Exemplary Novels

MIGUEL DE CERVANTES

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YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS ■ NEW HAVEN & LONDON

2016

A MARGELLOS
WORLD REPUBLIC OF LETTERS BOOK

THE NOVEL OF THE DECEITFUL MARRIAGE (1613)

A soldier was leaving the Hospital of the Resurrection in Valladolid, just outside the Campo Gate, and because he used his sword as a cane and his legs were thin and his face yellow, he gave very clear indications that, although the weather was not very hot, he must have sweated out in twenty days all the humor he had perhaps acquired in an hour.[1] He took the small, hesitant steps of a convalescent, and as he entered the city through the gate, he saw coming toward him a friend he had not seen in more than six months, who, crossing himself as if he had seen some diabolical sight, approached him and said:

"What, Señor Licutenant Campuzano? Is it possible that your grace is in this country? On my life, I thought you were in Flanders, fighting with your lance there instead of dragging your sword here! What a color you have! How skinny you are!"

To which Campuzano replied:

"As to whether or not I am in this country, Señor Licentiate Peralta, seeing me here is your answer; I have nothing to say to your other questions except that I have left this hospital after sweating out fourteen gallons of pustules given to me by a woman I took as my own and shouldn't have."

"Does your grace mean he is married?" replied Peralta.

"Yes, Señor," responded Campuzano.

"It must have been for love," said Peralta, "and such marriages have an act of repentance attached to them."

"I cannot say whether it was for love," responded the lieutenant, "although I can state it was for my sorrow, for when I took my wife, or should I say my life, I suffered so many pains in my body and soul that to alleviate the ones in my body has cost me forty sweat treatments, and I cannot even find a remedy for those in my soul. But since I am in no condition to have a long conversation on the street, your grace will pardon me, and tomorrow I can

1. The four humors—blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm—were part of an ancient Greek medical theory still prevalent in Cervantes's time which posited that one's health and temperament were the result of the combination of humors in the body.

more comfortably recount the events that have occurred, which are the strangest and most unusual your grace has heard in all the days of his life."

"That will not be necessary," said the licentiate, "for I want you to come with me to my lodgings, and there we can suffer through my poor supper together, for the stew is meant for two but my servant will have a meat pie instead, and if you can eat it in your condition, some slices of Rute ham will be our first course, and above all the goodwill with which I offer it, not only this time but as many times as your grace might wish."

Campuzano thanked him and accepted the invitation and the proposal. They went to the Church of San Llorente, heard Mass, Peralta took him home, gave him what he had promised, made his offer again, and when they had finished eating asked him to recount the events he had described so extravagantly. Campuzano did not have to be begged but began to speak, saying:

"Your grace must remember, Señor Licentiate Peralta, what good friends I was with Captain Pedro de Herrera, who is now in Flanders."

"I remember very well," answered Peralta.

"Well, one day," continued Campuzano, "we had just finished eating at La Solana Inn where we were living, when two women of wellborn appearance came in with two maids. One began to talk to the captain, as both of them were standing near a window; the other sat in a chair next to mine, her shawl lowered to her chin, not allowing more of her face to be seen than that permitted by the thinness of the fabric. And although I asked her for the sake of courtesy to be so kind as to uncover her face, I could not persuade her, which simply inflamed my desire to see her. And to increase that desire even more (whether intentionally or by chance), the lady revealed a very white hand wearing very good rings. I was elegantly dressed at the time, with the heavy chain your grace would recognize, the hat with plumes and a band, my outfit in a soldier's colors, and so gallant in the eyes of my madness that I could catch birds in midflight. And so I asked her again to uncover her face, to which she replied: 'Do not be insistent. I have a house; have a page follow me, for although I am more honorable than what this reply promises, provided your good judgment corresponds to your gallantry, I shall be happy to let you see me.'

"I kissed her hands for the great kindness she was doing me, and as payment I promised her mountains of gold. The captain concluded his conversation; the ladies left; a servant of mine followed them. The captain told me the lady wanted him to carry some letters to Flanders to another captain, her cousin, she said, although he knew he had to be her lover.

"I was inflamed by the snowy hands I had seen and dying for the face I desired to see. And so the next day, led by my servant, I was freely admitted to

her very nicely decorated house, and found a woman of about thirty, whom I recognized because of her hands. She was not extremely beautiful, but her beauty was of the kind that could inspire love in one who knew her, because she had so gentle a way of speaking that it entered the soul through one's ears. I had long, amorous colloquies with her; I boasted, hewed, hacked, offered, promised, and demonstrated everything I thought necessary to make her favor me. But since she was accustomed to hearing similar or greater wooing and words, it seemed she listened attentively but did not believe any of it. In brief, I spent our conversation paying compliments for the four days I visited her and never plucked the fruit I desired.

"During the time I visited her, I always found the house empty, and had no glimpse of feigned kinsmen or true friends; she was served by a maid more clever than simpleminded. Finally, treating my love as if I were a soldier on the eve of being transferred, I pressed my Señora Doña Estefanía de Caicedo (for this is the name of the woman who brought me to this state), and she responded: 'Señor Lieutenant Campuzano, it would be foolish if I tried to present myself to your grace as a saint. I have been a sinner and still am one, but not in a way that makes my neighbors gossip nor those more remote to take notice of me. I inherited nothing from my parents or any other kin, and even so the furnishings in my house are worth twenty-five hundred *escudos*, and these things, put up for public auction, would take no time at all to convert into currency. With this property I am looking for a husband to whom I shall give myself, and to whom I shall owe obedience, and to whom I shall offer, along with the rectification of my life, an incredible solicitude in caring for him and serving him, because no prince has a better cook or one who knows as well as I exactly how long to cook stews when I set my mind to it and want to show how well I tend house. I know how to be a steward in the house, a maid in the kitchen, and a lady in the salon. In short, I know how to give orders, and I know how to have people obey them. I waste nothing and save a great deal; my fortune is worth not less but much more when it is spent as I direct. My house linens, and I have a large quantity of them, and of very good quality, were not acquired from shops or dealers: these hands and those of my maids stitched them; and if we could spin at home, we would have woven them. I say these things in my own praise because to do so is not improper when the need to say them is obligatory. In short, I mean that I am looking for a husband who will protect me, command me, and honor me, and not a lover who will serve and revile me. If your grace would like to accept the gift that is offered him, here I am, true and tried, subject to everything your grace orders, no longer for sale, which is the same as being talked about by

matchmakers, and there's not one of them as good as the parties themselves to make arrangements.'

"I, who at that time had my good sense not in my head but in the soles of my feet, delighted in the picture painted in my imagination, and in her offering so openly the amount of her estate, which I already was contemplating converted into money, and thinking of nothing except what pleasure gave rise to, had my understanding in shackles, and I told her I was the fortunate and felicitous one since heaven had given me, almost as if by miracle, such a companion to make mistress of my will and estate, which was not so small that it was worth nothing, for with the chain I wore around my neck and some other little jewels I had at home, and by selling off a few soldier's trappings, it amounted to more than two thousand *ducados*, which together with her twenty-five hundred was enough for us to go to live in the village I came from and where I owned some property; a farm that, well managed, selling the fruits at an opportune time, could give us a happy and restful life. In short, on that occasion our betrothal was arranged and we planned how the two of us would publish the banns, which we did together on a feast day, then there were the three days of celebration, and on the fourth day we were married, those present being two friends of mine and a young man she said was her cousin, to whom I offered myself as a kinsman with very courteous words, as were all the words spoken until then by my new wife, with so twisted and traitorous an intention that I would like to conceal it, because although I am telling you the truth, these are not the truths of the confessional, which must be said.

"My servant moved my chest from my lodgings to my wife's house; in her presence I locked my magnificent chain inside; I showed her three or four others, if not as large, then better made, along with another three or four rings of different kinds; I showed her my military finery and trappings and gave her the four hundred *reales* I had for household expenses. For six days I enjoyed the early days of marriage, idling in the house like the despicable son-in-law in the house of the wealthy father-in-law. I walked on rich carpets, rumpled sheets of Holland linen, lit my way with silver candlesticks; I had breakfast in bed, got up at eleven, had lunch at twelve, and at two o'clock napped in the drawing room; Doña Estefanía and the maid anticipated all my desires. My servant, who until then had been known as lazy and slow, became as fleet as a deer. When Doña Estefanía was not at my side, she could be found in the kitchen completely solicitous about arranging for stews that would awaken my delight and enliven my appetite. My shirts, collars, and handkerchiefs were a new Aranjuez of flowers considering their fragrance, for they were washed in water perfumed with orange blossoms. Those days flew by as the years pass

that are under the jurisdiction of time; and during those days, finding myself so indulged and so well served, the evil intention with which that business had begun was transforming into good. And then, one morning when those days had come to an end, and I was still in bed with Doña Estefanía, there came a loud knocking at the street door. The maid looked out the window, instantly moved away, and said:

"'Oh, let us welcome her! Have you seen how she came here faster than she wrote she would the other day?'

"'Who is it that has come, girl?' I asked her.

"'Who?' she responded. 'My Señora Doña Clementa Bueso, and with her Señor Don Lope Meléndez de Almendárez, with two servants and Hortigosa, the duenna she took with her.'

"'Run, girl, and Lord bless me! Open the door for them,' said Doña Estefanía at this point, 'and you, Señor, for my sake, do not become agitated or come to my defense no matter what you may hear said against me.'

"'But who can say anything to offend you, especially when I am present? Tell me who these people are, for it seems to me their arrival has upset you.'

"'I can't answer you now,' said Doña Estefanía. 'Just know that everything that happens now is false and directed toward a certain purpose and effect that you will know about afterward.'

"And although I wanted to reply, Señora Doña Clementa Bueso did not give me the opportunity, for she entered the room dressed in green satin decorated with a good deal of gold passementerie, a short cape of the same cloth and the same adornment, a hat with green, white, and pink plumes, a rich hatband of gold, and a thin veil covering half her face. Señor Don Lope Meléndez de Almendárez came in with her, no less elegantly and richly dressed for travel. Duenna Hortigosa was the first to speak, saying:

"'Jesus! What is this? The bed of my Señora Doña Clementa occupied, and what is worse, by a man? Today I am seeing miracles in this house; by my faith, Señora Doña Estefanía, trusted with the friendship of my señora, was given a hand and has taken an arm.'

"'I assure you, Hortigosa,' replied Doña Clementa, 'that I am to blame, for I never learned not to take as friends women who don't know how to be friends, unless they find it useful.'

"To which Doña Estefanía replied:

"'Your grace should not feel regret, my Señora Doña Clementa Bueso, and realize that what you see in this your house is not without mystery, for when you unravel it, I know I shall be forgiven and your grace will have no complaints.'

"By this time I had put on my breeches and doublet, and taking me by the hand, Doña Estefanía led me to another room, and there she told me that her friend wanted to play a joke on Don Lope, who had come with her, and whom she intended to marry. And the joke was to make him understand that the house and everything in it all belonged to Doña Clementa, concerning which she planned to make a dowry document, and once they had married she would quickly disclose the deception, trusting in the great love Don Lope had for her.

"'And then she will return everything that is mine and will not be judged harshly, nor will any other woman who attempts to find an honorable husband, even if it is by means of some fraud.'

"I replied that what she wanted to do was pressing the limits of friendship, and that she should think carefully first because later she might have need of the law to recover her property. But she responded with so many justifications, alleging so many obligations to serve Doña Clementa, even in matters of greater importance, that very reluctantly, and with many doubts in my mind, I had to yield to Doña Estefanía's wishes, and she assured me the deception would last only a week, during which time we would be in the house of another friend of hers.

"She and I finished dressing, and then, coming in to take her leave of Señora Doña Clementa Bueso and Señor Don Lope Meléndez de Almendárez, she had my servant pick up the chest and follow her, and I also followed, not taking my leave of anyone. Doña Estefanía stopped at the house of a friend of hers, and before we went in she spent a long time inside talking to her, and then a maid came out and told my servant and me to go in. She took us to a narrow room where there were two beds so close together they seemed to be one, because there was no space between them and the sheets were kissing.

"And in effect, we were there six days, and in all that time not an hour went by when we weren't arguing and I wasn't telling her how foolish she had been to leave her house and property, even if it had been for her own mother. I kept returning to this subject so often that one day, when Doña Estefanía said she was going to see how her affairs were progressing, the mistress of the house wanted to know why I was moved to argue so much with her, and what she had done that I spoke so harshly, telling her it had been patent foolishness rather than perfect friendship. I told her the entire story, and when I said I had married Doña Estefanía and mentioned the dowry she had brought with her, and how simpleminded it had been for her to leave her house and property to Doña Clementa, even with so honest an intention as acquiring a husband as distinguished as Don Lope, she began to cross herself so quickly and with so many exclamations of 'Jesus, Jesus, what an evil woman!' that she threw me into great confusion, and finally she said to me:

"'Señor Lieutenant, I don't know whether it goes against my conscience to reveal to you what I also think would weigh on it if I concealed it from you; but may God and luck be with me, however it turns out, long live truth! And death to lies! The truth is that Doña Clementa Bueso is the true owner of the house and estate that formed the dowry presented to you; the lie is everything Doña Estefanía has told you, for she has no house, no wealth, and no dress other than the one she's wearing. Her having had the opportunity and time to create this deception was because Doña Clementa went to visit some kinsmen in the city of Plasencia, and from there she went on her nine-day pilgrimage to Our Lady of Guadalupe. While she was away, she had Doña Estefanía stay in her house and look after it because, in fact, they are great friends; though if you think about it, one cannot blame the poor lady, for she managed to acquire a person like the lieutenant as her husband.'

"Here she finished speaking and I began to think about killing myself. And undoubtedly I would have if my guardian angel had been just a little negligent in helping me, coming to tell me in my heart to remember I was a Christian, and that the greatest sin among humans is suicide, because it is a sin of demons. This consideration or good inspiration was some consolation, but not so great that I did not take my cape and sword and go out to look for Doña Estefanía, with the purpose of inflicting upon her an exemplary punishment. But as luck would have it, and I cannot say if this made matters worse or better for me, I did not find Doña Estefanía in any of the places where I thought I would. I went to San Llorente, put myself in the hands of Our Lady, sat on a bench, filled with regret, and fell into so deep a sleep that I would not have awoken very quickly if I had not been awakened. Filled with anguish and distress, I went to Doña Clementa's house and found her to be the very calm mistress of her house. I did not dare say anything to her because Don Lope was also there; I returned to the house where I had been staying, and the owner said she had told Doña Estefanía how I knew all about her tricks and lies, and that she had asked how I looked when I heard the news, and she had said awful, that in her opinion I had gone out with a bad intention and worse determination to find her. Finally, she told me that Doña Estefanía had taken everything in the chest, leaving me nothing but one traveling outfit.

"Just imagine! Once again God had me by the hand. I went to look at my chest, and I found it open and like a grave waiting for a corpse, and there was good reason for it to be mine if I had the understanding to feel and ponder so great a misfortune."

"It was more than great," Licentiate Peralta said at this point, "for Doña Estefanía to have taken so many chains and hatbands, for, as the saying goes, sorrows are easier to bear on a full stomach."

"I had no trouble in that regard," replied the lieutenant, "for I could also say: Don Simueque thought he would deceive me with his one-eyed daughter, and by God, I'm crippled on one side."[2]

"I don't know to what end your grace can say that," answered Peralta.

"The fact is," said the lieutenant, "that all that jumble and show of chains, hatbands, and jewels couldn't have been worth more than ten or twelve *escudos*."

"That isn't possible," replied the licentiate, "because the one the lieutenant wore around his neck seemed to be worth more than two hundred *ducados*."

"It would be," responded the lieutenant, "if truth corresponded to appearances, but since all that glitters is not gold, my chains, hatbands, gems, and jewels were pleasing, though false, but so well made that only an assayer or a foundry could have revealed their fraudulence."

"That means," said the licentiate, "that your grace and Doña Estefanía both gave as good as you got."

"So good," responded the lieutenant, "that we could deal the cards and start all over again! But the trouble is, Señor Licentiate, that she can get rid of my chains but I can't get rid of the falsity of her status; in effect, though it grieves me, she is my prize."

