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*The First English Translator of Straparola,
 Masuccio, and Ser Giovanni:
 William George Waters in his Victorian World**

William George Waters was a gentleman so modest that, as his obituary in the *London Times* reported on June 18, 1928, he published much of what he wrote anonymously.¹ Not so his wife, who in 1901, as Mrs. W. G. Waters, brought into print the widely read *Cook's Decameron: A Study in Taste*, classic Italian recipes cleverly attached to a frame tale featuring ten sophisticates from “tasteful” London society. In 1924 Mrs. Waters followed this witty manual, a showcase for her knowledge of Boccaccio’s masterpiece, with *Just a Cookery Book*, published at the prestigious presses of London’s Medici Society. Her learned preface condenses a history of haute-cuisine, from Apicius to the Anglo-Italian Charles Elmé Francatelli, head chef to Queen Victoria.² During her husband’s declining years, under the name Emily Waters, this talented lady collaborated with him in translating Vespasiano da Bisticci’s fifteenth-century biographies of famous men (1926), still in print throughout the twentieth century.³

A leisured scholar with a love of Italy, William George Waters did sign his own name to some seventeen books. Translator of *The Journal of Montaigne’s Travels in Italy*, and compiler of *Traveller’s Joy*, a literary anthology designed for the cyclist or backpacker, he whisks us away most pleasurably for informed *turismo* in *Five Italian Shrines: An Account of the Monumental Tombs of S. Augustine at Pavia, S. Dominic at Bologna, S. Peter Martyr at Milan, S. Donato at Arezzo, and of Orcagna’s Tabernacolo at Florence*. His other credits include four known novels, a brief history of the Venetian republic, a small biography of Emperor Franz Joseph II and a massive one on Girolamo Cardano, a monograph on Piero della Francesca, an encyclopedia of Italian sculptors, a handbook on authors associated with his Norfolk ancestral home, and a string of translated *novelle* in the tradition of Boccaccio, beginning in 1894 with *The Nights of Straparola*, followed by *The Novellino of Masuccio* (1895) and *The Pecorone of Ser Giovanni* (1897), all three for the first time in English.⁴ Together Mr. and Mrs. Waters take us back to an elite society centered in late-Victorian and Edwardian London with cultural interests enthusiastically Italianate that define the climate in which a trio of classic Italian *novellieri*, after 450 years, finally found a British translator. First came Straparola.

When Giovan Francesco Straparola of Caravaggio (ca. 1480-1557?) published *Le piacevoli notti* at Venice (1550, 1553), he released a mongrel and ribald twin-volume novella collection that flew from the booksellers’ stalls into households of an eager reading public,



going through twenty-nine reprintings by 1608.⁵ In the tradition of European frame tales descended from the *Decameron*, its author assembles a *brigata* of ladies and gentlemen on the Venetian Island of Murano. For two weeks they entertain themselves during the festive season of Carnival by dancing, singing, playing musical instruments, posing riddles, and telling stories. To vary Boccaccio's «giornate», Straparola has «notti» with five *novelle* per evening until the last, when each of thirteen storytellers takes a brief turn narrating. Twelve days of five tales each plus a finale that runs for thirteen, make a total of seventy-three «favole», the author's preferred term for his *novelle*.⁶

As when he trades day for night, Straparola both imitates the Italian archetype and departs from it.⁷ Boccaccio anchors his collection to the calamitous Black Death of 1348. Straparola connects with history, too, but invokes local and less memorable political upheavals as the reason for Duke Ottaviano Maria Sforza's flight from Milan to Venice in 1536, thence to Murano, a refuge where his widowed daughter, Lucrezia Gonzaga, «la signora», plays a role as hostess much like Emilia Pia in Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*. She proposes the «pleasant nights» of the book's title to an elite company whose female members are ten idealized ladies, vaguely defined by the author as «non men graziose che belle»: Lodovica, Vicenza, Lionora, Alteria, Lauretta, Eritrea, Cateruzza Brunetta; Arianna, Isabella, and Fior-diana. Critics, less kindly, have called them «empty shadows», «paper cut-outs».⁸

The men, by contrast, are eight historical individuals, but that does not make the gathering less fictional. All of them were not alive at the same time in the 1530s,⁹ nor is it clear what they have in common. Highest-ranking is Giovan Battista Casale of Bologna, Henry VIII's ambassador to Venice; with him come Pietro Bembo and his cousin Antonio; Vangelista di Cittadini of Milan; the poet Bernardo Cappello, a follower of Bembo whose book of verse was published by Dionigi Atanagi in Venice (but not until 1556); Benedetto Trivigiano, a poet in correspondence with Pietro Bembo¹⁰ and for the Murano circle, narrator of a novella in Paduan dialect; a Venetian friend of Lodovico Dolce, Antonio Molino detto Burchiella, plurilingual poet, musician, and improviser who spoke the dialect of Bergamo and wrote in «Ghreghesco» (a combination of Greek and Italian);¹¹ and Ferier Beltramo, a gentleman said to have been a merchant of Treviso who hosted the Duke and his daughter on their arrival in Venice. All will eventually get to tell at least one tale, but only two narrate during the first five *Notti*. Their participation is announced in the title of the 1550 edition and its 1551 reprint: *Le piacevoli notti, di M. Giovan Francesco Straparola da Caravaggio, nelle quali si contengono le favole con i loro enimmi, da dieci donne e duo giovani raccontate, cosa dilettevole, ne più data in luce*, Venezia, Comin da Trino di Monferrato. Perhaps Straparola convened all eight with an eye from the beginning to a second volume, for which he was saving the other six. Strangely, however, when that appeared at the same publishing house in 1553 with *Notti VI-XIII*, it echoes the title of the *editio princeps* but occludes the male narrators: *Le piacevoli notti, di M. Giovan Francesco Straparola da Caravaggio. Nelle quali si contengono le favole con e lor enimmi da dieci donne raccontate, cosa dilettevole ne piu data in luce*.¹² Rather than seeking communalities or consistency, we should recall Straparola's taste for the eclectic and respect their



differences. Bringing geographical diversity through dialects, cities of origin, or travel (Bergamo and Padua in the dialect *favole*; Casale's Bologna and diplomatic contact with the English court; Milan; Treviso; the Greek isles of Corfu and Crete, to which Molino had journeyed), they convene like a small court at the international hub and salon city of Venice, Straparola's own probable place of residence in adulthood.¹³

Whereas Boccaccio elevates his fictional narrators by giving them names with proto-humanistic Greek etymologies (Filomena, Neifile, Filostrato, Dioneo, Panfilo) or upper-tier literary allusions (the Petrarchan Lairetta, Virgilian Elissa), and he builds for each an identity that resonates in a larger allegorical structure, Straparola declassifies and drops the register. He does have a Lairetta, true, but otherwise he settles for generic female names, and except for Cateruzza Brunetta, none has a surname. A pair of ladies in-waiting to Lucrezia have named husbands who seem never to have existed.¹⁴ There is no connection between narrators and the themes of their stories, except that Burchiella, a master of languages, recounts one *favola* in the Bergamasco dialect (V 3), and particularly «dirty» stories allow male substitutes for female narrators – for example, the same polyglot tells of the convent-dweller Filomena (XIII 9), whose abdominal «tumor», when lanced, descends as testicles, unmasking a hermaphrodite. On the other hand, presumably licensed by the anything-goes world of Carnival, ladies can launch freely into the coarsest scatological humor, as when Alteria tells the tale of Adamantina and her doll (V 2), which shat coins of gold until stolen by the rightful owner's greedy neighbor, when its evacuations reverted to the stinking order of nature.

Boccaccio's perfected centenary of tales displays symmetries in a classical design with ascensional Gothic dynamics; Straparola's seventy-three *favole* told over thirteen nights do not form meaningful patterns or add up to any symbolically significant whole.¹⁵ Boccaccio's *prosimetrum* with its decorous insertion of daily ballads into a Latinate, Ciceronian prose yields to Straparola's mixed poetic forms embedded both in the frame and in the tales. Songs begin each day – *canzonette*, single *canzone* stanzas, madrigals – with varied rhyme schemes. In place of Boccaccio's *ballate*, Straparola sets at the end of each night a rhyming riddle in the metrics of a stanzaic octave.¹⁶ The title itself announces not *novelle*, but «fables and riddles», a coupling that pulls into parity two genres very different in form, length, and content. Much has been written, sometimes disapprovingly but in more recent times appreciatively, about Straparola's surprising salmagundi of genres and his distinctly un-Boccaccian prose style that tosses dialect tales into the mix and runs an anti-classical gamut in its lexicon from beauteous blond tresses to buttocks that fart like stentorian snoring. He embeds his narration with mosaic tiles from many “high” literary sources beginning with the *Decameron* itself, and beyond that others such as Boccaccio's *Filocolo*; Petrarch, Sacchetti, Sannazaro, Ariosto – even for his motifs, classics like Ovid and Apuleius – but its language flows in the rhythms and vocabulary of popular speech, reflecting oral milieux from which the «garrulous» author recorded his wonder tales.¹⁷

His omnibus of surprises crowds and pushes colorfully across animated pages in a Mannerist parade, unpredictably juxtaposing fable and riddle, lyric song and verse *ottava*,



comic and tragic, decorous and scurrilous, exemplum and *beffa*, Boccaccian “realism” and fairy-tale magic. They transport us into a realm of fiction where it can be every bit as natural for a horse or cat, or wind and water, to enter into human conversation as it is for peasants, priests, and princesses. Although the earliest collector of fairy tales in Europe (at least thirteen are scattered among his *favole*),¹⁸ Straparola is often passed over simply as a forerunner to Giambattista Basile, whose earthy Neapolitan *Pentamerone* [...] *overo lo cunto de li cunte* (1634-1636), a monument to full-blown Baroque, stands as the first frame tale collection made entirely of fairy tales.¹⁹

Straparola, however, deserves a sustained visit in his own right, as William George Waters well understood. The British Italophile had a very different perspective from his Italian contemporary Letterio di Francia, who disparaged the man of Caravaggio as a mediocre writer, far inferior to Boccaccio, guilty of jumbling together things best kept apart, indulging in unseemly subject matter («miasmi pestiferi»), and settling for chaotic assembly techniques.²⁰ Ironically, it’s the Italian who is squeamish, not the supposedly strait-laced Victorian. Instead Waters, who must have read the early eighteenth-century *Mille et une Nuits* and knew *A Thousand Nights and a Night* recently translated from the Arabic by Sir Richard Francis Burton and reissued in a shortened version by Lady Burton,²¹ would have appreciated the lure of Eastern exoticism at which Italo Calvino hints when he honors Straparola as the father of the fairy tale in Italy. In the *Piacevoli notti*, Calvino explains, «la novella cede il campo alla sua piú anziana e rustica sorella, la fiaba di meraviglie e d’incantesimi, con un ritorno d’immaginazione tra gotica e orientale alla Carpaccio».²² Suzanne Magnanini nicely captures the concept of “marvel” in these stories, comparing them to a cabinet of curiosities, a *Wunderkabinett*.²³ When Waters opened *Le piacevoli notti*, he could well have believed that he had discovered a *camera delle meraviglie*, not so different from *The Arabian Nights*, just waiting for the enjoyment of compatriots who shared his educated tastes. As we come better to know the man and his milieu, we can speculate about why he ventured upon such a challenging project, and why he did it when he did.

Straparola’s Victorian translator was a bibliophile of massive culture and polished literary talent. A shift in the titles he chose for his translation gives a clue. In his first edition, two volumes like Straparola’s twins (1894), Waters rendered *Le piacevoli notti*, literally «pleasant, or pleasurable nights», simply as *The Nights of Straparola*. By the second (four volumes, 1898), significantly, they have become *The Facetious Nights of Straparola*. Why this change? Precedent for the added adjective lies ready to hand in the French history of the text, which for the first volume debuts just a decade after the original with *Les Facecieuses nuicts du seigneur Ian François Straparole* [...] *nouvellement traduites d’Italian en François par Ian Louveau*, Lyon, Guillaume Rouille, 1560. A dozen years later, that forms the cornerstone for a complete edition: *Les Facecieuses nuictz du Seigneur Iean François Straparole. Avec les Fables & Enigmes, racontées par deux iieunes Gentilz-hommes, et dix Damoselles. Nouvellement traduites d’Italien en François par Iean Louveau. (Le Second et dernier livre des Facecieuses nuicts du Seigneur Iean Straparole.*



Traduict d'Italien en François par Pierre Delarivey Champenois), Lyon, Benoist Rigaud, 1572.²⁴ For Mr. Waters, who in 1903 would publish his translation of Montaigne's Italian travel memoir (partly in imperfect Italian), Renaissance French posed no problem. He had, in fact, also read Straparola in that language, to which he resorted, citing Larivey's version, when decency compelled him to mask risqué passages in his *Nights*.

He and his publishers' reading public would, moreover, have had other associations with the word «facetious». Suggestive in general of jocular entertainment, it alludes to comic wit, as in «farce», or to friendly gatherings where amusing anecdotes are told: «[...] *facetus* [...] *quasi favens cetui*». As early as the twelfth century, Geoffrey of Monmouth in his *History of the British Kings* credits the native island dwellers with excellent qualities, one being the «*facetia incolarum*». More specifically, *facetia* defines a particular narrative genre, epitomized in the Italian Renaissance by Poggio Bracciolini's Latin *Facetiae*, which Waters knew,²⁵ published in nearly fifty editions between 1470 and 1600. *Facetiae* are jokes, running to just a few sentences or a paragraph, that express urbane courtly wit liberally laced with sexual and scatological humor. They function, in a sense, as the opposite of a preacher's *exemplum*. At once vulgar and refined, the *facetia* in its scientific etymology relates to *facio*, expressing “know-how” in society, *savoir-faire* in conversation. These *bon mots* traveled like fairy tales, orally. In fact, Poggio refers to his *facetiae* as *confabulationes*, which we might translate as «telling fables or stories together».²⁶

It is a definition that describes to a T the *brigata*'s activity in Straparola's *Notti*. At the end of the first fable on Night II, Fiordiana addresses their mistress Lucrezia and asks that Molino step in to replace her:

Signora mia, e voi onorandissimi signori, il mi parebbe convenevole [...] che 'l nostro Molino con una sua **facecia** rallegrasse questa nostra dolce compagnia. [...] Egli, sí come voi sapete, è ingegnioso e **faceto** e ha tutte quelle buone parti che ad una gentilissima persona si convengono.

Yet Waters, in spite of wonderfully readable prose, not only fails to capitalize on the very epithet he will use in the title of his second edition, he also loses the rhetorical figure of polyptoton.

Signora, and you gentle folks all, does it not seem meet to you that Signor Molino, our good friend, should enliven this honourable company with one of his merry **conceits**? [...] He, as you well know, is ingenious and **full of wit**, and gifted with all those good parts which pertain to a man of breeding.²⁷

Molino's “facetiousness” heralds an off-color *favola* (II 2) rife with *beffe*, in which Straparola rewrites to his own sixteenth-century taste Boccaccio's tale of the scholar Rinieri's vengeance on the widow Elena (*Decameron* VIII 7).²⁸ The philandering Filenio Sisterno, a fellow whose name resembles that of Fileno, the miserable loser in love central to Boccaccio's *Filocolo*,²⁹ chats up three ladies, who discover how he has duped them. In



good form for a raconteur of fairy tales, Straparola multiplies the ladies' vendettas by three.³⁰ Ultimately, like Rinieri, he will take his counter-revenge by displaying them all three nude (but with faces hidden) to their husbands (fig. 1). As this complicated sequence begins to unfold, the first lady tricks Filenio into spending the night hiding silently in nothing but his shirt under her bed, a space stuffed with bundles of thorns that make him bleed all over. Molino invites his audience to muse on the man's comeuppance: «Io lascio considerare a voi a che termine quella notte si ritrovasse il miserello, il quale poco mancò che senza **coda** non restasse, sí come era rimasto senza **favela**». Straparola plucks the humorous euphemism from Boccaccio, who penned it to explain how the lusty Masetto da Lamporecchio managed to get inside a nunnery by pretending to be mute: «[...] la badessa, che forse stimava che egli così senza **coda** come senza **favella** fosse, di ciò poco o niente si curava» (*Decameron* III 1, 20). Waters, however, has a problem even with Straparola's oblique figurative language. For a proper Victorian translation, the danger to Filenio's male organ decorously flips to another bodily part:

I leave you to figure in what plight the poor wretch found himself that night, seeing that he dared not call out, though he was like to lose a good part of his **breech** through the torment he was suffering.³¹

«Breech» might at first call to mind «breeches», but the whole point of this comic situation is that the lover must dive half-naked under the bed, without his pants. So Waters uses the word in its sense of “buttocks,” as in “breech birth,” when a child is born not head-first, but more rarely, bottom-first. It most certainly doesn't signify “tail” in the facetious code Straparola borrows from Boccaccio.³²

Later English editions of *Le piacevoli notti* erased Waters's punning title adjective «faceto», substituting «delectable» and «merry». These package the book to exploit its risqué content. A slippery character notorious for producing erotica, the British expatriate Charles Carrington published his *Most Delectable Nights of Straparola of Caravaggio* at Paris in 1906, marketing it with a label that promises moments to relish.³³ In 1931 *The Merry Nights of Straparola* appeared at the New York Panurge Press, a niche house whose name speaks, as it were, volumes.³⁴ Active in the period from 1929 to 1935, its repertoire boasted such titles as: *A Plea for Polygamy* (1929); *The Sword and Woman-kind, being an Informative History of Indiscreet Revelations* (1929; 1930); *A Strange Love: A Novel of Abnormal Passion* (1930); *Sexual Slavery in America; Chastity Belts: An Illustrated History of the Bridling of Women Containing Numerous Explanatory Excerpts from Curious, Facetious, and Erotic Books; Sexarians; Black Lust* (all 1931); *The Hindu Art of Love; Madame Sex; Erotic Fairy Tales* (all 1932); *The Erotic History of France, Including a History of Its Erotic Literature; Bestiality: An Historical, Legal, and Literary Study; The Turkish Art of Love* (all 1933); *Sex Life in England; Fleshpots of Antiquity: The Lives and Loves of Ancient Courtesans; The Sexual History of the World War; Test Tube Babies: A History of the Artificial Impregnation of Human Beings* (all 1934); and *American Encyclopedia of Sex* (1935).



Panurge Press titles carry the words «privately printed», which trumpet content naughty or forbidden. That formula was required to escape censorship since sales were limited to book club subscribers only. Among them was an offering by the prodigious Sir Richard Francis Burton: *The Sotadic Zone* (1930), named after the ancient Greek poet Sotades, who wrote obscene and sometimes pederastic verse preserved in *The Greek Anthology*. It refers to those extensive parts of the world where Sir Richard believed pederasty was practiced as a matter of custom.³⁵ Burton, an indefatigable explorer infamous for transgressing Victorian boundaries of decorum, was a founding member of the Cannibal Club, an inner circle of the Anthropological Society of London active between the 1860s and 1880s. Drawn by the taboo of exotic sexualities, its members were connoisseurs of pornography.³⁶ In literature, he is most famous for his translation of *The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night* (ten volumes, 1885), heavily indebted to John Payne's *The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night* (nine volumes, 1882).³⁷ Both were unabridged and unexpurgated. Payne, as Italianists remember, was to publish the first intact *Decameron* in English (1886), reprinted in 1893 at the esteemed Covent Garden press of Lawrence & Bullen. That same year saw Basile's unabashed *Pentamerone* privately published by a competitor in its first unabridged English translation, a posthumous title by the irrepressible Burton.³⁸ Just one year later, Lawrence & Bullen would present to the reading world *The Nights of Straparola* translated by William George Waters.

To the same family of titillating literature promoted by Panurge Press belongs *The Lost Breeches (Innominata): A Collection of Embarrassing Stories*, privately printed at New York in 1935. Perhaps «Innominata» implies bawdiness too shocking for anyone but a «nameless» (and female!) author. Well matched to the title, the front dust jacket depicts a lady sitting stark naked in bed while a gentleman loosing his breeches rushes out an open window just in time to avoid confrontation with a well-clothed young man – doubtless the lady's husband – about to walk in through a dangerously near door (fig. 2). On the back, the jacket advertises a volume entitled *Sex Life in America* by James Segall, M.D. On cheap rough paper with a few poor and vulgar woodcuts, this book is as crude a production as its tasteless title. Inside, though, awaits matter of unassailable quality. A compilation of tales from Boccaccio, Masuccio Salernitano, Straparola, and Giovanni Fiorentino, apparently thrown together by the copyright holder William R. Carter, it anthologizes four *favole* from *The Facetious Nights*: II 2 (akin to Boccaccio's novella of the scholar and the widow); IV 4; VI 1; and VIII 3. Nowhere has either of the translators been credited, even though they are the absolute best and reproduced verbatim: for the five *novelle* by Boccaccio it was Payne, no less, and for the other three, William George Waters.³⁹ As time passed, then, Waters's *Nights* degenerated into soft porn with market potential, joining a sub-genre published because of their scandalous reputations for private subscribers at fly-by-night or nameless presses.

