

# The Little Gipsy Girl

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## THE LITTLE GIPSY GIRL.

It would almost seem that the Gitanos and Gitanas, or male and female gipsies, had been sent into the world for the sole purpose of thieving. Born of parents who are thieves, reared among thieves, and educated as thieves, they finally go forth perfected in their vocation, accomplished at all points, and ready for every species of roguery. In them the love of thieving, and the ability to exercise it, are qualities inseparable from their existence, and never lost until the hour of their death.

Now it chanced that an old woman of this race, one who had merited retirement on full pay as a veteran in the ranks of Cacus, brought up a girl whom she called Preciosa, and declared to be her granddaughter. To this child she imparted all her own acquirements, all the various tricks of her art. Little Preciosa became the most admired dancer in all the tribes of Gipsydom; she was the most beautiful and discreet of all their maidens; nay she shone conspicuous not only among the gipsies, but even as compared with the most lovely and accomplished damsels whose praises were at that time sounded forth by the voice of fame. Neither sun, nor wind, nor all those vicissitudes of weather, to which the gipsies are more constantly exposed than any other people, could impair the bloom of her complexion or embrown her hands; and what is more remarkable, the rude manner in which she was reared only served to reveal that she must have sprung from something better than the Gitano stock; for she was extremely pleasing and courteous in conversation, and lively though she was, yet in no wise did she display the least unseemly levity; on the contrary, amidst all her sprightliness, there was at the same time so much genuine decorum in her manner, that in the presence of Preciosa no gitana, old or young, ever dared to sing lascivious songs, or utter unbecoming words.

The grandmother fully perceived what a treasure she had in her grandchild; and the old eagle determined to set her young eaglet flying, having been careful to teach her how to live by her talons. Preciosa was rich in hymns, ballads, seguidillas, sarabands, and other ditties, especially romances, which she sang with peculiar grace; for the cunning grandmother knew by

experience that such accomplishments, added to the youth and beauty of her granddaughter, were the best means of increasing her capital, and therefore she failed not to promote their cultivation in every way she could. Nor was the aid of poets wanting; for some there are who do not disdain to write for the gipsies, as there are those who invent miracles for the pretended blind, and go snacks with them in what they gain from charitable believers.

During her childhood, Preciosa lived in different parts of Castile; but in her sixteenth year her grandmother brought her to Madrid, to the usual camping-ground of the gipsies, in the fields of Santa Barbara. Madrid seemed to her the most likely place to find customers; for there everything is bought and sold. Preciosa made her first appearance in the capital on the festival of Santa Anna, the patroness of the city, when she took part in a dance performed by eight gitanas, with one gitano, an excellent dancer, to lead them. The others were all very well, but such was the elegance of Preciosa, that she fascinated the eyes of all the spectators. Amidst the sound of the tambourine and castanets, in the heat of the dance, a murmur of admiration arose for the beauty and grace of Preciosa; but when they heard her sing—for the dance was accompanied with song—the fame of the gitana reached its highest point; and by common consent the jewel offered as the prize of the best dancer in that festival was adjudged to her. After the usual dance in the church of Santa Maria, before the image of the glorious Santa Anna, Preciosa caught up a tambourine, well furnished with bells, and having cleared a wide circle around her with pirouettes of exceeding lightness, she sang a hymn to the patroness of the day. It was the admiration of all who heard her. Some said, "God bless the girl!" Others, "'Tis a pity that this maiden is a gitana: truly she deserves to be the daughter of some great lord!" Others more coarsely observed, "Let the wench grow up, and she will show you pretty tricks; she is closing the meshes of a very nice net to fish for hearts." Another more good-natured but ill-bred and stupid, seeing her foot it so lightly, "Keep it up! keep it up! Courage, darling! Grind the dust to atoms!" "Never fear," she answered, without losing a step; "I'll grind it to atoms."

At the vespers and feast of Santa Anna Preciosa was somewhat fatigued; but so celebrated had she become for beauty, wit, and discretion, as well as for her dancing, that nothing else was talked of throughout the capital. A fortnight afterwards, she returned to Madrid, with three other girls, provided

with their tambourines and a new dance, besides a new stock of romances and songs, but all of a moral character; for Preciosa would never permit those in her company to sing immodest songs, nor would she ever sing them herself. The old gitana came with her, for she now watched her as closely as Argus, and never left her side, lest some one should carry her off. She called her granddaughter, and the girl believed herself to be her grandchild.

The young gitanas began their dance in the shade, in the Calle de Toledo, and were soon encircled by a crowd of spectators. Whilst they danced, the old woman gathered money among the bystanders, and they showered it down like stones on the highway; for beauty has such power that it can awaken slumbering charity. The dance over, Preciosa said, "If you will give me four quartos, I will sing by myself a beautiful romance about the churching of our lady the Queen Doña Margarita. It is a famous composition, by a poet of renown, one who may be called a captain in the battalion of poets." No sooner had she said this, than almost every one in the ring cried out, "Sing it, Preciosa; here are my four quartos;" and so many quartos were thrown down for her, that the old gitana had not hands enough to pick them up. When the gathering was ended, Preciosa resumed her tambourine, and sang the promised romance, which was loudly encored, the whole audience crying out with one voice, "Sing again, Preciosa, sing again, and dance for us, girl: thou shalt not want quartos, whilst thou hast the ground beneath thy feet."

Whilst more than two hundred persons were thus looking on at the dance, and listening to the singing of the gitana, one of the lieutenants of the city passed by; and seeing so many people together, he asked what was the occasion of the crowd. Being told that the handsome gitana was singing there, the lieutenant, who was not without curiosity, drew near also to listen, but in consideration of his dignity, he did not wait for the end of the romance. The gitanilla, however, pleased him so much, that he sent his page to tell the old crone to come to his house that evening with her troop, as he wished his wife Doña Clara to hear them. The page delivered the message, and the old gitana promised to attend.

After the performance was ended, and the performers were going elsewhere, a very well-dressed page came up to Preciosa, and giving her a

folded paper, said, "Pretty Preciosa, will you sing this romance? It is a very good one, and I will give you others from time to time, by which you will acquire the fame of having the best romances in the world."

"I will learn this one with much willingness," replied Preciosa; "and be sure, señor, you bring me the others you speak of, but on condition that there is nothing improper in them. If you wish to be paid for them, we will agree for them by the dozen; but do not expect to be paid in advance; that will be impossible. When a dozen have been sung, the money for a dozen shall be forthcoming."