"Give thanks to God, Señor Campuzano," said Peralta, "that she was a prize with feet and has left you, and you are not obliged to look for her."

"That is true," answered the lieutenant, "but even so, even without looking for her, I always find her in my imagination, and wherever I am, the offense against me is present."

"I don't know how to respond," said Peralta, "except to remind you of two lines of Petrarch, which say:

> *Ché qui prende diletto di far fiode,*
> *Non si de lamenter si altri l'ingana.*

"Which in our Castilian means: 'The man who custmarily takes pleasure in deceiving another, should not complain when he is deceived.'"

"I'm not complaining," said the lieutenant, "but I do feel sad that the guilty man, knowing his guilt, does not stop feeling the pain of the punishment.

2. A popular saying referring to the deception of the deceiver.

I see very clearly that I wanted to deceive and was deceived, and was wounded by my own blade; but I cannot so control my feelings that I don't complain on my own account. In short, what is most relevant to my tale, and you can give that name to this recounting of what happened to me, is that I learned that Doña Estefanía went off with the cousin I said was present at our wedding, who in any case had been her lover for a long time. I didn't want to look for her and then find the harm I was missing. I changed lodgings and in a few days changed my hair, because I began to lose my eyebrows and lashes, and gradually my hair fell out, and I became bald before my time, having a disease called alopecia. I was really hairless and penniless, because I didn't have a beard to groom or money to spend. The disease moved at the pace of my need, and since poverty tramples honor underfoot and takes some to the gallows and others to the hospital, and makes others walk through the gates of their enemies with courtesy and humility, which is one of the greatest miseries that can befall an unfortunate man to avoid paying for his cure by pawning his clothes, which had to cover and honor me in health, and when the time came for sweating in the Hospital of the Resurrection, I went in and have had forty sweat treatments. They say I'll be fine if I take care of myself; I have a sword, and may God take care of the rest."

The licentiate offered his services again, amazed at the things that had been recounted.

"Well, your grace marvels at very little, Señor Peralta," said the lieutenant, "for I still have other things to tell you that surpass all imagination, for they are outside all the boundaries of nature. Your grace should not want to know more, except they are such that I consider all my misfortunes well spent, for they were part of what placed me in the hospital where I saw what I shall tell you now, which is what your grace cannot now, or ever, believe, and there is no one in the world who will believe it."

All the lieutenant's preambles and praise before recounting what he had seen inflamed Peralta's desire, so that with no less praise he asked him immediately and without delay to tell him the marvels he still had to tell.

"Your grace must have seen," said the lieutenant, "two dogs that with two lanterns walk at night with the Brothers of the Basket, lighting their way when they beg for alms."[3]

"Yes, I have."

3. The Brothers of the Basket were members of the religious order started by San Juan de Dios (1495–1550) who would accept alms in woven baskets to help the sick.

"And your grace also must have seen or heard," said the lieutenant, "what is said about the dogs: that if someone tosses their coins from a window and they fall to the ground, they go immediately to light the spot and look for what has fallen, and they stop in front of the windows where they know people customarily give alms. And though they do this so meekly that they resemble lambs more than dogs, in the hospital they are like lions guarding the house with great care and vigilance."

"I have heard," said Peralta, "that all this is true, but it can't and shouldn't cause me to marvel."

"But what I shall say now about them is something that does, and without crossing myself or alleging impossible or difficult things, your grace should be prepared to believe it. And it is this: I heard and almost saw with my own eyes these two dogs, one named Cipión and the other Berganza, stretched out on some old straw mats behind my bed on the next to the last night of the sweat treatment, and in the middle of that night, when I was in the dark and awake, thinking about my past adventures and present misfortunes, there close by I heard talking, and I listened attentively to see whether I could learn who was talking and what they were talking about. And I soon realized, because of what they were saying, that the speakers were the two dogs, Cipión and Berganza."

As soon as Campuzano said this, the licentiate stood and said:

"Your grace, go in peace, Señor Campuzano, for until now I wondered whether to believe what you told me about your marriage, but what you're telling me now, that you heard dogs speaking, has made me decide that I don't believe anything you say. For the love of God, Señor Lieutenant, don't tell this foolishness to anyone except someone who is as good a friend to you as I am."

"Your grace should not think I am so ignorant," replied Campuzano, "that I don't understand that, except for a miracle, animals cannot speak; I know very well that if starlings, magpies, and parrots speak, it is nothing but words they learn and remember, and because they have the right kind of tongue these animals can pronounce them; but that doesn't mean they can speak and respond in reasoned discourse as these dogs spoke. And so, quite often after I heard them, I have not wanted to believe it myself, wanted to believe I had dreamed things that I heard, listened to, made note of, and, in brief, wrote down when I and all my five senses were awake, just as Our Lord was pleased to give them to me, not omitting a single word, and you should take this as a real indication that can move and persuade you to believe this truth I am telling you. The things they talked about were important and varied, more to be spoken of by wise men than said by the mouths of dogs. And so, since I could not invent them on my own, in spite of myself and contrary to my own opinion, I have come to believe that I was not dreaming and the dogs were talking."

"By my soul!" replied the licentiate. "The days of old have returned, when pumpkins could talk, or the time of Aesop, when the rooster reasoned with the fox, and brutes reasoned with other brutes."

"I would be one of those brutes, the greatest one," replied the lieutenant, "if I believed that time had returned. Or if I stopped believing what I heard and what I saw and what I'll dare to swear to with an oath that obliges and even forces incredulity itself to believe. But, even supposing I have been deceived and my truth is a dream and insisting that it is true is foolishness, wouldn't your grace, Señor Peralta, like to see written in a colloquy the things these dogs, or whoever they were, talked about?"

"So that your grace," replied the licentiate, "does not exhaust himself persuading me that he heard the dogs speak, I'll listen to this colloquy very gladly, which, being written and noted by the lieutenant's good intellect, I already judge to be good."

"There's something else in this," said the lieutenant, "for since I was so attentive and my mind was sharp, and my memory refined, subtle, and clear, thanks to the many raisins and almonds I had eaten, I took it all from memory, and the next day I wrote almost the same words I had heard, not looking for rhetorical colorings to adorn them or adding or taking away anything to make them more pleasing. Their conversation was not on a single night but on two consecutive nights, though I did not write down more than one, which is the life of Berganza, and the life of his companion Cipión (that was the one recounted on the second night) I plan to write down when I see whether this one is believed or, at least, not treated with scorn. I have the colloquy here in my shirt; I put it in the form of dialogue to avoid repeating 'said Cipión,' 'replied Berganza,' which usually lengthen a piece of writing."

And saying this, he took a notebook from his bosom and placed it in the hands of the licentiate, who took it, laughing, as if he were mocking everything he had heard and intended to read.

"I shall lie back," said the lieutenant, "in this chair while your grace reads these dreams or, if you like, this nonsense, their only recommendation being that you can put them aside when they annoy you."

"Your grace should do whatever he pleases," said Peralta, "for I shall finish this quickly."

The lieutenant reclined, the licentiate opened the notebook, and at the beginning he saw this title written:

THE NOVEL OF THE COLLOQUY OF THE DOGS (1613)

Dogs of the Hospital of the Resurrection, which is in the city of Valladolid, outside the Campo Gate, who are commonly called the dogs of Mahudes.

CIPIÓN: Berganza, my friend, tonight let us leave the hospital guarded by trust and withdraw to this solitude and these mats, where without being heard we can enjoy this unheard of grace that heaven has granted both of us at the same time.

BERGANZA: Cipión, my brother, I hear you speak and I know I am speaking to you, and I cannot believe it, because it seems to me that our speaking goes beyond the limits of nature.

CIPIÓN: This is true, Berganza, and this miracle is even greater because we not only are speaking but speaking with intelligence, as if we were capable of reason, though we are so lacking in it that the difference between the brute animal and man is that man is a rational animal, and the brute, irrational.

BERGANZA: I understand everything you say, Cipión, and your saying it and my understanding it makes me wonder and marvel yet again. It is true that in the course of my life I have heard on many different occasions about our great virtues; so much so, it seems, that some have wanted to feel we have a natural instinct, very lively and sharp in many things, that gives indications and signs of our being close to demonstrating that we have some kind of understanding capable of speech and reflection.

CIPIÓN: What I have heard lauded and praised is our remarkable memory, our gratitude, and great fidelity, so that we are often painted as symbols of friendship; and you'll have seen, if you have looked, that on alabaster tombs with figures of those buried there, when they are husband and wife, between the two, at their feet, the figure of a dog is placed as a sign that in life their friendship and fidelity were inviolable.

BERGANZA: I know very well there have been dogs so grateful that they have thrown themselves into the grave along with the dead body of their master. Others have remained on the graves where their masters are buried and not moved away from them, eating nothing, until they die. I also know that

after the elephant, the dog occupies first place in appearing to possess understanding, followed by the horse, and finally, the monkey.

CIPIÓN: That is true; but you must also confess that you have never seen or heard of any elephant, dog, horse, or monkey who spoke; and from this I assume that our speaking so unexpectedly falls into the category of things called portents, which, when they appear and reveal themselves, as experience has shown, some great calamity threatens the world.

BERGANZA: In that case it won't be difficult for me to take as a portentous sign what I heard a student say recently as I passed through Alcalá de Henares.

CIPIÓN: What did you hear him say?

BERGANZA: That of five thousand students enrolled in the university that year, two thousand of them were studying medicine.

CIPIÓN: And what do you infer from that?

BERGANZA: I infer that these two thousand doctors will either need to have sick people to cure, which would be a great plague and a misfortune, or they will starve to death.

CIPIÓN: But whichever it is, we're speaking, whether it's a portent or not; what heaven has ordained will happen, and no human effort or knowledge can foresee or prevent it; and so there's no reason for us to argue about how or why we're speaking; it would be better on this fine day, or fine night, that we take advantage of the opportunity, and since it's so comfortable on these mats and we don't know how long our good fortune will last, let us make use of it and talk all night long, not surrendering to the sleep that will interfere with this pleasure, which I have long desired.

BERGANZA: As have I, for ever since I had the strength to gnaw a bone I have wanted to speak, to say things that settled in my memory, and there, being old and numerous, either moldered away or were forgotten. But now, finding myself so unexpectedly enriched with this divine gift of speech, I plan to enjoy it and make use of it as much as I can, rushing to say everything I can think of, even if it's hurried and confused, because I don't know when I'll lose this benefit that I assume is only a loan.

CIPIÓN: Let's do it this way, Berganza, my friend: tonight you tell me your life and the events that have brought you to the point where you are now, and if tomorrow night we still can speak, I shall tell you mine; because it will be better to spend the time recounting our own lives rather than attempting to learn about other people's.

BERGANZA: Cipión, I have always considered you wise, and a friend, and now I think that more than ever, for as a friend you want to tell me your life and know about mine, and as a discerning creature you will parse the time when we can recount them. But first see whether anyone can hear us.

CIPIÓN: No one, as far as I can tell, although nearby there is a soldier taking a sweat treatment; but at this time, he must be more interested in sleeping than in listening to anybody.

BERGANZA: Well, if I can speak with that certainty, then listen; and if what's being said becomes tiresome, either reprimand me or tell me to be quiet.

CIPIÓN: Speak until dawn or until someone hears us; I shall listen to you very gladly and won't stop you except if it seems necessary.

BERGANZA: It seems to me I first saw the sun in Sevilla, in its Slaughterhouse, which is outside the Gate of Meat, and from this one would imagine, if not for what I shall tell you later, that my parents must have been hounds, the kind raised by those ministers of chaos called slaughterers. The first person I knew as a master was one named Nicolás the Snub-nosed, a robust young man, short, stocky, and choleric, like all those who engage in slaughter. This Nicolás taught me and other pups, accompanied by old hounds, to attack bulls and seize them by the ears. In this I easily became an eagle.

CIPIÓN: I'm not surprised, Berganza; since doing evil is a consequence of nature, one easily learns to do it.

BERGANZA: What could I tell you, Cipión, my brother, about what I saw in the slaughterhouse and the excesses that go on there? First, you must take it for granted that all those who work there, from the youngest to the oldest, are people without scruples, heartless, unafraid of either the king or his justice; most live in sin. They are bloodthirsty birds of prey; they and their girlfriends live on what they steal. Every morning before dawn on the days you can buy meat, a great number of low women and boys are at the slaughterhouse, all of them with bags that come in empty and return filled with pieces of meat, and the maids get the testicles and entire half loins. No cattle are killed without these people taking tithes and first fruits of the most delicious and best parts. And since in Sevilla there is no one person in charge of setting the price of meat, each man can sell what he chooses, the first one slaughtered, or the best, or the cheapest; and with this arrangement there is always an abundant supply. The owners entrust themselves to the good people I've mentioned, not so they won't steal from them, for that is impossible, but so they'll moderate the cuts and shavings they inflict on the dead animals, for they trim them and prune them as if they were willows or grapevines. But nothing surprised me more, or seemed worse to me, than seeing that these slaughterers would kill a man as easily as a cow; in the blink of an eye and without thinking twice, they take a knife with a

yellow hilt and slit open a person's belly as if they were slaughtering a bull. A day without fights and wounds and sometimes without deaths is exceptional; all boast of being brave and still have their pimp's habits; not one of them lacks his guardian angel on the Plaza de San Francisco, bribed with beef loins and tongues.[1] In short, I heard a discerning man say that the king had three things to conquer in Sevilla: the Calle de la Caza, the Costanilla, and the Slaughterhouse.

CIPIÓN: If you're going to spend as much time as you have just now recounting the condition of the masters you've had and the evils in their trades, we shall have to ask heaven to grant us speech for at least a year, and even so I fear, at the rate you're going, you won't get to half your story. I want to advise you of something, and you'll see the truth of it when I tell you the events of my life; and it is that some stories hold and contain their charm inside themselves, and others have theirs in the way they're told; I mean there are some that give pleasure even though they're told without preambles and ornamentations of words; others need to be dressed in words and told with facial expressions and hand gestures and changes of voice to make something of a trifle, turning poor, weak things into something clever and pleasing; and don't forget this advice and use it in recounting what you still have to say.

BERGANZA: I shall, if I can and if the great temptation I have to speak will let me, although I think it will be very difficult to control myself.

CIPIÓN: Then control your tongue, for there lie the greatest ills in human life.

BERGANZA: I was saying, then, that my master taught me to carry a basket in my mouth and defend it against anyone who tried to take it from me. He also showed me the house of his girlfriend, and her maid did not have to come to the slaughterhouse because at dawn I brought what he had stolen at night. And one day at dawn, when I was diligently taking her the daily portion, I heard someone calling my name from a window; I looked up and saw an extremely beautiful girl; I stopped for a moment, and she came down to the street door and called me again. I went up to her as if I were going to see why she had called me, which was simply to take what I was carrying in the basket and put in its place an old clog. Then I said to myself: 'Flesh has gone to flesh.' The girl said to me as she took the meat: 'Go on, Hawk, or whatever your name is, and tell Nicolás the Snub-nosed, your

1. The Plaza de San Francisco was the center of administrative activity in Sevilla. The guardian angels are a tongue-in-cheek reference to corrupt government officials.

master, not to trust in animals, and not to play games with wolves, or to do so as little as possible.' I could easily have taken back what had been taken from me but did not want to so as not to put my dirty, slaughterhouse mouth on those clean, white hands.

CIPIÓN: You did the right thing, for it is a prerogative of beauty to always be respected.

