

from heaven into the meanest cottages ; whilst royal palaces shall produce such as seem rather adapted to have the care of hogs, than the government of men. Who but Griselda could, not only without a tear, but even with seeming satisfaction, undergo the most rigid and unheard of trials of her husband ? Many women there are who, if turned out of doors naked in that manner, would have procured themselves fine clothes, adorning at once their own persons and their husbands' brows.

Dioneus's novel, which was now concluded, was much canvassed by the company, this blaming one thing, and that commending another, according to their respective fancies ; when the king, seeing the sun was now far in the west, and that the evening drew on apace, said, without rising from his seat, " I suppose you all know, ladies, that a person's sense and understanding consist, not only in remembering things past, or knowing the present ; but to be able, by both these means, to foresee what is to come, is, by the more knowing part of mankind, judged the greatest proof of wisdom. To-morrow, you are sensible, it will have been fifteen days since we, by way of amusement, and for the preservation of our lives, came out of Florence, avoiding all those cares and melancholy reflections which continually haunted us in the city, since the beginning of that fatal pestilence. And, in my opinion, we have done honestly and well. For, though some light things have been talked of, and a loose given to all sorts of innocent mirth, yet am I not conscious of anything blameworthy that has passed among us ; but everything has been decent, everything harmonious, and such as might well besem the community of brothers and sisters.

Lest, therefore, something should happen, which might give us uneasiness, and make people put a bad construction upon our being so long together, now all have had their days, and their shares of honour, which at present rests in me, I hold it most advisable for us to return from whence we came. Besides, as people know of our being together, our company may probably increase, which would make it entirely disagreeable. If you approve of it, then, I will keep the power till to-morrow, that we depart ; but if you