When the book made its English publishing debut, however, matters stood quite differently. It found acceptance at Lawrence & Bullen, publishers that towered with distinction over the trail of men out for fast money who came later. Arthur Henry Bullen



(1857-1920), son of a librarian at the British Museum, studied at the University of Oxford a generation after Waters. Perhaps it is more than coincidence that both were graduates of the same Oxford college, Worcester, a connection that may have brought them together or would at any rate have given them a bond.⁴⁰ During the decade from 1891 to 1900 Bullen partnered with H.W. Lawrence to head the Lawrence & Bullen press. Bullen, a lover of the British classics, also brought their publishing house a reputation for rediscoveries of forgotten works. Waters's *Nights of Straparola*, his first endeavor as a translator, was a perfect fit for Lawrence & Bullen.

A sampling of their fertile output as business partners tells the story: Catullus with the *Pervigilium Veneris*, Elizabethan lyrics, John Donne, Blake, Coleridge, Keats; Botticelli's drawings of the *Divine Comedy*, *The Works of Edgar Allan Poe*. Travel was clearly a topic of interest: *Essex Highways, Byways and Waterways*; *On the Trail of Don Quixote: Being a Record of Rambles in the Ancient Province of La Mancha*. Later in the decade, titles on sports, especially golf and angling, are notable; 1900 saw into print their *Encyclopedia of Sport*. Contemporary writers figured prominently: poetry by Yates, autobiographical material by H.G. Wells. Finally, there were the fairy tales, a genre much in vogue. In the years leading up to Waters's *Nights of Straparola* we find *The Fairy Tales of Madame d'Aulnoy* and *Russian Fairy Tales* (both 1892); in the same year as his book, *Cossack Fairy Tales and Folk-Tales* (1894); and after, *Turkish Fairy Tales and Folk-Tales*; *Sinbad the Sailor*; and, *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* (both 1896). Tall tales they liked, too: Rabelais's *Gargantua and Pantagruel Tales* (1892); *The Surprising Adventures of Baron Munchausen* (1895). And, not least, a literary monument foundational as precedent to *Straparola* in the sixteenth century and a favorite of Mr. and Mrs. Waters in the nineteenth, the Payne *Decameron* (1893).⁴¹

Boccaccio's *Decameron*, seriously compromised in its integrity by Counter-Reformation editors in Italy, likewise suffered censorship when first rendered into English (1620). So, too, did its successors in Albion, typified by one bowdlerized eighteenth-century version that claimed cuts were necessary «to suit the tastes of the age».⁴² Not until 1886, under the pen of John Payne, did it finally become available whole in English, «printed for the Villon Society by private subscription and for private circulation only». Similarly, the 1893 reprint at Lawrence and Bullen, went out in one thousand numbered copies for England and America. Their edition, although still limited, would have made the book more widely available. Talk of Boccaccio's *novelle* would have been in the air. It would have constituted a climate favorable to the reception Mrs. W. G. Waters's *Cook's Decameron* (1901), which she and her husband must have companionably discussed along the way to its completion. Her «*Decameron*» was a recipe book. Could he do something «*Decameronian*», too? For him, *Straparola* was the answer. How he came to translating is another question.

For nearly twenty years he had already been writing and publishing, but in different genres: history, which had been his undergraduate major; and after college, novels. His first signed piece, *Joseph II*, appeared as a twenty-six page chapbook in 1873. Against a



background of pan-European history, Waters traces the life of this enlightened despot who in 1764 succeeded his mother Maria Theresa as ruler of Austria and Holy Roman Emperor. During an era when French culture charmed the upper classes, his efforts to impose the degraded German language in schools and require universal education for girls as well as boys proved controversial. No great memorable events, only many small ones define the student's subject, a worshipper «at the shrine of democracy» who tried to reform medicine and uproot corruption from the whole legal system, «that relic of cumbrous mediaevalism which lay like a nightmare on Germany». Faced with the «pernicious influence» of the Jesuits, although Joseph II did much to reduce their power,

he saw that it was useless to hope for enlightenment, progress, or the better instruction of the people, until a thorough change should have been made in the educational establishments. He began with Louvain, an institution which taught in the eighteenth century that the sun went round the earth, but where nevertheless all those who hoped for employment in civil or ecclesiastical affairs were required to receive their education. The first step, that the Theological professors should be appointed independent of episcopal supervision, united the whole national priesthood in opposition to the Imperial policy.

A man of good instincts, Waters judges him, but ill-timed in his actions and insensitive to the populace. Tellingly, «failure» is the last word of the budding historian's biography.⁴³

His second paper, *The Rise of the Republic of Venice* (1876), is longer at forty-five pages, but tends similarly toward negativity in tracing a people's loss of liberty. Focused on the city's history from the earliest «fishers and salters» to the oligarchy's establishment in 1319 and the rise of the Republic, Venice with all its violence and murdered doges stands as an anti-type to modern Italy. The young Oxonian, at public school and university during the climactic years of the Risorgimento, holds strongly to ideals of democracy:

impartial investigation of recent times has [...] demonstrated how deeply seated and incurable were the vices which she [Venice] bore within her from the first and how barren are her records of any lesson in politics to which statesmen of modern times may turn with profit when striving to work out those problems which in the complicated system of society must necessarily continue to arise and to demand solution. One of the greatest events in modern history, one in which the politician would naturally expect to find traces of the influence of the Venetian annals – the establishment of the Kingdom of Italy – has been accomplished in our own time; but the spirit which led the Italian monarchy to its final resting place was fostered by the example of foreign constitutional states rather than that of the serene Republic.

Even its first settlers, those who fled Padua and settled the swamp, Waters suspects, were accustomed to tyranny, not liberty. Although he can admire Wordsworth's panegyric *On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic*, he doubts that what came just before Napoleon better served the ancient Queen of the Adriatic.⁴⁴



After these student compositions, he turns to novels, four during the following decade: *The Cardies* in three volumes, London, Hurst & Blackett, 1884; *A Lily Maid*, likewise three volumes, London, Hurst & Blackett, 1886; *My Friend Bellamy*, London and New York, Frederick Warne & Co., 1887; and *The Vagabond Will*, Bristol, Arrowsmith, 1889. His reviewers were not enthusiastic. From one in *The Academy*, we learn that the *Cardies* are «a county family of unpleasant antecedents». The current baronet, Sir Wilfrid Cardie, worst of his race, is a «cad and coward, as well as drunkard and gambler». A Jewish money-lender named Beckhardt has Sir Wilfrid in his clutches. He attempts blackmail but dies «of apoplexy and rage at the failure of his schemes». Issues of succession to the family title accompany love stories in this melodramatic saga, possibly a sign of better to come: «If this be a first attempt, Mr. Waters may make his mark one day».⁴⁵

Another tepid assessment, in *The Athenaeum*, admires *The Cardies* for its sketches of country society, but finds the plot slow to start and complains about the characters:

His sketches of country society, if they are not particularly strong, are at any rate accurate, and bear traces of an intimate acquaintance with the originals. The chief fault of the book, however, is the difficulty Mr. Waters experiences in getting the actual narrative under weigh [...]. With the exception of the rector and his nephew (who is somewhat self-righteous), the people to whom the reader is introduced are not very pleasant; indeed, the author seems to delight in revealing the darker sides of London life. Nina Basseley is a bold attempt, but we hardly think sufficient ingenuity is exhibited in dealing with her complex and impulsive character. Mr. Waters writes with singular correctness, though there are one or two lapses as regards punctuation; and he has an eye for the country. The description of King's Lynfer House, which stood amidst the «cold undrained soil,» where the «rusty red of noxious mosses» killed the colour of the grass, furnishes one or two happy touches.⁴⁶

Not much of an endorsement. Nevertheless, Waters would press on with three more novels. *A Lily Maid*, truly Victorian in its length, again receives notice in *The Athenaeum*. Although the reviewer allows that it is «distinctly well written in clear, vigorous language and the author may some day write a good novel», his tone then turns sour:

At present he shows many signs of inexperience. His plot is old, and is not treated freshly. The somewhat weak hero who leaves much of his wooing to his friend, and is deceived by him; the inexperienced country girl, possessing every accomplishment and every good quality, except that of common sense, who is consequently deceived by the false friend; the proud sad wicked mother of the weak hero, and the equally proud but poor and virtuous uncle of the heroine – all these people have been used over and over again before Mr. Waters took them in hand. If Mr. Waters is to make a name as a novelist he must give his readers something less hackneyed.⁴⁷

His third try, *My Friend Bellamy*, has left only the most fleeting mention and a handful of copies in the world.⁴⁸ So, too, his fourth foray into fiction, *A Vagabond Will*. Touted as «A story excellently well adapted to relieve the tedium of a railway journey» and «One



of the prettiest romances of this unromantic age», it was, in fact, available for sale at railway stalls.⁴⁹ A publicity source of the period offers a précis of its implausible plot:

the history of a practical joke, in which the trickster burns his own fingers. Wilfred Earle and a surly fellow passenger with a deed-box about which he seems very anxious, are the sole occupants of a first-class carriage between London and Southampton. When the surly passenger falls asleep, Earle proceeds to pay off the score he has against him by tying the precious box outside the carriage. It falls off, and Earle, on reaching Southampton, learns to his dismay that it contained a will which entitled him to a large share in his uncle's property. In his efforts to trace the lost property, he falls in with [Gypsies] and loses his heart to a dark Gypsy maid. But a rival who has been first in the field determines to get rid of Earle, and he is seized, bound, and carried off [...]. He succeeds in making his escape and recovering his sweetheart, who turns out to be his cousin, to whom, by a curious fate, the fortune he has lost eventually reverts.⁵⁰

If the first two novels had met with discouraging reviews, the next two faltered in the face of critical silence. The last, a strange tale of a migrating will and a mysterious Gypsy maid could hardly compete with the *succès fou* of Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat*, issued to huge profits by his Bristol publisher in the same year.⁵¹ No wonder Waters set out on a new course, this time as translator, beginning with *Le piacevoli notti*.

While a bowdlerized *Decameron* had existed since Elizabethan times, the tale spinner from Caravaggio had only crept by snippets into English until Waters put his powers to the larger task that had waited so long. Carried on a tide of other "novelists", both Italian and not, one of Straparola's tales (II 2) surfaces in William Painter's *Palace of Pleasure Beautified Adorned and Well Furnished with Pleasaunt Histories and Excellent Novels* (1566), a fertile repertory sacked by Shakespeare. The prominent Australian folklorist Joseph Jacobs, a contemporary of Waters, renewed it in modern times with a dedication to the Pre-Raphaelite artist Edward Burne-Jones: *The Palace of Pleasure. Elizabethan Versions of Italian and French Novels from Boccaccio, Bandello, Cinthio, Straparola, Queen Margaret of Navarre, and Others*, London, David Nutt in the Strand, 1890. In the century after Painter, there appeared another *novella spicciola*, *The Italian Taylor, and his Boy* by Robert Armin (London, Thomas Pavier, 1609), a free translation of VIII 5.⁵² Thomas Roscoe reproduces X 4 in his four-volume anthology, *The Italian Novelists: selected from the most approved authors in that language, from the earliest period down to the close of the eighteenth century: arranged in an historical and chronological series, translated from the original Italian. Accompanied with notes critical and biographical*, London, Prowett, 1825.⁵³ Within a decade of Waters's translation, the fairy tale in Straparola that has perhaps become most famous, «Puss in Boots» (XI 1), finds its way to America in Thomas Crane's *Italian Popular Tales* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1885), an ample anthology drawn primarily from Giuseppe Pitre's Sicilian sources.⁵⁴

Waters knew Painter's classic *Palace of Pleasure*, republished by Jacobs at London in 1890, and he was acquainted as well with Roscoe's perennial treasury.⁵⁵ Another English-



man, one whom Waters does not cite, adapted into English the Hero and Leander tale from *Le piacevoli notti* (VII 2). It belongs to a witty «private» *Decameron*, elite as much for its social setting as for its selective contents – only nine stories plus the frame tale. Undocumented to my knowledge in the scholarly literature, Henry Slingsby's *My Grandmother's Guests and Their Tales* is a gem printed at London and Dublin in 1825, the same year that Roscoe's often re-issued volumes first appeared.

A leisurely but engaging introduction by this anthology's tongue-in-cheek author explains how he came to join relatives and friends gathered for Christmas at his grandmother's. After a sojourn in Paris, he traveled to Havre-de-Grace, where he sought passage back to «merrie olde England» for the holiday season. The packet-agent, a rogue, books him on the Swiftsure, a vessel that proves neither speedy nor certain. To underline the humor, our narrator informs us that it is under command of one Captain Gull (in English «gull», beyond its better known sense of ocean bird, also means «a person who is easy to fool» – cfr. *gullible*). The Swiftsure arrives at Le Havre late and out of commission, forcing its snail-paced towboat to carry stranded passengers to England. On the crossing, our narrator suffers the company of a great bore, whom by good luck a fierce gale sweeps overboard. Eventually, the towboat makes landfall, wildly off course from its South Hampton destination, but felicitously, just five miles from Sidmouth, Devon, where his grandmother lives.

There he finds assembled her son and two other grandchildren; the local curate, an apothecary (sickly, of course), and an attorney, by avocation an antiquarian. The hostess herself is «a great lover of story-telling» with «a large collection of the best novels and romances, as well of ancient as of modern times». After tea, in an old-fashioned drawing room with a blazing fire that bestows «a feeling of comfort and enjoyment», she proposes «that each [...] in turn shall tell a tale». Then, one of her grandsons remarks, «we shall have a sort of *Decameron* in little», to which she replies, «The recollection of that immortal collection – that masterpiece of human wit and ingenuity, which defies, as it ever has defied, all attempts at imitation – fills me with despair». He – a cousin of the narrator's called Harry Belfort – defends himself: «I mean a sort of private *Decameron*, not one which shall go down to posterity, but simply to serve for our own amusement». It's true, he goes on, we don't have the plague, this being salubrious Devonshire, but we can do without that. We haven't Messer Giovanni's *palagio*, but a comfortable English country house. I didn't have the privilege of knowing Pampinea or Dioneo, «but we are here, and they are no more». At last, «everybody is willing *di dire una sua novelletta*». Harry proposes that his grandmother be the queen. No indeed, she firmly asserts, we'll have a republic.

Story tellers, chosen by lot as in Straparola, follow that model and its Boccaccian ancestor with conversational comments between the tales. After the first two, Belfort brings out an old book, saying:

This volume contains the tales (to my thinking) of one of the most amusing of the numerous host of Italian novelists – I mean the worthy Giovan Francesco Straparola. I know that he is not held in the greatest reputation by some of the critics, and it may be true that many of his best stories



are not original; but his manner of relating them is very delightful. I am sure I should be the most ungrateful soul alive if I did not pay him all the encomiums I think he deserves; for, whether original or not, I have enjoyed his tales as much as those of any of his cotemporaries [sic], always excepting that great master and prince of story-tellers, the inimitable Boccaccio. Straparola calls his collection ‘*Tredici piacevolissime notti*,’ and well is it worthy of that title. It has enabled me to pass several nights in the highest degree *piacevolmente* [...]. He is, besides, the great father of those fairy tales which the French authors poured out in such abundance, and which first began to appear about a century after the publication of this volume.⁵⁶

Citing from what he mistakenly believes to be the *editio princeps* – going by the price a book-dealer in London gouged for it – Belfort summarizes so closely Straparola’s proem («not the least agreeable part of his book»), that he produces a condensed translation. Having established the frame, he promises a tale both «original» and «pathetic».

It is, perhaps, impossible to ascertain [...] whether the story of Hero and Leander formed any part of the foundation of this tale [...] I shall read it exactly as I find it in the text, preserving the meaning of the Italian as nearly as possible, and of course neither adding to or diminishing it myself.⁵⁷

After a page break, under the title *Malgherita Spoletina* appears an epigraph from Byron’s *Don Juan*:

If she loved rashly, her life paid for wrong –
A heavy price must all pay who thus err
In some shape; let none think to fly the danger,
For soon or late, Love is his own avenger.

A rubric-title in brackets precedes the narrative, which begins after another page break:

Malgherita Spoletina falls in love with **Theodore**, and, swimming across an arm of the sea by night to visit him, is discovered by her brothers, who afterwards deceive her by setting up a light, and thus draw her into the main ocean, where she is most unhappily drowned. – *Le notti di Straparola, Nott. VII, Fav. 2*.⁵⁸

Compare with the original Italian:

Malgherita Spoletina s’innamora di **Teodoro calogero**, e nuotando se ne va a trovarlo, e scoperta da’ fratelli e ingannata dall’acceso lume, miseramente in mare s’annega.⁵⁹

Pirovano’s notes explain «calogero» as «monaco, di rito ortodosso». This word must have been censured in Slingsby’s Italian source text, not the first, as he believed, but one of the Counter-Reformation cluster marked by a superlative title (*Le piacevolissime notti*)



and modified to erase misbehavior that would embarrass the Church. Perhaps in his version, the problem in the title had been solved simply by suppressing the word «calogero» because Slingsby anglicizes the proper name as «Theodore» without any qualifier.⁶⁰ Waters, on the other hand, working from a more authoritative text, renders «calogero» as «hermit», maybe thinking of Boccaccio's Rustico (*Decameron*, III 10), an anchorite. For the Anglo-Saxon scholar, always careful as translator to side-step the semantics of sexual organs, escapades of the Catholic clergy presented no problem.

Malgherita Spoletina becomes enamored of **Teodoro**, a **hermit**, and swims across the sea to meet him, but being discovered by her brothers and tricked by a false signal, she dies wretchedly by drowning.⁶¹

The single Straparolian tale that Slingsby chose to anthologize, lauded by Waters as «the finest of the whole collection»,⁶² sparked the imagination of its illustrators. They offer differing perspectives on this «pathetic» story, which opens on a philosophical note with a high Boccaccian borrowing and is one of the few in the *Notti* that rise to the register of tragedy.⁶³ Edward Robert Hughes, greatly admired in his day, provided twenty illustrations on commission for the 1894 two-volume English translation. These and another set of fourteen images, originally created by Jules Arsène Garnier for an 1884 French edition, were combined for the 1898 four-volume *Facetious Nights*. The artists were invited to select their subjects, making for a hit-and-miss outcome. It leaves most *favole* without any illustration, some with just one, and seven with two, including duplicate frontispieces.⁶⁴ The tale of Malgherita, who swims to her trysts totally stripped and whose body the sea returns to Teodoro, falls in the third category, doubtless attractive for possibilities offered by the female nude (figs. 3, 4). The man who signs himself E. R. Hughes illustrates an indeterminate hermit, neither clearly religious nor secular, perhaps like the old man Petrarch encountered ascending Mt. Ventoux, or those mysterious characters that knights errant have a way of bumping into as they ride the labyrinths of chivalric romance. Under the hood of a rough tunic, his hair seems to grow bushy and wild; he carries a primitive walking stick and descends from forested rocks to the beach, where Malgherita's naked, lifeless body has washed ashore like a sleeping Venus. Jules Garnier, whose image precedes, captures the affair in its flower. He makes Teodoro much guiltier, in consonance with the couple's tragic fate, by defining him as Straparola does, a mendicant monk who has retreated from the world to atone for his sins. Garnier depicts Malgherita sensuously curvaceous and stark naked, having just climbed out of a sea heavy with breakers beneath a crescent moon, as she and a fully clothed, tonsured male embrace, standing on the rocky shore. Significantly, he turns his back to an oratory with its tabernacle to the Virgin.

Slingsby translates rather more freely than Waters, who works directly from Straparola and always preserves characters' names in their original form, achieving an Italianate text poetic in its archaic strains. In Slingsby, the Italian “novelist” appears as if conjured by a magician when Belfort, with a proud flourish, announces his rare find. To Waters,



caught up in a tide of literary fashion trending toward fairy tales, Straparola must have held similar excitement, a rare find now fittingly rediscovered, decorated by illustrators of talent, and distributed to a receptive public by a fresh young press with the finest production values.

Waters's publics were not only cultured individuals reading privately at home and in their clubs, but also sociable circles like the Christmastide gathering in old Devonshire, people who listened to stories recited orally. Reading aloud «reached its apotheosis in the Victorian era». This enticing pastime opened a «garden gateway to the flowers of the mind», as Muriel Harris extolled it nearly a century ago. By comparison, silent reading she deemed a deflating activity:

Who does not know the cold dead feeling of finishing to yourself a book that was begun aloud, the deadness, the loss of color and relief? It involves all the difference between seeing the sights with a lover, and seeing them with a Baedeker. [...] listening to [a book] mirrored equally in the appreciations of other people [...] raises all the values, doubles the reflections, makes the book as intensely living as it is possible for it to be.⁶⁵

The practice, Harris reports, «opened a door to women far more than to men. While the novel held the floor, educated women, who are now old, will tell you that most of their education was derived from reading aloud after dinner or after tea». Just so did Slingsby's family entertain themselves – after tea. Even bawdy books could be admitted, given «an odd mixture [...] of prudishness and broad-mindedness» that characterized home-bound English readers, modern descendants of Boccaccio's idle ladies. Collectively, they

could comfortably read *Tom Jones* aloud, but as imperturbably say «um–um» as it skipped the undesirable pages. Not one of them could have understood a Stock Exchange transaction and their minds had been trained to close automatically at the sound of the word «business.» But most of them spoke French beautifully, and many of them could listen with pleasure to Goldoni in the original. Most of them could converse easily with the foreigner, and there was far less of the barrier of nationality which to-day obscures our meanings. And it came out in their reading, for they read with a background not merely of national but of international culture.