BERGANZA: That is what I did; and so I went back to my master without the portion and with the clog. He thought I had returned quickly; he saw the clog; he imagined the gibe; he took a knife with a hilt and hurled it at me, and if I hadn't moved out of the way, you'd never be hearing this story now, or the many others I intend to tell you. I ran away as fast as I could, and taking the route into my own hands and feet, I went behind San Bernardo through fields of God wherever fortune wanted to take me. That night I slept outdoors, and the next day a herd or flock of ewes and rams presented me with good luck. As soon as I saw them, I believed I had found the center of my well-being, thinking it was the proper and natural occupation of dogs to guard livestock, for it is work that contains a great virtue, which is protecting and defending the humble and weak against the powerful and proud. As soon as one of the three shepherds guarding the flock saw me, he began to call me with a clicking sound. And I, who wanted nothing else, went up to him, lowering my head and wagging my tail. He ran his hand along my back, opened my mouth, spat in it, looked at my teeth, knew my age, and said to the other shepherds that I had all the signs of being a good breed. At this moment the owner of the flock rode up on a gray mare with short stirrups, a lance and shield, looking more like a coast guardian than the owner of livestock. He asked the shepherd: 'What dog is this? He looks like a good one.' 'Your grace can well believe that,' replied the shepherd, 'for I've looked him over, and there's nothing about him that doesn't show and promise that he'll be a great dog. He just came here, and I don't know who he belongs to, though I do know he doesn't belong to any of the flocks around here.' 'Well, if that's so,' said the owner, 'hurry and put a collar on him, the one that belonged to Leoncillo, the dog that died, and give him the same ration of food as the others, and pet him so he begins to love the flock and stays with it.' Saying this, he left, and the shepherd put around my neck a spiked collar, having first given me a large amount of bread and milk in a trough. He also gave me a name and called me Barcino. I found myself full and happy with my second master and my new occupation; I showed myself to be solicitous and diligent in guarding the flock, not leaving it except for

siestas, which I spent in the shade of a tree, a slope, a crag, or a bush at the edge of one of the many streams that flowed there. And I didn't spend these hours of tranquility doing nothing, because during that time I occupied my memory in recalling many things, especially the life I had led in the Slaughterhouse, and the life led by my master and all those like him, subjected to satisfying the impertinent desires of their girlfriends. Oh, what things I could tell you now that I was taught in the school of my master's slaughterhouse lady! But I shall have to be quiet about them so you don't consider me long-winded and a gossip.

CIPIÓN: Since I have heard that one of the great poets of antiquity said it was difficult not to write satires, I shall consent to your gossiping a little, with light but not blood; I mean that you can aim but not wound or expose anyone with what you have thrown; for even if it makes many people laugh, gossip is not good if it exposes someone; and if you can please without it, I'll think you very discerning.

BERGANZA: I shall take your advice and wait impatiently for the time to come when you recount your life to me; from someone who knows so well how to perceive and correct the faults I have in recounting mine, we can certainly expect an account that both teaches and delights. But, tying up the broken thread of my story, I say that in the silence and solitude of my siestas, I considered among other things that what I had heard about the life of shepherds probably wasn't true; at least, the ones my master's lady read in books when I would go to her house, because they all dealt with shepherds and shepherdesses, saying that they spent their whole life singing and playing bagpipes, panpipes, rebecs, and flageolets, and other extraordinary instruments. I would stop and listen to her read, and she read about how the shepherd Anfriso sang exceedingly, divinely well in praise of the matchless Belisarda without there being, in all the woodlands of Arcadia, a single tree against whose trunk he had not sat down to sing, from the time the sun rose in the arms of Aurora until it set in those of Thetis, and even after raven night had spread its black, dark wings across the face of the earth, he did not cease his well sung and better wept complaints. And she did not forget about the shepherd Elicio, more in love than he was daring, of whom it was said that without tending to either his love or his livestock, he concerned himself with other people's cares. She also said that the great shepherd Filida, the most excellent painter of a portrait, had been more confident than fortunate. Regarding the dismay of Sireno and the repentance of Diana she said she thanked God and the enchantress Felicia, who with her enchanted water undid that collection of entanglements and clarified that labyrinth of difficulties. I thought of many other books of this sort that I had heard her read, but they weren't worthy of being brought to mind.

CIPIÓN: Berganza, you're taking advantage of my advice as you go along; hurry along and continue, and may your intention be virtuous, though your tongue doesn't seem to be.

BERGANZA: In these matters the tongue never stumbles if the intention doesn't fall first, but if it happens that through carelessness or malice I gossip, I shall reply to the person who reprimands me with the response of Mauleón, a foolish poet and mock academic of the Academy of Imitators, to one who asked him the meaning of *Deum de Deo*; and he replied 'Dare do derring-do.'

CIPIÓN: That was the answer of a simpleton; but you, if you are wise or wish to be so, should never say anything that you have to excuse. Proceed.

BERGANZA: I say that all the thoughts I've mentioned, and many others, made me see how different the manners and actions of my shepherds and all the others on that piece of land were from those of the shepherds in the books I had heard;[2] because if mine sang, they weren't refined, nicely composed songs but "The wolf is watching where Juanica goes' and others like it; and this was not to the sound of flageolets, rebecs, or bagpipes but the one made by hitting one shepherd's crook with another or bringing together small tiles held between the fingers; and not sung by delicate, sonorous, admirable voices but ones that were hoarse and, alone or together, sounded not as if they were singing but shouting or growling. They spent most of the day delousing themselves or repairing their sandals; and none of them was named Amarilis, Filida, Galatea, or Diana, and there were no Lisardos, Lausos, Jacintos, or Riselos; they were all Antones, Domingos, Pablos, or Llorentes; and so I came to understand what I think everyone must believe: that all those books are well-written dreams meant to entertain the idle, and have no truth in them; if they did, among my shepherds there would have been some remains of that supremely happy life, and of those pleasant meadows, spacious woodlands, sacred mountains, beautiful gardens, clear streams, and crystalline fountains, and of that wooing as virtuous as it was well spoken, and of that shepherd swooning here, that shepherdess swooning there; someone playing a reed pipe over yonder, and nearby someone else playing the flute.

CIPIÓN: Enough, Berganza; return to your path and keep walking.

2. Berganza here contrasts the reality of shepherds with their idealistic interpretation in pastoral literature, the kind he recalled hearing at the house of his master's lady.

BERGANZA: I thank you, Cipión, my friend; because if you hadn't warned me, my mouth was heating up so much that it wouldn't have stopped until it had painted you an entire book of the kind that had deceived me; but the time will come when I shall say it all with better words and better reasoning than I do now.

CIPIÓN: Look at your feet and you'll fold up your tail, Berganza. I mean you should see that you're an animal that lacks reason, and if you show some now, the two of us have already decided it's something supernatural and unheard of.

BERGANZA: That might have been true if I were in my earlier ignorance; but now that what I was going to tell you at the start of our talk has come to mind, I not only am not surprised at speaking but am amazed at what I'm not saying.

CIPIÓN: Well, can't you say now what you've just remembered?

BERGANZA: It's a certain story of what happened to me with a great sorceress, a disciple of Camacha de Montilla.

CIPIÓN: I say that you should tell it to me before you go any further in the account of your life.

BERGANZA: I certainly won't do that until it is time. Be patient and listen to these things in their proper order, and you'll enjoy them more if you're not worn out by wanting to know middles before beginnings.

CIPIÓN: Be brief, and tell whatever you want and however you want to tell it.

BERGANZA: I'll say, then, that I was happy with my occupation of guarding livestock, because it seemed to me that I was eating the bread I had earned by the sweat of my brow, and that idleness, root and mother of all the vices, had nothing to do with me, because if during the day I rested, at night I didn't sleep, since wolves attacked us often and put us on the defensive; and as soon as the shepherds said to me: 'Get the wolf, Barcino,' I came running, before the other dogs, to the place where they indicated the wolf was lurking; I ran through the valleys, I investigated the mountains, I dug up the woods, I jumped across ravines, crossed roads, and in the morning I returned to the flock not having found the wolf or any trace of him, gasping for breath, tired, overcome by fatigue, my paws torn by broken branches; and in the flock I would find either a dead ewe or a ram with its throat torn open and half eaten by the wolf. It made me angry to see how little good my care and diligence accomplished. The owner of the flock came; the shepherds came out to receive him with the hides of the dead animals; he accused the shepherds of negligence and ordered the dogs punished for laziness; blows with sticks and reprimands rained down on us; and so, finding myself punished one day when I was blameless, and seeing that my care, speed, and valor were of no use in catching the wolf, I decided to change my style, not going away to search for him, as I usually did, far from the flock, but staying close, and if the wolf came, it would be easier to attack him. Each week the alarm sounded, and on a very dark night I was on the lookout for wolves, though the flock couldn't be protected from them. I crouched behind a bush, the dogs, my friends, went out, and from there I observed that two shepherds seized one of the best rams in the fold and slaughtered it in such a way that in the morning it really looked as if a wolf had been the killer. I was dumbfounded, astonished when I saw that the shepherds were the wolves; the ones who were supposed to protect the sheep were tearing them to pieces. They immediately informed their master of the wolf's kill, gave him the hide and part of the meat, and kept the best for themselves. Again the owner reprimanded them, and again the dogs were punished. There were no wolves; the flock was shrinking; I would have liked to bring this to light; I was mute. All of which filled me with amazement and distress. 'Lord save me!' I said to myself. 'Who can remedy this evil? Who is capable of revealing that the defense offends, the sentinels are asleep, trust is a thief, and your guardian is killing you!'

CIPIÓN: And you were correct, Berganza, because there is no greater or more subtle thief than a servant; and so, many more of the trustful die than the suspicious; but the bad thing is that it's impossible for people to get along in the world if they don't trust and have confidence in one another. But let's leave this for now, I don't want us to seem like preachers. Continue.

BERGANZA: I'll continue and say that I decided to leave that occupation even though it seemed so good, and choose another where, if I did the work well, even if I weren't remunerated, I wouldn't be punished. I returned to Sevilla and began to serve a very rich merchant.

CIPIÓN: What method did you use to gain access to a master? Because, in general, it is very difficult these days for an honest man to find a master to serve. The earthly masters of the Master of heaven are very different; for them to accept a servant they first scrutinize his lineage, examine his skill, study his person, and even want to know the clothes he has; but to begin to serve God, the poorest is the richest; the humblest has the best lineage; and anyone prepared to serve Him with a pure heart is immediately entered in the book of His benefits, marking them as so important that, being so many and so great, they surpass all our desires.

BERGANZA: All that is preaching, Cipión, my friend.

CIPIÓN: It seems that way to me too, and so I'll be silent.

BERGANZA: As for what you asked regarding the method I used to find a master, I'll say that you already know that humility is the basis and foundation of all the virtues, and that without it no virtue exists. It levels obstacles, overcomes difficulties, and is a means that always leads us to glorious ends; it makes friends of enemies, tempers the rage of the wrathful, and diminishes the arrogance of the proud; it is the mother of modesty and sister of temperance; in short, with it the vices cannot find an opportunity to triumph, because the arrows of sins are blunted and break in its softness and gentleness. And so I made use of it when I wanted to enter the service of a house, having first considered and verified very carefully that it was a house that could support and take in a large dog. Then I stayed at the door and when, in my opinion, a stranger went in, I barked at him, and when the master came I lowered my head and, wagging my tail, approached him and cleaned his shoes with my tongue. If they beat me with a stick, I endured it, and with the same gentleness I showed affection toward the man who gave me the beating, which was never repeated, seeing my persistence and noble behavior. In this way, after two attempts I stayed in the house; I served well, they soon had affection for me, and no one sent me away unless I sent myself away, I mean to say, unless I left; and I even found a master and would be in his house today if bad luck had not pursued me.

CIPIÓN: In the same way that you've recounted, I entered the houses of the masters I've had, and it seems we can read their thoughts.

BERGANZA: We've had similar experiences along those lines, if I'm not mistaken, and I'll tell you about them in time, as I've promised; and now listen to what happened to me after I left the flock in the care of those villains.

I returned to Sevilla, as I said, which is a shelter to the poor and a refuge to the scorned, for in its greatness there is room for the humble, and they don't even notice the great. I approached the doorway of a large house that belonged to a merchant, took the usual steps, and in a short while was inside. They took me in to keep me tied behind the door during the day and untied at night; I served with great care and diligence; I barked at strangers and growled at those who weren't very well known; I didn't sleep at night, visiting the corrals, going up to the flat roofs, becoming the general guardian of my house as well as other people's houses. My master was so pleased with my good service that he gave orders for me to be well treated and fed a ration of bread, the bones from his table, and leftovers from the kitchen, for which I showed my gratitude, jumping up and down over and over again when I saw my master, especially when he came in from outside; I gave so many demonstrations of joy and jumped so much that my master gave orders for me to be untied and allowed to walk free both day and night. When I found myself free, I ran to him, ran all around him, not daring to touch him with my forepaws, remembering the fable of Aesop in which an ass was such an ass that he tried to give his owner the same caresses that a spoiled lapdog of his gave, and was severely beaten. It seemed to me that this fable lets us know that the charms and graces of some don't suit others; let the court jester invent nicknames, the actor do sleight-of-hand and acrobatics, the rogue bray like a donkey, and the lowborn man who has devoted himself to it imitate the song of birds and the various gestures and actions of animals and men, and let the eminent man avoid these things, for none of these abilities can be a credit to him or give him an honorable name.

CIPIÓN: Enough. Go on, Berganza, your point has been made.

BERGANZA: I only hope that just as you understand me, those for whom I'm saying this understand me too! I don't know what kind of good nature I have, but it pains me greatly when I see a gentleman tell indecent jokes, and boast of knowing how to play cups and balls,[3] and brag that no one dances the chaconne as well as he. I know a gentleman who prided himself on the fact that, implored by a sacristan, he cut thirty-two paper rosettes that were attached to black cloths and placed on a monument, and he attributed so much importance to this that he took his friends to see them as if he were taking them to see the banners and spoils of enemies on the tomb of his parents and grandparents. This merchant, then, had two sons, one twelve and the other almost fourteen, who were studying grammar in the school of the Company of Jesus. They went to school with a great deal of show, with a tutor and with pages who carried their books and what is called a *vademécum*.[4] Seeing them go so ostentatiously, in canopied seats if the weather was sunny, in a carriage if it was raining, made me consider and remark on the simplicity with which their father went to the exchange to tend to his affairs, because the only servant he took was a black, and sometimes he even rode on an unadorned old mule.

CIPIÓN: You should know, Berganza, that it is the custom and condition of the merchants in Sevilla, and even in other cities, to show their authority and wealth not in their own persons but in those of their children; because

3. A version of the shell game where a cone from a cypress tree is hidden under a cup and passed between others using sleight of hand.

4. *Vademécum* is Latin for "goes with me" and refers to a small book or notebook.

merchants are greater in their shadows than in themselves. And if they make an exception and attend to something other than their deals and contracts, they do so modestly; and since ambition and wealth long to show themselves, they explode in their children, and so they treat them and empower them as if they were the children of some prince. And there are some who obtain titles for them and place on their bosoms the sign that distinguishes eminent people from plebeians.

BERGANZA: It is ambition, but a generous ambition, of someone who attempts to improve his status without harming another.

CIPIÓN: Rarely, if ever, can ambition be satisfied with no harm to another.

BERGANZA: We've already said that we weren't to gossip.

CIPIÓN: Yes, and I'm not gossiping about anybody.

BERGANZA: Now I've just confirmed as true what I've heard so often. A slanderous gossip has just ruined ten lineages and defamed twenty good men, and if anyone reproves him for what he has said, he replies that he hasn't said anything, and if he has said something, it wasn't all that bad, and if he thought anyone would be offended, he wouldn't have said it at all. The truth is, Cipión, that whoever wants two hours of conversation without touching on the boundaries of gossip has to know a great deal and take great care; because I see in myself that, being an animal, which is what I am, after a few phrases words come rushing to my tongue like mosquitoes to wine, and all of them malicious and slanderous; and for this reason I'll say again what I have said before: we have inherited doing and saying evil from our first parents and drink it in with our mother's milk. We can clearly see that as soon as the child has freed his arm from his swaddling, he raises his hand with indications that he wants to take his revenge on whoever in his opinion has offended him; and almost the first articulated word he says is to call his wet nurse or mother a whore.

CIPIÓN: This is true, and I confess my error, and I want you to forgive me for it, as I have forgiven you for so many; let's make up, as the children say, and not gossip from now on; and continue your story, for you left off at the display made by the children of the merchant, your master, when they went to the school of the Company of Jesus.

BERGANZA: I commend myself to Him in everything; and although I consider not gossiping anymore very difficult, I intend to use a remedy that I heard was used by a man who swore constantly and, repentant over his bad habit, whenever he swore he would pinch his arm, or kiss the ground as a punishment for his fault; but even so, he still swore. And so, each time I go against the precept you have given me to stop gossiping and against the intention I have not to gossip, I shall bite the tip of my tongue so that it hurts and reminds me of my fault so I don't repeat it.