"If the Señora Preciosa only pays me for the paper," said the page, "I shall be content. Moreover, any romance which does not turn out so well shall not be counted."

"I will retain the right of choice," said Preciosa; and then she continued her way with her companions up the street, when some gentlemen called and beckoned to them from a latticed window. Preciosa went up and looked through the window, which was near the ground, into a cheerful, well-furnished apartment, in which several cavaliers were walking about, and others playing at various games. "Will you give me a share of your winnings, señors?" said Preciosa, in the lisping accent of the gipsies, which she spoke not by nature but from choice. At the sight of Preciosa, and at the sound of her voice, the players quitted the tables, the rest left off lounging, and all thronged to the window, for her fame had already reached them. "Come in! Let the little gipsies come in," said the cavaliers, gaily; "we will certainly give them a share of our winnings."

"But you might make it cost us dear, señors," said Preciosa.

"No, on the honour of gentlemen," said one, "you may come in, niña, in full security that no one will touch the sole of your shoe. I swear this to you by the order I wear on my breast;" and as he spoke he laid his hand on the cross of the order of Calatrava which he wore.

"If you like to go in, Preciosa," said one of the gitanillas who were with her, "do so by all means; but I do not choose to go where there are so many men."

"Look you, Christina," answered Preciosa, "what you have to beware of is one man alone; where there are so many there is nothing to fear. Of one thing you may be sure, Christina; the woman who is resolved to be upright may be so amongst an army of soldiers. It is well, indeed, to avoid occasions of temptation, but it is not in crowded rooms like this that danger lurks."

"Well then, let us go in, Preciosa," said her companion, "you know more than a witch."

The old gipsy also encouraged them to go in, and that decided the question. As soon as they had entered the room, the cavalier of the order, seeing the paper which Preciosa carried, stretched out his hand to take it. "Do not take it from me," she said: "It is a romance but just given to me, and which I have not yet had time to read."

"And do you know how to read, my girl?" said one of the cavaliers.

"Ay, and to write too," said the old woman. "I have brought up my grandchild as if she was a lawyer's daughter."

The cavalier opened the paper, and finding a gold crown inclosed in it, said, "Truly, Preciosa, the contents of this letter are worth the postage. Here is a crown inclosed in the romance."

"The poet has treated me like a beggar," said Preciosa; "but it is certainly a greater marvel for one of his trade to give a crown than for one of mine to receive it. If his romances come to me with this addition, he may transcribe the whole *Romancero General* and send me every piece in it one by one. I will weigh their merit; and if I find there is good matter in them, I will not reject them. Read the paper aloud, señor, that we may see if the poet is as wise as he is liberal." The cavalier accordingly read as follows:—

Sweet gipsy girl, whom envy's self  
Must own of all fair maids the fairest,  
Ah! well befits thy stony heart  
The name thou, Preciosa, <sup>[66]</sup> bearest.

If as in beauty, so in pride

And cruelty thou grow to sight,  
Woe worth the land, woe worth the age  
Which brought thy fatal charms to light.

A basilisk in thee we see,  
Which fascinates our gaze and kills.  
No empire mild is thine, but one  
That tyrannises o'er our wills.

How grew such charms 'mid gipsy tribes,  
From roughest blasts without a shield?  
How such a perfect chrysolite  
Could humble Manzanares yield?

River, for this thou shalt be famed,  
Like Tagus with its golden show,  
And more for Preciosa prized  
Than Ganges with its lavish flow.

In telling fortunes who can say  
What dupes to ruin thou beguilest?  
Good luck thou speak'st with smiling lips.  
But luckless they on whom thou smilest!

Tis said they're witches every one,  
The women of the gipsy race;  
And all men may too plainly see  
That thou hast witchcraft in thy face.

A thousand different modes are thine  
To turn the brain; for rest or move,  
Speak, sing, be mute, approach, retire,  
Thou kindlest still the fire of love.

The freest hearts bend to thy sway,  
And lose the pride of liberty;  
Bear witness mine, thy captive thrall,  
Which would not, if it could, be free.

These lines, thou precious gem of love,  
Whose praise all power of verse transcend,  
He who for thee will live or die,  
Thy poor and humble lover sends.

"The poem ends with 'poor' in the last line," said Preciosa; "and that is a bad sign. Lovers should never begin by saying that they are poor, for poverty, it strikes me, is a great enemy to love."

"Who teaches you these things, girl?" said one of the cavaliers.

"Who should teach me?" she replied. "Have I not a soul in my body? Am I not fifteen years of age? I am neither lame, nor halt, nor maimed in my understanding. The wit of a gipsy girl steers by a different compass from that which guides other people. They are always forward for their years. There is no such thing as a stupid gitano, or a silly gitana. Since it is only by being sharp and ready that they can earn a livelihood, they polish their wits at every step, and by no means let the moss grow under their feet. You see these girls, my companions, who are so silent. You may think they are simpletons, but put your fingers in their mouths to see if they have cut their wise teeth; and then you shall see what you shall see. There is not a gipsy girl of twelve who does not know as much as one of another race at five-and-twenty, for they have the devil and much practice for instructors, so that they learn in one hour what would otherwise take them a year."

The company were much amused by the gitana's chat, and all gave her money. The old woman sacked thirty reals, and went off with her flock as merry as a cricket to the house of the señor lieutenant, after promising that she would return with them another day to please such liberal gentlemen. Doña Clara, the lieutenant's lady, had been apprised of the intended visit of the gipsies, and she and her doncellas and dueñas, as well as those of another señora, her neighbour, were expecting them as eagerly as one looks for a shower in May. They had come to see Preciosa. She entered with her companions, shining among them like a torch among lesser lights, and all the ladies pressed towards her. Some kissed her, some gazed at her; others blessed her sweet face, others her graceful carriage. "This, indeed, is what you may call golden hair," cried Doña Clara; "these are truly emerald eyes."  
[\[67\]](#) The señora, her neighbour, examined the gitaniilla piecemeal. She made



a *pepetoria*<sup>[68]</sup> of all her joints and members, and coming at last to a dimple in her chin, she said, "Oh, what a dimple! it is a pit into which all eyes that behold it must fall." Thereupon an esquire in attendance on Doña Clara, an elderly gentleman with a long beard, exclaimed, "Call you this a dimple, señora? I know little of dimples then if this be one. It is no dimple, but a grave of living desires. I vow to God the gitanilla is such a dainty creature, she could not be better if she was made of silver or sugar paste. Do you know how to tell fortunes, niña?"