Cultural formation, which exposed Victorian ladies and gentlemen to French, carried many as well to Italy, or at least its language. This helps explain why Waters could preserve Straparola's nomenclature with its “talking names” and allows him sometimes to slip from English into French without creating nonsense. «Gramotiveggio» is the pseudonym assumed by Dimitrio, who finds his wife in bed with a priest, hands her over to her murderously punitive brothers, then happily marries the maid (I 5). Messer Simplicio di Rossi, spurred by love like Francesca da Rimini – «Amor, che veramente a niuno perdona» («Love, who of a truth spares nobody») – was truly a simpleton, as Straparola spells out (II 5): «ben semplice chiamar si poteva» («indeed as simple as his name imports»). Folk



gave King Dalfreno's son Livorotto, reduced to minding pigs (III 2), a nickname that is a diminutive of «porcaro» («swineherd»): «da tutti fu chiamato Porcarollo» («men always called him Porcarollo»). The child Biancabella comes by her name quite naturally (III 3), «per la bellezza Biancabella fu posto il nome» («on account of her exceeding loveliness, the name of Biancabella was given», III 3). And we mustn't forget Castorio, the moron who wanted to lose his manhood – and did, to his everlasting delight (VI 2).⁶⁶

For pages deemed too risqué in plain, naked English (true for part of the Castorio story), French serves as a face-saving veil, transparent to the well educated, but opaque enough to confound those less familiar with communication across the Channel. Consider, for example, Antonio Bembo's tale of three nuns vying for the post of convent abbess (VI 4). Why, in a setting presumably above reproach and with a fairy-tale trio of demure candidates (Sisters Veneranda, Modestia, and Pacifica) should we be on ground unsafe for English? Precisely at the point where Straparola begins describing what each wimpled lady did to claim primacy – a display of prowess beneath her skirts – he reverts to the Gallic tongue, going on for some 1,300 words. Whoever lacks more than traveler's French will be woefully frustrated. A narrative register emerges, so coarse it shocks the Murano women, vulgarity replete with dead-accurate pissing, thunderous farting, and a vise-like buttocks capable of pulverizing peach pits. Ever the gentleman scholar, W. G. Waters scrupulously footnotes his source: «Translation by Pierre de la Rivey».

French had already come to the rescue on the same *Notte*, in VI 2. For this «facezia» with a «talking name», Waters renders the rubric:

Castorio, wishing to become fat, **submits himself to treatment** at the hands of Sandro, and being half dead thereby is soothed by a jest of Sandro's wife.

This is not quite how the Italian reads:

Castorio, desideroso di venir grasso, **si fa cavare tutti duo i testicoli** a Sandro, ed essendo quasi morto, vien dalla moglie di Sandro con una piacevolezza placato.

Here's how the story goes. Near Fano, on the Adriatic coast, lived the peasant Sandro, as roly-poly as the wench he married. Castorio, a skinny gentleman of the city, «young, rich, but not very wise», asks Sandro his recipe for rotundity. Sandro replies that a doctor painlessly removed his testicles, and since that surgeon is now deceased, Sandro himself offers to perform the operation in exchange for fifty gold florins. Castorio's wound becomes infected. To remedy the situation, Sandro's wife masquerades as her husband at work in the field and consoles Castorio by lifting a leg and showing him her crotch with an unhealed «wound» much larger and more stinking. Castorio, convinced that he is lucky after all, recovers and becomes as plump as a castrated calf.

In the Italian dialogue, when Castorio begs Sandro to reveal his secret for obesity, the plowman replies, «mi fei cavare e' testicoli». Waters makes a tactful alteration, «I made



a gelding of myself». Reversing urban-rural stereotypes, the cunning peasant convinces naïve Castorio to lie down on the grass and go under his knife.

[Sandro] tolse un coltellino che come rasoio tagliava, e presa la cassa di testicoli in mano e con oglio commune ben mollificata, destramente diede un taglio, e messi due dita nel luoco inciso, con tant'arte e con tanta destrezza **gli cavò ambi i testicoli** che quasi non sentì dolore [...] Castorio, già fatto cappone anzi eunuco, mise mano alla borsa e cinquanta fiorini li donò.

The English translation elides key details of the operation, which Sandro could just as well have performed on a barnyard animal.

Sandro, who had with him a knife as sharp as a razor, at once set to work and in a few seconds of time **made a capon of messer Castorio**. [...] [Castorio] as proper a eunuch as there was in the world, [...] put his hand in his pocket and took therefrom fifty golden florins.

Several days later the gelded gentleman, who has failed to heal, seeks out «Sandro» (that is, his wife out tilling the soil in male disguise).

Sandro, io mi sento morire se non m'aiuti. Il taglio che tu mi facesti non è ancora saldato, anzi è putrefatto e rende tanto puzzo che dubito assai di fatti miei, e se non mi porgi soccorso, presto vedrai il fine della vita mia.

In spite of his misery, as Waters will have it, at this critical point Castorio suddenly manages to switch into perfect French, duly credited to «Pierre de la Rivey»: «Sandrin, je meurs si ne prens pitié de moy car la playe que m'as faicte n'est encore refermée, joint que la chaire en est toute pourrie et rend telle puanteur que je doubte de mon salut».

French will continue as the vehicle for the rest of the story and beyond, for the riddle. Only after reassurance from the riddler that it merely refers to a cleansing enema, not some much dirtier act, does Waters allow English to return for a closing paragraph.

Such extended censorship by linguistic transference is rare. More often, small elisions or tweakings are sufficient. For example, in Molino's dialect tale Messer Ambros drops dead of violent dysentery: «vols la fortuna che messer Ambros s'amalas d'una infermità sí terribola e granda d'una insida de corp [uscita di corpo] che **cagà la vita**». Waters gives no clue as to the cause of death: «by ill fortune [...] Messer Ambros was seized with so grave and insidious an illness that after the lapse of a few days **he died**».⁶⁷

Not surprisingly, a naughty word central to the story of Adamantina's magic doll (V 2) requires some tinkering. The toy, fully able to speak since this is fairyland, alerts her mother Adamantina when it is time for a diaper change: «**Mamma, mamma, caca** [...] **Io vorrei far caca, mamma mia**». Adamantina encouragingly puts a cloth under the doll, «**fa caca, figliuola mia**». The doll strains and fills the cloth with golden coins. For this stercoral humor, Waters devises an ingenious solution: «**The stool, mother, the stool**».



Now «stool» more commonly means «sgabello», but in medical parlance it is a piece of feces. So the English word might betoken both a toilet-training potty and the bodily waste that a child deposits in it. Of course, «stool» is practically nonsensical if a person doesn't know the original Italian. Waters gracefully skates over the thin ice, here and for the whole *favola*: «[Adamantina] straightaway arose and ministered to the doll as if it had been a young child, and to her amazement she found that **the doll filled the stool** with a great quantity of coins of all sorts».

Hearing of this amazing feat, an envious neighbor steals the doll, who «empi il panno di tanto puzzolente feccia ch'appena se le poteva avvicinare» («the doll filled the chamber with so offensive a smell that the good woman was fain to get as far away from it as she could»). In anger, the thief's husband throws it out the window, and it lands atop a heap of garbage. Out on a hunt one day, King Drusiano is visited by a sudden call of nature: «venne una grandissima volontà di scaricare il superfluo peso del ventre» («the king [...] was seized with a sharp pain of his intestines»).⁶⁸ After a servant haphazardly pulls the doll out of the manure and hands it to the king to wipe himself, the dolly goes on a merciless attack:

[...] la poavola con e' denti gli aveva presa **una natica** e sí strettamente la teneva che gridare ad alta voce lo faceva [...] alle volte con le mani gli apprendeva **e' sonagli** e sí fatta stretta gli dava che gli faceva vedere quante stelle erano in cielo a mezzo il giorno.

Waters makes both «buttocks» and «bells» disappear with deft legerdemain:

[...] the doll had seized upon his **hinder parts** with its teeth, and held on thereto with so tight a grip that he screamed out with agony [...] now and again **the doll would claw him with its sharp fingers** so grievously that he seemed to see all the stars of the firmament, although it was yet high noon.

Long before it came to Waters's attention, Straparola's miscellany had suffered mutilation from Italian moralists. Antonio Bembo's *favola* would have been a target, not for its focus on the female nether regions, but because it makes a mockery of convent dwellers. The cuts began as early as 1555, with a reprint of the second volume in which a priest, caught *in flagrante* during the night with an image-carver's wife, assumes the pose of a naked, sculpted Christ figure standing like a Crucifix inside a conveniently placed armoire, then flees in the nick of time to save his private parts from the enraged husband's chisel (VIII 3). It was replaced by two *favole* of equal length. Successive editors further butchered *Le piacevoli notti*, and churchmen put it on no less than four Indexes of Prohibited Books. Yet in its earlier years, a time of unparalleled production by the *novellieri* and the presses, especially at Venice, and in spite of the censors' stabs, Straparola's collection soared above the competition, achieving status as an early modern best seller.⁶⁹

In Victorian and Edwardian England it met with comparable favor. During an era of progress and prosperity before World War I, with well-schooled adults open to classics



«complete and unexpurgated» – *The Decameron* by Payne, *The Book of One Thousand Nights and One Night*, and Basile’s *Pentamerone* by Burton, Waters performs a labor of restoration by not cutting a single tale. At the same time, he is quite like the old-fashioned ladies who in their mixture of «prudishness and broad-mindedness», listened after tea to spicy novels such as the picaresque *Tom Jones*. Open to obscene and scatological tales, he can with circumspection lower his eyes, so to speak, when it comes to the most shocking passages. His English tames the Italian by trimming bawdy bites or sprinkling Gallic salt. The Victorian gentleman achieves a paradoxical feat. At once translator and censor, he opens the text while hiding it.

For Waters, that successful engagement with Straparola marked a major turning point in his literary activity, from novelist to translator. He next took up two earlier Italian authors from whose tales the sixteenth-century *novelliere* had borrowed, Masuccio Salernitano (ca. 1410 – ca. 1475) and Ser Giovanni fiorentino (d. after 1385). Bracketed chronologically between the two-volume *Nights* (1894) and the four-volume *Facetious Nights* (1898), the results were two new issues, of 1895 and 1897 respectively, again from Lawrence and Bullen, cloth-bound in identical simple but elegant format and with illustrations by the much admired E. R. Hughes, R.W.S. (Royal Watercolor Society). These “sequels” make an ideal set,⁷⁰ and the trio is a logical sequence. Waters was working his way backward. As he uncovered one author’s source material, it led him to another, where he could delve into untilled territory.

The Novellino of Masuccio, its title page announces, brought into English for the first time a collection of fifty tales by the Salernitan nobleman more properly known as Tommaso Guardati, a court secretary in Aragonese Naples.⁷¹ Circulated initially in 1000 numbered copies for England and America with eighteen illustrations,⁷² it immediately reappeared in London reprints unidentified by publisher or date, and was privately printed in the same city for members of the Aldus Society in 1901 and 1903. Although for some profiteers Masuccio was grist for the mill of “private printings”, Waters presents his second major translation project in an Introduction that shines as a model of serious scholarship, substantial and insightful. In less than twenty pages, he elegantly gives the book a “personality,” capturing its quiddity in the times and place that shaped it.

An obvious point of comparison for understanding Masuccio is Boccaccio, to whom his imitator refers (Prologue, Part III). Both men had court connections at Naples, a century apart. The Certaldan’s follower composes exactly half a *Decameron*, divided into five thematic sections of ten *novelle* each. Waters faults him, though, for failing (unlike Straparola) to capitalize on Boccaccio’s great invention of the frame tale. He has «just a heap of rough-hewn tales», each beginning with a dedication to a personage of importance and ending with the musings it summons to his mind. Even if most of Boccaccio’s stories had been lost, Waters declares, his *Decameron* would still be important for «the extraordinary beauty and delicacy of the setting, which must ever be ranked among the acknowledged masterpieces of literary craftsmanship».⁷³ The translator’s admiration for Boccaccio’s *novella portante* must remind us of *The Cook’s Decameron* by Mrs. W. G.



Waters. As this writer has observed, in her spin-off she «connects not with the racy, transgressive *novelle* that so typically determine modern reincarnations [of the *Decameron*], but rather with the frame tale, which counters the impetus toward rule-breaking and lays down boundaries to assert social harmonies». ⁷⁴

Overall, in spite of a mixed review, Waters warms to his subject, «a would-be reformer of manners», especially profligate clergy and unchaste women. The translator forgives Masuccio's «occasional lapses into licentiousness of expression [as] accidents inseparable from the age in which he wrote». He reads him as a realist whose stories make forays into history, in contrast to the fictions of Boccaccio and Ser Giovanni, or Straparola's fairy tales. He displays his own classical education when he quotes the epitaph for Masuccio in Latin from Pontano, ⁷⁵ patronized by Alfonso il Magnanimo, praiseworthy for an enlightened rule rivaling that of Cosimo de' Medici. The son Ferdinando who succeeded Alfonso, however, deserves nothing but contempt, as evil as Ezzellino or Bernabò Visconti. Because Masuccio was secretary to Ferdinando's good friend Roberto of Sanseverino, he never criticized the tyrant, silence for which Waters judges the writer sycophantic and servile. On the other hand, his talent for describing common people – peasants, traders, craftsmen – appeals to the gentleman scholar, who lived in fashionable London but whose roots were in the countryside and villages of his native Norfolk. Often «coarse in diction», Masuccio writes not in dialect but language «tinged with popular idiom», calling himself «materno poeta» in the first phrase of his book. In contrast to Pontano, he wanted to use Neapolitan to see if it could work as well as Tuscan for Pulci, and Ferrarese for Boiardo.

From the cool Englishman's point of view, «Masuccio writes with all the fire of a southern Italian». ⁷⁶

Sexual love around the shores of Parthenope was then, as it is now, of that elemental and primitive character of which we find some echo in Lucretius when he writes of that over-mastering force which sways the material universe as potently as the bodies of men and women. In Latin countries, as compared with Teutonic, woman is more especially regarded as the instrument of pleasure, and the Neapolitan is subject to a superadded influence of similar nature by reason of the stream of Oriental life which at different periods overflowed his frontiers. ⁷⁷

Waters the scholar is fully at home with the culture of medieval courtly love, which he finds abundant in Masuccio's «novels» of adultery. As he measures Masuccio's scale of values – an adulteress is only guilty if she chooses an unworthy object, say a dwarf or a Moorish muleteer rather than a fine young gentleman – one senses in Waters a touch of the late Romantic, who must disapprove of infidelity but loves its poetry. Tristram and Yseult, Paolo and Francesca «are but the most noteworthy examples, the finest flowers of this unwholesome passion-nourished thicket of exotic bloom, worked up into pathetic stories and set before us». Gottfried von Strassburg asks us to have compassion for Tristram and Yseult, Dante puts Paolo and Francesca in the circle of lightest punishment, and Tennyson makes us sympathize with Lancelot and Guinevere. ⁷⁸



In judging him,

some heed must be taken of the change which, since his day, has come over the ordinary conception of sexual love. Masuccio lived in the lingering shadows of the middle ages, and was on this account the heir of a tradition by which certain forms of adultery attained a place, if not amongst the domestic virtues, at least amongst the venial sins. The air was as yet heavy with the miasma bred from the dismal swamp of cramped and artificial life led by womankind in those dreary centuries.⁷⁹

One infers that Waters, whose wife was herself an author, approves of the liberated modern woman. He seconds Masuccio's castigation of the clergy, but he cannot accept his fierce misogyny. The author's concluding remarks to the twenty-third tale capture in Waters's rendering its virulent tone:

Would that it had been God's pleasure and Nature's to have suffered us to be brought forth from the oak-trees, or indeed to have been engendered from water and mire like the frogs in the humid rains of summer, rather than to have taken our origin from so base, so corrupt, and so vilely fashioned a sex as womankind.⁸⁰

Reviewing as a batch four recent translations from Boccaccio, Ser Giovanni, Masuccio, and Bandello, one critic characterized the Salernitan as «prophet» of the *novellieri*, standing to them «in much the same relationship as that borne by Savonarola to his brother monks. [...] He wrote with a pen of red-hot iron».⁸¹ That anonymous contributor to the «Edinburgh Review», with a colorful style reminiscent of Francesco De Sanctis, could find enchantment in Boccaccio's frame tale, and he thanks Waters enthusiastically for his Straparola, («the glamour of fairyland, the sun-glamour of the East, not the moon-glamour of the North, lies over many a passage»), but for the most part he roundly censors the Italian *novellieri*, hammering them for immorality and repulsive *beffe* utterly unacceptable to British sensitivities. Through his invective, we gain perspective. By comparison to this contemporary, Waters was more measured in temperament, tolerant of cultural differences, tireless in his intellectual curiosities.

A pioneering scholar, he made the first translation into any language not only of Masuccio's *Novellino* (based on Luigi Settembrini's 1874 edition), but also Ser Giovanni's *Pecorone* (based on the Turin edition of 1853). Here, as in *The Nights of Straparola* and *The Novellino of Masuccio*, he presents the volume in a splendidly professional Introduction.⁸² An overview of scholarship on the author's elusive identity launches the piece, sounding all the necessary names and theories: Domenico Maria Manni's notion that it was Villani; Canonico Biscioni's belief that it was the first General of the Franciscan order after Francis himself, sustained by Gaetano Poggioli in his Leghorn edition of 1793; Marcus Landau's idea that it was a Florentine *gonfaloniere* by the name of Giovanni Cambi; and the argument advanced by Angelo de Gubernatis – with whom Waters was in direct correspondence – that «Ser Giovanni» is as apocryphal as Ossian, and the *Peco-*



rone is a fraudulent product of the *rafazzonatore* Lodovico Domenichi, who published the first edition (Milano, 1558), dedicated to the poet Lucia Bertani. Toward his Italian colleague the Englishman is skeptical but impeccably courteous.⁸³

Fascinated by medieval and Renaissance Italy,⁸⁴ Waters is here again in his element. Ser Giovanni, writing in the wake of Messer Boccaccio, collects fifty tales, linked loosely by a simple frame. As the proem tells, word reaches the Florentine Aurette (an anagram for «*auttore*»?) of a famously beautiful nun in a convent near Forlì. Seized by *amor de lonh* for this Sister Saturnia, he takes the tonsure and travels to her nunnery. There as convent chaplain he visits with her in the *parlatorio* and after twenty-five days wins her love. During their honorable daily «*duologue*» («*naught of unseemliness was ever there*»), each tells one tale, followed by a *canzonetta*. Their story and those they tell are reported by Ser Giovanni, a victim of hard times and political tumult, forced to flee Florence for refuge in Dovadola, near Forlì. This Giovanni, whoever he was, unleashes his translator's love of history. To establish the author's background, Waters fluidly condenses bygone conflicts between Guelph and Ghibelline, Black and White, noble and *popolano*; he conjures the tyrannical Duke of Athens and comes to the Ciompi revolt of 1378, presumed date of the *Pecorone*.

Waters, who would today be called «an independent scholar», always engages judiciously with the critical tradition, but he seems happiest when he turns to literature. His style waxes poetic with animating rhetorical figures like metaphor, personification, and alliteration. Aurette's *amor de lonh* leads to a sweep through the centuries of Italy's lyric tradition. Troubadours, who had been in Sicily since the Norman kingdom of William II, passed their traditions to Frederick II's court, and they flourished in the north as well, in those lands just below the Alps, across from Provence: «[...] troubadour literature raised its head there above all other». Who better to back him up than Dante's Marco Lombardo?

In sul paese ch'Adice e Po riga,
solea valore e cortesia trovarsi
prima che Federigo avesse briga (*Purgatorio* XVI 115-118).

In time, troubadour verse faded; «the life of the flower flagged and declined after the wrench which separated it from its native soil». Nevertheless, Ser Giovanni must have known Jaufré Rudel and his distant lady, Melisande of Tripoli: «[...] the ghost of this dead and gone Provençal culture must have been walking in the days with which the proem of the *Pecorone* proposes to treat».

Yet Waters is not so lost in the past as to lack of a sense of the present, feeling the spirit of the Risorgimento, a patriotic movement he had saluted in his early student essay on Venice. In the native-born lyrics of Guittone d'Arezzo and Guido Guinizelli, he sees the beginnings of national tradition. While troubadour verse was «a flower that wilted, severed from its roots», they wrote poetry «worthy of being placed alongside that of Petrarch himself. It bears traces of those sterner surroundings amidst which the national life of



Italy was being molded». Waters was reading an Italian political exile's son, Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882), whose *Early Italian Poets* he cites for its English translation of Guinizelli. The Tuscan school sublimated the

body and soul of the worshipped object [...] into the most exalted expression of beauty and spiritual elegance [...] Beatrice and Laura, and the fainter, belated figure of the fair Geraldine, Surrey's pathetic love object.⁸⁵

Waters copiously annotates all three of his translated *novellieri* with an apparatus at the end of each anthology pointing to sources and analogues for the tales, a motif index. Not surprisingly, his antennae as a comparatist are alert in the volume presentations, too. So he knows the world tradition in which Ser Giovanni sits both before Boccaccio and after Masuccio – the *Cento novelle antiche*, the *Disciplina clericalis*, *Gesta romanorum*, and *Seven Wise Masters*, Arthurian romance, the historians Villani and Livy. He compares two stories in Ser Giovanni and Straparola and supposes that Shakespeare must have known Giovanni's story of Giannotto before he wrote *The Merchant of Venice*.