CIPIÓN: If you use that remedy, I expect you'll bite yourself so many times you'll be left without a tongue, and therefore incapable of gossiping.

BERGANZA: At least I shall do what I must, and may heaven overlook my faults. And so I say that my master's children left a portfolio one day in the courtyard, where I happened to be; and since my master had taught me to carry the slaughterer's basket, I took hold of the portfolio and went after them, intending not to let go of it until I reached the school. Everything happened as I wished: my masters, who saw me coming with the portfolio in my mouth, held gently by the straps, sent a page to take it from me; but I did not consent and did not let go of it until I went into the classroom with him, something that made all the students laugh. I went up to the older of my masters and, with what I thought was great courtesy, placed it in his hands and remained sitting in the doorway of the room, staring fixedly at the teacher who was lecturing from his desk. I don't know what there is in virtue, for I have so little of it, or nothing at all; but I immediately rejoiced at seeing the love, the manner, the solicitude, and the care with which those blessed fathers and teachers taught those children, straightening the tender stalks of their youth so they would not twist or go the wrong way on the path of virtue, which they showed them along with letters. I considered how they reprimanded them gently, punished them with mercy, animated them with examples, motivated them with prizes, overlooked their misdeeds with wisdom, and, finally, how they painted for them the ugliness and horror of vices, and sketched for them the beauty of virtues so that, despising the first and loving the second, they might achieve the end for which they were brought up.

CIPIÓN: You have spoken the truth, Berganza, because I have heard it said of those blessed people that as teachers there are none as prudent anywhere in the world, and as guides and leaders on the road to heaven, few can rival them. They are mirrors where one can see righteousness, Catholic doctrine, a rare prudence, and, finally, profound humility, the foundation on which the entire edifice of heavenly bliss is erected.

BERGANZA: Everything is just as you say. And continuing with my story, I shall say that my masters liked me to carry the portfolio for them, which I did very willingly; with this I led the life of a king and even better, because it was restful; the students liked to play with me and I made myself so gentle with them that they would put their hands in my mouth and the littlest ones would climb on my back. They would throw their caps or hats, and

I would return them unharmed and with signs of great joy. They would feed me as much as they could, and they liked to see that when they gave me walnuts or hazelnuts I would open them like a monkey, leaving the shells and eating the meat. And it so happened that to test my ability, they brought me in a handkerchief a large quantity of mixed greens, which I ate as if I were a person. It was winter, a season when soft rolls and butter are outstanding in Sevilla, and in this I was so well served that more than two Latin grammars were pawned or sold so that I could have a meal. In short, I led a student's life without hunger or scabies, which is the greatest praise one can give to say that it was good; because if scabies and hunger were not so closely associated with students, there would be no other life more pleasant and amusing, because in it virtue and pleasure go together, and one spends one's youth learning and enjoying oneself. From this glory and this tranquility a lady came to take me away who, I believe, they call reason of state, and when one's obligations toward her are fulfilled, one must unfulfill many others. The fact is that those honorable teachers believed that the half-hour period between lessons was being used by the students not to review the lessons but to amuse themselves with me; and so, they ordered my masters not to bring me to the school anymore. They obeyed, returned me to the house and to my former guarding of the door, and because my older master did not recall the kindness he had done me earlier when he let me walk free both day and night, I again offered my neck to the chain and my body to a straw mat they put down for me behind the door. Oh, Cipión, my friend, if you knew how hard it is to suffer the change from a happy to an unhappy state! Look: when miseries and misfortunes have been usual for a long time and are continuous, either they end quickly with death, or their continuation becomes a habit and suffering them a custom, and usually when harshest they can be a kind of relief; but when, from an unfortunate and calamitous fate, one suddenly and without thinking begins to enjoy another kind of fate that is prosperous, fortunate, and happy, and then a little while later one suffers again one's earlier travails and misfortunes, it is so harsh a sorrow that if one's life does not come to an end, it is only to increase one's torment by continuing. In short, I returned to my doggish portion and the bones that a black woman in the house threw to me, and even these were tithed by two Roman cats that, untied and lithe, found it easy to take from me whatever did not fall into the area my chain could reach. Cipión, my brother, may heaven grant you the good you desire, and without being annoyed let me now philosophize a little, because if I fail to say the things that at this moment have come to mind regarding what happened to me then, I think my story would be neither exact nor worthwhile.

CIPIÓN: Take care, Berganza, that this desire to philosophize which you say has come over you is not a temptation of the devil; because gossip has no better disguise to extenuate and conceal its dissolute evil than for the gossiper to let it be known that everything he says are the aphorisms of philosophers, and that speaking ill of someone is a reprimand, and revealing the defects of others is admirable zeal. And no gossip has a life that, if you consider and analyze it carefully, is not filled with vices and insolence. And knowing this, you can philosophize now all you want.

BERGANZA: You can be sure, Cipión, that if I gossip it is because I intend to. Well, the fact is that since I was idle all day, and idleness is the mother of the imagination, I began to review in my memory some Latin phrases that remained in my mind of the many I heard when I went with my masters to school, so that, in my opinion, I found myself somewhat improved in my understanding, and I decided, as if I knew how to speak, to take advantage of them when the occasion arose, but in a way that was different from the one used by some ignorant people. There are those who do not know Latin but in conversation occasionally blunder with some brief, concise Latin expression, letting those who don't understand know that they are great Latin scholars when they barely know how to decline a noun or conjugate a verb.

CIPIÓN: I think that does less harm than the injury inflicted by those who really do know Latin, for some of them are so imprudent that when speaking with a cobbler or a tailor, they sprinkle Latin phrases as if they were water.

BERGANZA: From this we can infer that the man who says Latin expressions to one who doesn't know them sins as much as the man who says them but doesn't know them.

CIPIÓN: Well, there's something else you can give advice about, which is that there are some whose knowledge of Latin does not excuse them from being asses.

BERGANZA: Well, who can doubt it? The reason is clear, because when in the time of the Romans everybody spoke Latin as their mother tongue, there must have been among them one simpleton whose speaking Latin did not excuse him from being a fool.

CIPIÓN: To know how to be silent in the vernacular and speak in Latin, discernment is needed, Berganza, my brother.

BERGANZA: That is true, because you can say something idiotic in Latin as well as in the vernacular, and I have seen erudite fools, and tedious grammarians,

and ignorant writers in the vernacular who weave in their lists of Latin words, so they very easily can annoy the world not just once but many times.

CIPIÓN: Let's drop this; you can begin to tell me your philosophies.

BERGANZA: I've already told them to you. They're the ones I've just said.

CIPIÓN: Which ones?

BERGANZA: The ones about Latin and vernacular words, which I began and you finished.

CIPIÓN: You call gossip philosophizing? Well, well, well: applaud, applaud, Berganza, the accursed plague of gossip! Call it whatever you like, it will call us cynics, a word that means gossiping canines; and by your life, be quiet now and go on with your story.

BERGANZA: How can I go on with it if I'm quiet?

CIPIÓN: I mean just go straight ahead, without making the story look like an octopus with all the tails you keep adding to it.

BERGANZA: Speak properly; the appendages of an octopus are not called tails.

CIPIÓN: That was the mistake of the man who said that it wasn't witless or vicious to call things by their own names, as if it weren't better, since it is obligatory to name them, to use circumlocutions and evasions that moderate the disgust caused by hearing their names. Decorous words are an indication of the decorum of the one who says or writes them.

BERGANZA: I want to believe you; and I say that my fate, not content with removing me from my studies and the life I led pursuing them, so joyous and composed, and tying me behind a door, and exchanging the generosity of the students for the stinginess of the black woman, ordered that I be disturbed in what by then I already considered tranquility and peace. Look, Cipión, you can consider it true and proven, as I do, that misfortunes search out and find the unfortunate man even if he hides in the farthest corners of the world. I say this because the black woman was in love with a black man who was also a slave in the house; and this black man slept in the portico between the street door and the one in the middle, behind the one where I was, and they couldn't be together except at night, and for this they had stolen or copied the keys; and so, most nights the black woman came down, and covering my mouth with a piece of meat or cheese, opened the door to the black man, with whom she spent a long time, facilitated by my silence, and at the cost of many things she stole. Some days her gifts clouded my conscience, making me think that without them my flanks would grow thin, and I would look more like a greyhound than a mastiff. But in fact, led by my better nature, I wanted to be responsible for what I owed my master,

since I received benefits from him and ate his bread, which is what should be done not only by honorable dogs, giving them their reputation for gratitude, but also by all those who serve.

CIPIÓN: This, Berganza, is what I want to be taken as philosophy, because these are words made up of good truth and good understanding; continue your story, and speak plainly, not going round in circles.

BERGANZA: First I beg you to tell me, if you know, what philosophy means; because even though I say it, I don't know what it is. I simply assume it's something good.

CIPIÓN: I shall tell you briefly. This word is composed of two Greek nouns, and they are *philos* and *sophia*; *philos* means love, and *sophia* means knowledge; and so philosophy means love of knowledge, and a philosopher is a lover of knowledge.

BERGANZA: You know a great deal, Cipión. Who the devil taught you Greek nouns?

CIPIÓN: Really, Berganza, you're a simpleton, because you take notice of this; these are things that schoolchildren know, and there are also those who presume to know Greek and don't know it, just like Latin and those who are ignorant of it.

BERGANZA: That's what I say, and I'd like those people to be placed in a press, and by turning the handle the juice of what they know would be squeezed out of them, as the Portuguese do with the blacks of Guinea, and then they wouldn't go around deceiving everybody with the glitter of their false Greekisms and false Latinisms.

CIPIÓN: And now, Berganza, you can bite your tongue and slice off mine, because everything we're saying is gossip.

BERGANZA: Yes, for I am not obliged to do what I have heard that a certain Corondas, a Tyrian did, when he decreed that no one could enter the council chambers of his city with weapons, under pain of death. Then he forgot and the next day he entered the council meeting wearing his sword; realizing what he had done, and remembering the penalty, he immediately unsheathed his sword and passed it through his chest, and was the first man to decree and break a law and pay the penalty. What I said was not decreeing a law but promising I would bite my tongue when I gossiped. But nowadays matters do not follow the tenor or rigor of ancient times; today a law is passed, and tomorrow it is broken, and perhaps it is better this way. Now one promises to correct his vices and the next moment falls into even greater ones. It is one thing to praise discipline and another to submit to it, and, in effect, there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip. Let the devil bite himself,

I don't want to bite my tongue or do fine things behind a straw mat, where I'm not seen by anyone who can praise my honorable determination.

CIPIÓN: According to that, Berganza, if you were a person, you'd be a hypocrite, and every action you took would be pretense, feigned, and false, covered with the cloak of virtue just so you would be praised, which is what every hypocrite does.

BERGANZA: I don't know what I would do then; what I do know is that what I want to do now is not bite myself, when there are so many things yet for me to say that I don't know how or when to finish saying them, and even more so when I'm fearful that when the sun comes up we shall be left in darkness and not have speech.

CIPIÓN: Heaven will do better than that. Go on with your story and don't leave the short, smooth road with presumptuous digressions; in this way, no matter how long it may be, you'll soon finish it.

BERGANZA: I'll say, then, that having seen the insolence, thievery, and dishonesty of the blacks, I decided, as a good servant, to hinder them by the best means I could; and I could so well that I achieved my purpose. The black woman would come down as you have heard, to take her pleasure with the black man, certain that the pieces of meat, bread, or cheese that she threw to me would keep me silent. Gifts can accomplish a great deal, Cipión!

CIPIÓN: A great deal; don't digress; go on.

BERGANZA: I remember that when I was studying I heard the teacher cite a Latin proverb, which they call an adage, and it said: *Habit bovem in lingua*.

CIPIÓN: Oh, it was an evil hour when you slipped in your Latin! Have you forgotten so soon what we said just a short while ago against those who insert Latin phrases into vernacular conversations?

BERGANZA: This Latin phrase fits perfectly; you should know that the Athenians used, among others, a coin stamped with the figure of an ox, and when a judge failed to say or do what was reasonable and just because he had been bribed, they would say: 'This one has an ox on his tongue.'

CIPIÓN: Its relevance falls short.

BERGANZA: Isn't it perfectly clear, if the gifts from the black woman kept me silent for many days, so that I didn't want or dare to bark at her when she came down to be with her black lover? For this reason I repeat that gifts can accomplish a great deal.

CIPIÓN: I've already replied that they can, and if it weren't to avoid a long digression now, with a thousand examples, I'd prove how much gifts can accomplish; but perhaps I shall if heaven grants me the time, the place, and the speech to tell you the story of my life.

BERGANZA: God grant what you desire, and listen. In brief, my good intentions were broken by the black woman's evil gifts; one very dark night, when she was coming down for her customary amusement, I attacked her without barking so the household would not be disturbed, and in an instant I ripped her blouse to shreds and tore off a piece of her thigh; a bit of fun that was enough to keep her in bed for more than a week, pretending some illness or other for her masters. She got better, returned on another night, and I renewed the fight with my bitch, and without biting her I scratched her entire body, carding her as if she were a blanket. Our battles were silent, and I always came out the victor, while she was always injured and not at all happy. But her anger was certainly noticeable in my fur and my health. She cut off my ration and the bones, and mine slowly began to appear along my spine. With it all, though they took away my food, they couldn't take away my bark. But to finish me off once and for all, she brought me a sponge fried in lard; I recognized the evil act; I saw it was worse than eating poison paste, because if you eat it your stomach swells and there's no way out except to die. And thinking it was impossible to defend myself against the snares of such unworthy enemies, I thought of putting land between us, removing them from my sight. One day I found myself untied, and without saying goodbye to anyone in the house, I went into the street and in less than one hundred paces, luck presented me with the bailiff I mentioned at the beginning of my story, who was a great friend of my master Nicolás the Romo;[5] as soon as he saw me he recognized me and called me by name. I knew him too, and when he called me, I went up to him with my usual ceremonies and caresses. He seized me by the collar and said to two of his constables: 'This is a famous guard dog that belonged to a great friend of mine; let's take him home.' The constables were delighted, and said if I was a guard dog it was a benefit to everybody. They wanted to seize me to take me away, and my master said it wasn't necessary, that I would go because I knew him. I've forgotten to tell you that the spiked collars I took when I left and abandoned the herd were taken from me by a Gypsy in an inn, and in Sevilla I went around without them; but the bailiff put a collar on me decorated with Moorish copper. Just consider, Cipión, the changeable wheel of my fortune: yesterday I was a student, and today you find me a constable.

CIPIÓN: That's the way the world is, and there's no reason for you to start exaggerating the mutability of fortune, as if there were a great deal of difference

5. There is no bailiff mentioned in the story, a possible oversight on Cervantes's part.

between serving a slaughterer and serving a constable. I can't endure and don't have patience for hearing the complaints about fortune from men whose greatest good was having prospects and hopes of becoming squires. With what curses they curse her! With how many insults do they dishonor her! And only so that whoever hears them will think they have fallen from a high, prosperous, and good position into the unfortunate, low state in which they are found now.

BERGANZA: You're right. And you should know that this bailiff was the friend of a notary, and they were often together. The two of them were the lovers of two worthless women, not a little more or less but totally less in everything. The truth is their faces were rather pretty, but there was a good deal of whorish ease of manner and slyness in them. They served as the net and hook for fishing on dry land in this way: they would dress so that their appearance was like the mark that indicates the picture card,[6] and from a distance one could see they were free-living ladies; they were always on the prowl for strangers, and when the autumn fair came to Cádiz and Sevilla, the scent of their earnings arrived with it, and there was no foreigner they did not pursue; and when some foreign libertine fell in with these pure ladies, they would tell the bailiff and the notary the inn they were going to, and when they were together the two would take them by surprise and arrest them for having illicit relations; but they weren't taken to prison, because the foreigners always redeemed their humiliation with money.