"That I do, and in three or four different manners," replied Preciosa.

"You can do that too?" exclaimed Doña Clara. "By the life of my lord the lieutenant, you must tell me mine, niña of gold, niña of silver, niña of pearls, niña of carbuncles, niña of heaven, and more than that cannot be said."

"Give the niña the palm of your hand, señora, and something to cross it with," said the old gipsy; "and you will see what things she will tell you, for she knows more than a doctor of medicine."

The señora Tenienta<sup>[69]</sup> put her hand in her pocket, but found it empty; she asked for the loan of a quarto from her maids, but none of them had one, neither had the señora her neighbour. Preciosa seeing this, said, "For the matter of crosses all are good, but those made with silver or gold are best. As for making the sign of the cross with copper money, that, ladies, you must know lessens the luck, at least it does mine. I always like to begin by crossing the palm with a good gold crown, or a piece of eight, or at least a quarto, for, I am like the sacristans who rejoice when there is a good collection."

"How witty you are," said the lady visitor; then turning to the squire, "Do you happen to have a quarto about you, Señor Contreras? if you have, give it me, and when my husband the doctor comes you shall have it again."

"I have one," replied Contreras, "but it is pledged for two-and-twenty maravedis for my supper; give me so much and I will fly to fetch it."

"We have not a quarto amongst us all," said Doña Clara, "and you ask for two-and-twenty maravedis? Go your ways, Contreras, for a tiresome

blockhead, as you always were."

One of the damsels present, seeing the penury of the house, said to Preciosa, "Niña, will it be of any use to make the cross with a silver thimble?"

"Certainly," said Preciosa; "the best crosses in the world are made with silver thimbles, provided there are plenty of them."

"I have one," said the doncella; "if that is enough, here it is, on condition that my fortune be told too."

"So many fortunes to be told for a thimble!" exclaimed the old gipsy. "Make haste, granddaughter, for it will soon be night." Preciosa took the thimble, and began her sooth saying.

Pretty lady, pretty lady,  
    With a hand as silver fair,  
How thy husband dearly loves thee  
    'Tis superfluous to declare.

Thou'rt a dove, all milk of kindness;  
    Yet at times too thou canst be  
Wrathful as a tiger, or a  
    Lioness of Barbary.

Thou canst show thy teeth when jealous;  
    Truly the lieutenant's sly;  
Loves with furtive sports to vary  
    Magisterial gravity.

What a pity! One worth having  
    Woo'd thee when a maiden fair.  
Plague upon all interlopers!  
    You'd have made a charming pair.

Sooth, I do not like to say it,  
    Yet it may as well be said;  
Thou wilt be a buxom widow;

Twice again shalt thou be wed.

Do not weep, my sweet senora;  
We gitanas, you must know,  
Speak not always true as gospel  
Weep not then sweet lady so.

If the thought is too distressing,  
Losing such a tender mate,  
Thou hast but to die before him,  
To escape a widow's fate.

Wealth abundant thou'lt inherit,  
And that quickly, never fear:  
Thou shalt have a son, a canon,  
—Of what church does not appear;

Not Toledo; no, that can't be;  
And a daughter—let me see—  
Ay, she'll rise to be an abbess;  
—That is, if a nun she be.

If thy husband do not drop off  
From this moment in weeks four,  
Burgos him, or Salamanca,  
Shall behold corregidor.

Meanwhile keep thyself from tripping:  
Where thou walkest, many a snare  
For the feet of pretty ladies  
Naughty gallants lay: beware!

Other things still more surprising  
Shall on Friday next be told,  
Things to startle and delight thee,  
When I've crossed thy palm with gold.

Preciosa having finished this oracular descant for the lady of the house, the rest of the company were all eager to have their fortunes told likewise, but she put them off till the next Friday, when they promised to have silver coin ready for crossing their palms. The señor lieutenant now came in, and heard a glowing account of the charms and accomplishments of the leading gitana. Having made her and her companions dance a little, he emphatically confirmed the encomiums bestowed on Preciosa; and putting his hand in his pocket he groped and rummaged about in it for a while, but at last drew his hand out empty, saying, "Upon my life I have not a doit. Give Preciosa a real, Doña Clara; I will give it you by and by."

"That is all very well, señor," the lady replied; "but where is the real to come from? Amongst us all we could not find a quarto to cross our hands with."

"Well, give her some trinket or another, that Preciosa may come another day to see us, when we will treat her better."

"No," said Doña Clara, "I will give her nothing to-day, and I shall be sure she will come again."

"On the contrary," said Preciosa, "if you give me nothing. I will never come here any more. Sell justice, señor lieutenant, sell justice, and then you will have money. Do not introduce new customs, but do as other magistrates do, or you will die of hunger. Look you, señor, I have heard say that money enough may be made of one's office to pay any mulets that may be incurred, [\[70\]](#) and to help one to other appointments."

"So say and do those who have no conscience," said the lieutenant; "but the judge who does his duty will have no mulet to pay; and to have well discharged his office, will be his best help to obtain another."

"Your worship speaks like a very saint," replied Preciosa; "proceed thus, and we shall snip pieces off your old coats for relics."

"You know a great deal, Preciosa," said the lieutenant; "say no more, and I will contrive that their majesties shall see you, for you are fit to be shown to a king."

"They will want me for a court fool," said the gitanilla, "and as I never shall learn the trade, your pains will be all for nothing. If they wanted me for my cleverness, they might have me; but in some palaces fools thrive better than the wise. I am content to be a gitana, and poor, and let Heaven dispose of me as it pleases."

"Come along, niña," said the old gipsy; "say no more, you have said a great deal already, and know more than I ever taught you. Don't put too fine a point to your wit for fear it should get blunted; speak of things suitable to your years; and don't set yourself on the high ropes, lest you should chance to have a fall."

"The deuce is in these gitanas," said the delighted lieutenant, as they were taking their leave. The doncella of the thimble stopped them for a moment, saying to Preciosa, "Tell me my fortune, or give me back my thimble, for I have not another to work with."

"Señora doncella," replied Preciosa, "count upon your fortune as if it were already told, and provide yourself with another; or else sew no more gussets until I come again on Friday, when I will tell you more fortunes and adventures than you could read in any book of knight errantry."

The gipsies went away, and falling in with numerous workwomen returning from Madrid to their villages as usual at the Ave Maria, they joined company with them, as they always did for the greater security; for the old gipsy lived in perpetual terror lest some one should run away with her granddaughter.