Critical success crowned this effort, from an anonymous *Athenaeum* reviewer much more appreciative than the evaluators on whose desk *The Cardies* and *The Lily Maid* had landed more than ten years before.⁸⁶ Ser Giovanni's book, never available until now except in Italian, has been «translated with frankness and vivacity [and] illustrated with original drawings of great merit by Mr. E. R. Hughes, one of the most accomplished draughtsmen of our time». Boccaccio's «garden party» gives place to «authorized interviews in a convent parlour», elevating morally the *Pecorone*, which «knows little or nothing of the occasional coarseness of the *Decameron*». Consequently, «objections to it as a book for family reading are precisely those which apply to the *Decameron* and its successors, but they are less considerable». Special praise goes to the «erudite introductory essay» that lays out what Waters has been able to glean about the author, the book's history, and the tales. The reviewer is left with only one disappointment, that there are so few illustrations by Hughes, admirable for his «nude and graceful figures».

While occupied by these ambitious Italian projects, Waters somehow found time for enlisting his skills in a sort of literary epicycle, surprising in the path of his career. He is one of eight writers to play on an all-male team that knocked off the oddly titled book, *Lives of Twelve Bad Women: Illustrations and Reviews of Feminine Turpitude set forth by Impartial Hands*, edited by Arthur Vincent (London, T. F. Unwin, 1897). Lest anyone fault them for antifeminism, their album, still in print, follows another to form a pair: *Twelve Bad Men: Original Studies of Eminent Scoundrels by Various Hands*, edited by Thomas Seccombe (London, Fisher Unwin, 1894). Although the series could have continued, as one anonymous reviewer of the second entry wryly put it (with twelve bad boys, bad girls, bad kings, bad queens, bad statesmen, and so forth), it wasn't likely to be worn «threadbare». End it did after the first two volumes, perhaps with some help from this endorsement: «These lives may be read with amusement and interest by those who have nothing better to read».⁸⁷



Seccombe (1866-1923), elite by education at Felsted College and Oxford's Balliol (where he received a First in History – Waters at Worcester had only won a Second), bequeathed a respectable corpus. In addition to writing some 700 entries for the *Dictionary of National Biography*, he wrote a history of English literature, and books on Samuel Johnson and Shakespeare. As editor he put together a chronological anthology of prose and poetry *In Praise of Oxford* and the essays for *Twelve Bad Men*. Twelve, as he casually remarks in a preface, just seemed a natural number: «Our unifying principle is pre-eminence in ill-doing».⁸⁸

His lieutenant Arthur Vincent, compiler of the *Twelve Bad Women*, has not left other perceptible footprints. A preface orients the book as a sequel, to point out that that not all evil-doing women come from other countries. (With examples like Lucrezia Borgia, Catherina de' Medici, Empress Catherine [of Russia], and Joan of Naples we can see where they are concentrated). Plentiful at home too, here they will all be inhabitants of the British Isles.⁸⁹ They are not the worst who ever lived, no Lady Macbeths, but they were «consistently bad, whether owing to a vicious temperament, a crooked nature, or a lack of moral perception resulting in unscrupulousness and crime».

Clichés of misogyny blast off the volume, an epigraph that jogs memory of Masuccio (better to be born of mud or frogs than women), and could account in part for Waters's role as author of three chapters, more than any other contributor, since he had just lately published his translation of the *Novellino*.

What mighty ills have not been done by woman?
 Who was't betrayed the Capital? A woman!
 Who lost Mark Antony the world? A woman!
 Who was the cause of a long ten years' war,
 And laid at last old Troy in ashes? Woman!
 Destructive, damnable, deceitful woman.

Otway⁹⁰

The first and most fascinating of the trio by Waters, preceded as are most in the book by a full-page engraved portrait, is a tightly packed exposé of Elizabeth Canning, domestic servant (d. 1773), whose case became one of the most celebrated in the annals of English crime. An epigraph sets the stage for mayhem: «I will be found most cunning in my patience: | but (dost thou hear?) most bloody. – *Othello*». At the age of eighteen she vanished, leaving her family wracked with anxiety. A month later she reappeared, battered, starved, and half-naked, claiming to have been kidnapped and imprisoned in a hay loft by the notorious madam, «Mother Wells», and an old Gypsy hag, Mary Squires. Witnesses came forward both to confirm and deny. London was divided between «Canningites» and «Gypsyites», and pamphlets fell from the Grub Street press «thick as leaves at Vallombrosa».⁹¹ Events galloped to a sensationalistic trial, first before a Justice of the Peace, then the Magistrate Henry Fielding (to posterity famed for his novel *Tom Jones*). After a jury at the



Old Bailey had heard all the contradictory, confusing testimony, the law executed Squires for theft (Canning claimed the Gypsy had stolen her corset stays), mutilated Mother Wells's hand in punishment by fire, and «transported» the so-called victim to the Colonies, where she died in Wethersfield, Connecticut. In the end, some truth came out: there had been no abduction and Canning had perjured herself. Where had she really spent that missing month – with a lover? Giving birth? No one has ever known. Moral of the story: lesser evil may lie harmlessly dormant; it becomes greater in proportion to the damage it inflicts on others, innocent victims.⁹²

Another page-turner awaits in the life of Elizabeth Chudleigh (d. 1788), a woman who used her beauty to climb high at court, but for all the suspense Waters creates, his epigraph makes her doom a foregone conclusion, the fateful end for a woman rotten at the core:

You see, my lords, what goodly fruit she seems:
Yet like those apples travellers report
To grow where Sodom and Gomorrah stood
I will but touch her and you straight shall see
She'll fall to soot and ashes.

Vittoria Corombona⁹³

Maid of honor to the princess of Wales, she secretly married a navy lieutenant and returned to court, where the seventy-year-old King George II pursued her. An attack of gout kept her from the next masquerade ball: «[...] she had already begun to give way to the capulous humours lurking in her blood». When she married the Duke of Kingston, bigamy was proven and she was «unduchessed». She attempted to bribe the playwright Samuel Foote not to dramatize her life of «crime and profligacy», and he, ruined by her attacks, died a broken man. At last, she sailed by private yacht to a lover in St. Petersburg, thence to Paris, where years of alcoholism and adultery took their toll. Learning that a law suit had gone against her, she burst a blood vessel and the next day, after a final draught of madeira, she died. «All her ideals were base and sordid [...] her tastes and habits were gross and even brutal, and she never let any consideration of decency and cleanly living interfere with them».⁹⁴

No less an authority than Horace launches the life of Mary Anne Clarke (d. 1852): «Non missura cutem nisi plena cruoris hirudo».⁹⁵ A bloodsucker on society, Clarke was a courtesan, prostitute, swindler, and felon who lived off her lovers' money. She specialized in taking bribes from men who wanted posts or advancement in the army, which she duly provided in complicity with the Duke of York, whose mistress she was, living in «waste and profligacy [like] Romans of the Decadence».⁹⁶

The novelist joins the classicist in these biographies, written with the seduction of fiction. The scholar who could quote and frown at Pontano for sloppy Latin, here goes for the jugular with a perfect verse from Horace. As always, Waters impresses for the rigor of his research and the range of his reading in the library of English authors. We have



been coming across them now from Shakespeare to Webster, from Surrey to Tennyson and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. His learning was immense. He wielded the pen with native talent and disciplined art. His contributions to *Twelve Bad Women*, in spite of a book title that promises lurid journalism, are in fact prose at a high literary level. Waters himself has a vein as *novelliere*.⁹⁷

Behind the thousands of pages he penned and perused, who was William George Waters?

He read voraciously everything which came in his way, and [...] he stored his memory with that vast collection of facts out of which he subsequently compounded the row of tomes which form his legacy to posterity. [...] as he surveyed the broadening horizon of the world of knowledge, he must have felt the student's spasm of agony when he first realized the infinity of research and the awful brevity of time.

Actually, these words do not refer to Waters, although they very well could. He wrote them speaking of his subject in *Jerome Cardan: A Biographical Study* (1898). That polygraph (1501-1576), fascinated by arcana, records in his *De vita propria* the remarkable twists and turns of his life.⁹⁸ Looking back, Waters sees him living in an era of despots and before the Enlightenment («during the rule of authority»), unluckily held back in his explorations: «[...] he missed the labour in the full harvest-field, the glimpse of the distant mountain tops, suffused for the first time by the new light». His progress «for the most part resembled the movement of a squirrel in a rotatory cage». In a final paragraph, we hear the biographer, who has fought back against time, lament the fate of a forgotten man.

Leaving out of the reckoning his mathematical treatises, the vogue enjoyed by Cardan's published works must have been a short one. They came to the birth only to be buried in the yawning graves which lie open in every library.

Much the same sentiment resonates in a book review he wrote for «The Times Literary Supplement» about a decade later, on *Coke of Norfolk and his Friends. The Life of Thomas William Coke, First Earl of Leicester of Holkham* by Anna Maria Wilhelmina Stirling. As author, he remarks, she had the good fortune to be called upon «to disinter an illustrious name from undeserved neglect».⁹⁹ That spirit of recovering a forgotten life, we can see, pervaded his research, not just for Cardano, but Straparola, Masuccio, and Ser Giovanni.

Alas, the modest Victorian, who himself would become honorary librarian in the Savile Club, left no such convenient record as an autobiography. Preferring to duck back in the shadows – as he accuses Cardano of doing, even in a self-portrait – he, too, has been largely forgotten. We must piece together the picture from scattered sources, starting with his generous obituary in the *London Times*. (He has no entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.) Glimpses of him flash at moments across his imposing corpus, the seventeen books he signed and other shorter pieces. When his chapter on the «bad» Elizabeth Canning recalls scandal sheets that flew «thick as leaves at Vallombrosa», for an



instant we picture Mr. and Mrs. Waters as wayfarers, hiking on the heavily forested slopes that envelop that ancient medieval Tuscan abbey. His unsigned book reviews in «The Times Literary Supplement», more than fifty of them, flow philosophically as far-reaching meditations on life and art, rounding out our sense of this most impressive individual – his personality, his preferences, his firm opinions. From time to time he breaks privacy to voice an opinion in letters to the editor in reviews like «The Athenaeum» and «The Times Literary Supplement» that were a forum for debates of the day. He signs them, «Obediently yours, W.G. Waters». From inside his own household comes another cache, the chatty slice-of-life dialogues Mrs. W. G. Waters staged for the *dramatis personae* in her «new» *Decameron*. Finally, his membership in prestigious gentleman's clubs during the golden age of London «Clubland» widens our window on the people around him, a defining social milieu.

According to his death notice, William George Waters was born in 1844 at Wighton, Norfolk of a family originally from Holland, who came to England at the time of Queen Elizabeth and settled as yeomen farmers in East Anglia. After living for a time on his family's Norfolk estate at Hindringham, and attending Oxford, he moved to fashionable Mansfield Street in London, occupying a house designed by the renowned eighteenth-century Neoclassical architect, Robert Adam.¹⁰⁰ His hospitality made it a delightful center in the intellectual life of the city. «Possessed of ample private means, he was able to devote his life to literature and to what interested him without ulterior motive». For many years honorary librarian and a member of the governing committee at the Savile Club, he later joined the Athenaeum. He was an Italian scholar with a wide knowledge of Renaissance literature and art. «He recalled something of the cultivated patron of learning of the eighteenth century, and was a fine example of independence devoted to worthy ends».¹⁰¹

The obituary is set under a heading in bolder type, «Mr. W. G. Waters, Italian Art and Literature». Author and translator, the versatile Mr. Waters also made his mark as an accomplished, if controversial, art historian. In the same year his wife published *The Cook's Decameron* (1901), his book *Piero della Francesca* came out, conceived «to illustrate his position in relation to his contemporaries and surroundings». Waters revered Piero:

In literature and in art as well, the student will light now and again upon striking figures which, if for no other reason, compel attention from the fact that they stand apart, upon pedestals of their own. Piero della Francesca is one of these great solitary figures in the world of Art, and there are not many of them.¹⁰²

For all his enthusiasm, Waters ran afoul with the establishment. One reviewer solemnly trounced him:

William George Waters is greatly daring. He disputes the conclusions of Dr. Bode [Director of the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin], Mr. Berenson, and Sir Edward Poynter [President of the Royal Academy] and completes his illustrations by making the frontispiece the exquisite profile



portrait of a lady in the Poldi-Pezzoli Gallery at Milan. But in his catalogue this fine work is included amongst the pictures “attributed to the artist which the author cannot accept.” It would appear as if the author’s instinct for a beautiful picture were better than his written judgment.¹⁰³

How Waters, usually impeccable in his scholarship, could have let pass such an embarrassment is hard to understand.¹⁰⁴ This was not the only time that his idiosyncratic pronouncements raised a critic’s hackles.

Ten years after the unfortunate *Piero della Francesca*, he brought out an encyclopedia of Italian sculpture, in a portable format suitable for travelers, by size and for its index of localities. It runs to more than two-hundred entries, from Nicola Pisano to the Seicento, or in alphabetical order, from Agostino di Duccio to Giovanni Zacchi. Donatello gets most space, with twelve pages, then Michelangelo with eight, and Nicola, deified as «first of the moderns», seven.¹⁰⁵ Fed by years of fact-harvesting and site inspections on the Continent, *Italian Sculptors* could have been a laudable vademecum, but once again, as had happened long ago with his novels, Waters encounters hostility. A hawk-eyed Bowyer Nichols, assessing it for *The Times Literary Supplement*, spots too many small factual errors. Mainly, though, the younger man objects to Waters for being old-fashioned and rigid in his judgments. He has in mind the alleged «ugliness» of Donatello’s *Zuccone* (John the Baptist) and *Maddalena; Santa Teresa in Ecstasy*, where Bernini «reaches the lowest depth of hysterical emotion».¹⁰⁶ A week later, the miffed Italianist fires back: «My critic and I hold our several opinions by titles of equal validity». *Santa Teresa*, a «spiritual exaltée» in her «quasierotic contortions», is «painful and revolting». As for the Donatellos, they are «masterpieces», yes, but ugly nonetheless.¹⁰⁷

A much happier reception had met *The Journal of Montaigne’s Travels in Italy* (1903), testimony to Waters’s peripatetic spirit and Italy’s magnetic pull. Back in his safer niche as translator, he writes in a preface:

Most of us have crossed the Alps and descended upon Italy; and, changed as the conditions of travel are, it raises a sympathetic interest to read of the humours of the road in Montaigne’s time, and to compare his experience with our own. We are introduced to him face to face with troubles and pleasures, the intensity of which it is not difficult to gauge: the knavery of post-masters: the stupidity of guides: the discomfort of this inn, and the excellence of that [...] toleration is his watchword.¹⁰⁸

His preview portrays the French traveler, tormented by gall stones and kidney gravel, yet cheery of temperament, through an itinerary attuned more to customs than «sights». Although very ill, he vowed to

“take joyfully all the good fortune God may send. Moreover there is no remedy, nor rule, nor knowledge whereby to keep clear of these evils which, from every side and at every minute, gather round man’s footsteps, save in the resolve to endure them with dignity, or boldly and



promptly make an end of them.” We seem here to be very far from the traditional frivolity of the Frenchman; much nearer to the calm wisdom of Epictetus or Marcus Aurelius.¹⁰⁹

For medicinal purposes he stops at Lucca, a spa where he much admires water games in the gardens of the villas, «ridiculous squirts and tubes which are devised to drench the unwary visitors»; he joins throngs of pilgrims at Loreto; penetrates the Vatican; meets Pope Gregory XIII, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Duke of Ferrara, cardinals, ambassadors, chancellors, countless officials, even *cortigane*.¹¹⁰

Waters must have been a constant, perennial reader, wherever he was – at home, at his club, on the road – so the idea of the book becomes a metaphor in his thinking. Thus Montaigne’s journey is like a book. He relished every «page» and wanted it to go on forever: «On setting out for Italy, he declared he seemed to be in like case to one who reads some delightful story or good book and dreads to turn the last page». Most writers have a single characterizing book: of Isaac Walton we remember not his *Lives*, but the *Compleat Angler*; Swift is author of *Gulliver*; Gray’s name immediately suggests *Elegy*. For Montaigne it is the *Essays*, which accompany Waters throughout his commentary. Only from them, as revised in 1588, do we learn, for example, that when at Ferrara the Frenchman visited Tasso. Waters finds it astonishing that the travel memoir, complement to the *Essays*, wasn’t published until 1774, when it was found in a trunk at Périgord.¹¹¹

One passage from Montaigne that the translator lifts into his Introduction concerns the case of «Marie, la barbue», so-called because she had a face more hairy than the other girls. She lived at Vitry le Français, a girl until the age of twenty-two. That changed when one day she exerted herself and took a great leap, breaking a ligament. Testicles painfully descended, and it turned out she was a man, thereafter to be called Germain. He returned to his mother, weeping because he thought his intestines had come out, «dis-ant que ses trippes estoient sortiés hors du ventre». Waters notes that one of Morlini’s *novelle* (XXII) tells a similar tale; Straparola borrowed it for his *favola* of Filomena the hermaphrodite (XIII 9).¹¹²

Waters compares Montaigne with contemporary travelers. One was the Englishman Fynes Moryson, who for ten years at the end of the Cinquecento wandered Europe and the Middle East. Thanks to his biographer Charles Hughes, the fourth volume of his *Itinerary* had just appeared in a new London edition, the same year as the *Journal of Montaigne’s Travels* (1903). It disappointed Waters, who in a letter to «The Athenaeum» of June 6, 1903, complains about cuts to the original. «Being much interested in early European travel», he was looking forward to the whole fourth part, where Hughes had justified his abridgements of «laborious compilations [...] enlivened with very few personal touches». Waters indignantly objects:

[...] a “laborious compilation” is quite as likely – or even more likely – to contain morsels out of which history may be built up than are the most lively personal touches [...] the selector



[...] will as likely as not cut away the very passages on which the bookworm would browse most gratefully.

Hughes rushes to his defense a week later with irony as his weapon: he has preserved the livelier passages and cut the parts that rely on historians like Guicciardini because he wanted to give an idea of how people lived in the time of Shakespeare. If there is a renewed interest in Moryson, perhaps a complete edition could be prepared, but that would run to eight volumes. Hughes is inclined to think that he is the only person, aside from Fynes Moryson himself, to have read the whole folio edition of 1617.¹¹³

The reviewer who gave a strong public seal of approval to *The Journal of Montaigne's Travels in Italy*, turned out to be the very same Thomas Seccombe responsible for *Twelve Bad Men*. Who better qualified for this labor than the translator already known for Ser Giovanni, Straparola, and Massuccio? «A piece of work that was well worth doing could hardly have fallen into more able or sympathetic hands».¹¹⁴ Seccombe accepts the authenticity of the manuscript, noting the recent edition by Alessandro d'Ancona.¹¹⁵ From the travelogue, two-thirds in unidiomatic Italian, he plucks colorful detail: Montaigne's discovery of water and perfume distilled by Jesuits, his visit to Venice, where the «famous Aspasia» Veronica Franco presented him with a copy of her *Lettere famigliari*; to Pratolino where he liked the *eaux d'artifice* but not the hotel, food, or lack of entertainment; to Rome, «a sepulcher». These volumes must be read together with the *Essays* for a fuller picture of the man who would have spent his life and died on horseback, had he not been recalled to France as mayor of Bordeaux.

When the Waters traveled, they did so equipped with a Baedeker, as we can extrapolate from *The Cook's Decameron*, where conversation one day traces an ideal Italian itinerary leading to the Adriatic town of Fano, home of a painting made famous by Robert Browning in his poem of 1848, *The Guardian Angel: A Picture at Fano*. Lunch after an awesome visit to Guercino's *Angelo Custode* takes place at the Albergo Del Moro, an establishment surviving only as a ghost in the 1890 Baedeker of Central Italy and Rome.¹¹⁶ Advance preparation armed them as well, so we appreciate from Mr. Waters's Introduction to his book that marries travel and art history, *Five Italian Shrines* (1906).

In times when leisure was more abundant than it now is, it used to be a commonplace that all travel should be preceded by a course of appropriate reading: that the man who went to see his sights with adequate knowledge of them gained by study gathered far more enjoyment and profit than he who set forth uninstructed [...]. No student of history can pass by Runnymede, or Pevensey Level [where William the Conqueror landed before he went to Hastings], or the bloody meadow at Tewkesbury [scene of a decisive 1471 battle in the Wars of the Roses] without regarding these acres as different in essence from the adjacent ones, though there is no visible sign to mark their title to renown; the most unimaginative of pilgrim scholars will not behold them unmoved by some vision of the phantom figures of those who played their parts in the momentous dramas there acted ages ago – pictures which have no existence in the eye of the unlettered rustic or of the gaping, wearied tripper.