It so happened, then, that Colindres, which was the name of the notary's girlfriend, caught a lustful and licentious foreigner; she agreed to have supper and spend the night at his inn; she gave the information to her friend; and no sooner had they undressed than the bailiff, the notary, two constables, and I found them. The lovers were in an uproar; the bailiff exaggerated the offense and ordered them to dress immediately so he could take them to prison; the foreigner was very distressed; moved by charity, the notary intervened, and by sheer pleading reduced the fine to only one hundred *reales*. The foreigner asked for a pair of chamois trousers he had put on a chair at the foot of the bed, where he had money to pay for his release, and the trousers did not appear and could not appear, because as soon as I entered the room the aroma of bacon reached my nostrils and consoled me for everything; I found it by smell in a pocket of his trousers. I say I found a piece of famous ham, and to enjoy it and take it out with no noise,

6. A reference to a mark made on a playing card to indicate secretly that it is of high value.

I took the trousers to the street and devoted myself to the ham with all my heart and soul, and when I returned to the room, I found the foreigner shouting in an adulterated and bastardized language—though he could be understood—that they had to return his trousers, for in them he had fifty *escuti d'oro in oro*. The notary supposed that either Colindres or the constables had stolen them; the bailiff thought the same; he called them aside; no one confessed; and they created a huge commotion. Seeing what was going on, I went back to the street where I had left the trousers so I could return them, for the money was of no use to me at all; I didn't find them, because some fortunate passerby had already taken them. When the bailiff saw that the foreigner had no money for a bribe, he was infuriated and intended to extract from the landlady what the foreigner did not have. He called for her, and she came in half dressed, and hearing the shouts and complaints of the foreigner, and finding Colindres naked and crying, the bailiff in a rage, the notary in a fury, and the constables stealing whatever they found in the room, she was not very happy. The bailiff told her to get dressed and come with him to prison, because she allowed disreputable men and women in her house. And then there really was a commotion! This was when the shouting increased and the confusion grew. Because the landlady said: 'Señor Bailiff, Señor Notary, don't try any tricks with me, I see through all of them; no threats with me, and no bluster; shut your mouths and go with God; if not, by my faith, I'll make such a fuss that we'll get to the bottom of this and expose everybody; for I know Señora Colindres very well, and I know that for many months she's been working with Señor Bailiff; and don't force me to say any more but return his money to this gentleman, and let us all be regarded as good people; because I am an honorable woman and have a husband with his patent of nobility and his *a perpenan rei de memoria* with all its dangling stamps and seals,[7] God be praised, and I follow this trade very honorably and without harm to anyone else. I keep my price list nailed up where everybody can see it, and no tricks with me, because by God I know how to disentangle myself from everything. I'm just the right one to send women to the rooms of guests! They have the keys to their rooms, and I'm not a lynx that can see through seven walls.'

7. These were documents that attested to one's lineage as an old Christian and a noble; the landlady, who mispronounces the Latin phrase *ad perpetuam rei memoria*, most certainly does not have such documents.

My masters were dumbfounded hearing the landlady's harangue and seeing how she read them the story of their lives; but as they saw that they had no one from whom to extract money if not from her, they insisted on taking her to prison. She complained to high heaven of the unreasonableness and injustice being done to her when her husband, so eminent a nobleman, was absent. The foreigner howled for his fifty *escuti*. The constables insisted they hadn't seen the trousers, God forbid. The notary insisted surreptitiously to the bailiff that he search Colindres's clothes, for he suspected that she must have the fifty *escuti* because she was in the habit of inspecting hiding places in the underwear and pockets of those with whom she went to bed. She said the foreigner was drunk and must be lying about the money. In short, everything was confusion, shouts, and oaths, with no way of calming them down, and they would never have calmed down if at that moment the Auxiliary Magistrate, who was visiting the inn and was attracted by the shouting, had not walked into the room. He asked the reason for the shouting; the landlady responded with a minimum of details; she identified the prostitute Colindres, who was already dressed, declared publicly Colindres's public friendship with the bailiff, exposed his tricks and method of stealing, apologized that a woman of questionable reputation had ever entered her house, canonized herself as a saint and her husband as a blessed man, and called to a maid to run and bring from a chest her husband's patent of nobility, so that the Señor Auxiliary Magistrate could see it, saying that once he saw it he would know that the wife of so honorable a husband could not do anything wrong, and if her inn was a brothel it couldn't be helped; for God knew how much it grieved her, and if she wanted to have some income and her daily bread she had no choice but to follow this profession. The Auxiliary Magistrate, annoyed at her inexhaustible talk and boasting of the patent of nobility, said: 'Sister Landlady, I'll believe your husband has a patent of nobility when you confess to me that he is an innkeeping gentleman.' 'And with great honor,' replied the landlady. 'And what lineage is there in the world, no matter how good, that doesn't have some blemish or other?' 'What I'll tell you, Sister, is that you get dressed, because you have to go to prison.' At this news, she fell to the floor; she scratched her face and began to shout; but, even so, the Auxiliary Magistrate, excessively harsh, took them all to prison, which is to say, the foreigner, Colindres, and the landlady. Afterward I learned that the foreigner lost his fifty *escuti*, in addition to ten more that he was fined for costs; the landlady paid the same amount, and Colindres walked out the street door a free woman. And on the very day they released her, she fished

a sailor, who paid for the foreigner, with the same deception of the informer; so you can see, Cipión, how many and how great were the difficulties born of my gluttony.

CIPIÓN: You should say, born of the roguish desires of your master.

BERGANZA: Just listen, then, for it got even worse, since it grieves me to speak ill of bailiffs and notaries.

CIPIÓN: Yes, for speaking ill of one does not mean speaking ill of all; yes, for there are many, more than many, notaries who are good, faithful, and legal, and friends of pleasing without harming anyone; yes, for not all of them delay lawsuits, or give information to the parties, or charge more than is lawful, and not all of them go looking into and inquiring about other people's lives to cast doubt upon them, or join with the judge for 'you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours,' and not all bailiffs collude with tramps and cardsharps, and not all of them have the girlfriends for their swindles that your master had. Many, and more than many, are noble by nature and have noble dispositions; many are not impetuous, insolent, badly behaved, or thieves, like those who go through inns measuring the swords of foreigners, and if they find them a hair longer than prescribed, they arrest the owners. Yes, not all of them arrest and release, and are judges and lawyers whenever they wish.

BERGANZA: My master aimed higher than that; he took another path; he thought of himself as brave, arresting famous criminals; he kept up his valor with no danger to his person, but at the cost of his purse. One day at the Jerez Gate he set upon six famous scoundrels by himself, and I couldn't help him at all because my mouth was restrained by a bit made of rope that he had me wear during the day, though at night he removed it. I was astonished to see his daring, his spirit, and his courage; he charged and attacked the six swords of the ruffians as if they were reeds; it was a marvelous thing to see the agility with which he rushed forward, his thrusts and feints, his care and alert eye so they could not attack him from the rear. In short, in my opinion and in the opinion of everyone who watched the fight and had the knowledge, he was considered a new Rodamonte,[8] having taken his enemies from the Jerez Gate to the marble columns of Master Rodrigo's Academy,[9] more than one hundred paces. He left them confined and re-

8. Rodamonte was a Saracen cavalier from Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato* and Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* known for his excessive strength and arrogance.

9. Master Rodrigo's Academy is the antiquated name for the University of Sevilla inspired by its founder, Master Rodrigo Fernández de Santaella.

turned to pick up his battle trophies, three sheaths, which he then took to show to the Auxiliary Magistrate, who at that time, if I remember correctly, was Licentiate Sarmiento de Valladares, famous for the destruction of Sauceda. People looked at my master as he walked down the streets, pointing at him as if to say: 'That's the brave man who dared to fight alone against the best of the toughs of Andalucía.' As he went around the city so he could be seen, what was left of the day passed, and night found us in Triana, on a street next to the powder mill; and my master, having observed, as they say in the ballad, whether anyone could see him, entered a house, and I went in after him, and in a courtyard we found all the thugs from the fight, without their cloaks or swords, and with their vests unbuttoned; and one, who must have been the host, had a large jug of wine in one hand and in the other a large tavern goblet, and filling it with an excellent foaming wine, he drank to the health of everyone present. As soon as they saw my master, they all went toward him with open arms, and everyone toasted him, and he drained his glass with all of them, and would have done so with others if he had been interested, since he had an affable nature and did not want to anger anyone over trifles. I want to tell you now what they talked about there, the supper they had, the fights they recounted, the thievery they referred to, the ladies they knew and how they ranked them and the ones they scorned, the praise they heaped on one another, the absent thugs who were named, the skill that was pondered there, getting up in the middle of the meal to put into practice the fencing moves that occurred to them, fencing with their hands, the exquisite words they used, and, finally, the figure of the host, whom they all respected as their leader, and that would mean my entering a labyrinth I couldn't get out of when I wanted to. In short, I came to understand with full certainty that the owner of the house, whom they called Monipodio, harbored thieves and led pimps, and that my master's great fight had been agreed upon first with them, along with the circumstance of their fleeing and leaving behind the sheaths, which my master immediately paid for, along with all that Monipodio said the supper had cost, which concluded almost at dawn, and which everyone had enjoyed. And dessert was to inform my master of a brand new foreign scoundrel who had arrived in the city. He must have been braver than they were, and out of envy they betrayed him. My master seized him the following night, naked in his bed; if he had been dressed, I saw in his figure that he would not have allowed himself to be taken so easily. With this arrest, which came after the dispute, my cowardly master's fame increased, and my master was more cowardly than a hare, and by dint of meals and drinks he maintained

his reputation for valor, and everything he earned with his office and his schemes emptied into the canal of his valor. But have patience, and listen now to a story that happened to him, and I won't add or take away anything from the truth.

Two thieves in Antequera stole a very fine horse; they brought it to Sevilla, and to sell it with no danger they used a trick that, in my opinion, was both clever and discerning. They went to stay at different inns, and one went to the authorities with a petition that said Pedro de Losada owed him four hundred *reales* that he had borrowed, as could be seen in a receipt, signed with his name, which he offered as proof. The lieutenant ordered this Losada to certify the authenticity of the receipt and his signature; and if he did, to pay the amount in guaranties or go to prison. This task fell to my master and his friend, the notary. The thief took them to the inn where the other thief, who immediately certified his signature and confessed to the debt, was staying, and offered as a guarantee the horse; when my master saw it, he burned with greed and marked it as his own in the event it was sold. The thief declared the legal time limit past, the horse was put up for auction at a price of five hundred *reales*, and the bailiff induced another person to buy it for him. The horse was worth at least one-and-a-half times the amount paid for it, but since the advantage to the seller was in making a quick sale, he accepted the first bid for his merchandise. One thief collected the debt that was not owed him, the other retrieved the receipt that was not necessary, and my master kept the horse, which brought him worse luck than Seyano had brought to its owners.[10] The thieves fled immediately, and two days later, after my master had refurbished the trappings and other items the horse needed, he rode it into the Plaza de San Francisco, more pompous and vain than a villager dressed for a festival. He was congratulated a thousand times on his good purchase, affirming that it was worth one hundred fifty *ducados* as surely as an egg was worth a *maravedí*, and he, turning and pirouetting the horse, played out his tragedy in the theater of the aforementioned plaza. And as he was twirling and whirling, two men with fine figures and better clothes arrived, and one said: 'By God, this is Piedehierro, my horse that was stolen in Antequera a few days ago!' Everyone accompanying him—that is, four servants—said this was true, that the horse was Piedehierro and had been stolen. My master was dumbfounded,

10. According to Aulus Gellius's *Attic Nights* (III, 9), Seyano (Seianus) was Gnaeus Seius's magnificent Argive horse that brought ruin to its successive owners.

the owner filed a complaint, there was a trial, and the owner's evidence was so good that the sentence came down in his favor, and my master lost the horse. People heard about the thieves' mockery and skill, for through the intervention of the law itself, they had sold what they had stolen, and almost everyone was pleased that, because of my master's greed, in the end he was left with nothing.

And this was not the end of his misfortune, for that night the Auxiliary Magistrate himself went out on patrol with him because he had been told there were thieves in the district of San Julián; they passed a crossroads where they saw a man running, and the Auxiliary Magistrate, grasping me by the collar and urging me on, said: 'Get the thief, Gavilán! Hey, Gavilán, good dog, get the thief, get the thief!' I was already wearied by the iniquities of my master, and in order to carry out Señor Auxiliary Magistrate's commands without disobeying him in anything, attacked my own master, who could not defend himself, and threw him to the ground; and if someone hadn't pulled me off, I would have avenged more than a few; I was pulled off to the great sorrow of both of us. The constables wanted to punish me and even beat me to death, and they would have if the Auxiliary Magistrate had not said to them: 'No one touch him, for the dog did what I ordered him to do.' His slyness was understood, and I, without taking my leave of anyone, went out into the countryside through a hole in the wall, and before daybreak I was in Mairena, a town four leagues from Sevilla. As my good luck would have it, I found a company of soldiers there who, according to what I heard, were going to embark for Cartagena. Four scoundrels, friends of my master, were in the company, and the drummer had been a constable, and a great cardsharp, as most drummers tend to be. They all recognized me and spoke to me; and so they asked me about my master, as if I could have responded; but the one who showed me the most affection was the drummer, and so I decided to stay with him, if he wanted me to, and follow that expedition even if it took me to Italy or Flanders; because it seems to me, and you must agree, that since the adage says: 'A fool at home is a fool in Rome,' traveling through different countries and communicating with different people educates a man.

CIPIÓN: That is so true that I recall hearing from one of my masters, who was extremely clever, that the famous Greek named Ulysses was known as a prudent man only because he had traveled through many lands and communicated with different people and several nations; and so I extol your intention of going wherever they took you.

BERGANZA: And so it happened that the drummer, having the opportunity to demonstrate even more of his deviltry, began to teach me to dance to the sound of the drum and to do other tricks that no other dog would have been able to learn, as you shall hear when I tell you about them. To shorten the route, they marched very slowly. There was no commissioner watching us; the captain was young, but a very fine gentleman and a great Christian; the lieutenant had left the court and his servants not many months before; the sergeant was experienced and astute and a great leader of companies, for he could lead them from where they started off to the port of embarkation. The company was filled with ruffians and rogues, who offended some of the towns we passed through, which led to cursing some who did not deserve it. It is the unhappiness of the good prince to be blamed by his subjects because of his subjects, since some are the assassins of others, through no fault of the lord's; for even if he wishes and endeavors to, he cannot remedy these injuries, because all or most matters of war bring with them asperity, harshness, and vexation. In short, in less than two weeks, with my good wit and the diligence of the man I had chosen as my master, I had learned to jump for the king of France and not for the wicked wife of the tavern owner. He taught me to walk on my hind legs like a Neapolitan horse and in a circle like a mule in a flour mill, along with other things that, if I had not determined not to step forward and display them, would have caused some to wonder whether a demon in the shape of a dog was performing them. They called me the *learned dog*, and we hadn't reached our billet yet when, playing his drum, he walked through the town proclaiming that all persons who wished to see the marvelous grace and talents of the learned dog could do so for eight *maravedís* or four, depending on whether it was a large town or a small one, in such-and-such a house or hospital. With this kind of public praise, there was not a person in the town who did not come to see me, and none who did not leave amazed and happy at having done so. My master made a great deal of money and supported six comrades as if they were kings. Greed and envy awoke a desire in the scoundrels to steal me, and they kept looking for the opportunity, for this idea of earning a living without doing any work has many admirers and enthusiasts; that is why there are so many puppeteers in Spain, so many who display retables, so many who sell pins and poems, since their entire property, even if they were to sell everything, is not enough to support them for one day; and even so they don't leave the hostels and taverns all year; which leads me to conclude that the current of their drunkenness flows from a source other than their

trades. All these people are idlers, useless, ne'er-do-wells, sponges of wine and weevils of bread.

CIPIÓN: Enough, Berganza, let's not return to the past; continue, the night is passing, and when the sun comes up I wouldn't want us to be left in the darkness of silence.