One morning after this as they were returning to Madrid to levy black mail along with other gitanas, in a little valley about five hundred yards from the city, they met a handsome young gentleman richly dressed; his sword and dagger were a blazo of gold; his hat was looped with a jewelled band, and was adorned with plumes of various colours. The gitanas stopped on seeing him, and set themselves to observe his movements at their leisure, wondering much that so fine a cavalier should be alone and on foot in such a place at that early hour. He came up to them, and addressing the eldest gitana, said, "On your life, friend, I entreat you do me the favour to let me say two words in private to you and Preciosa. It shall be for your good."

"With all my heart," said the old woman, "so you do not take us much out of our way, or delay us long;" and calling Preciosa, they withdrew to some twenty paces distance, where they stopped, and the young gentleman thus addressed them: "I am so subdued by the wit and beauty of Preciosa, that after having in vain endeavoured to overcome my admiration, I have at last found the effort impossible. I, señoras (for I shall always give you that title if heaven favours my pretensions), am a knight, as this dress may show you;" and opening his cloak he displayed the insignia of one of the highest orders in Spain; "I am the son of——" (here he mentioned a personage whose name we suppress for obvious reasons), "and am still under tutelage and command. I am an only son, and expect to inherit a considerable estate. My father is here in the capital, looking for a certain post which by all accounts he is on the point of obtaining. Being then of the rank and condition which I have declared to you, I should yet wish to be a great lord for the sake of Preciosa, that I might raise her up to my own level, and make her my equal and my lady. I do not seek to deceive; the love I bear her is too deep for any kind of deception; I only desire to serve her in whatever way shall be most agreeable to her; her will is mine; for her my heart is wax to be moulded as she pleases but enduring as marble to retain whatever impression she shall make upon it. If you believe me I shall fear no discouragement from any other quarter, but if you doubt me, I shall despond. My name is——; my father's I have already given you; he lives in such a house in such a street and you may inquire about him and me of the neighbours, and of others also; for our name and quality are not so obscure but that you may hear of us about the court, and every, where in the capital. I have here a hundred crowns in gold to present to you, as earnest of what I mean to give you hereafter; for a man will be no niggard of his wealth who has given away his very soul."

Whilst the cavalier was speaking, Preciosa watched him attentively, and doubtless she saw nothing to dislike either in his language or his person. Turning to the old woman, she said, "Pardon me, grandmother, if I take the liberty of answering this enamoured señor myself."

"Make whatever answer you please, granddaughter," said the old woman, "for I know you have sense enough for anything." So Preciosa began.

"Señor cavalier," she said, "though I am but a poor gitana and humbly born, yet I have a certain fantastic little spirit within me, which moves me to great things. Promises do not tempt me, nor presents sap my resolution, nor obsequiousness allure, nor amorous wiles ensnare me; and although by my grandmother's reckoning I shall be but fifteen next Michaelmas, I am already old in thought, and have more understanding than my years would seem to promise. This may, perhaps, be more from nature than from experience; but be that as it may, I know that the passion of love is an impetuous impulse, which violently distorts the current of the will, makes it dash furiously against all impediments, and recklessly pursue the desired object. But not unfrequently when the lover believes himself on the point of gaining the heaven of his wishes, he falls into the hell of disappointment. Or say that the object is obtained, the lover soon becomes wearied of his so much desired treasure, and opening the eyes of his understanding he finds that what before was so devoutly adored is now become abhorrent to him. The fear of such a result inspires me with so great a distrust, that I put no faith in words, and doubt many deeds. One sole jewel I have, which I prize more than life, and that is my virgin purity, which I will not sell for promises or gifts, for sold it would be in that case, and if it could be bought, small indeed would be its value. Nor is it to be filched from me by wiles or artifices; rather will I carry it with me to my grave, and perhaps to heaven, than expose it to danger by listening to specious tales and chimeras. It is a flower which nothing should be allowed to sully, even in imagination if it be possible. Nip the rose from the spray, and how soon it fades! One touches it, another smells it, a third plucks its leaves, and at last the flower perishes in vulgar hands. If you are come then, señor, for this booty, you shall never bear it away except bound in the ties of wedlock. If you desire to be my spouse, I will be yours; but first there are many conditions to be fulfilled, and many points to be ascertained.

"In the first place I must know if you are the person you declare yourself to be. Next, should I find this to be true, you must straightway quit your father's mansion, and exchange it for our tents, where, assuming the garb of a gipsy, you must pass two years in our schools, during which I shall be able to satisfy myself as to your disposition, and you will become acquainted with mine. At the end of that period, if you are pleased with me and I with you, I will give myself up to you as your wife; but till then I will

be your sister and your humble servant, and nothing more. Consider, señor, that during the time of this novitiate you may recover your sight, which now seems lost, or at least disordered, and that you may then see fit to shun what now you pursue with so much ardour. You will then be glad to regain your lost liberty, and having done so, you may by sincere repentance obtain pardon of your family for your faults. If on these conditions you are willing to enlist in our ranks, the matter rests in your own hands; but if you fail in any one of them, you shall not touch a finger of mine."

The youth was astounded at Preciosa's decision, and remained as if spell-bound, with his eyes bent on the ground, apparently considering what answer he should return. Seeing this, Preciosa said to him, "This is not a matter of such light moment that it can or ought to be resolved on the spot. Return, señor, to the city, consider maturely what is best for you to do; and you may speak with me in this same place any week-day you please, as we are on our way to or from Madrid."

"When Heaven disposed me to love you, Preciosa," replied the cavalier, "I determined to do for you whatever it might be your will to require of me, though it never entered my thoughts that you would make such a demand as you have now done; but since it is your pleasure that I should comply with it, count me henceforth as a gipsy, and put me to all the trials you desire, you will always find me the same towards you as I now profess myself. Fix the time when you will have me change my garb. I will leave my family under pretext of going to Flanders, and will bring with me money for my support for some time. In about eight days I shall be able to arrange for my departure, and I will contrive some means to get rid of my attendants, so as to be free to accomplish my purpose. What I would beg of you (if I might make bold to ask any favour) is that, except to-day for the purpose of inquiring about me and my family, you go no more to Madrid, for I would not that any of the numerous occasions that present themselves there, should deprive me of the good fortune I prize so dearly."