Runnymede, Pevensey Level, Tewkesbury – Waters himself, an indefatigable sightseer, had visited them all. And he personally is all the wayfarers whose roamings have enriched their memories:

One pilgrim will return from his wanderings and quote the moment when he stood on the threshold of the Mamertine prison in Rome as his supreme experience; another will award this honour to the church at Fano where Browning came across Guercino's angel; and another to Tasso's dungeon at Ferrara.¹¹⁷

The great cathedrals of Paris, Reims, and Chartres are a beaten path he abandons. Like his wife, who disparages Italians that copy French cuisine, he rejects the monumental Gothic for miniature Italic architecture. On the Tabernacle of Or San Michele, commissioned to be «the finest that the world had yet seen», he writes rhapsodically and hymns its maker Orcagna in matching tones, «one of those men of universal gifts of whom Italy has ever been the nursing-mother. He was gold-smith, architect, painter, sculptor, and poet, and an accomplished artist throughout». Four out of his five shrines are tombs, «lasting mansions», in Horace Walpole's words. Still under a Romantic spell, Waters holds them in special reverence. In bridges of imagination, they connect his native land with his adoptive *patria*. «This then is the charm which makes Westminster Abbey and Santa Croce supremely interesting amongst the churches of the world».¹¹⁸

Mr. Waters's imagination as historian puts him into a «simpatia» with his subjects, even when removed by centuries, and suggests how much at home he must have felt while dwelling with Straparola, Masuccio, and Ser Giovanni. He launches his anthology *Norfolk in Literature*, with the following remark:

No clear rule has ever been laid down to explain why in certain cases the personality of a man of letters will be firmly knit by association to the region of his birth, while in others this link will be entirely wanting [...] Chaucer and Milton were both Londoners [...] both rest in London earth, but except through birth, we rarely associate them with London.¹¹⁹

He makes us think about the connection between poets and their places. Venice, the setting for Straparola's tales, interested Waters from his university days, as witnessed by the prize he took for his essay on the rise of that republic. His introductory essay inserts *The Novellino of Masuccio* into a taut chronicle of Aragonese Naples; for Ser Giovanni he generates historical background from the turbulent annals of Trecento Florence.

The Englishman's native Norfolk, however, was his great love. In his charming gallery of Norfolk *literati*, thirty-one authors span five centuries, from the fifteenth to the nineteenth: Erasmus of Rotterdam, counted because he described his planned trip to a famed pilgrimage site («I intend to visit the Virgin of Walsingham, and to hang up some Greek verses there»); John Skelton, poet laureate and tutor to Henry VIII, cited in the poem he wrote on the death of his pet sparrow; Horace Walpole, whom Waters remembers in *Five*



Italian Shrines for thinking of tombs as «lasting mansions»; Bulwer-Lytton; Frances Burney; Thomas Paine, «the most restless and unruly of Norfolk-born writers [...] a zealous supporter of the revolted Colonists ever since the troubles began in America». In his assessment of the Revolutionary Paine, whom Americans like to claim for ourselves, do we hear some ambivalence for the loss of England's transatlantic territory, precisely when the Empire was at its apogee? Last named is the most recently deceased, Rupert Brooke, who died in 1915 on his way to the Battle of Gallipoli of sepsis from an infected mosquito bite: «[...] sprung from good yeoman stock [...] he was the finest flower death plucked in those terrible years. His great sonnet, "If I should die, think only this of me", is already immortal». At the head of «the county's literary roll of honor» towers Sir Thomas Browne, master of the esoteric: «Elsewhere he has no counterpart. No searcher ever peered more closely into the dusky recesses of scientific tradition as he found it, and none ever brought back from hunting such a strangely mixed bag».

Waters admires Browne's strain of poetry and mysticism.

With the utmost gravity [...] he would enter the fairyland of Nature and discuss its legendary marvels as others would debate on the laws of induction or on the Copernican system. The gryphon, the phoenix, salamanders, dragons, and basilisks [...] Ostriches eat iron, lions flee at the crow of a cock, and men are struck dumb at the sight of a wolf.¹²⁰

Expressing as much versatility as eclecticism, W. G. Waters's bibliography, like his life, gradually reveals unities. In Browne (1605-1682) he must have found a kindred spirit to Cardano, and in Straparola he would have loved the «fairyland» and «marvels» in what he aptly calls a «strangely mixed bag».

The term «mixed bag», in popular American slang loosely used for any odd assortment, comes from the vocabulary of hunting as sport and refers to the huntsman's catch, what he has «bagged» and brought home in his sack of animals. It lends recurrent metaphors to *Traveller's Joy*, which Waters published the same year as *Five Italian Shrines* (1906). Small enough to be carried by the backpacker or biker, this treasury of selections from world literature, organized into four seasons (spring-youth, summer-manhood, autumn-maturity, winter-decline), is offered by an editor suffused with enthusiasm:

The ardor of the chase waxes with the rarity of the prey. The wealth of our literature is so immense! How many fascinating byways are there which are only familiar to the diligent student [...] the repose of many of the famous volumes, which have charmed past generations, grows ever more profound and undisturbed. [...] In turning over their neglected pages the anthologist may now and again feel something of the wonder and delight of Cortes on the peak as he disinters from its musty obscurity some fragment rich in imagery and ringing with quaint melody.

Culinary and horticultural imagery carry him on:



It is by the taste of these enticing morsels of good literary fare that men, hitherto indifferent, may be led to make a full meal of the same. The board will be none the less tempting if it should prove to be plentifully garnished with the spoil of years lying nearer to our golden prime.¹²¹

England's golden age for Waters is the Renaissance, the Elizabethan period. While many salient names are present (Spenser, Shakespeare, Herrick, Thomas Campion, Sir Walter Raleigh, Ben Jonson, John Donne, Milton, Isaac Walton), his is a «guide to those flowery wildernesses which lie a little off the beaten track». Straparola, we can assume, is one of the by-ways, represented by *Piacevoli notti* VII 5, «How three brothers, poor men, went out into the world and acquired great riches». The greater the novelty of the discovery, the greater the pleasure. Moderns, too, grace the table with «provender»: Keats, Tennyson, Swinburne, R. Browning, D. G. Rossetti, and Laurence Binyon. Binyon, a poet who achieved one the finest ever English versions of Dante's *Divine Comedy*,¹²² would warmly review *Five Italian Shrines* for «The Times Literary Supplement».¹²³ Meanwhile, *Traveller's Joy* itself received notice as a «charming pocket garden of mingled prose and poetry».¹²⁴

It must have been during years of a lonely widowhood with responsibility for raising a little boy that W. G. Waters, still living in the country, revised for publication his prize-winning history papers on Joseph II (1873) and the Venetian republic (1876). He had married young, when about twenty-three, in 1867 at the village of Walsingham, Norfolk, a pilgrimage center even more famous than Canterbury for its chapel of the Virgin, an English counterpart to the Santa Casa di Loreto. A year later his wife, Charlotte Jane Leeder, daughter of the rector at nearby Wells, died in her twenty-fourth year, leaving a son born in October, 1868. That boy, whom the obituary of 1928 calls simply «Dr. Waters of Oxford», would leave no progeny.¹²⁵

A record of 1883 describes Hindringham, his ancestral hamlet and its manor house:

a straggling village and large parish about 4 miles east from Walsingham Station, 7 south-east from Wells, and 7 north-east from Fakenham, in the Northern division of the county [...] diocese of Norwich. The church of St. Martin is an ancient building, in the Perpendicular style: it has chancel, nave with clerestory, aisles, and a lofty embattled tower containing 5 bells [...] The register dates from the year 1660. The living is a vicarage, yearly value £322 [...]. The Wesleyans and Primitive Methodists have chapels here [...]. Hindringham Hall is an ancient moated mansion [...]. The soil is heavy loam; subsoil, clay. The chief crops are wheat, barley and oats. [...] the population in 1881 was 538.¹²⁶

«William George Waters J.P.» is listed among the «principal landowners». The initials after his name mean that he was a Justice of the Peace, a title that in the British legal system requires no training in law and refers to a «prominent citizen of property».¹²⁷ The same directory lists «William George Waters M.A.» among seven men as «County Magistrates for Gallow Petty Sessional Division».¹²⁸ M.A. stands for Master of Arts, the ancient Oxford degree automatically granted after a certain lapse of time to those with a Bachelor of Arts.



A court of «petty sessions» was conducted by magistrates in a «hundred», originally a term that meant one hundred households, later used to describe a division of a shire or county. The parish named Gallow was a «hundred». Each hundred was governed by a high constable and had its own court. In other words, Waters was a wealthy, respected citizen who, in his capacity as a lay jurist, sat among his neighborhood peers to adjudicate local cases in the Gallow hundred – such crimes as the theft of a farm animal.¹²⁹

From his years as a young man in East Anglia, among the farmers and villagers near Hindringham, survives an article signed by «William George Waters, Esq.», a member of the Norfolk and Norwich Archeological Society. The honorific attached to his name defines a gentleman lesser than titled aristocracy but of elevated social rank.¹³⁰ Published in 1879, doubtless after years of alert listening and patient notations, «Norfolk Words not Found in Forby's *Vocabulary*» is a small glossary of «genuine Norfolk provincialisms» that he compiled as an addendum to a larger, standard dictionary. In presenting it, he writes: «The words contained in the following collection have every one come under my personal notice; and, so far as my knowledge goes, have not been hitherto dealt with». ¹³¹ A selection will suffice to suggest daily life, livestock, crops, and landscape in a bygone rural world:

ASHEL, v. To cut bricks to form a joint in masonry.

BALK, v. To let land lie fallow.

BELT, s. A narrow strip of woodland.

CAMP, v. «The rooks are camping» is an expression often heard in the autumn when those birds assemble together and gyrate in the air.

CHURCH-HOLE, s. The grave

COOMB, s. A measure of four bushels.

DILBERRIES, s. Pellets of hardened dung hanging in the breech of a sheep.

DOG, s. An instrument used for lifting carriages in order to grease the wheels.

DRINGLING-PAINS, s. Premonition of labour in women.

FINGERS AND TOES, s. A disease common in turnips.

GAVEL, v. To prepare straw for thatching.

HARN, s. The beard of barley.

HUFFLES, s. A kind of asthma common in pigs.

MIDDLESTREE, s. The wooden standard to which barn doors are fastened.

MOFFERY, s. A corruption of Hermaphrodite, a term usually applied to an agricultural carriage, half waggon half tumbril; sometimes to a malformed sheep.

OFF-HAND. A farmer having an occupation apart from his homestead is said to farm it off-hand.

OLGET-HOLE, s. A corruption of eye-let. A hole left in the wall of a barn for light and ventilation.

PEEL, s. A flat shovel used by bakers in taking the bread out of the oven.

RIG, s. An imperfectly castrated sheep.



SCOLED, adj. Diseased in the knees. In wet seasons lambs become *scoled* in great numbers.

SHIFT, s. A division of land in crop rotation.

STREAK, s. A piece of iron used in shoeing a cart wheel: each *streak* is one-fifth or one-sixth of a circle.

TUTTLE BOX, s. A piece of wood kept suspended between horses at plough. It has sometimes a sharp point on one side [...].

WILLY-WILLY. A goose call.

WINDLE, s. A basket used in winnowing corn.

Here, if ever there was one, is a «mixed bag». In Waters the word-collector, we see the philologist who will evolve into a novelist and translator. The gentleman farmer's first novel, *The Cardies* (1884), had found a reviewer who appreciated his eye for the country *à propos* of a house «that stood amidst the “cold undrained soil”, where the “rusty red of noxious mosses” killed the colour of the grass». Terms like «dillberries» and «moffery» in this Norfolk lexicon fall on a register that runs throughout the anti-classical Straparola, exuberant in a style with all the color of oral speech.

Waters's second marriage, in 1880, led to a burst of new literary activity, his decade as a novelist. About this time he must have moved to London because it was in 1886 that he was elected to the Savile Club, and by 1890 he had joined The Arts Club. The wife he took shared his roots. She was Emily, second daughter of Andrew Paton, J. P., of Norfolk, the woman who as «Mrs. W.G. Waters» would in 1901 publish *The Cook's Decameron*. His obituary mentions her, «author of more than one excellent book on cookery and possessor of one of the finest libraries of works on that subject».

Presumably still living at the time of his death, forty-eight years after their marriage, she joined him in a last translation, *The Vespasiano Memoires*. Here, too, as in the translated *novellieri*, a wonderful essay introduces the Florentine bookseller Vespasiano da Bisticci (1421-1498), author of *Vite di uomini illustri del secolo XV* and leading bibliophile of his age. «His rich storehouse of remarkable events and shrewd observations is a quarry fully as serviceable to the historian and the biographer as is Vasari to the writer on art». Although «insensible that all around him a band of immortal artists were working to fill the treasure-house of Florence with masterpieces which have held succeeding generations spellbound by their beauty», and preferring others now mostly forgotten – Leonardo Aretino; Poggio, best known by his *Facetiae*; and Giannozzo Manetti – he did gather a vast store of facts and had a sharp, honest understanding of men and politics. «Nothing here of the guile and finesse of the traditional Italian». With Englishmen he had a special rapport, which may be one of the reason the Waters wanted to bring him into their language. One prelate who patronized him bought so many of his books that he had to charter a ship from Leghorn to transport his loot home. Vespasiano has a particular appeal for the «piquant details» and «tincture of gossip» in his *Vite*, just those nuggets that enliven any narrative.¹³²



It must be no accident that Vespasiano was a favorite of Waters, from 1911 until his death honorary librarian at one of London's most exclusive male haunts, the Savile Club.

Founded in 1868 in the heart of literary London, its motto was «Sodalitas Convivium», words that captured the quality of their convivial brotherhood. Dining was *table d'hôte* at this acme of civility, where members prided themselves on their «Savilisation» and were a mixture from many professions – ministers, politicians in Parliament, artists, writers, scientists, academics, jurists – each one carefully selected.¹³³ Over time its circle, the most illustrious men of the day, admitted the writers Bulwer-Lytton, Henry James, Robert Louis Stevenson (who liked to work in the Club), Thomas Hardy, Max Beerbohm, H. G. Wells, Rudyard Kipling, E. M. Forster; artists like Sir Laurens Alma-Tadema; and other Victorian «grandees»:¹³⁴ Sir Frederic Burton (Director of the National Gallery, not to be confused with Sir Richard), the actor Sir Henry Irving, John Murray the publisher, the chief cashier of the Bank of England, and the mathematician G. W. Hemming, a well known Chancery barrister, who wrote the curious *Billiards Mathematically Treated* (1899).

In 1871, the year they decisively rejected admitting women as guests at meals,¹³⁵ the Club moved to a location next door to the Burlington Fine Arts Club on Savile Row, a street synonymous with elegance. Then in 1882, keeping the name from their former address, they set up new quarters at Piccadilly Row, which gave them space for a separate room to serve as library. Called the «Book Room», it looked from the second-floor across Green Park to Buckingham Palace. One can imagine Waters in this eyrie, where there would have been daily copies of the morning and evening papers. The Honorary Librarian, a position dating from the Club's founding, had an annual grant for purchases, bindings, and reference books like the *Dictionary of National Biography* and *The Britannica*, holdings often bolstered by Savilians who had participated in writing them.¹³⁶ Waters, who belonged from 1886 until his death in 1928, was sponsored by James William Browne, M.B. (Bachelor of Medicine), a doctor in The Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society of London and a Savile member from 1875 to 1918.¹³⁷

Barbara Black, in an engaging overview, brings back to life the world of Victorian Clubland, an exclusive, luxurious culture of «clubbability» that rests on Samuel Johnson's definition, «An assembly of good fellows, meeting under certain conditions». The one overarching rule was to «behave like a gentleman».¹³⁸ Grandfather of them all (there were approximately 200 at the turn of the twentieth century) was the «Athenaeum», founded in 1824 for writers and artists. With reproductions of the Elgin marbles from the Acropolis on its façade and a statue of Athena in the entrance hall, it had attracted stellar individuals, among them Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, John Stuart Mill, Winston Churchill, Robert Browning, Richard Burton, Lewis Carroll, Darwin, Dickens, and Disraeli.¹³⁹ In 1927 William George Waters joined their number, proposed by the Honorable Mr. Justice Clausen and seconded by Sir Reginald Blomfield.¹⁴⁰ Waters and Blomfield would have known each other from The Arts Club, founded in 1863, where Waters was a member from 1890 to 1909 and Blomfield from 1899 to 1919. Among its founders were Charles Dickens and Anthony Trollope; others brought it luster: Wilkie



Collins, Auguste Rodin, James McNeill Whistler, and Franz Liszt.¹⁴¹ All three of Waters's London clubs still flourish.¹⁴²

Hybrid in his identity – philologist and historian, novelist and translator, *letterato* and art historian, English and «Italian», rural and urban, London salon host and Continental traveler – William George Waters was one of the great scholars of his age. He deserves recognition above all as an Italianist, yet virtually nothing of his life and barely his name is remembered as the person who put into English Straparola, Masuccio, and Ser Giovanni. The man behind that mediator is a ghost locked in the past. His own modesty may be partly to blame. His versatility, too, revealed in the astonishing quantity and range of his book reviews, miniature icons of his major corpus. He roamed, both geographically and intellectually, leaving a bibliography with many entries but no defining field. His books, like Cardano's «came to the birth only to be buried in the yawning graves which lie open in every library». Now out of copyright, they are once again available, not in the handsome bound copies of Lawrence and Bullen but in workable substitutes, scanned online copies of those rarities and economical on-demand printed editions. This essay invites its readers to go find those books. If it has disinterred «an illustrious name from undeserved neglect», it has released the ghost from his prison.



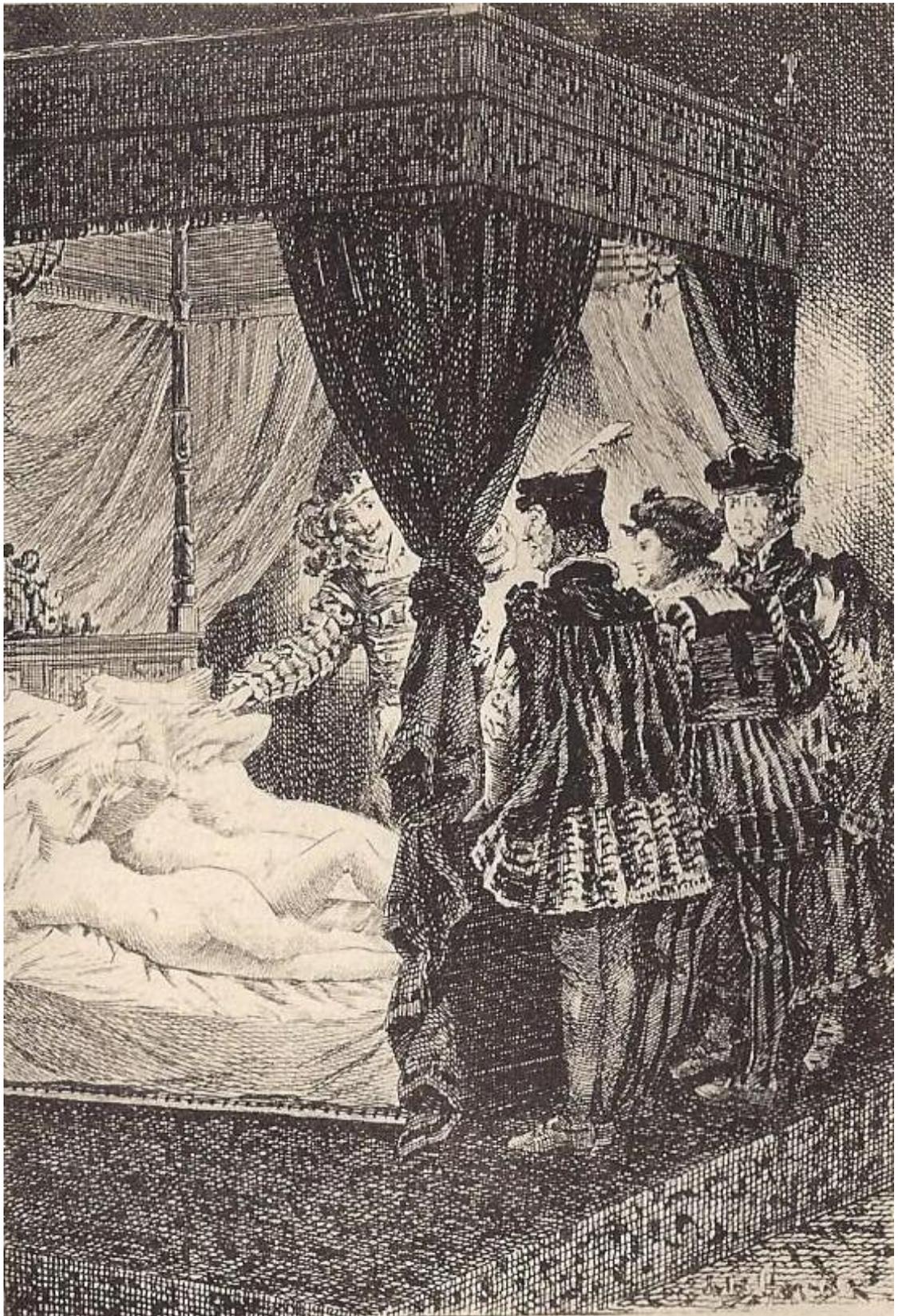


Fig. 1. JULES ARSÈNE GARNIER, *Filenio Sisterno's Revenge*, in *The Facetious Nights of Straparola*, trans. W. G. Waters, London, Privately Printed for the Society of Bibliophiles, 1898. From a copy in Van Pelt Library, University of Pennsylvania. Tale II 2.