BERGANZA: Don't worry, and listen. Since it's an easy thing to add to what has already been invented, and seeing how well I could imitate the Neapolitan charger, my master made me some tooled-leather trappings and a small saddle, which he placed on my back, and on it he sat a small figure of a man with a slim lance for running the ring, and taught me to run directly at a ring he hung between two poles;[11] and the day I was to run, he proclaimed that on that day the learned dog would run the ring and perform other new and never before seen tricks, which I did because I chose to, as they say, in order not to prove my master a liar. And so, in the planned number of days, we reached Montilla, a town belonging to the famous and very Christian Marquis of Priego, a lord of the house of Aguilar and Montilla. My master was billeted, because he requested it, in a hospital. Then he made his usual proclamation, and since fame had preceded him and brought the news of the skills and charms of the learned dog, in less than an hour the courtyard had filled with people. My master was happy to see that the harvest would be a good one, and that day he showed himself to be too much of a scoundrel. The fiesta began first of all with my jumping through the hoop of a sieve so large it looked as if it came from a barrel. He commanded me by means of the usual requests, and when he lowered a rod of quince wood that he held in his hand, it was the signal to jump; and when he raised it, I was to remain still. The first of that day, memorable among all those I've had in my life, was his saying to me: 'Well, Gavilán, my friend, jump for that dirty old man you know who dyes his gray beard; and if you don't want to, jump for the pomp and show of Doña Pimpinela de Plafagonia, who was a friend of the Galician girl who served in Valdeastillas. Don't you like the command, Gavilán, my son? Then jump for Bachelor Pasillas, who calls himself licentiate without having any degree at all. Oh, how lazy you are! Why don't you jump? But now I see, now I understand your tricks: now jump for the wine of Esquivias, as famous as that of Ciudad Real, San Martín, and Ribadavia.' He lowered the rod, and I jumped,

11. Running the ring was a courtly exercise in which horsemen would try to snag hanging rings with a lance.

and I noted his cunning and malicious nature. Then he turned toward the people and said in a loud voice: 'Don't think, oh valiant senate, that what this dog knows is anything to sneer at. I've taught him twenty-four pieces, and a sparrow hawk would go flying for the least of them; I mean that before seeing the least of them, one could go thirty leagues. He knows how to dance the sarabande and the chaconne better than the woman who invented them; he can drink two liters of wine without leaving a drop; he intones a *sol fa mi re* as well as a sacristan; all these things, and many others I could mention, your graces will see in the days the company is here; and for now, let our learned dog give another jump, and then we shall take up the principal subject.' With this the audience, which he had called senate, was enthralled, and he set fire to their desire to see everything I knew. My master turned to me and said: 'Go back, Gavilán, my son, and with great agility and skill do in reverse the jumps you have already done; but it must be with devotion to the famous witch who once lived, they say, in this town.' As soon as he had said this, the person who tended the sick, an old woman who seemed older than sixty, raised her voice and said: 'You wicked swindler, liar, and whoreson, there's no witch here. If you say there is because of Camacha, she's already paid for her sin and is in the place that God knows about; if you say so because of me, you indecent trickster, I am not now nor have I ever in my life been a witch, and if I have the reputation of being one, it was due to false witnesses and a one-sided agreement and a thoughtless and badly informed judge; everybody knows the life I lead now, repentant, not for spells I did not cast but for many other sins, sins I committed as a sinner. And so, you crafty drummer, leave the hospital, and if you don't, on my life, I'll make you leave pretty fast.' And with this she began to shout so much and direct so many insults one after the other at my master that she left him in a state of confusion and indecision; in short, she did not allow the fiesta to continue in any way whatsoever. My master was not sorry about the uproar because he kept the money and postponed the rest of the performance until the next day in another hospital. The people left cursing the old woman, adding to 'sorceress' the name of 'witch' and 'bearded old hag.' With it all, we stayed in the hospital that night; and the old woman, finding me alone in the corral, said to me: 'Is it you, Montiel, my son? Can it be you, my son?' I raised my head and looked at her very slowly, and she, seeing this, came toward me with tears in her eyes and threw her arms around my neck, and if I had allowed her to, she would have kissed me on the mouth; but I felt disgusted and did not allow it.

CIPIÓN: You did the right thing, because it's not a gift but a torment to kiss or let oneself be kissed by an old woman.

BERGANZA: What I want to tell you now I should have told you at the beginning of my story, and then we could have avoided the astonishment we felt when we found ourselves able to speak. Because you should know that the old woman said to me: 'Montiel, my son, follow me and you'll know where my room is, and tonight try to see me there alone, and I'll leave the door open; I have many things to tell you about your life, and to your benefit.' I lowered my head as a sign I would obey her, and from this she definitely understood that I was the dog Montiel she had been looking for, as she told me afterward. I was astonished and surprised, waiting for nightfall to see what the mystery or marvel was that the old woman had mentioned; and since I had heard her called a witch, I expected great things from seeing and talking to her. At last it was time for me to go to her room, which was dark and narrow and had a low ceiling, and the only light was the weak illumination of an earthenware oil lamp; the old woman trimmed it, sat on a small chest, pulled me to her, and without saying a word embraced me again, and I had to make an effort to keep her from kissing me. The first thing she said to me was:

'I trusted in heaven that before these eyes of mine closed for their final sleep, I would see you again, my son, and now that I have, let death come and take me from this wearisome life. You should know, son, that the most famous witch in the world, whom they called Camacha de Montilla, lived in this town; she was so excellent at her work that the Erichthos, the Circes, and the Medeas were not her equal, and I have heard that histories are filled with them. She froze the clouds when she wanted to, covering the face of the sun with them; and when she felt like it, she could calm the most turbulent sky; she brought men from distant lands in an instant; with marvelous skill she could repair young maidens who had been somewhat careless in defending their virginity; she covered up widows so they could be indecent with decency; she unmarried married women and married those she wished to. In December she had fresh roses in her garden, and in January she was reaping wheat. And making watercress grow in a kneading trough was the least of what she could do, or having the living or dead that someone asked to see appear in a mirror or an infant's fingernail. It was said that she turned men into animals and for six years had used a sacristan in the form of a jackass, really and truly, but I have never been able to understand how it's done, because what they say about those old sorceresses, that they turned men into animals, according to those who know best, was simply that they, with their great beauty, and their flattery, attracted men so that the men fell in love with them, and then the sorceresses enthralled them and made use of them for anything they wished, so that they seemed like animals. But in you, my son, experience shows me the opposite, for I know you are a rational person and I see you in the semblance of a dog, unless this is something done with that science called prestidigitation, which makes one thing look like another. Whatever it may be, what grieves me is that neither I nor your mother, disciples of the good Camacha, ever learned as much as she did; and not because of a lack of wit, or ability, or spirit, which we had in abundance, but because of her excessive perversity, for she never wished to teach us the big things but kept them solely for herself.

'Son, your mother was named Montiela, second in fame only to Camacha; my name is Cañizares, if not as wise as them, at least with desires as good as those of either one. The truth is that not even Camacha herself could equal the desire your mother had to draw and enter a circle and shut herself in with a legion of devils. Always somewhat fearful, I was satisfied with conjuring up half a legion of demons; but bless them both, and as for preparing the ointments that we witches use on ourselves, of all those who follow and keep our rules today, none could do it better. For you should know, my son, that since I have seen and see that the life that flies on the swift wings of time is coming to an end, I've wanted to leave behind all the vices of witchcraft in which I was mired for many years and have retained only the inquisitiveness of being a witch, which is an extremely difficult vice to abandon. Your mother did the same, left many vices behind and did many good deeds in this life, but in the end she died a witch, not of any disease but of sorrow when she learned that Camacha, her teacher, resented her lack of respect in wanting to know as much as she did, or perhaps they had some other jealous squabble I never found out about. Your mother was pregnant, the time to give birth had arrived; Camacha was her midwife and received in her hands what your mother delivered, and showed her that she had given birth to two puppies; and as soon as Montiela saw them she said: 'There's wickedness here, there's trickery here!' 'But Montiela, my sister, I'm your friend; I'll hide this birth; you take care of recovering and know that this misfortune of yours will be buried in silence; don't worry at all about it, for you know that I know that except for your friend Rodríguez, the porter, you haven't had anything to do with any other man; so that this doggish birth comes from elsewhere and contains a mystery.' Your mother and I, for I was present throughout, were astonished at this strange event. Camacha left and took the pups; I stayed with your mother to help care for her,

and she could not believe what had happened to her. Camacha's end came, and in her final hour she called for your mother and told her that she had turned her children into dogs because she had been annoyed with her; but she shouldn't grieve, for they would return to their true form when least expected; but it could not be before they saw this with their own eyes:

> They will return to their true shape and form
> when they witness the overthrow, with swift
> and ready care, of the haughty on high
> and the raising of the humble and low
> by a powerful, a most potent hand.

'Camacha, at the time of her death, said this to your mother just as I have said it to you. Your mother wrote it down and memorized it, and I fixed it in my memory in the event the time came when I could tell it to one of you; and to recognize you, I call all the dogs I see with your color by your mother's name, not because I think dogs will know it, but to see whether they respond to being called something so different from what other dogs are named. And this afternoon, when I saw you doing so many things, and that you were called 'the learned dog,' and that you raised your head to look at me when I called to you in the corral, I believed you were the child of Montiela, whom I have told with great pleasure about yourself, and how you will regain your original form; and I hope it is as easy as the one told about Apuleius in *The Golden Ass*, which consisted of simply eating a rose. But in your case it is based on the actions of others and not on your own efforts. What you must do, my son, is commend yourself in your heart to God and hope that these—I don't want to call them prophecies—riddles happen quickly and prosperously; and since the good Camacha pronounced them, they undoubtedly will happen, and you and your brother, if he is alive, will see each other just as you desire.

'What troubles me is that I am so close to my end that I won't have the opportunity to see it. I've often wanted to ask my goat how your misfortune will turn out, but I haven't dared to because he never answers what we ask directly but uses twisted and equivocal phrases; and so one mustn't ask our lord and master anything, because he mixes a thousand lies with one truth. And what I've gathered from his answers is that he doesn't know anything certain about the future but can only conjecture. Even so, he has so deceived those of us who are witches that even though he constantly mocks us, we cannot leave him. We go to see him very far from here, in a large field, where an infinite number of people, wizards and witches, gather, and

there he gives us unpleasant food to eat, and other things occur that in truth and in God and in my soul I don't dare tell, they are so filthy and disgusting, and I do not wish to offend your chaste ears. Some think we don't go to these celebrations except in our fantasy, where the demon represents images of all those things that we later say have happened to us. Others say no, that we really go in body and in spirit; and I think both theories are true, since we don't know how we go, because everything that happens to us in fantasy is so intense that there's no way to distinguish it from when we go really and truly. The gentlemen of the Inquisition investigated this with some of us whom they had arrested, and I think they found that what I have said is true.

'I would like, son, to move away from this sin, and I have made my efforts toward that end: I work in a hospital; I treat the poor, and some die but give me life with what they leave me or with what they have left among their rags because of how careful I am to delouse their clothes; I pray little, and in public; I gossip a great deal, and in secret; it's better for me to be a hypocrite than a public sinner; the appearance of my present good works are erasing from the memory of those who know me my evil past deeds. In short, feigned saintliness harms no one except the person who uses it. Look, Montiel my son, I'll give you a piece of advice: be good in every way you can; and if you have to be bad, do your best not to seem so in every way you can. I'm a witch, I won't deny it; your mother was a witch and a sorceress, and I can't deny that either; but a good appearance gave us both a good reputation with everyone. Three days before she died we had both been at an outing in a valley in the Pyrenees; and even so, when she died, it was with such calm and tranquility that if it hadn't been for some faces she made a quarter of an hour before she gave up the ghost, it would have seemed as if the bed she was in was a bed of roses. Her two sons were a pain in her heart, and even at the moment of her death, she refused to forgive Camacha; that's how steadfast and firm she was in her affairs. I closed her eyes, and accompanied her to the grave; there I left her, never to see her again, though I haven't lost the hope of seeing her before I die because they say in the town that some have seen her wandering cemeteries and crossroads in different forms, and perhaps sometime I'll run into her and ask if she wants me to do something to ease her conscience.'

Each of these things the old woman said in praise of the woman she said was my mother was a blow of a lance that pierced my heart, and I would have liked to attack her and tear her to pieces with my teeth; and if I didn't, it was so death would not take her in so sinful a state. Finally, she said that

on that very night she planned to apply ointment to go to one of her usual gatherings, and when she was there she intended to ask her master what was going to happen to me. I wanted to ask what ointments they were, and it seemed as if she read my mind, for she responded to my desire as if I had asked the question and said:

'This ointment we witches apply is composed of the sap of hallucinatory herbs and is not, as the ignorant say, made of the blood of the children we murder. You could also ask me now what pleasure or profit the demon derives from making us kill tender infants, for he knows that since they are baptized, and innocents without sin, they go to heaven, and he experiences a particular punishment with each Christian soul that escapes him; all I can reply is what the old saying tells us, that 'there are those who would lose both eyes as long as their enemy lost one,' that is, the grief he inflicts on parents by killing their children, which is the greatest one can imagine. And what matters to him most is to have us constantly commit so cruel and perverse a sin; and God allows it all because of our sins, for without His permission I have seen in my own experience that the devil cannot offend even an ant; and this is so true that once I asked him to destroy the vineyard of an enemy of mine, and he responded that he could not touch a leaf of it because God did not wish it; and therefore you'll understand, when you're a man, that all the misfortunes that come to peoples, kingdoms, cities, and nations, sudden deaths, shipwrecks, downfalls, in short, all the ills called harmful, come from the hand of the Almighty and His approving will; and the ills and misfortunes they call culpable come from us and are caused by us. God is faultless; from this it can be inferred that we are the authors of sin, forming it in intention, in word, and in deed; and God permits it all because of our sins, as I have said. You'll ask now, son, if you even understand me, who made me a theologian, and perhaps you'll say to yourself: For God's sake, the old whore! Why doesn't she stop being a witch if she knows so much, and return to God, for she knows He is more given to pardoning sins than to permitting them? And my reply to this, as if you had asked me, is that the habit of vice becomes one's nature, and being a witch turns into our flesh and blood, and in the midst of its ardor, which is great, it brings a cold that enters the soul and chills it and deadens even faith, which gives rise to a forgetting of oneself, and one does not even recall the fear with which God threatens or the glory with which He invites; in effect, since it is a sin of the flesh and its pleasures, it is a force that muffles all the senses and enthralls and entrances them, not allowing them to function as they should; and so the soul, being useless, feeble, and careless,

cannot even consider having a good thought; allowing itself to be submerged in the profound abyss of its misery, it does not wish to raise its hand to the hand of God, Who offers it only for the sake of His mercy so that the soul can rise up. I have one of the souls I've depicted for you. I see everything and understand everything, and since sin has shackled my will, I always have been and shall be evil.

'But let us leave this and return to the subject of the ointments; I say they are so cold that they deprive us of all our senses when we apply them, and we are left lying naked on the floor, and then they say that in fantasy we experience everything we think we really have experienced. Other times, when we have applied the ointment, we think we change shape and are transformed into roosters, owls, or crows; we go to the place where our master is waiting for us, and there we recover our original form and enjoy pleasures I shall not tell you about because they are such that one's memory is scandalized recalling them, and so one's tongue avoids recounting them; and even so, I am a witch and cover all my many faults with the mantle of hypocrisy. The truth is that if some esteem and honor me as a good woman, there are quite a few who call me witch right to my face, which is what the fury of a choleric judge who dealt with me and your mother in the past made them think, depositing his rage in the hands of an executioner who, because he had not been bribed, used all his power and full severity on our backs. But this passed, as all things pass; memories come to an end, lives do not come back, tongues grow tired, new events make one forget old ones. I work in a hospital; I give good indications of how I behave; my ointments give me some good times; I am not so old I cannot live another year, since I am seventy-five; since I can no longer fast, because of my age, or pray, because of my dizzy spells, or go on pilgrimages, because of the weakness in my legs, or give alms, because I am poor, or think of the good, because I like gossiping and to do that one must think about it first, so that my thoughts are always evil; with it all, I know that God is good and merciful and knows what will become of me, and that's enough, and let this talk end here, for it truly is making me sad. Come, my son, and you can watch me use my ointments, for all sorrows are bearable with bread; bring the good day in the house, for as long as you laugh you're not crying; I mean that even though the pleasures the devil gives us are only apparent and false, they still seem like pleasures to us, and imagined delight is much greater than the one that is enjoyed, though in true pleasures it must be just the opposite.'