"Not so, señor gallant," said Preciosa: "wherever I go I must be free and unfettered; my liberty must not be restrained or encumbered by jealousy. Be assured, however, that I will not use it to such excess, but that any one may see from a mile off that my honesty is equal to my freedom. The first charge, therefore, I have to impose upon you is, that you put implicit



confidence in me; for lovers who begin by being jealous, are either silly or deficient in confidence."

"You must have Satan himself within you, little one," said the old gipsy; "why you talk like a bachelor of Salamanca. You know all about love and jealousy and confidence. How is this? You make me look like a fool, and I stand listening to you as to a person possessed, who talks Latin without knowing it."

"Hold your peace, grandmother," replied Preciosa; "and know that all the things you have heard me say are mere trifles to the many greater truths that remain in my breast."

All that Preciosa said, and the sound sense she displayed, added fuel to the flame that burned in the breast of the enamoured cavalier. Finally, it was arranged that they should meet in the same place on that day sennight, when he would report how matters stood with him, and they would have had time to inquire into the truth of what he had told them. The young gentleman then took out a brocaded purse in which he said there were a hundred gold crowns, and gave it to the old woman; but Preciosa would by no means consent that she should take them.

"Hold your tongue, niña," said her grandmother; "the best proof this señor has given of his submission, is in thus having yielded up his arms to us in token of surrender. To give, upon whatever occasion it may be, is always the sign of a generous heart. Moreover, I do not choose that the gitanas should lose, through my fault, the reputation they have had for long ages of being greedy of lucre. Would you have me lose a hundred crowns, Preciosa? A hundred crowns in gold that one may stitch up in the hem of a petticoat not worth two reals, and keep them there as one holds a rent-charge on the pastures of Estramadura! Suppose that any of our children, grandchildren, or relations should fall by any mischance into the hands of justice, is there any eloquence so sure to touch the ears of the judge as the music of these crowns when they fall into his purse? Three times, for three different offences, I have seen myself all but mounted on the ass to be whipped; but once I got myself off by means of a silver mug, another time by a pearl necklace, and the third time with the help of forty pieces of eight, which I exchanged for quartos, throwing twenty reals into the bargain. Look

you, niña, ours is a very perilous occupation, full of risks and accidents; and there is no defence that affords us more ready shelter and succour than the invincible arms of the great Philip: nothing beats the *plus ultra*.<sup>[71]</sup> For the two faces of a doubloon, a smile comes over the grim visage of the procurator and of all the other ministers of mischief, who are downright harpies to us poor gitanas, and have more mercy for highway robbers than for our poor hides. Let us be ever so ragged and wretched in appearance, they will not believe that we are poor, but say that we are like the doublets of the gavachos of Belmont, ragged and greasy and full of doubloons."

"Say no more, for heaven's sake, grandmother," said Preciosa; "do not string together so many arguments for keeping the money, but keep it, and much good may it do you. I wish to God you would bury it in a grave out of which it may never return to the light, and that there may never be any need of it. We must, however, give some of it to these companions of ours, who must be tired of waiting so long for us."

"They shall see one coin out of this purse as soon as they will see the Grand Turk," the old woman replied. "The good señor will try if he has any silver coin or a few coppers remaining, to divide amongst them, for they will be content with a little."

"Yes, I have," he said, and he took from his pocket three pieces of eight which he divided among the gitanas, with which they were more delighted than the manager of a theatre when he is placarded as victor in a contest with a rival. Finally it was settled that the party should meet there again in a week, as before mentioned, and that the young man's gipsy name should be Andrew Caballero, for that was a surname not unknown among the gipsies. Andrew (as we shall henceforth call him) could not find courage to embrace Preciosa, but darting his very soul into her with a glance, he went away without it, so to speak, and returned to Madrid. The gipsies followed soon after; and Preciosa, who already felt a certain interest in the handsome and amiable Andrew, was anxious to learn if he was really what he said.

They had not gone far before they met the page of the verses and the gold crown. "Welcome, Preciosa," he said, coming up to her. "Have you read the lines I gave you the other day?"

"Before I answer you a word," said she, "you must, by all you love best, tell me one thing truly."

"Upon that adjuration," he replied, "I could not refuse an answer to any question, though it should cost me my head."

"Well, then, what I want to know is this: are you, perchance, a poet?"

"If I were one, it would certainly be perchance," said the page; "but you must know, Preciosa, that the name of poet is one which very few deserve. Thus I am not a poet, but only a lover of poetry; yet for my own use I do not borrow of others. The verses I gave you were mine, as are these also which I give you now; but I am not a poet for all that—God forbid."

"Is it such a bad thing to be a poet?" Preciosa asked.

"It is not a bad thing," he answered; "but to be a poet and nothing else I do not hold to be very good. We should use poetry like a rich jewel, the owner of which does not wear it every day, or show it to all people, but displays it only at suitable times. Poetry is a beautiful maiden, chaste, honest, discreet, reserved, and never overstepping the limits of perfect refinement. She is fond of solitude; she finds pleasure and recreation among fountains, meadows, trees, and flowers; and she delights and instructs all who are conversant with her."

"I have heard for all that," said Preciosa, "that she is exceedingly poor; something of a beggar in short."

"It is rather the reverse," said the page, "for there is no poet who is not rich, since they all live content with their condition; and that is a piece of philosophy which few understand. But what has moved you, Preciosa, to make this inquiry?"

"I was moved to it, because, as I believe all poets, or most of them, to be poor, that crown which you gave me wrapped up with the verses caused me some surprise; but now that I know that you are not a poet, but only a lover of poetry, it may be that you are rich, though I doubt it, for your propensity is likely to make you run through all you have got. It is a well-known saying, that no poet can either keep or make a fortune."

"But the saying is not applicable to me," said the page. "I make verses, and I am neither rich nor poor; and without feeling it or making a talk about it, as the Genoese do of their invitations, I can afford to give a crown, or even two, to whom I like. Take then, precious pearl, this second paper, and this second crown enclosed in it, without troubling yourself with the question whether I am a poet or not. I only beg you to think and believe that he who gives you this would fain have the wealth of Midas to bestow upon you."

Preciosa took the paper, and feeling a crown within it, she said, "This paper bids fair to live long, for it has two souls within it, that of the crown and that of the verses, which, of course, are full of souls and hearts as usual. But please to understand, Señor Page, that I do not want so many souls; and that unless you take back one of them, I will not receive the other on any account. I like you as a poet and not as a giver of gifts; and thus we may be the longer friends, for your stock of crowns may run out sooner than your verses."