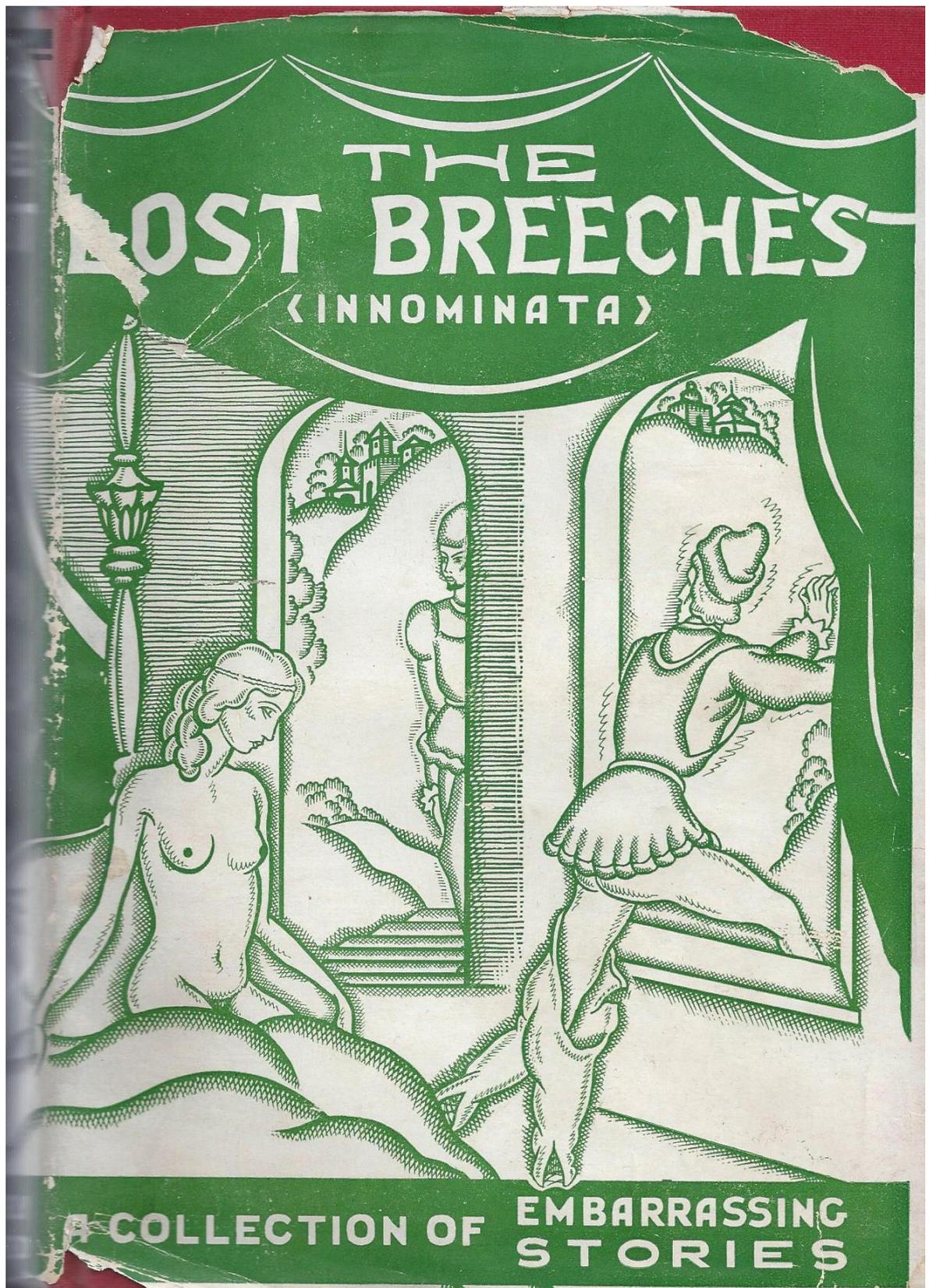


Fig. 2. Unknown artist. Jacket illustration for *The Lost Breeches*, New York, Privately Printed, 1935. Author's personal library. Gift of Rebecca West.



Fig. 3. JULES ARSÈNE GARNIER, *Malgherita and the Hermit*, in *The Facetious Nights of Straparola*, trans. W. G. Waters, London, Privately Printed for the Society of Bibliophiles, 1898. From a copy in Van Pelt Library, University of Pennsylvania. Tale VII 2.



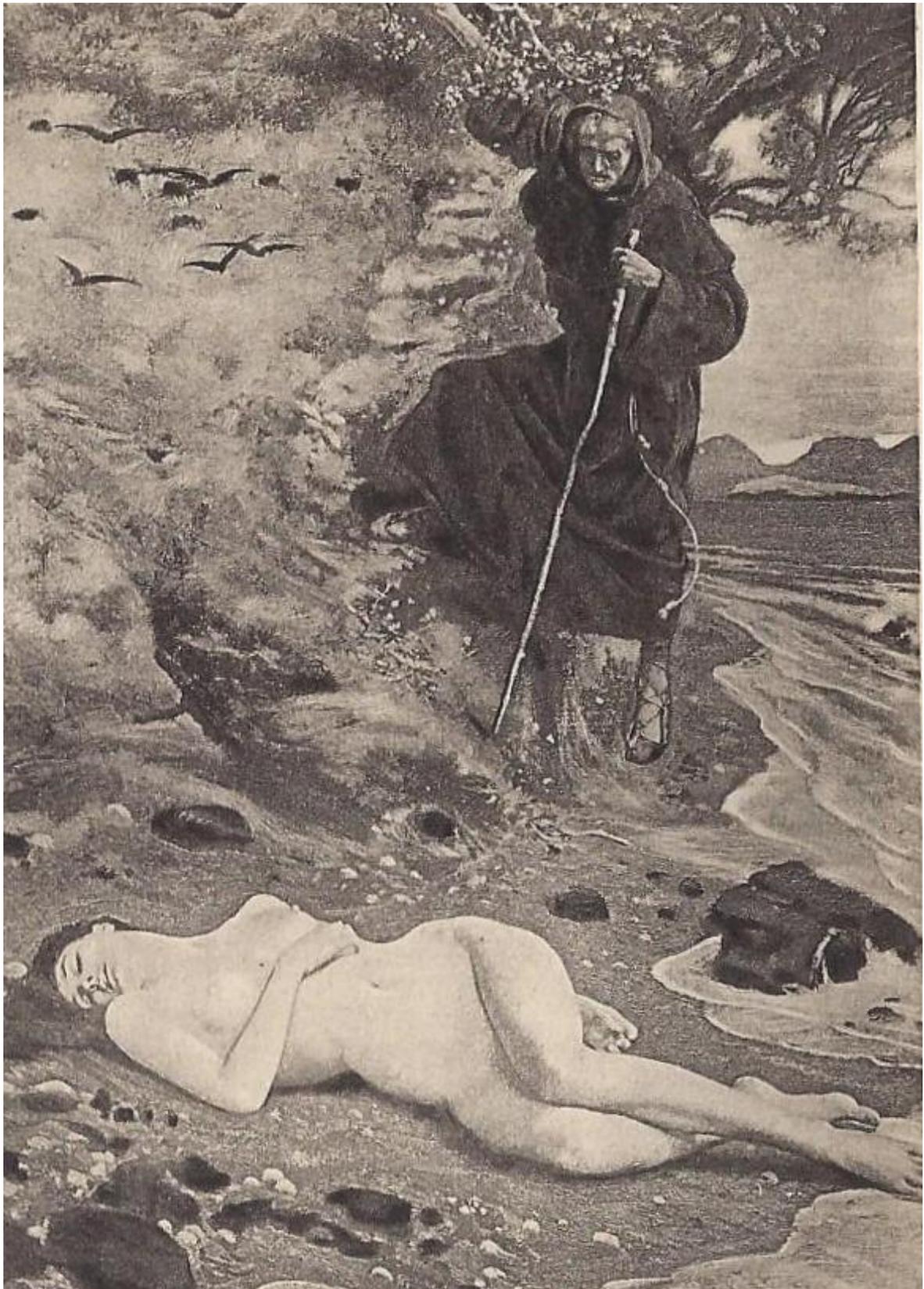


Fig. 4. E. R. HUGHES, *Teodoro Discovering Malgherita's Dead Body*, in *The Facetious Nights of Straparola*, trans. W.G. Waters, London, Privately Printed for the Society of Bibliophiles, 1898. From a copy in Van Pelt Library, University of Pennsylvania. Tale VII 2.



Note

* I would like to express appreciation to Renzo Bragantini and Igor Candido for inviting me to contribute to their new journal; also to Donald Beecher, Virginia Cox, Armando Maggi, Suzanne Magnanini, and Rebecca West for their collegial participation during the long gestation of this essay. To Dan Ben-Amos special thanks.

¹ Some sixty elegant and learned book reviews he published between 1904 and 1923 in *The Times Literary Supplement* are anonymous, but he always signed letters to the editor. Consequently, the latter turn up in Google searches, while to find the former it is necessary to use a database that reintegrates the reviewers' suppressed names. For all online references to *The Times Literary Supplement*, I have used the Gale News Vault, available through subscribing libraries. The obituary appears online in «*The Times Digital Archive 1785-2010*» for June 18, 1928, p. 18, under the heading «Mr. W. G. Waters, Italian Art and Literature».

² Mrs. Waters adapts Boccaccio's frame tale by creating a fictional *brigata* of wealthy Londoners at the turn of the twentieth century, all of whom suddenly lose their cooks through a series of flukes in a light-hearted twist on the Black Death. Conversational repartee, often about food, sustains this slice of high society as they sojourn for ten days at a country villa and receive instruction by turn on how to cook from a visiting Italian *marchesa*. Daily luncheon and dinner menus replace the Decameronian *ballate*. Filling the second half of the book, Italian recipes substitute for the *novelle*. For Mrs. Waters's cookery books, see V. KIRKHAM, *The Cook's Decameron, or, Boccaccio to the Rescue of the Dull British Diet*, in *Boccaccio in America. Proceedings of the 2010 International Boccaccio Conference at The University of Massachusetts Amherst*, ed. E. Filosa and M. Papio, Ravenna, Longo, 2012, pp. 31-65. *The Cook's Decameron* was reprinted in 1920. In the preface to *Just a Cookery Book*, 8-9, Mrs. Waters's brief history of English cookery replaces the longer frame tale of the earlier book, reaching back to George Eliot (1539), Abraham Weale (1575), Robert May, *The Accomplisht Cook* (1660), and Sir Kenelm Digby (d. 1665), credited with inventing the wine bottle. French authorities she names are such great restaurateurs as Beauvilliers, Robert, Very, Henneveu, Baleine, Vatel (who famously committed suicide at the Chateau de Chantilly when the fish didn't arrive in time for a royal banquet), and of course, Brillat Savarin. Francatelli, of Italian descent, wrote several cook books, among them *A Plain Cookery Book for the Working Classes* (1852), reprinted in 1993. His specialty was confectionery – sugar decorations of pearls, birds, and feathers.

³ *The Vespasiano Memoirs. Lives of Illustrious Men of the XVth Century*, London, Routledge & Co., 1926. The most recent is in the authoritative Renaissance Society of America Reprint Text Series, 1997.

⁴ *The Nights of Straparola*, now first translated into English by W. G. Waters, illustrated by E. R. Hughes, 2 vols., London, Lawrence and Bullen, 1894; *The Facetious Nights of Giovanni Francesco Straparola*, translated by W. G. Waters, illustrated by J. Garnier and E. R. Hughes, 4 vols., London, Private Printing for the Society of Bibliophiles, 1898 (reprint 1901, 1908, 1909, 1923); *The Novellino of Masuccio*, now first translated into English by W. G. Waters, illustrated by E. R. Hughes, 2 vols., London, Lawrence and Bullen, 1895; *The Pecorone of Ser Giovanni*, now first translated into English by W. G. Waters, illustrated by E. R. Hughes, R. W. S., London, Lawrence and Bullen, 1897. All four are online at HathiTrust Digital Library (<https://www.hathitrust.org/>). Waters's Straparola has enjoyed remarkable longevity, providing the basis for G. F. STRAPAROLA, *The Pleasant Nights*, ed. with intro. by D. Beecher, translated by W. G. Waters, thoroughly revised and corrected by the editor, 2 vols., Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2012. Beecher's rich commentary profits from the current well-documented Italian critical text, G. F. STRAPAROLA, *Le piacevoli notti*, a cura di D. Pirovano, 2 voll., Roma, Salerno Editrice, 2000, which updates *Le piacevoli notti*, a cura di M. Pastore Stocchi, Bari, Laterza, 1975. Straparola has most recently been translated into English by Suzanne Magnanini, whose interest lies in how it «weaves together male and female voices and how Straparola's particular engagement of issues of gender shapes the tradition of the literary fairy tale inside and outside of Europe». See G. F. STRAPAROLA, *The Pleasant Nights*, ed. and trans. S. Magnanini, Tempe, University of Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2015, p. 8, online resource.

⁵ Scholars and editors give the date of the first volume alternatively as 1550, by the old calendar of Venice, where the new year began on March 1, or 1551 (modern style). R. BOTTIGHEIMER, *Fairy Godfather: Straparola, Venice, and the Fairy Tale Tradition*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002, p. 62, accepts 1551, citing the historian Edward Muir. In other respects – her fanciful «surmised» biography of Straparola and her contention that he invented what she calls the «rise tale» – her book is not a reliable source, as her polemicists have persuasively argued. See the special issue of «*Journal of American Folklore*», 123, 490, 2010, ed. D. Ben-Amos with articles by J. M. ZIOLKOWSKI, *Straparola and the Fairy Tale: Between Oral and Literary Traditions*, pp. 377-397; F. VAZ DA SILVA, *The Invention of Fairy Tales*, pp. 398-425; and BEN-AMOS himself, *Straparola: The Revolution that was Not*, pp. 426-446. They cite 1551 as the publication date of the first volume of *Le piacevoli notti*, whereas Pirovano and Beecher give 1550. It was initially reprinted within a year, even before the second volume appeared. For the collection's remarkable publishing history, see *Le piacevoli notti*, a cura di Pirovano, pp. XI-XII, 805-816; *The Pleasant Nights*, ed. Beecher, 1, pp. 73-81.

⁶ A few tales in the second book are designated «novella». «Istoria» defines IX 4, based on an actual historical event. See *Le piacevoli notti*, a cura di Pirovano, pp. XX-XXI.

⁷ Each *giornata* in the *Decameron* opens with sunrise, a pattern probed by R. HOLLANDER, *The Sun Rises in Dante*, «*Studi sul Boccaccio*», 14, 1983-1984, pp. 241-255; reprinted in *Boccaccio's Dante and the Shaping Force of Satire*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1997, pp. 53-68. By reversal, every *notte* of Straparola begins with sunset. See, e.g., *Le piacevoli notti*, a cura di Pirovano (who notes echoes of *Filocolo* II 44, 1; and *Orlando furioso* XXV 18, 5-6), II, Intro., «Aveva già Febo le dorate rote nelle salse onde dell'Indiano mare, ed e' suoi raggi non davano più splendore alla terra,



e la sua cornuta sorella le oscure tenebre con la sua chiara luce signoreggiava per tutto e le vaghe e scintillanti stelle avevano già il cielo del suo lume dipinto [...]»; *The Facetious Nights*, trans. Waters, 1, p. 131: «Phoebus had already plunged his golden wheels into the salt waves of the Indian ocean, his rays no longer gave light to the world, his horned sister now ruled the universe with her mild beams, and the sparkling stars had spread their fires thickly over the sky [...]». In another example, Straparola opens the second volume of his *Notti* with an apology calqued on *Decameron*, Intro. IV. Waters takes Straparola literally rather than recognizing the literary imitator at work, which makes his words, as was true for those of Boccaccio's narrator, a fictional pose.

⁸ L. DI FRANCIA, *Storia dei generi letterari italiani. Novellistica*, vol. I. *Dalle origini al Bandello*, Milano, Vallardi, 1924, p. 715, who criticizes Straparola generally for his lack of originality – except in the fairy tales – describes the narrators as «ombre vane, fuorché nel nome, figure convenzionali, scialbe e generiche». BOTTIGHEIMER, *Fairy Godfather*, p. 67, in spite of an otherwise generous appraisal, dismisses them as «cardboard cut-outs».

⁹ *The Pleasant Nights*, ed. Beecher, I, p. 15: «[...] the thirteen nights are a fiction retrofitted upon a pseudo-historical situation»; *Le piacevoli notti*, ed. Pirovano, p. XVII: «[...] una dimensione fiabesca [...] aleggia già sulla cornice».

¹⁰ P. BEMBO, *Lettere di M. Pietro Bembo Cardinale a' sommi pontefici ed a' cardinali e ad altri signori e persone ecclesiastiche scritte*, in *Opere del cardinal Pietro Bembo*, vol. V, Milano, Società Tipografica dei Classici Italiani, 1809, bk. 2, p. 274; online at Google Books: Bembo writes from Padua on Sept. 9, 1530, to Benedetto Trivigiano in Venice thanking him for sending a pair of sonnets and complimenting him on the prose style of his letter.

¹¹ See the excellent recent online entry, *Molino, Antonio*, by G. CRIMI, *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. LXXXV, Roma, Istituto dell'Enciclopedia italiana, 2011.

¹² I have harvested the titles from Worldcat, the international online catalog of the Library of Congress. See also the book's publishing history in the notes for *Le piacevoli notti*, ed. Pirovano, pp. 805-816.

¹³ S. MAGNANINI, *Fairy-Tale Science: Monstrous Generation in the Tales of Straparola and Basile*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2008, p. 25, suggests that the frame narrators in their diverse pursuits «reflect the heterogeneous nature of *Le piacevoli notti*». In the introduction to her English version of *The Pleasant Nights*, pp. 15-23, she offers a concise, well documented discussion of Straparola's cultural context and Venice as a city of salons. *Le piacevoli notti*, a cura di Pirovano, p. xv, credits the eclecticism of Straparola's tales with their commercial success.

¹⁴ *Le piacevoli notti*, a cura di Pirovano, p. 9.

¹⁵ For the *Decameron*, the whole is greater than the sum of its interlocking parts, assembled in a pre-determined organic design ruled by a biblical ideal of creation according to «number, weight, and measure» (Wisdom 11: 21). See V. KIRKHAM, *The Sign of Reason in Boccaccio's Fiction*, Firenze, Olschki, 1993, especially «An Allegorically Tempered *Decameron*», pp. 131-171; and «The Last Tale in the *Decameron*», pp. 249-265. *Le piacevoli notti*, ed. Pirovano, p. XIX: «non esiste nessun criterio, tematico o strutturale [...], che accorpi le varie favole». On sound bites from Boccaccio and some of Straparola's other “high” literary sources, and for contrasting signs of “orality” in his tales, see further *Le piacevoli notti*, a cura di Pirovano, pp. XXXVI-XLVII.

¹⁶ For V 3 and V 4, both tale and riddle are in dialect. Where Waters reverts to French in particularly racy passages, that language may continue through the riddle and its explication. See, e.g., VI 2, a tale of castration discussed below, with an enigma about administering an enema, «Je veux que mon amy sur le ventre se couche». Like the *favole*, many of the riddles are lascivious, involving «bagpipe, candle, glove, lock, lute, pen, stockpot, shoe, trumpet, warming-pan». See for our author and other enigmatographs, or riddlers, in the sixteenth century, M. DE FILIPPIS, *Straparola's Riddles*, «Italia», 24, 1947, 2, pp. 134-146. Girolamo Bargagli's *Dialogo de' giuochi che nelle vegghe sanesi si usano di fare* (1572) attests to the popularity of the genre. See *Le piacevoli notti*, ed. Pirovano, p. XLVIII.

¹⁷ The name Straparola is thought to be a pseudonym; it would mean “talkative”, “chatterbox”. See *The Pleasant Nights*, ed. Beecher, 4, p. 8. Magnanini, trans., *The Pleasant Nights*, 9, gives it as «the man who talks too much». As Ben-Amos (see above, n. 5) writes in *Straparola: The Revolution that was Not*, p. 436, «Straparola assembled and documented traditional fairy tales that were told in Italy and other European countries, but [Bottigheimer] is wrong in assuming that he authored them or formulated their narrative principles». A. MAGGI, *Preserving the Spell: Basile's "The Tale of Tales" and Its Afterlife in the Fairy-Tale Tradition*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2015, pp. 26-27, sensibly asserts, «The actual relationship between oral and literary narration is porous and dynamic [...] rather than being in strict opposition, [they] have always been engaged in a prolific dialogue». Like Basile's *Cunto de li Cunti*, *Le piacevoli notti* «is in reality a hybrid of oral and literary elements».

¹⁸ Counts vary. VAZ DA SILVA, *The Invention of Fairy Tales*, reckons a total of thirteen. MAGNANINI, trans., *The Pleasant Nights*, 1, puts the number at sixteen; BEECHER, ed., *The Facetious Nights*, I, p. 40, at seventeen.

¹⁹ Basile used Straparola as a source for some of his tales. See the commentary in G. BASILE, *Lo cunto de li cunti*, a cura di M. Rak, Milano, Garzanti, 1986. For studies see further, e.g., N. CANEPA, *From Court to Forest: Giambattista Basile's Lo cunto de li cunti and the Birth of the Literary Fairy Tale*, Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1999; *Giovan Battista Basile e l'invenzione della fiaba*, a cura di M. Picone, A. Messerli, Ravenna, Longo, 2004. CANEPA, p. 37, reminds us that N. BORSELLINO, *Gli anticlassici del Rinascimento*, Bari, Laterza, 1975, placed Straparola in an «anti-classical» tradition, along with such authors as Aretino, Ruzante, Berni, and Folengo. Basile's popularity continues in the internationally circulating film, *Il racconto dei racconti*, dir. Matteo Garrone (2015), an anthology of three tales. For Basile in English, see below, n. 38.