Having said this long harangue she got up, and taking the lantern went into another small room that was even narrower. I followed her, torn by

different ideas and amazed at what I had heard and what I expected to see. Cañizares hung the lantern on the wall, and quickly undressed down to her chemise, and taking from a corner a pot of glazed earthenware, she put her hand in it, and murmuring to herself, applied the ointment from her feet to her head, which was bare. Before she finished she told me that whether her senseless body remained in that room or disappeared from it, I should not be frightened or fail to wait there until morning, because she would know what I still had to go through before I became a man. Lowering my head, I indicated that I would, and then she finished her application and stretched out on the floor like a dead woman. I brought my mouth up to hers and saw that she wasn't breathing, either lightly or heavily.

I want to confess a truth to you, Cipión, my friend: it filled me with fear to find myself enclosed in a narrow room with that figure in front of me, which I shall describe for you to the best of my ability. She was more than seven feet long, her anatomy was all bones covered by black skin that was hairy and rough; her belly, like soft leather, covered her shameful parts and even hung down to the middle of her thighs; her teats resembled two dry, wrinkled cow bladders; her lips were black, her teeth rotten or missing, her nose curved and rigid, her eyes contorted, her head disheveled, her cheeks emaciated, her throat narrow, her breasts sagging; in short, she was skinny and possessed by the devil. I looked at her for a time and soon felt overwhelmed by fear, considering the evil sight of her body and the worse possession of her soul. I tried to bite her to see if she regained consciousness, and everywhere on her body I was hindered by disgust; but even so, I seized her by a heel and dragged her out to the courtyard, but still she gave no signs of consciousness. There, looking at the sky and finding myself in an open space, my fear lifted; at least, it moderated so that I had the courage to wait and see how the going and coming of that evil female would turn out, and what she would tell me of my life. At this point I asked myself: who made this evil old woman so wise and so wicked? How does she know which are harmful ills and which are culpable? How does she understand and talk so much of God, and do so much of the devil's work? Why does she sin so willfully and not even excuse herself by claiming ignorance?

The night passed in these deliberations, and day came and found the two of us in the middle of the courtyard; she had not come to, and I was sitting beside her, concentrating, looking at her frightening, ugly face. People from the hospital arrived, and seeing that display, some said: 'The blessed Cañizares is dead! Look how distorted and skinny she was from penitence'; others, more thoughtful, took her pulse, saw that she had one

and was not dead, from which they gathered that she was in an ecstasy, a rapture, because she was so good. There were others who said: 'This old whore, she must be a witch and smeared with her ointment; saints never have such indecent transports, and until now, among those of us who know her, she's known more as a witch than a saint.' There were the curious who came to stick pins in her flesh, from head to toe; not even that woke the sleeping woman, who did not regain consciousness until seven in the morning; and since she felt herself riddled with pins, and bitten on the heel, and bruised by being dragged from her room, and before so many pairs of eyes looking at her, she believed, and believed the truth, that I had been the cause of her dishonor; and so she attacked me, and putting both hands around my throat attempted to strangle me, saying: 'Oh, you ungrateful, ignorant, malicious villain! Is this the reward deserved by the good turns I did for your mother, and the ones I planned to do for you?' I, who found myself in danger of losing my life between the nails of that ferocious harpy, shook her off, and seizing her by the long folds of her belly, tore at her with my teeth and dragged her around the courtyard; she shouted for someone to free her from the teeth of that malignant spirit.

With these words of the evil old woman, most of the people thought I must be one of those demons that have a constant grudge against good Christians, and some hurried to sprinkle holy water on me, others did not dare approach to detach me from her, others called for someone to exorcise me; the old woman growled; I clamped down my teeth; the confusion grew; and my master, who had come when he heard the noise, became exasperated when he heard people say I was a demon. Others, who knew nothing about exorcisms, brought three or four sticks with which they began to make the sign of the cross on my back. The joke began to smart, I let go of the old woman, and with three leaps I was on the street, and with a few more I left the town, pursued by an infinite number of boys who ran, shouting in loud voices: 'Make way, the learned dog has rabies!' Others said: 'He doesn't have rabies, he's the devil in the shape of a dog!' Considering the blows I had received, I ran out of the town as fast as I could, followed by many who undoubtedly believed I was a devil because of the things they had seen me do, as well as the words the old woman said when she awoke from her accursed sleep. I fled and disappeared from their sight so quickly they thought I had disappeared like a demon. In six hours I ran twelve leagues and came to an encampment of Gypsies in a field near Granada. I stopped there for a while because some of the Gypsies recognized me as the learned dog, and with no small pleasure they welcomed me and hid me in a cave

so I would not be found if anyone came looking for me, intending, as I realized later, to earn money with me as my master the drummer had done. For twenty days I was with them, during which time I learned about and observed their life and customs, and since they are notable, I am obliged to tell you about them.

CIPIÓN: Before you go any further, Berganza, it would be good for us to pay some attention to what the witch told you and find out whether the great lie you believe can be true. Look, Berganza, it would be very foolish to believe that Camacha changed men into animals and that the sacristan in the shape of a donkey served her for all the years they say he served her. All these things and others like them are deceptions, lies, or falsifications of the devil; and if it seems to us now that we have some understanding and reason, since we speak when we are really dogs, or have taken on their shape, we have already said that this is an amazing, never-before-seen case, and even if we touch it with our hands, we won't believe it until the fact of its happening shows us what we ought to believe. Do you want to see it more clearly? Consider what trivial and foolish points Camacha said our restoration consisted of, and what must have seemed like prophecies to you are nothing but the words of fairy stories or old wives' tales, like the ones about the horse with no head and the magic wand, told to pass the time before the fire on long winter nights; because, if they were anything else, they would already have been done, unless her words are to be taken in a sense I have heard called allegorical, and this sense does not mean what the words sound like but something else that, although different, contains a resemblance; for instance, if one says:

> They will return to their true shape and form
> when they witness the overthrow, with swift
> and ready care, of the haughty on high
> and the raising of the humble and low
> by a powerful, a most potent hand.

Taking it in the sense I've said, I think it means we shall recover our form when we see those who were at the top of the wheel of fortune yesterday trampled and humbled at the feet of misfortune and ignored by those who most esteemed them. And by the same token, when we see others, who not two hours ago had no portion other than to be one more in a growing number of people in this world, now so elevated in their good fortune that we lose sight of them; and if at first they did not appear because they were small and shrinking, now we cannot reach them because they are large and lofty.

And if, as you say, our return to our former shape depends on this, we have already seen it and see it constantly; from this I gather that Camacha's verses are to be taken not in the allegorical sense but in the literal; but our remedy does not lie in this either, for we have often seen what they say and we are still as dog as you can see; therefore, Camacha was a false deceiver, Cañizares a liar, and Montiela foolish, malicious, and a scoundrel, and excuse my saying so in the event she is our mother, or yours, for I do not want her as my mother. And so I say that the real meaning is a game of ninepins in which with speed and diligence the ones standing are knocked down and those that have fallen are raised up again, and this by the hand of the person who can do it. Consider, then, whether in the course of our lives we have ever seen a game of ninepins, and if we have, did we therefore turn back into men, if that's what we are.

BERGANZA: I say you're right, Cipión, my brother, and that you are wiser than I thought; and from what you have said I've come to think and believe that everything we have experienced so far and what we are experiencing now is a dream, and that we are dogs; but for that reason we should not stop enjoying this gift of speech that is ours and the extraordinary benefit of having human discourse for as long as we can; and so, don't tire of hearing me recount what happened to me with the Gypsies who hid me in the cave.

CIPIÓN: I'll listen to you gladly if only to oblige you to listen to me when I tell you, if it please heaven, the events in my life.

BERGANZA: The life I led with the Gypsies was to consider during that time their many perversities, their deceptions and lies, the thefts they commit, women as well as men, almost from the moment they're out of swaddling and can walk. Do you see their multitude scattered across Spain? Well, they all know one another and hear about one another, and transfer and move what they've stolen back and forth from one group to another. They give their obedience not to the king but to one they call count, and they give the surname Maldonado to him and to all who succeed him; and not because they are descendants of that noble line but because a page of a gentleman with that name fell in love with a Gypsy girl who refused to give him her love until he became a Gypsy and took her as his wife. The page did so, and the rest of the Gypsies liked him so much they chose him to be their leader and gave him their obedience; and as a sign of their vassalage they offer him part of what they steal if it is valuable. To hide their idleness, they forge objects of iron, making tools they use in their thefts; and so you will always see the men in the street selling pincers, augers, hammers, and the women trivets and pokers. All the women are midwives, and in this they have an

advantage over our women because with no cost or assistance they give birth to their children and wash the infants in cold water as soon as they're born; and from birth to death they are hardened and inured to suffer the inclemencies and rigors of the weather; and so you will see that they are all strong, and good jumpers, runners, and dancers. They always marry within the group so their evil ways will not be known by others; the women are loyal to their husbands, and very few are unfaithful with outsiders. When they beg, they obtain more with disguises and ribaldry than with devotions; and with the excuse that no one trusts them, they are not in service, and tend to be idlers; if I remember correctly, rarely if ever have I seen a Gypsy woman taking communion at the altar, even though I've gone into churches quite often. Their thoughts are imagining how they'll deceive and where they'll steal; they tell one another about their thefts, and how they did them; and so, one day a Gypsy man told others, in front of me, about a deception and theft he had once committed against a farmer, and it was this: the Gypsy had a donkey whose tail had been cut off, and to its hairless piece of tail he attached a shaggy one so that it looked like the donkey's natural tail. He took the animal to the market, a farmer bought it for ten *ducados*, and having sold it to him and taken the money, he told the farmer that if he wanted to buy the brother of this donkey, an animal just as good as the one he had bought, he would sell it to him for a better price. The farmer replied that he should go for it and bring it back, and he would buy it, and while he was waiting he would take the one he had bought to his lodging. The farmer left, the Gypsy followed him, and for whatever reason, the Gypsy was crafty enough to steal the donkey, the one he had sold him, from the farmer, and at the same time he removed the false tail so the donkey was left with the hairless one. He changed the saddle and bridle and was bold enough to look for the farmer so he could sell it to him, and the Gypsy found him before the farmer had missed the first donkey, and after a brief negotiation the farmer bought the second one. He intended to pay him at his lodgings, but the donkey could not find his donkey, and though he was a great dunce, he suspected that the Gypsy had stolen it and did not want to pay him. The Gypsy looked for witnesses, and brought those who had collected their sales tax for the first donkey and swore the Gypsy had sold the farmer an animal with a very long tail, one very different from the tail on the second donkey. A bailiff happened to be present for all this, and he took the part of the Gypsy with so much evidence that the farmer had to pay for the same donkey twice. They recounted many other thefts, all or most of them of animals, in which they

hold advanced degrees, and these are the kinds of theft they commit most often. In short, they are an evil people, and even though many very discerning judges have ruled against them, they have not reformed as a result.

After twenty days they wanted to take me to Murcia. I passed through Granada, where the captain whose drummer was my master was located. When the Gypsies learned this, they shut me up in a room at the inn where they were staying; I heard them say the reason; I didn't like the journey they were taking, and so I decided to get free, which I did, and leaving Granada, I found myself in an orchard owned by a Morisco,[12] who was happy to take me in, and I was even happier, thinking he didn't want me for anything more than guarding the orchard, work, in my opinion, less arduous than guarding livestock; and since it was not possible to haggle over my salary, it was easy for the Morisco to find a servant to command and I a master to serve. I was with him for more than a month, not because I liked the life I had, but because I liked knowing about my master's life, and from that about the life of all the Moriscos living in Spain. Oh, how many different things I could tell you, Cipión, my friend, about this Morisco rabble, if I weren't afraid I couldn't finish in two weeks! And if I went into detail, I wouldn't finish in two months; but, in fact, I'll have to say something, and so listen to what I saw in general and noticed in particular about these good people.

It is a miracle to find among so many even one who believes honestly in sacred Christian law; their entire intention is to lock away and keep minted money; and to obtain it they work and do not eat; if a *real* of any value comes into their power, they condemn it to perpetual prison and eternal darkness; so that by always earning and never spending, they accumulate the largest amount of money in Spain. They are the moneybox, the clothes moth, the magpie, and the weasel; they acquire everything, hide everything, and swallow everything. Consider that there are many of them, and each day they earn and hide a little or a lot, and a slow fever like typhus ends life; and since they are growing, the number of concealers is increasing, and they grow and will grow into infinity, as experience has demonstrated. Among them there is no chastity, and neither men nor women enter the religious life; they all marry, they all multiply, because a sober life increases the causes of procreation. War does not consume them, and no work wearies them too much; they steal from us very calmly, and with the

12. Moriscos were Muslims who had converted (sometimes by force) to Christianity.

fruits of our inheritance, which they sell back to us, they become rich. They have no servants, because they are all their own servants; they don't spend money on their children's studies, because their only knowledge is stealing from us. Of the twelve sons of Jacob that I've heard went into Egypt, when Moses led them out of that captivity 600,000 men left, not counting children and women; from this one can infer how the Morisca women will multiply, for they undoubtedly have greater numbers.

CIPIÓN: A remedy has been sought for all the evils you have noted and suggested; I know very well that the ones you don't speak of are greater and more numerous than those you recount; so far they have not found the right solution; but our nation has very discerning caretakers who, considering that Spain rears and has in its bosom as many vipers as there are Moriscos, with the help of God they will find a certain, rapid, and secure solution to so much harm. Go on.

BERGANZA: Since my master was miserly, as are all those of his kind, he maintained me on millet bread and leftover soup, his ordinary fare; but heaven helped me bear this misery in a very strange way, which you will hear now. Each morning at dawn a young man sitting beneath one of the many pomegranate trees in the orchard would waken, apparently a student, dressed in heavy flannel, not as black or thick as it was drab and threadbare. He wrote in a notebook and from time to time would smack his forehead and bite his nails, while looking up at the sky; at other times he would become so pensive that he did not move his foot, his hand, or even his eyelashes, so great was his enthrallment. Once I went up to him without his seeing me and heard him murmuring to himself, and after a long while he gave a great shout, saying: 'By God, this is the best octave I've made in all the days of my life!' And writing quickly in his notebook, he gave signs of great contentment; all of which led me to assume that the unfortunate man was a poet. I gave him my usual caresses to assure him of my gentleness. I lay down at his feet, and he, with this reassurance, continued with his thoughts and scratched his head again, and returned to his ecstasies and to writing down what he had thought. While this was going on, another young man, gallant and elegantly dressed, came into the orchard with some papers in his hand, from which he read from time to time. He went up to the first young man and said: 'Have you finished the first act?' 'I just did,' responded the poet, 'the most exquisite act that one can imagine.' 'In what way?' asked the second young man. 'In this way,' said the first: 'His Holiness the Pope comes out in full pontifical dress, with twelve cardinals, all dressed in purple, because when the event occurred that my play recounts, it was the time

of *mutatio caparum*, when the cardinals dress not in red but in purple; and so in every way, and in defense of accuracy, it is right and proper that my cardinals come out in purple; and this is a point of great importance for the play, and people would stumble over this and make a thousand rude remarks and foolish comments. I can't be wrong in this, because I've read the entire Roman ceremonial just to be certain about their dress.' 'Well,' replied the other man, 'where do you want my director to find purple clothes for twelve cardinals?' 'Well, if you take out even one,' responded the poet, 'I'll sooner fly than let you have my play. Good Lord! This magnificent effect will be lost! Imagine, right here, how it will seem in a theater when a Supreme Pontiff, with twelve somber cardinals and the other prelates who must accompany him, appear on stage. By heaven, it will be one of the greatest and most sublime spectacles ever seen in a play, even the *Ramillete de Daraja*!'[13]