"Well," said the page, "since you will have it that I am poor, do not reject the soul I present to you in this paper, and give me back the crown, which, since it has been touched by your hand, shall remain with me as a hallowed relic as long as I live."

Preciosa gave him the crown, and kept the paper, but would not read it in the street. The page went away exulting in the belief that Preciosa's heart was touched, since she had treated him with such affability.

It being now her object to find the house of Andrew's father, she went straight to the street, which she well knew, without stopping anywhere to dance. About half way down it, she saw the gilded iron balcony which Andrew had mentioned to her, and in it a gentleman of about fifty years of age, of noble presence, with a red cross on his breast. This gentleman seeing the gitanilla, called out, "Come up here, niñas, and we will give you something." These words brought three other gentlemen to the balcony, among whom was the enamoured Andrew. The instant he cast his eyes on Preciosa he changed colour, and well nigh swooned, such was the effect her sudden appearance had upon him. The girls went up stairs, whilst the old woman remained below to pump the servants with respect to Andrew. As

they entered the room, the elder gentleman was saying to the others, "This is no doubt the handsome gitanilla who is so much talked of in Madrid."

"It is," said Andrew; "and she is unquestionably the most beautiful creature that ever was seen."

"So they say," said Preciosa, who had overheard these remarks as she came in; "but indeed they must be half out in the reckoning. I believe I am pretty well, but as handsome as they say—not a bit of it!"

"By the life of Don Juanico, my son," said the elder gentleman, "you are far more so, fair gitana."

"And who is Don Juanico, your son?" said Preciosa.

"That gallant by your side," said the cavalier.

"Truly, I thought your worship had sworn by some bantling of two years old," said Preciosa. "What a pretty little pet of a Don Juanico!<sup>[72]</sup> Why he is old enough to be married; and by certain lines on his forehead, I foresee that married he will be before three years are out, and much to his liking too, if in the meantime he be neither lost nor changed."

"Ay, ay," said one of the company; "the gitanilla can tell the meaning of a wrinkle."

During this time, the three gipsy girls, who accompanied Preciosa, had got their heads together and were whispering each other. "Girls," said Christina, "that is the gentleman that gave us the three pieces of eight this morning."

"Sure enough," said they; "but don't let us say a word about it unless he mentions it. How do we know but he may wish to keep it secret?"

Whilst the three were thus conferring together, Preciosa replied to the last remark about wrinkles. "What I see with my eyes, I divine with my fingers. Of the Señor Don Juanico, I know without lines that he is somewhat amorous, impetuous, and hasty; and a great promiser of things that seem impossible. God grant he be not a deceiver, which would be worse than all. He is now about to make a long journey; but the bay horse thinks one thing, and the man that saddles him thinks another thing. Man proposes and God

disposes. Perhaps he may think he is bound for Oñez, and will find himself on the way to Gaviboa."

"In truth, gitana," said Don Juan, "you have guessed right respecting me in several points. I certainly intend, with God's will, to set out for Flanders in four or five days, though you forebode that I shall have to turn out of my road; yet I hope no obstacle will occur to frustrate my purpose."

"Say no more, señorito," the gipsy replied; "but commend yourself to God, and all will be well. Be assured I know nothing at all of what I have been saying. It is no wonder if I sometimes hit the mark, since I talk so much and always at random. I wish I could speak to such good purpose as to persuade you not to leave home, but remain quietly with your parents to comfort their old age; for I am no friend to these Flanders expeditions, especially for a youth of your tender years. Wait till you are grown a little more and better able to bear the toils of war; and the rather as you have war enough at home, considering all the amorous conflicts that are raging in your bosom. Gently, gently with you, madcap! Look what you are doing before you marry; and now give us a little dole for God's sake and for the name you bear; for truly I believe you are well born, and if along with this you are loyal and true, then I will sing jubilee for having hit the mark in all I have said to you."

"I told you before, niña," said Don Juan, otherwise Andrew Caballero, "that you were right on every point except as to the fear you entertain that I am not quite a man of my word. In that respect you are certainly mistaken. The word that I pledge in the field I fulfil in the town, or wherever I may be, without waiting to be asked; for no man can esteem himself a gentleman, who yields in the least to the vice of falsehood. My father will give you alms for God's sake and for mine; for in truth I gave all I had this morning to some ladies, of whom I would not venture to assert that they are as obliging as they are beautiful, one of them especially."

Hearing this, Christina said to her companions, "May I be hanged, girls, if he is not talking of the three pieces of eight he gave us this morning."

"No, that can't be," one of them observed; "for he said they were ladies, and we are none; and being so true-spoken as he says he is, he would not lie in this matter."

"Oh, but," said Christina, "that is not a lie of any moment that is told without injury to anybody, but for the advantage and credit of him who tells it. Be that as it may, I see he neither gives us anything, nor asks us to dance."

The old gipsy now came into the room and said, "Make haste, granddaughter; for it is late, and there is much to be done, and more to be said."

"What is it, grandmother?" said Preciosa, "A boy or a girl?"

"A boy, and a very fine one. Come along, Preciosa, and you shall hear marvels."

"God grant the mother does not die of her after pains," said the granddaughter.

"We will take all possible care of her. She has had a very good time, and the child is a perfect beauty."

"Has any lady been confined?" said Andrew's father.

"Yes, señor," replied the old Gitana: "but it is such a secret, that no one knows of it except Preciosa, myself, and one other person. So we cannot mention the lady's name."

"Well, we don't want to know it," said one of the gentlemen present; "but God help the lady who trusts her secret to your tongues, and her honour to your aid."

"We are not all bad," replied Preciosa; "perhaps there may be one among us who piques herself on being as trusty and as true as the noblest man in this room. Let us begone, grandmother; for here we are held in little esteem, though in truth we are neither thieves nor beggars."

"Do not be angry, Preciosa," said Andrew's father. "Of you at least I imagine no one can presume anything ill, for your good looks are warrant for your good conduct. Do me the favour to dance a little with your companions. I have here a doubloon for you with two faces, and neither of them as good as your own, though they are the faces of two kings."