²⁰ DI FRANCIA, *Storia dei generi letterari italiani*, I, pp. 713-731. He is especially critical of Straparola's second volume, where he finds numerous inconsistencies and calls the author a plagiarist for having cribbed twenty-two tales from a Latin collection of 1520 by the Neapolitan Girolamo Morlini. The work «fu iniziata bene, proseguita male e finita pes-



simamente» (p. 731). Straparola's debt to Morlini is, of course, widely recognized, but he did not merely copy; he translated, amplified, and adapted those tales to his northern Italian spaces. Critics today accept such borrowing as standard literary practice in the Renaissance. See, e.g., *The Pleasant Nights*, ed. Beecher (who counts twenty-three from Morlini), 1, p. 6; *Le piacevoli notti*, ed. Pirovano, p. xxxii.

²¹ For his first edition of 1894, *The Nights of Straparola*, Waters wrote an Introduction, reprinted with some modifications in the 1898 edition, *The Facetious Nights of Straparola*, but placed at the end as a Terminal Essay. At the end of The Terminal Essay he quotes a rhyming couplet taken from *Lady Burton's Edition of Her Husband's Arabian Nights, Translated literally from the Arabic, Prepared for household reading* by J. Huntley McCarthy, 6 vols., London, Waterlow and Sons, Ltd., London Wall, 1886: «Hide thou whatever here is found of fault; | And laud the Faultless and His might exalt!». Something prepared by a devout Catholic lady and suitable for «household reading» sounds like a bowdlerized edition. Burton's original was much longer: *A Plain and Literal Translation of the Arabian Nights' Entertainments Now Entitled The Book of a Thousand Nights and a Night with Introduction, Explanatory notes on the Manners and Customs of Moslem Men, and a Terminal Essay on the History of the Nights*, 10 vols., Benares, Printed by the Kamashastra Society for Private Subscribers Only, 1885. Waters may have decided to move his Introduction to a Terminal Essay, taking a cue from Burton. Burton's original Terminal Essay ends with a rhyming couplet that expresses a free thinker, sentiment less religious than the message of Lady Burton's revised sequel: «Veil it, an fault thou find, nor jibe nor jeer: | – None may be found of faults and failings clear!». Both the 1885 and 1886 editions of *The Arabian Nights* are online at Google Books. Waters, who notes analogies between four of Straparola's tales and the Arabian collection (IV 1; IV 3; V 3; XII 3), may have initially encountered the *Thousand and One Nights* in its first European translation, the early eighteenth-century version by Antoine Galland, cited in the *Facetious Nights*, «Terminal Essay», 4, 1898, pp. 247-249.

²² *Fiabe italiane raccolte e trascritte da Italo Calvino*, 2 voll., Milano, Oscar Mondadori, 1956; reprint 1981, I, p. 7.

²³ MAGNANINI, *Fairy-Tale Science*, p. 23.

²⁴ Full titles from WorldCat. Sketching the *fortuna* of Straparola's *Notti* in his Introduction (1894), p. xiv, Waters cites the first two French editions, noting that «Pierre de la Rivey [...] revised and re-wrote portions of Louveau's translation, and in 1725 an edition was produced at Amsterdam, enriched by a preface by La Monnoie and notes by Lainez».

²⁵ See below, the discussion of Vespasiano da Bisticci's biographies co-translated by Waters and his wife.

²⁶ P. BRACCIOLINI, *Facezie*, intr. E. Garin; intr., trad. e commento M. Ciccuto, Milano, BUR, 1983, pp. 46-47.

²⁷ *Le piacevoli notti*, a cura di Pirovano, p. 106; *The Facetious Nights*, trans. Waters, I, pp. 151-152.

²⁸ R. BRAGANTINI, *Il riso sotto il velame. La novella cinquecentesca tra l'avventura e la norma*, Firenze, Olschki, 1987, cap. 2, «La magia e la regola», pp. 73-94, documents insightfully very calculated recastings of specific passages in *Decameron* VIII 7 in Straparola (II 2) and in Matteo Bandello's *Novelle* (I 3).

²⁹ V. KIRKHAM, *Fabulous Vernacular: Boccaccio's Filocolo and the Art of Medieval Fiction*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2001, pp. 173-176. Fileno, whom Biancifiore has rejected, begins his wanderings in book III, chapter 33, Venerean numbers that define him and announce his diatribes against Cupid and women, at the center of the central book of the *Filocolo*. The *Piacevoli notti* incorporate many borrowed phrases from the *Filocolo*, documented in Pirovano's notes to the text.

³⁰ Fairy tales traditionally involve things that come in 3's. It is a "magic" number of repetitions, the minimum required to establish an all-encompassing pattern. See V. FOSTER HOPPER, *Medieval Number Symbolism* [1938], reprint New York, Cooper Square, 1969, pp. 4-5; cfr. *Le piacevoli notti*, a cura di Pirovano, p. xxvii; *The Pleasant Nights*, ed. Beecher, I, p. 46. P. GASPARINI, *Controeffa, punizione e vendetta nelle novelle di Straparola*, «Chroniques italiennes» web, 26, 2013, 3/4, pp. 1-33, comments on the tripling effect in this *favola*, citing BRAGANTINI, *Il riso sotto il velame*, pp. 73-74.

³¹ *Le piacevoli notti*, a cura di Pirovano, p. 113; *The Facetious Nights*, trans. Waters, I, p. 162.

³² *The Pleasant Nights*, ed. Beecher, I, p. 302, updated to correct Waters, reads, «I leave you to imagine further the plight of the poor wretch that night, as likely to end up an amputee as he was speechless». Magnanini, trans. *The Pleasant Nights*, finds honest phrasing: «I will let you imagine in what state the wretch found himself at the end of the night. He almost ended up losing his tail, just as he had lost his voice». The best solution remains that of G. H. McWilliam, in his translation of the *Decameron* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1973), p. 237: «[...] the Abbess, who was possibly under the impression that he had lost his tail as well as his tongue, took little or no notice».

³³ See *The Most Delectable Nights of Straparola of Caravaggio: The First Complete Translation into English of Le tredici piacevolissime notti de Messer Giovanni Francesco Straparola with an introduction and notes*, Paris, C. Carrington, 1906. The superlative in the English title comes from one of the later editions of Straparola, which must have served as an Italian point of reference: e.g., *Le tredici piacevolissime notti* [...], 1590, 1598, 1599, 1601, 1604, 1608. Some confusion attaches to the author of the 1906 translation, which in all editions I have found in WorldCat and the online full text at HathiTrust from an Indiana University copy is unattributed. Comparison with Waters, however, reveals that Carrington or his translator were plagiarizing the latter, retouching his text in order to disguise their debt, to make the language more archaic – infelicitously so, and to restore Straparola's original "taboo" vocabulary, purging Waters's English of its determined efforts to purge Straparola's Italian. A bizarre twist of pseudo-history has attributed the Carrington translation to Richard Francis Burton, who died in 1890, four years before Waters's first edition. Bottigheimer accepts the Burton attribution, *Fairy Godfather*, p. 124; and Beecher's edition of *The Pleasant Nights* has in the introduction, 1, pp. 92-94, an appendix with a table of Burton/Carrington tales and their titles, a subject on which he and I have corresponded without resolving the mystery. Burton's translation of Basile did appear posthumously, in 1893, but that fact is explained by his editor. See below, n. 38. Carrington, who had a particular interest in books about flagellation, died of syphilis, impoverished in an insane asylum. For a biographical sketch see www.erotocabibliophile.com.

³⁴ It seems to have contained only fifteen tales, as does its apparent reprint, *The Merry Nights of Straparola*, Amsterdam, Fredonia Press, 2004, cited by Magnanini in her introduction to *The Pleasant Nights*, 29. The 1931 and 2004 editions



(neither of which I have been able to consult) both have 272 pages. A blurb for one of the earlier volumes on the website of Abe Books makes clear what readership its publisher is aiming to reach: «This collection of panurgic stories is a veritable handbook on amorous intrigue but it is vastly more facetious than the *Héptameron* or the *Decameron*». «Facetious» signaled «risqué», «racy».

³⁵ Burton first advanced his thoughts on this zone of the world in the Terminal Essay for his translation of *A Thousand Nights and a Night*, a disquisition excised from all popular editions. Panurge press reprinted it as a short book in 1930, 1934 and 1935, and it has continued to circulate internationally in plentiful copies from other presses. For background, see the Preface to Sir Richard Burton, *The Sotadic Zone*, New York, Panurge Press, 1934?, pp. 9-12, and the afterword by John Addington Symonds, pp. 103-107; online at HathiTrust. On Burton's activity more generally, see the excellent dedicated website, burtoniana.org.

³⁶ B. BLACK, *A Room of His Own: A Literary-Cultural Study of Victorian Clubland*, Athens (Ohio), Ohio University Press, 2012, p. 170.

³⁷ [W. G. WATERS], review in *The Times Literary Supplement* of Thomas Wright, *The Life of John Payne*, London, Fisher Unwin, 1919. Payne had signed a contract with his publisher for 500 copies, but 2,000 subscribers applied for the book. Burton, realizing that profits were to be made, produced a translation in two years (it had taken Payne six), stealing whole passages from his rival and producing «little else than Payne's translation over another man's signature. It says much for Payne's magnanimity that he kept silence over this episode».

³⁸ John Edward Taylor had translated thirty tales, a selection of the least indecent, in *The Pentamerone, or The Story of Stories: Fun for Little Ones. Being Rambles in the Fairy Land of Italy*, London, David Bogue and J. Cundall, Old Bond Street, 1848 (online at HathiTrust), with illustrations by George Cruikshank. Some of Cruikshank's amusing drawings are reproduced in Jack Zipes's rich anthology, *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition from Straparola to the Brothers Grimm*, New York, Norton, 2001. Taylor was several times reprinted in England and the United States – e.g., in 1849, 1850, 1852, 1857. Burton died in 1890, and his widow made his full text available to the publisher: *Il Pentamerone; or, The Tale of Tales. Being a Translation by the Late Sir Richard Burton, K.C.M.G., of Il Pentamerone: ovvero lo Cunto de li Cunte, trattenemiento de li peccerille, of Giovanni Battista Basile, Count of Torone (Gian Alessio Abbattutis)*, 2 vols., London, Henry and Co., Bouverie Street, E.C., 1893 (online at HathiTrust). On Burton's authorship, see the prefatory «Publishers' Note» from Henry and Co. v; and N. M. PENZER, *An Annotated Bibliography of Sir Richard Francis Burton*, London and New York, 1923, p. 189. In the same year Helen Zimmern revised and edited the Taylor anthology, cutting it down to twelve tales and keeping Cruikshank's illustrations: *The Pentamerone or The Story of Stories by Giambattista Basile, tr. from the Neapolitan by John Edward Taylor*, London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1893, also published at New York and Edinburgh. Her preface in a reprint of 1894 (New York, Macmillan & Co.; London, T. Fisher Unwin, online at HathiTrust), pp. VIII-IX, accounts for the expurgations: «Mr. Taylor, deterred by the grossness of the language and contents, which made some of the stories quite inadmissible for English readers, translated thirty of the fifty, and even so he saw himself obliged to omit many objectionable portions [...]. Mr. Taylor's volume as it stands is unadapted for young readers of the present day, and I have therefore been obliged to revise many passages, omitting offensive words and expressions and adapting the stories to juvenile ears».

³⁹ Carter cut some passages from Straparola's frame tale and shortened the rubrics. The pages devoted to Straparola are 161-216. This book, hidden under a title that conjures quite literally images of men caught with their pants down, is unknown to the documented tradition of Payne's *Decameron*, Straparola, Masuccio, and Ser Giovanni in English. I thank my friend Rebecca West for making me a gift of a copy she found on the web.

⁴⁰ The first publication by Straparola's translator was a prize-winning student essay, which identifies his university affiliation: «The Stanhope Prize Essay, by William George Waters, Fellow Commoner of Worcester College [Oxford]. Oxford: Thomas Shrimpton & Son, 1873». It appears in full (26 pp.) at Google online. On Bullen's biography, see the entry, s.v. *Arthur Henry Bullen*, online at Wikipedia.

⁴¹ The Lawrence and Bullen titles were gathered from Worldcat.

⁴² See V. KIRKHAM, *John Badmouth: Fortunes of the Poet's Image*, in Boccaccio 1990. *The Poet and his Renaissance Reception*, ed. K. Brownlee, V. Kirkham, «Studi sul Boccaccio», 20, 1991-1992, pp. 355-376.

⁴³ *Joseph II: The Stanhope Prize Essay*, by William George Waters, Fellow Commoner of Worcester College, Oxford, Thomas Shrimpton & Son, 1873, pp. 2, 12, 20, 24 (online at Google Books). Waters displays his linguistic abilities, citing sources in French and mainly, German – e.g., the Protestant historian Heinrich von Sybel, his elder by a generation; Friedrich Christophe Scholsser (d. 1861), and Leopold von Ranke. He ranges geographically, assessing Joseph (1741-1790) in relationships with France, England, Prussia, Russia, and Turkey.

⁴⁴ W. G. WATERS, B.A., *The Rise of the Republic of Venice. The Arnold Prize Essay*, Oxford, Thomas Shrimpton & Son, 1876, esp. 4, p. 45. For the full text online, see HathiTrust (The Google Books version lacks its last page.) Wordsworth laments the fall of Venice to Napoleon in 1797.

⁴⁵ «The Academy: A Weekly Review of Literature, Science, and Art», 26, 660, Dec. 27, 1884, p. 426 (digitized by Google).

⁴⁶ This review appeared in «The Athenaeum: Journal of Literature, Science, the Fine Arts, Music, and the Drama», 2984, Jan. 3, 1885, p. 12 (digitized by Google).

⁴⁷ «The Athenaeum», 3066, July 31, 1886, p. 141.

⁴⁸ WorldCat records five copies of *My Friend Bellamy*. It is listed in *British Books in Print* (1888), 5, p. 43, digitized by Google, p. 1106.

⁴⁹ *Bookseller: The Organ of the Booktrade* (1889), 326 (as digitized by Google, p. 368) lists *A Vagabond Will* as a new volume (octavo, 187 pp.) by «W.G. Waters, author of *My Friend Bellamy*, etc.», published at Bristol, W. Arrowsmith; London, Simpkin, Marshall & Co., and Railway Bookstalls. The notice is an advertisement accompanied by blurbs from *Publishers' Circle*



(«A story excellently well adapted to [...] a railway journey»; and *Western Figaro* («One of the prettiest romances [...])).

⁵⁰ *The Literary World*, vol. 39, p. 318 (digitized by Google, p. 238).

⁵¹ See Wikipedia, s.v. *J. W. Arrowsmith*. The press survived until 2006. *Three Men in a Boat* (1889) is still in print and available on Kindle, actively publicized by Amazon.

⁵² Armin, «the last of Shakespeare's great stage clowns», adapted Straparola's tale in light of his own life, changed the ending, and generally improved it, according to A. EQUESTRI, *The Italian Taylor and his Boy or what Robert Armin did to Straparola*, «Renaissance Studies», 30, 2016, 2, pp. 254-72.

⁵³ In *Le piacevoli notti*, X 4, Andrigetto bequeaths his soul, that of his notary, and that of his confessor to the devil. To my knowledge there has not yet been a systematic study of Straparola in English. Pirovano, 815, cites Armin and Roscoe, but strangely overlooks the very popular Painter, who inaugurated the English tradition with three editions between 1566 and 1575. His selection, the tale of Filenio Sisterno and his humiliating revenge on the three women who had connived to make him the object of a *beffa* (II 2) is one of the four to appear in *The Lost Breeches*, whose editor Carter probably chose it more for its resonance with Boccaccio's novella of the scholar and the widow (*Decameron*, VIII 7) than its appearance in Painter. When BOTTIGHEIMER, *Fairy Godfather*, p. 124, states (without any source) that «The Tailor's Apprentice» (VIII 4) circulated as a chapbook, she refers by an incorrect title to Armin's *The Italian Taylor and his Boy*. Brief but useful is the introduction by Janet Levarie Smarr, ed. and trans., to *Italian Renaissance Tales*, Rochester (Michigan), Solaris Press, 1983, p. 158, with a partial bibliography of those who have anthologized tales from *Le piacevoli notti*.

⁵⁴ Thomas Frederick Crane (1844-1927), praised as America's «dean in mediaeval literary studies», began his career as a lawyer and moved into the scholarly life when he joined the faculty of the newly forming Cornell University (established 1868), rising to become chair of the Department of Romance Languages (1884-1909) and to hold higher administrative positions, including Acting-President of the University. A founding editor of the «Journal of American Folk-Lore» (1888-1890), beyond his *Popular Italian Tales* («Puss in Boots») is chapter 34 of 109), he published many scholarly articles and books, among them a massive study on *Italian Social Customs of the Sixteenth Century, and Their Influence on the Literatures of Europe* (1920). See the obituary by George Livingston Hamilton in «Speculum», 3, 1928, 2, pp. 273-275. Crane and Waters were born in the same year and died just one year apart.

⁵⁵ He cites Painter, Roscoe, and Jacobs in his scholarly presentation of Straparola and his book.

⁵⁶ H. SLINGSBY, *My Grandmother's Guests and Their Tales*, 2 vols., London, James Robins and Co. Ivy Lane, Paternoster Row; Dublin, Joseph Robins, Jun. and Co. Lower Ormond Quay, 1825, I, pp. XXXI-XXXVII; I, p. 120 (online at Archive.org). As a congener of Sir Henry Slingsby of Scriven, executed for treason in 1658, our author must have been that baronet's aristocratic descendant. *My Grandmother's Guests and Their Tales* receives an approving review in «The Ladies' Monthly Museum», June, 1825, p. 339 (online at Google Books): «The writer knows how to excite the feelings, and please the imagination, and has thus been enabled to provide for his readers a fund of agreeable entertainment». The title *Piacevolissime notti* signals one of the late sixteenth- or early seventeenth-century editions. See above, n. 33.

⁵⁷ SLINGSBY, *My Grandmother's Guests*, I, p. 127.

⁵⁸ Ivi, I, pp. 129-131. For the tale itself, see I, pp. 131-141.

⁵⁹ *Le piacevoli notti*, a cura di Pirovano, 486. GASPARINI, *Controbeffa*, pp. 26-27, comments on how surprisingly the Murano *brigata* receive this tearful story without questioning the cruel, fatal punishment inflicted on Malgherita by her brothers.

⁶⁰ The same thing happens later in the story, when Malgherita reveals her hidden passion to the monk. Cfr. *Le piacevoli notti*, a cura di Pirovano, VII 2, 8: «Il calogero, ch'ancor non s'aveva avveduto ch'ella l'amasse restò come pazzo»; Slingsby, I, p. 134: «Theodore, who had never imagined that he was likely to inspire anyone with love, was thunderstruck at this news and remained mute with astonishment»; Waters (1894), III, p. 26: «The hermit, who up to this time had never suspected that she loved him, stood as a man bemused». In Slingsby's version, I, p. 136, an interpolation entirely absent from Straparola (probably in his Counter-Reformation source) legitimizes the couple, who kneel at a shrine to the Virgin and implore her blessing before their night of intimacy: «No human eye witnessed this marriage: the stars of heaven alone looked on, and the favoring darkness wrapped the wedded lovers from the sight of the world».

⁶¹ *The Facetious Nights*, trans. Waters, III, p. 23. Waters comments at some length in his Introduction (1894), I, pp. XXIV-XXV, on censorship of the text in editions after the earliest, concluding: «In plain words, the book was prohibited and castrated on account of the ugly picture of clerical morals which was exhibited in its pages. A glance at any of the editions issued 'con licenza de' superiori' will show that the revisers went to their work with set purpose, caring nought as to the mangled mass of letterpress they might leave behind them. In some tales bits are cut out so clumsily that the point of the story is entirely lost; in others the feelings of orthodoxy are spared by changing the hero of amorous intrigue from a *prete* to a *giovane* [...] and the famous story of *Belphagor* is left out altogether». Waters was accused of allowing his anti-Catholicism to show by a reviewer of his book *Norfolk in Literature*. See below, n. 119.

⁶² *The Nights of Straparola*, trans. Waters, Introduction, I, p. XXI.

⁶³ *Le piacevoli notti*, a cura di Pirovano, VII 2, 2: «Amor [...] niuna altra cosa è che una irrazionabile volontà causata da una passione venuta nel cuore per libidinoso pensiero». Cfr. G. BOCCACCIO, *Filocolo*, IV 46, 3.

⁶⁴ *The Pleasant Nights*, ed. Beecher, I, pp. 94-136, includes a «Chart of Selected Illustrators of the *Piacevoli notti*», and reproductions of all thirty-four images in the 1898 Waters edition.

⁶⁵ M. HARRIS, *On Reading Aloud*, «The North American Review», 214, 1921, no. 790, pp. 345-351.