At this point I realized that one was a poet and the other an actor, who advised the poet to reduce the number of cardinals unless he wanted to make it impossible for the director to put on the play. To which the poet said they ought to thank him for not having included the entire conclave present at the memorable ceremony that he sought to have people recall in his excellent play. The actor laughed and left him to his work to pursue his, which was to study a role in a new play. The poet, having written, very calmly and slowly, a few verses of his magnificent play, took a few crusts of bread from his pouch along with something like twenty raisins, I believe, because I counted them and am still not sure if there were so many, because they were mixed with some crumbs of bread, which he blew away, and one by one he ate the raisins and the stems, because I didn't see him discard anything, helped along by the crusts that were purplish with the lint from his pouch and looked moldy, and they were so hard that although he attempted to soften them, putting them in his mouth over and over again, he could not make them more tender; all of which was to my benefit, because he tossed them to me, saying, 'Here, boy! Take this and I hope you enjoy it.' 'Look,' I said to myself, 'look at the nectar or ambrosia this poet is giving me, the ones they say nourish the gods and Apollo there in heaven!' In short, the poverty of most poets is great, but my need was greater, for it obliged me to eat what he threw away. For as long as the composition of his play lasted, he did not fail to come to the orchard and I did not lack for

13. *Ramillete de Daraja* is a lost play, likely of a Moorish theme, that was popular during the Golden Age in Spain.

crusts, because he shared them with me very liberally, and afterward we would go to the waterwheel, and I on my stomach and he with a scoop would satisfy our thirst like monarchs. But then the poet failed to appear, and there was such a surfeit of hunger in me that I decided to leave the Morisco and go into the city to seek my fortune, for the one who changes finds it. When I entered the city, I saw my poet coming out of the famous monastery of San Jerónimo,[14] and when he saw me he approached with open arms, and I went to him with new signs of rejoicing at having found him. Then he immediately began to pull out pieces of bread, softer than those he used to take to the orchard, and offer them to my teeth without passing them first along his, a kindness that with new pleasure satisfied my hunger. The tender crusts, and seeing my poet come out of the monastery, made me suspect that he had embarrassing muses, as do many others. He walked toward the city and I followed, determined to have him for a master if he so wished, imagining that the leavings of his castle could support my army; because there is no greater or better purse than that of charity, whose generous hands are never poor; and so I don't agree with the adage that says: 'The stingy man gives more than the naked one,' as if the hard, avaricious man gave anything comparable to what the generous naked man gives who, in effect, gives his good wishes when he has nothing else. From one adventure to another, we came to the house of a director who, if I remember correctly, was named Angulo el Malo, and not the other Angulo, not a director but a performer, the wittiest the theater had, then or now.[15] The entire company gathered to hear my master's play, for I already considered him my master; and in the middle of the first act, one by one and two by two everyone left except me and the director, who served as the audience. The play was such that, even though I'm an ass as far as poetry is concerned, it seemed to me that Satan himself had written it for the total ruin and perdition of the poet himself, who was gritting his teeth when he saw the solitude in which the audience had left him; and before long his prophetic soul told him of the misfortune that was threatening him, which was that all the performers, who numbered more than twelve, returned, and without a word seized my poet, and if it had not been because the authority of the director and his entreaties and shouts came between them, they undoubtedly would have

14. The monastery of San Jerónimo in Granada was founded by the Catholic Monarchs.

15. Angulo el Malo was an actor and owner of a theater company whom Cervantes also mentions in *Don Quixote*.

tossed the poet in a blanket. The incident left me stunned; the director, surly; the actors, joyful; and the poet, gloomy; and he, very patiently, though his face was distorted, took his play, placed it in his shirt, and said, half-whispering: 'One must not cast pearls before swine'; and with this he left very calmly. I was so embarrassed I couldn't and wouldn't follow him, and I was right not to, because the director gave me so many caresses that they obliged me to stay with him, and in less than a month I became a great actor in interludes, and a great performer of mute characters. They put a cloth muzzle on me and taught me to attack in the theater anyone they wanted; and since most of the interludes end with a drubbing, in my master's company they would incite me and I would knock down and trample everyone, which gave the ignorant something to laugh at, and a large profit to my master. Oh, Cipión, I wish I could recount what I saw in this and two other companies of actors where I worked. But since it isn't possible to reduce it to a succinct, brief narration, I shall have to leave it for another day, if there is another day when we communicate with each other. Do you see how long my talk has been? Do you see the many diverse events of my life? Have you considered the many paths and masters I have taken? Well, everything you have heard is nothing compared to what I could tell you of what I noted, found out, and saw in these people: their behavior, their life, their customs, their activities, their work, their leisure, their ignorance, their cleverness, with an infinite number of other things, some to be whispered in your ear, and others to be hailed in public, and all to be remembered in order to bring the truth home to many who idolize false characters and the beauty of artifice and transformation.

CIPIÓN: I can see all too clearly, Berganza, the broad field that lies before you for extending your talk, and it is my opinion that you should leave it for a separate tale and a moment of undisturbed tranquility.

BERGANZA: Let it be so, and listen. I came with a theater company to this city of Valladolid, where in an interlude I received a wound that almost ended my life; I could not take my revenge because I was muzzled at the time, and afterward I did not want to in cold blood, for vengeance that is planned implies cruelty and a malicious spirit. That enterprise began to weary me, not because it was work but because I saw in it things that all together called for rectification and punishment; and since I could feel it more than remedy it, I decided not to see it, and so I took refuge in religion, as do those who abandon their vices when they can no longer practice them, though better late than never. And so, I say, that seeing you one night carrying the lantern with the good Christian Mahúdes, I considered you content and

occupied by something just and holy; and filled with virtuous envy, I wanted to follow in your footsteps, and with this praiseworthy intention I placed myself in front of Mahúdes, who chose me as your companion and brought me to this hospital. What happened to me here is not so insignificant that there is no need for time to recount it, especially what I heard from four patients whom luck and necessity brought to this hospital, all four being together in four paired beds. Forgive me, for the story is brief, and has not been expanded, and fits here like a glove.

CIPIÓN: Yes, I forgive you. And finish up, because I believe it won't be long until daybreak.

BERGANZA: I say that in the four beds at the end of this ward, there was an alchemist in one, a poet in the second, a mathematician in the third, and in the fourth one of those they call mad reformers.

CIPIÓN: I remember having seen those good people.

BERGANZA: And so, I say that during a siesta last summer, when the windows were closed and I was taking the air under one of their beds, the poet began to complain most pitifully of his luck, and when the mathematician asked what it was he was complaining about, he answered that it was his bad luck. 'How could it not be reasonable for me to complain?' he continued; 'for I, having obeyed what Horace decrees in his *Poetica*, that one should not publish a work until ten years after its composition, spent twenty years writing a work, and that was twelve years ago; its subject is noteworthy, its inventiveness admirable and new, its verse serious, its episodes entertaining, and its structure wondrous, because the beginning corresponds to the middle and to the end, so that together they form a poem that is lofty, sonorous, heroic, delightful, and substantial, and with it all I find no prince to whom I can dedicate it. A prince, I say, who is intelligent, generous, and magnanimous. Oh, ours is a miserable age and a depraved time!' 'What is the book about?' asked the alchemist. The poet replied: 'It deals with what Archbishop Turpin did not write about King Arthur of England,[16] with another supplement to the *History of the*

16. Archbishop Turpin was the Archbishop of Reims in the eighth century and was believed to be the author of the *History of the Life of Charlemagne and Roland*, also known as the *Chronicle of (Pseudo-) Turpin*, which tells the tale of how Charlemagne came to Spain to liberate the tomb of St. James from the Arabs. That text has nothing to do with the Arthurian legend that Cervantes comically has the poet mention.

Search for the Holy Brail,[17] and all of it in heroic verse, part of it in royal octaves, part in hendecasyllabic blank verse, but all of it dactylishly, I mean, dactyls in the nouns but not in any verbs at all.' 'I understand little of poetry,' said the alchemist, 'and so I cannot properly evaluate the misfortune your grace complains of, since, even if greater, it would not be equal to mine, which is that because I lack the instruments, or a prince to support me and give me the requisites that the science of alchemy demands, I am not now brimming over with gold and more riches than Midas, Crassus, or Croesus.' 'Has your grace,' the mathematician said at this point, 'Señor Alchemist, performed the experiment of deriving silver from other metals?' 'So far I have not,' replied the alchemist, 'but really, I know that it can be derived, and in two months I shall obtain the philosopher's stone, with which one can derive silver and gold from the stones themselves.' 'Your graces have certainly exaggerated your misfortunes,' said the mathematician, 'but, after all, one of you has a book to dedicate, and the other is in potential propinquity to the philosopher's stone; but what shall I say about my misfortune, which is so unique it has nowhere to lay its head? For twenty-two years I have been searching for the fixed longitudinal point, and here I leave it and there I take it up again and think I have found it and that it is impossible for it to get away, and then when I least expect it, I find myself so far from it that I am astonished. The same thing occurs with the squaring of the circle, for I have come so close to finding it that I do not know and cannot imagine why I don't already have it in my purse; and so, my suffering is like that of Tantalus, who is close to the fruit and dies of hunger, and near the water and dies of thirst. For moments I think I have come upon the nature of truth, and for minutes I find myself so far from it that I again climb the mountain I have just descended with the stone of my work on my back, like another Sisyphus.'

Until now the mad reformer had been silent, and here he began to speak, saying: 'Poverty has gathered together in this hospital four complainers so accomplished they could appear before the Great Turk, and I disdain occupations and practices that neither entertain nor feed their practitioners. I, Señores, am a reformer, and at different times I have offered His Majesty many diverse schemes, all to his advantage and harmless to the realm; and now I have prepared a written petition asking him to indicate the person to

17. *History of the Search for the Holy Brail* is a satirical allusion to the stories concerning the Arthurian legend of the Holy Grail.

whom I should communicate a scheme I have that would result in the total restoration of his debts and obligations; but considering what has happened to other petitions of mine, I realize that in the end this one too will die and be buried. But so that your graces do not consider me a fool, even if my scheme is made public, I shall tell it to you now: the parliament must demand that all of His Majesty's vassals, from the age of fourteen to sixty, be obliged to fast on bread and water once a month, on a chosen, specified day, and all the expenditure for other foodstuffs such as fruit, meat, fish, wine, eggs, and vegetables that would have been made on that day should be converted into money and given to His Majesty, down to the last penny, under oath; and by so doing, in twenty years he will be free of all debts and difficulties. Because, if you count it up, as I have done, there are in Spain more than three million people of that age, aside from the sick and those who are older and younger, and not one will fail to spend at a minimum a *real* and a half a day; and I want it to be no more than a *real*, and it cannot be less unless the person eats fenugreek. Well, do your graces think it would be insignificant to have three million *reales* a day as if they had fallen from heaven? It would benefit and in no way be harmful to those who fast, because the fast would please heaven and serve the king; and each one could fast in a way that would be advantageous to his health. This is a straightforward scheme, and it could be collected by parishes, free of the cost of tax collectors, who destroy the nation.' Everyone laughed at the scheme and the mad reformer, and he too laughed at his foolishness, and I was amazed at having heard them and seeing that, for the most part, those with similar inclinations came to die in hospitals.

CIPIÓN: You're right, Berganza. See if you have anything left to say.

BERGANZA: Just two more things, and then I shall end my talk, for I think day is almost here. One night, when my master went to beg at the house of the Magistrate of this city, who is a great gentleman and a very great Christian, we found him alone and it seemed a perfect opportunity to tell him certain information I had heard from an old patient in this hospital concerning how to solve the glaring disgrace of the vagrant girls who, in order not to go into service, do so many wicked things, things so wicked that in summer they populate all the hospitals with the dissolute men who follow them, an intolerable plague that demanded a quick and effective solution. And I, wanting to tell him this, raised my voice, thinking I could speak, and instead of pronouncing rational words I barked so rapidly and so loudly that the Magistrate became angry and called for his servants to drive me out of the room with a beating; and one lackey who came at the sound of his master's voice—and it would have been better for me if for the moment he had been deaf—picked up a copper vessel and hit me with it so hard on my ribs that to this day I bear the scars of those blows.

CIPIÓN: And did you complain about that, Berganza?

BERGANZA: How could I not complain if even now it hurts, just as I have told you, and if it seems to me my good intentions did not deserve so harsh a punishment?

CIPIÓN: Look, Berganza, no one should go where he is not called, nor try to do the work that is not his. And you must remember that the poor man's advice, no matter how good, never is accepted, and the poor, humble man should never presume to advise the great and those who think they know everything. Wisdom in the poor man is obscured, and need and poverty are the shadows and clouds that darken it; and if it happens to be revealed, it is judged as foolishness and treated with contempt.

BERGANZA: You're right, and learning from my mistakes, from now on I shall follow your advice. By the same token, on another night I entered the house of a distinguished lady who had in her arms one of those little things called lapdogs, so small she could hide it in her bosom; and when the dog saw me, she jumped from her mistress's arms and ran at me, barking, and with so much boldness that she did not stop until she bit me in the leg. I looked at her again, fixedly and with annoyance, and said to myself: 'If I were to catch you, you miserable little beast, on the street, I would either ignore you or tear you to pieces with my teeth.' I thought that even cowards and the fearful are daring and insolent when they are protected, and they come forward to offend those who are worth more than they.

CIPIÓN: An example and sign of the truth you have said is given by some small men who in the shadow of their masters dare to be insolent; and if by chance death or another accident of fate knocks down the tree where they are leaning, then their lack of courage is revealed and made manifest; because, in effect, their gifts have no greater value than that given by their masters and protectors. Virtue and a good understanding are always one, always the same, naked or dressed, alone or accompanied. It is certainly true that they can suffer in the estimation of other people but not in the true reality of what they deserve and are worth. And with this let us end our talk, for the light coming in these cracks shows that it is already day, and tonight, if this great gift of speech has not abandoned us, it will be my turn to tell you about my life.

BERGANZA: So be it, and be sure you come to this same place.

The conclusion of the colloquy by the licentiate and the waking of the lieutenant happened at the same time, and the licentiate said:

"Even if this colloquy is imagined and never happened, it seems to me so well composed that the lieutenant can go ahead with the second."

"With this opinion," responded the lieutenant, "I shall gather my courage and prepare to write it, without disputing any further with your grace as to whether the dogs spoke or not."

To which the licentiate replied:

"Señor Lieutenant, let us not return to that dispute. I grasp the artfulness and inventiveness of the colloquy, and that's sufficient. Let us go to the Plaza de Espolón to entertain the eyes of our bodies, for I have already entertained those of my understanding."

"Let us go," said the lieutenant.

And with this, they left.

THE END

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: THE EXEMPLARY NOVELS

Known and Well Known

The first question that probably occurs to readers of Cervantes's *Exemplary Novels* is how—and whether—this collection of twelve novellas differs from *Don Quixote*, Cervantes's universally admired masterwork. Some differences, based on genre, are palpable, starting with the contrast between short and extended fictions. Others are subtler and have to do with style and intention. The question of difference, or possible similarity, certainly occurred to me as I took on the daunting project of bringing these captivating but not particularly well-known works into English. This volume, it seems, is the first publication in many decades of the complete collection in English—a fact that is both astonishing and appalling. Astonishing because these twelve stories range from exceptional to extraordinary, and their author is a fundamental presence in the saga of the world's literature: the creator of the modern novel and the great luminary of all literature written in Spanish. Appalling because for far too long the English-speaking public has been deprived of a contemporary version of all twelve tales in a translation based on a reliable text in Spanish. I can't begin to account for the vagaries of literary history, but I can share some of my thoughts and observations as I became immersed in the task of translating these wonderful stories.

First, I have a confession to make: I had read these novellas when I was in school, as an undergraduate and as a graduate student, and the truth is that back then, many decades ago, the novellas made my eyes glaze over. They seemed superficial, lacking in relevance, lightweight, and not especially significant or memorable. I remember thinking that they were a prime example of a literary tradition that was not to be trusted, and it was clear to me that these works had ridden into prominence not on their own merits but on the back of *Don Quixote*.

Years later, when I reencountered them for this translation, I was surprised and deeply chagrined, in retrospect, to find myself charmed, amused, engaged: reading them was almost like listening to one of Mozart's lighter operas. And I think there is relevance in that comparison. These novellas do not