The moment the old woman heard this she cried, "Come along, girls: tuck up your skirts, and oblige these gentlemen." Preciosa took the tambourine, and they all danced with so much grace and freedom, that the eyes of all the spectators were riveted upon their steps, especially those of Andrew, who gazed upon Preciosa as if his whole soul was centred in her; but an untoward accident turned his delight into anguish. In the exertion of the dance, Preciosa let fall the paper given her by the page. It was immediately picked up by the gentleman who had no good opinion of the gipsies. He opened it, and said, "What have we here? A madrigal? Good! Break off the dance, and listen to it; for, as far as I can judge from the beginning, it is really not bad." Preciosa was annoyed at this, as she did not know the contents of the paper; and she begged the gentleman not to read it, but give it back to her. All her entreaties, however, only made Andrew more eager to hear the lines, and his friend read them out as follows:—

Who hath Preciosa seen  
Dancing like the Fairy Queen?  
Ripplets on a sunlit river  
Like her small feet glance and quiver.  
When she strikes the timbrel featly,  
When she warbles, oh how sweetly!  
Pearls from her white hands she showers,  
From her rosy lips drop flowers.  
Not a ringlet of her hair  
But doth thousand souls ensnare.  
Not a glance of her bright eyes  
But seems shot from Love's own skies.

He in obeisance to this sovereign maid,  
His bow and quiver at her feet hath laid.

"Por dios!" exclaimed the reader, "he is a dainty poet who wrote this."

"He is not a poet, señor," said Preciosa, "but a page, and a very gallant and worthy man."

"Mind what you say, Preciosa," returned the other; "for the praises you bestow on the page are so many lance-thrusts through Andrew's heart. Look at him as he sits aghast, thrown back on his chair, with a cold perspiration



breaking through all his pores. Do not imagine, maiden, that he loves you so lightly but that the least slight from you distracts him. Go to him, for God's sake, and whisper a few words in his ear, that may go straight to his heart, and recall him to himself. Go on receiving such madrigals as this every day, and just see what will come of it."

It was just as he had said. Andrew had been racked by a thousand jealousies on hearing the verses; and was so overcome that his father observed it, and cried out, "What ails you, Don Juan? You are turned quite pale, and look as if you were going to faint."

"Wait a moment," said Preciosa, "let me whisper certain words in his ear, and you will see that he will not faint." Then bending over him she said, almost without moving her lips, "A pretty sort of gitano you will make! Why, Andrew, how will you be able to bear the torture with gauze, <sup>[73]</sup> when you are overcome by a bit of paper?" Then making half-a-dozen signs of the cross over his heart, she left him, after which Andrew breathed a little, and told his friends that Preciosa's words had done him good.

Finally, the two-faced doubloon was given to Preciosa, who told her companions that she would change it, and share the amount honourably with them. Andrew's father intreated her to leave him in writing the words she had spoken to his son, as he wished by all means to know them. She said she would repeat them with great pleasure; and that though they might appear to be mere child's play, they were of sovereign virtue to preserve from the heartache and dizziness of the head. The words were these:—

Silly pate, silly pate,  
Why run on at this rate?  
No tripping, or slipping, or sliding!  
Have trusty assurance,  
And patient endurance  
And ever be frank and confiding.  
To ugly suspicion  
Refuse all admission,  
Nor let it your better sense twist over.  
All this if you do  
You'll not rue,

For excellent things will ensue,  
With the good help of God and St. Christopher.

"Only say these words," she continued, "over any person who has a swimming in the head, making at the same time six signs of the cross over his heart, and he will soon be as sound as an apple."

When the old woman heard the charm, she was amazed at the clever trick played by her granddaughter; and Andrew was still more so when he found that the whole was an invention of her quick wit. Preciosa left the madrigal in the hands of the gentleman, not liking to ask for it, lest she should again distress Andrew; for she knew, without any one teaching her, what it was to make a lover feel the pangs of jealousy. Before she took her leave, she said to Don Juan, "Every day of the week, señor, is lucky for beginning a journey: not one of them is black. Hasten your departure, therefore, as much as you can; for there lies before you a free life of ample range and great enjoyment, if you choose to accommodate yourself to it."

"It strikes me that a soldier's life is not so free as you say," replied Andrew, "but one of submission rather than liberty. However, I will see what I can do."

"You will see more than you think for," said Preciosa; "and may God have you in his keeping, and lead you to happiness, as your goodly presence deserves."

These farewell words filled Andrew with delight; the gitanas went away no less gratified, and shared the doubloon between them, the old woman as usual taking a part and a half, both by reason of her seniority, as because she was the compass by which they steered their course on the wide sea of their dances, pleasantries, and tricks.

At last the appointed day of meeting came, and Andrew arrived in the morning at the old trysting place, mounted on a hired mule, and without any attendant. He found Preciosa and her grandmother waiting for him, and was cordially welcomed by them. He begged they would take him at once to the rancho,<sup>[74]</sup> before it was broad day, that he might not be recognised should he be sought for. The two gitanas, who had taken the precaution to come alone, immediately wheeled round, and soon arrived with him at their huts.

Andrew entered one of them, which was the largest in the rancho, where he was forthwith assisted by ten or twelve gitanos, all handsome strapping young fellows, whom the old woman had previously informed respecting the new comrade who was about to join them. She had not thought it necessary, to enjoin them to secrecy; for, as we have already said, they habitually observed it with unexampled sagacity and strictness. Their eyes were at once on the mule, and said one of them, "We can sell this on Thursday in Toledo."

"By no means," said Andrew; "for there is not a hired mule in Madrid, or any other town, but is known to all the muleteers that tramp the roads of Spain."

"Por dios, Señor Andrew," said one of the gang, "if there were more signs and tokens upon the mule than are to precede the day of judgment, we will transform it in such a manner that it could not be known by the mother that bore it, or the master that owned it."

"That maybe," said Andrew; "but for this time you must do as I recommend. This mule must be killed, and buried where its bones shall never be seen."

"Put the innocent creature to death!" cried another gipsy. "What a sin! Don't say the word, good Andrew; only do one thing. Examine the beast well, till you have got all its marks well by heart; then let me take it away, and if in two hours from this time you are able to know, it again, let me be basted like a runaway negro."

"I must insist upon the mule's being put to death," said Andrew, "though I were ever so sure of its transformation. I am in fear of being discovered unless it is put under ground. If you object for sake of the profit to be made by selling it, I am not come so destitute to this fraternity but that I can pay my footing with more than the price of four mules."

"Well, since the Señor Andrew Caballero will have it so," said the other gitano, "let the sinless creature die, though God knows how much it goes against me, both because of its youth, for it has not yet lost mark of mouth, a rare thing among hired mules, and because it must be a good goer, for it has neither scars on its flank nor marks of the spur."