⁶⁶ M. PASTORE STOCCHI, in the introduction to his edition of Straparola, *Le piacevoli notti*, Bari, Laterza, 1975, p. XVI, refers to an «onomastica parlante» in names of Straparola's characters. Cited by GASPARINI, *Controbeffa*, p. 8. Pirovano notes many of them in his commentary, e.g., p. 183, on Porcarollo: «nome parlante con suffisso diminutivo».

⁶⁷ *Le piacevoli notti*, a cura di Pirovano, V 3, p. 24; *The Facetious Nights*, trans. Waters, II, p. 216.



- ⁶⁸ Straparola uses a formula matching the need that set in motion Andreuccio da Perugia's night of falls (*Decameron* II 5).
- ⁶⁹ Two stories adding up to the same number of pages replace it. By 1565 eight stories had been rewritten to spare the clergy; by 1597 five of the «corrected» tales had been suppressed altogether; 1598 saw the censorships even of songs and madrigals; in 1601 four more stories were expurgated. Eventually, it was to land on four different Indexes of Forbidden Books (1580, 1590, 1596, and 1600), a succession of hits that all but squelched its circulation in Italy until the turn of the twentieth century. Its first modern editor in Italy was Giuseppe Rua, *Le "Piacevoli notti" di Messer Gian Francesco Straparola*, Roma, Loescher, 1898. See the overview of censorship stages in *The Pleasant Nights*, ed. Beecher, I, pp. 77-79; and cfr. *Le piacevoli notti*, a cura di Pirovano, pp. x-xi, 805-810, for a fuller description of the editorial history of this «best seller».
- ⁷⁰ Carter, editor of *The Lost Breeches* (see above, n. 39) clearly had in his library the original Lawrence and Bullen series, which he reproduced, with Waters's translations of Straparola, Masuccio, and Ser Giovanni.
- ⁷¹ See the useful entry by F. DE PROPRIIS, *Guardati, Tomaso*, in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, 60, Roma, Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 2003, online.
- ⁷² This according to the copy in the Rare Book Room at the Van Pelt Library of the University of Pennsylvania: W. G. WATERS, *The Novellino of Masuccio*, London, Lawrence and Bullen, 1895. Lawrence and Bullen evidently made more than one imprint in 1895 because a copy online at HathiTrust from the University of California is no. 17 of 210 copies for England and America. The latter is my source for quotes from Waters's Introduction (I, pp. XIII-XXXI) in this article.
- ⁷³ *The Novellino*, trans. Waters, p. xxvii.
- ⁷⁴ KIRKHAM, *The Cook's Decameron* (see above, n. 2), p. 52.
- ⁷⁵ *The Novellino*, trans. Waters, pp. xvi-xvii: «[...] a composition scarcely worthy of that writer's high reputation as a Latin scholar».
- ⁷⁶ Ivi, p. xxix.
- ⁷⁷ Ivi, p. xxiv.
- ⁷⁸ Waters refers to Alfred, Lord Tennyson's poem *Idylls of the King* (1859-1885).
- ⁷⁹ *The Novellino*, trans. Waters, p. xx.
- ⁸⁰ Ivi, p. xxiv.
- ⁸¹ «The Edinburgh Review», 185, no. 380, Apr., 1, 1897, pp. 306-326.
- ⁸² As for *The novellino*, I have consulted the copy at the Rare Book Room in the University of Pennsylvania Van Pelt Library: *The Pecorone of Ser Giovanni*, now first translated into English by W. G. Waters, illustrated by E. R. Hugues, R.W.S., London, Lawrence and Bullen, 1897, 600 copies for England and America, n. 452. In this single-volume edition the translator's Introduction precedes, pp. XIII-XXIX; thereafter, where present, it follows the stories. The history of subsequent editions is confusing because some give no publisher or date. Multiple versions are online, e.g.: *The Pecorone of Ser Giovanni*, now first translated into English by W. G. Waters, choicely illustrated by E. R. Hughes, A.R.W.S., 3 vols., London, Privately Printed for the Society of Bibliophiles, 1898. Of the latter I have found vol. I online at Google Books in a copy from Harvard University Library, Aquarelle Edition limited to 100 copies, no. 41. For citations from the final critical essay (III, pp. 267-313), I have used vol. 3 (Boston, Privately Printed for Members of the Burton Ethnological Society, n.d.), digitized by Google Books from Cornell University. The original Lawrence and Bullen edition is online at HathiTrust and Google Books, as is a 1901 edition from the Society of Bibliophiles.
- ⁸³ WATERS, *The Pecorone*, pp. xvii-xix, picks up on de Gubernatis, admitting that the title, meaning «simpleton», and a sonnet-epilogue that declares the date 1378, sound more like literary games of sixteenth-century academies – the *Insensati*, *Storditi*, *Vignaiuoli* – than the *Quattrocento*. He knows, too, Domenichi's method from the introduction to his *Dialogo della nobiltà delle donne* (1548), which is to add a small amount of material to a «large mass of undigested borrowings». He does not, however, seem ready to accept the *Pecorone* as Domenichi's «farrago». The *Pecorone* is now ascribed to Malizia Barattone, the artistic name of a Florentine minstrel («huomo buffone») active in Naples during the Angevin period. See F. PIGNATTI, *Giovanni Fiorentino (da Firenze)*, in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, 56, Roma, Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 2001, online.
- ⁸⁴ See, for example, among some sixty books he reviewed over the years for *The Times Literary Supplement*: a new edition of James Dennistoun's classic *Memoirs of the Dukes of Urbino* (Dec. 17, 1908); Julia Cartwright's *Baldassare Castiglione: The Perfect Courtier* (Apr. 29, 1909); Edward Lee Stuart Horsburgh, *Lorenzo the Magnificent* (Sept. 30, 1909); Lord Balcarras, *The Evolution of Italian Sculpture* (Jan. 27, 1910); G.S. Davies, *The Sculptured Tombs of the Fourteenth Century in Rome* (Sept. 15, 1910); Ugo Ojetti, *I monumenti italiani e la guerra* (Mar. 7, 1918).
- ⁸⁵ Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1516/17-1547) was beheaded by Henry VIII. He immortalized in his poetry Lady Elizabeth Fitzgerald, «the fair Geraldine».
- ⁸⁶ «The Athenaeum», no. 3670, Feb. 28, 1898, pp. 283-284. See further [W. G. WATERS], review of Alice Hughes, *My Father and I*, in «The Times Literary Supplement» of May 17, 1923.
- ⁸⁷ *Notes and Queries. A Medium of Intercommunication for Literary Men, General Readers, etc.*, ser. 8, vol. 12, July-Dec. 1889, p. 39 (online at Google Books).
- ⁸⁸ *Twelve Bad Men: Original Studies of Eminent Scoundrels by Various Hands*, ed. Th. Seccombe, London, Fisher Unwin, 1993, pp. xviii-xix (online at HathiTrust).
- ⁸⁹ *Twelve Bad Women: Illustrations and Reviews of Feminine Turpitude put forth by Impartial Hands*, ed. A. Vincent, London, T. F. Unwin, 1897, pp. xi-xiii (online at HathiTrust).
- ⁹⁰ Thomas Otway was an English dramatist (1652-1685). Celebrated for infamy are the British females: Alice Perrers, «Favorite of King Edward III» (d. 1400); Alice Arden, «Murderess» (executed 1551); Moll Cutpurse, «Thief and receiver» (d. 1659); Frances Howard, «Countess of Somerset» (d. 1632); Barbara Villier, «Duchess of Cleveland» (d. 1709); Jenny Diver,



«Pickpocket» (executed 1741); Teresia Constantia Phillips (d. 1765); Elizabeth Brownrigg, «Cruelty personified» (d. 1767); Elizabeth Canning, «Impostor» (d. 1773); Elizabeth Chudleigh, «Duchess of Kingston» (d. 1788); Mary Bateman, «Yorkshire witch» (1809); Mary Anne Clarke (d. 1852).

⁹¹ *Twelve Bad Women*, ed. Vincent, p. 206.

⁹² Waters opens the chapter with a philosophical meditation on this point. The Wethersfield Historical Society reports that Canning was taken in by a Congregational minister and married into a prominent family. See wethersfieldhistory.org. Her case inspired a novel by the Scottish mystery writer Josephine Tey, *The Franchise Affair* (1948).

⁹³ Verses cited from a revenge tragedy by John Webster of 1612, *The White Devil, or the Tragedy of Paulo Giordano Ursini, Duke of Brachiano, with the Life and Death of Vittoria Corombonda the Famous Venetian Curtizan*, act II, scene II.

⁹⁴ *Twelve Bad Women*, ed. Vincent, p. 257.

⁹⁵ Waters quotes *Ars poetica*, 476, the last verse: «A leech that will not let go the skin till gorged with blood». HORACE, *Satires, Epistles and Ars Poetica*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, Cambridge (MA), Harvard University Press, 1926 (reprint 1955).

⁹⁶ *Twelve Bad Women*, ed. Vincent, p. 296. Of the three chapters, this is the least engaging, with its litany of lovers and listing of the prices she charged for different commissions – major, captain, lieutenant, ensign.

⁹⁷ His obituary in *The Times* mentions «novels, short stories, and poems» he wrote. I have not been able to find any short stories or poems by Waters.

⁹⁸ *Jerome Cardan: A Biographical Study*, London, Lawrence & Bullen, 1898, pp. 26, 147 (online at HathiTrust).

⁹⁹ «The Times Literary Supplement», Nov. 28, 1907.

¹⁰⁰ Located at 7 Mansfield Street, the house with beautiful fan windows over the front door survives. Robert Adam (1728-1792), who studied in Rome under Giovanni Battista Piranesi, led the Classical revival in England. A member of the Royal Society of Arts, he developed what became known as the admired «Adam Style». Serving as Architect of the King's Works, he was the most successful architect of his day.

¹⁰¹ See above, n. 1.

¹⁰² W. G. WATERS, M.A. Worcester College, Oxford, *Piero della Francesca*, London, George Bell and Sons, 1901, p. 3. The volume joins a prestigious *collana*, Bell's Handbooks of the Great Masters Series – artists such as Velasquez, Andrea del Sarto, Luca Signorelli, Raphael, Donatello, Brunelleschi (by Leader Scott, an English expatriot in Tuscany), Giotto (by F. Mason Perkins of Harvard); online at archive.org.

¹⁰³ «The Art Journal», n.s. (London: H. Virtue & Co., Ltd., 1901), p. 192 (online at archive.org). The beautiful color frontispiece in Waters's book is the *Portrait of a Young Woman* (ca. 1470) that Bernard Berenson used as the frontispiece to his *Florentine Painters of the Renaissance* (1912), attributing it to Antonio del Pollaiuolo. On Victorian art historians and female portraiture of the Quattrocento, see the Introduction by David Alan Brown to the exhibit he curated at the Washington National Gallery in 2001, *Virtue and Beauty: Leonardo's Ginevra de' Benci and Renaissance Portraits of Women*, Princeton, National Gallery of Art and Princeton University Press, 2001, pp. 14-15. Bode, Berenson, and Poynter were the absolute acme of authority. Poynter, himself a painter, married into a family with prominent connections: his wife's sister married Edward Byrne-Jones, another sister was the mother of Rudyard Kipling, and a third the mother of Stanley Baldwin, three times prime minister of England.

¹⁰⁴ One signal of his critical discipline is the discernment with which he read Vasari, evident in a letter he sent to «The Times Literary Supplement» of Feb. 21, 1918. Another subscriber had accepted Vasari's account of how Verrocchio mutilated his statue of Colleoni to spite the Venetian senate. Waters understands that Vasari is more accurate about his contemporaries than the past and cites a document of 1468 in which Vasari's executor, Lorenzo di Credi, says that another artist actually cast the statue, left only as a clay model at Vasari's death.

¹⁰⁵ W. G. WATERS, *Italian Sculptors*, with seventy-eight illustrations, London, Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1911.

¹⁰⁶ Bowyer Nichols, review of *Italian Sculptors*, «The Times Literary Supplement», Nov. 23, 1911.

¹⁰⁷ W. G. Waters, reply to Bowyer's review, «The Times Literary Supplement», Nov. 30, 1911.

¹⁰⁸ *The Journal of Montaigne's Travels in Italy by Way of Switzerland and Germany in 1580 and 1581*, translated and edited with an introduction and notes by W. G. Waters, author of *Jerome Cardan*, etc., 3 vols. illustrated, London, John Murray, Albemarle Street; New York, Dutton, 1903, pp. 4-5. Montaigne greets readers in a frontispiece portrait.

¹⁰⁹ *Montaigne's Travels*, trans. Waters, p. 20.

¹¹⁰ For his visit to Venice in 1580, where Veronica Franco sent him her poetry, see M. ROSENTHAL, *The Honest Courtesan: Veronica Franco, Citizen and Writer in Sixteenth-Century Venice*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1992, pp. 20, 116, 155.

¹¹¹ *Montaigne's Travels*, trans. Waters, pp. 18-22. «W.G. Waters, 7 Mansfield Street, Portland Place», in a letter to «The Times Literary Supplement» of Jan. 29, 1904, takes issue with the very distinguished scholar George Saintsbury for denying the authenticity of the rediscovered manuscript of Montaigne's journey. A forger, argues the translator, would not have omitted Montaigne's meeting with Tasso, referred to in the *Essays*; other passages are indisputably genuine, e.g., the circumcision ceremony in a Jew's house at Rome and a ball at Lucca.

¹¹² *Montaigne's Travels*, trans. Waters, pp. 36-38.

¹¹³ «The Athenaeum», June 6, 1903; and June 13, 1903.

¹¹⁴ TH. SECCOMBE, review of *Montaigne's Journey*, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Jan. 8, 1904.

¹¹⁵ *L'Italia alla fine del secolo XVI: Giornale di viaggio di Michele de Montaigne in Italia nel 1580 e 1581*, a cura di A. d'Ancona, Città di Castello, S. Lapi, 1895.

¹¹⁶ See KIRKHAM, *The Cook's Decameron*, p. 65.

¹¹⁷ W. G. WATERS, *Five Italian Shrines: An Account of the Monumental Tombs of S. Augustine at Pavia, S. Dominic at*



Bologna, *S. Peter Martyr at Milan, S. Donato at Arezzo, and of Orcagna's Tabernacolo at Florence, With a Prefatory Essay on Tuscan Sculpture*, London, John Murray, 1906, pp. 1-3.

¹¹⁸ WATERS, *Five Italian Shrines*, 4, pp. 130-134.

¹¹⁹ W. G. WATERS, *Norfolk in Literature*, London, Jarrods, n.d. (1923), p. 3. One of his reviewers cites the publisher's description: «[...] a summary, complete and condensed, of the lettered folk who have sprung from her [Norfolk's] soil or who have passed their period of activity within her bounds, or who have been associated with her in one or other of their chief efforts». See *The Tablet: The International Catholic News Weekly*, Nov. 10, 1923, p. 7; online at <http://archive.thetablet.co.uk>: «If the Catholic reader would enjoy this volume he must skip one or two gratuitous observations, e.g., as to "otiose and worldly Benedictines and Cistercians" [...] Otherwise we have nothing but praise for the book, which so far as it goes is interesting and informing, and written in a brisk and bright literary style».

¹²⁰ WATERS, *Norfolk in Literature*, pp. 38, 63-68, 122-123.

¹²¹ *Traveller's Joy. An Anthology*, ed. W. G. Waters, New York, E. P. Dutton, 1906; London: J. Cape, 1928, pp. v-viii. Given his systematic application of hunting metaphors to *Traveller's Joy* and a major character in *The Cook's Decameron* with a hobby of shooting woodcock in Sardinia, maybe Mr. Waters himself practiced the sport.

¹²² Binyon's friend Ezra Pound lent a hand to the *terza rima* translation (1933-1943), which in spite of disruption due to the war, circulated widely in the Viking Portable Dante and other editions in enduring reprints. See Wikipedia, s.v. *Laurence Binyon*.

¹²³ L. BINYON, review of *Five Italian Shrines* for «The Times Literary Supplement», Feb. 8, 1907: «It was a happy idea that inspired Mr. W. G. Waters's book, *Five Italian Shrines* [...]».

¹²⁴ E. H. SICHEL, review of *Traveller's Joy* for «The Times Literary Supplement», Sept. 21, 1906.

¹²⁵ His mother must have died in childbirth. The boy's full name was William Arthur Pernow Waters. The month of his birth is given on Ancestry.co.uk. In 1882 he is recorded as «W.A.P. Waters, son of W.G. Waters, Hindringham, Norfolk» and a «junior» at the recently established Clifton College, an elite boarding school in Bristol founded in 1862. See the *Clifton College Annals and Register 1860-1897*, ed. E. M. Oakley, Bristol, J. W. Arrowsmith, Printer, Quay Street, 1897 (online at Google Books). The British medical journal «The Lancet», 1, 1904, p. 1617 (online at Google Books) reports that the degree of doctor of medicine was conferred upon him in a ceremony of May, 1904, at Brasenose College, Oxford. As of 1906 he was assisting in an Oxford class on «practical bacteriology» («The British Medical Journal», 1, no. 2372, June 23, 1906, pp. 1479-1491; online in Jstor). In the same year he takes a place alongside the famous physician William Osler, President of the Oxford Medical Society, as «Secretary W.A.P. Waters, 99 Holywell Street» (*Official Yearbook of Scientific and Learned Societies of Great Britain and Ireland* [1908], p. 340; online at Google Books). A census of 1911 places him at that address, a physician age 42, «lodging with Arthur Latham Ormerod, the Medical Officer of Health for the city». They had two servants and would continue to reside there until 1936. See www.oxfordhistory.org, which gives street-by-street addresses, histories, and photographs of the city's houses. The house at 99 Holywell St., a plain structure made of large grey stones, dates from the early seventeenth century and was refashioned in the eighteenth. From 1952 to 1967, J. R. Tolkien lived there.

¹²⁶ *Kelly's Directory for Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, and Suffolk* (1883; online), p. 345, reports that the manor house had been «purchased, together with Field House, from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, by Edmund Plane Middleton esq. J.P. The Dean and Chapter of Norwich, who are lords of the manor, Edmund Plane Middleton J.P. Edward B. Soarke J.P. William George Waters J.P. Richard England J.P. J.S. Scott J.P. esqrs. and Captain William George England R.N. are the principal landowners».

¹²⁷ On Justice of the Peace: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magistrate_\(England_and_Wales\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magistrate_(England_and_Wales)).

¹²⁸ *Kelly's Directory for Cambridgeshire, Norfolk & Suffolk* (1883), pp. 541-543; online.

¹²⁹ This information is available from Google (hundred + court). See further Wikipedia for the Magistracy in England generally; also «hundreds in Norfolk».

¹³⁰ Wikipedia, s.v. *Esquire*. It does not mean lawyer, as in the United States.

¹³¹ *The Norfolk and Norwich Archeological Society* (1877), p. vi, lists «Waters, William George, Esq., of Hindringham» as a member. His article appeared in «Norfolk Archeology: or Miscellaneous Tracts Relating to the Antiquity of the County of Norfolk. Published by the Norfolk and Norwich Archeological Society», vol. 8, Norwich: Miller and Leavins, 1879, beginning on p. 167.

¹³² *The Vespasiano Memoirs. Lives of Illustrious Men of the XVth Century*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1997, pp. 5-11 (online at Google books).

¹³³ *The Savile Club: 1868-1923*, Privately Printed for the Committee of the Club, Edinburgh, Neill & Co., Ltd., 1923, p. 138. See the unsigned review of this book on the club's history by W. G. Waters in «The Times Literary Supplement» of Aug. 2, 1923: its *table d'hôte* dinner is «the ark of the Savilian covenant».

¹³⁴ G. ANDERSON, *Hang Your Halo in the Hall: A History of the Savile Club*, London, Savile Club, 1968, p. 14.

¹³⁵ *The Savile Club*, p. 21: «[...] the Club as a whole wished to be a Club for men only, and to leave the development of epicene establishments of this character to other and more ardent reformers».

¹³⁶ Ivi, p. 62.

¹³⁷ I thank Julian Malone-Lee of the Savile Club for this information, provided in an email of Feb. 1, 2016.

¹³⁸ BLACK, *A Room of His Own*, pp. 1, 44.

¹³⁹ Ivi, pp. 9, 59-62.

¹⁴⁰ I thank Ms. Jennie De Protani, the Athenaeum Club archivist, for information on Waters's two sponsors, provided in an email of Mar. 8, 2016. In sparse internet notices I have found, Clausen was a Master of the Bench at Lincoln's Inn, where he ruled on copyright cases; he donated money to Oxford, evidently his Alma Mater. He enjoyed some brief international



celebrity when a disgruntled litigant, whose appeal for a new trial Clausen had rejected, came to court armed with rotten tomatoes, which he proceeded to lob at the judge. «One overripe missile splattered on the Hon. Mr. Justice Clausen’s “full bottomed wig”». See, e.g., the «Sarasota Herald-Tribune», Dec. 2, 1938, p. 10; retrievable online. Blomfield (1856-1942), one of England’s most distinguished architects and author of books on the history of English and French architecture, designed the buildings for Lady Margaret Hall at Oxford and many World War I memorials.

¹⁴¹ G. A. F. ROGERS, *The Arts Club and its Members*, London, Truslove and Hanson, Ltd., 1920, p. 124 (online). See also the club’s current website.

¹⁴² All have current websites. Women are now admitted. The Carleton, founded in 1832 and one of the most conservative, voted to admit women in 2008; up to then, its only female member had been Margaret Thatcher.