The slaughter of the mule was postponed till night, and the rest of the day was spent in the ceremonies of Andrew's initiation. They cleared out one of the best huts in the encampment, dressed it with boughs and rushes, and seating Andrew in it on the stump of a cork tree, they put a hammer and tongs in his hands, and made him cut two capers to the sound of two guitars. They then bared one of his arms, tied round it a new silk ribbon through which they passed a short stick, and gave it two turns gently, after the manner of the garotte with which criminals are strangled. Preciosa was present at all this, as were many other gitanas, old and young, some of whom gazed at Andrew with admiration, others with love, and such was his good humour, that even the gitanos took most kindly to him.

These ceremonies being ended, an old gipsy took Preciosa by the hand, and setting her opposite Andrew, spoke thus: "This girl, who is the flower and cream of all beauty among the gitanas of Spain, we give to you either for your wife or your mistress, for in that respect you may do whatever shall be most to your liking, since our free and easy life is not subject to squeamish scruples or to much ceremony. Look at her well, and see if she suits you, or if there is anything in her you dislike; if there is, choose from among the maidens here present the one you like best, and we will give her to you. But bear in mind that once your choice is made, you must not quit it for another, nor make or meddle either with the married women or the maids. We are strict observers of the law of good fellowship; none among us covets the good that belongs to another. We live free and secure from the bitter plague of jealousy; and though incest is frequent amongst us there is no adultery. If a wife or a mistress is unfaithful, we do not go ask the courts of justice to punish; but we ourselves are the judges and executioners of our wives and mistresses, and make no more ado about killing and burying them in the mountains and desert places than if they were vermin. There are no relations to avenge them, no parents to call us to account for their deaths. By reason of this fear and dread, our women learn to live chaste; and we, as I have said, feel no uneasiness about their virtue.

"We have few things which are not common to us all, except wives and mistresses, each of whom we require to be his alone to whom fortune has allotted her. Among us divorce takes place, because of old age as well as by death. Any man may if he likes leave a woman who is too old for him, and choose one more suitable to his years. By means of these and other laws

and statutes we contrive to lead a merry life. We are lords of the plains, the corn fields, the woods, mountains, springs, and rivers. The mountains yield us wood for nothing, the orchards fruit, the vineyards grapes, the gardens vegetables, the fountains water, the rivers fish, the parks feathered game; the rocks yield us shade, the glades and valleys fresh air, and the caves shelter. For us the inclemencies of the weather are zephyrs, the snow refreshment, the rain baths, the thunder music, and the lightning torches. For us the hard ground is a bed of down; the tanned skin of our bodies is an impenetrable harness to defend us; our nimble limbs submit to no obstacle from iron bars, or trenches, or walls; our courage is not to be twisted out of us by cords, or choked by gauze,<sup>[75]</sup> or quelled by the rack.

"Between yes and no we make no difference when it suits our convenience to confound them; we always pride ourselves more on being martyrs than confessors. For us the beasts of burden are reared in the fields, and pockets are filled in the cities. No eagle or other bird of prey pounces more swiftly on its quarry than we upon opportunities that offer us booty. And finally, we possess many qualities which promise us a happy end; for we sing in prison, are silent on the rack, work by day, and by night we thieve, or rather we take means to teach all men that they should exempt themselves from the trouble of seeing where they put their property. We are not distressed by the fear of losing our honour, or kept awake by ambition to increase it. We attach ourselves to no parties; we do not rise by day-light to attend levees and present memorials, or to swell the trains of magnates, or to solicit favours. Our gilded roofs and sumptuous palaces are these portable huts; our Flemish pictures and landscapes are those which nature presents to our eyes at every step in the rugged cliffs and snowy peaks, the spreading meads and leafy groves. We are rustic astronomers, for as we sleep almost always under the open sky, we can tell every hour by day or night. We see how Aurora extinguishes and sweeps away the stars from heaven, and how she comes forth with her companion the dawn, enlivening the air, refreshing the water, and moistening the earth; and after her appears the sun gilding the heights, as the poet sings, and making the mountains smile. We are not afraid of being left chilly by his absence, when his rays fall aslant upon us, or of being roasted when they blaze down upon us perpendicularly. We turn the same countenance to sun and frost, to dearth and plenty. In conclusion, we are people who live by our industry and our wits, without troubling

ourselves with the old adage, 'The church, the sea, or the king's household.' We have all we want, for we are content with what we have.

"All these things have I told you, generous youth, that you may not be ignorant of the life to which you are come, and the manners and customs you will have to profess, which I have here sketched for you in the rough. Many other particulars, no less worthy of consideration, you will discover for yourself in process of time."

Here the eloquent old gitano closed his discourse, and the novice replied, that he congratulated himself much on having been made acquainted with such laudable statutes; that he desired to make profession of an order so based on reason and politic principles; that his only regret was that he had not sooner come to the knowledge of so pleasant a life; and that from that moment he renounced his knighthood, and the vain glory of his illustrious lineage, and placed them beneath the yoke, or beneath the laws under which they lived, forasmuch as they so magnificently recompensed the desire he had to serve them, in bestowing upon him the divine Preciosa, for whom he would surrender many crowns and wide empires, or desire them only for her sake.

Preciosa spoke next: "Whereas these señores, our lawgivers," she said, "have determined, according to their laws that I should be yours, and as such have given me up to you, I have decreed, in accordance with the law of my own will, which is the strongest of all, that I will not be so except upon the conditions heretofore concerted between us two. You must live two years in our company before you enjoy mine, so that you may neither repent through fickleness, nor I be deceived through precipitation. Conditions supersede laws; those which I have prescribed you know; if you choose to keep them, I may be yours, and you mine; if not, the mule is not dead, your clothes are whole, and not a doit of your money is spent. Your absence from home has not yet extended to the length of a day; what remains you may employ in considering what best suits you. These señores may give up my body to you, but not my soul, which is free, was born free, and shall remain free. If you remain, I shall esteem you much; if you depart, I shall do so no less; for I hold that amorous impulses run with a loose rein, until they are brought to a halt by reason or disenchantment. I would not have you be towards me like the sportsman, who when he has bagged a hare

thinks no more of it, but runs after another. The eyes are sometimes deceived; at first sight tinsel looks like gold; but they soon recognise the difference between the genuine and the false metal. This beauty of mine, which you say I possess, and which you exalt above the sun, and declare more precious than gold, how do I know but that at a nearer view it will appear to you a shadow, and when tested will seem but base metal? I give you two years to weigh and ponder well what will be right to choose or reject. Before you buy a jewel, which you can only get rid of by death, you ought to take much time to examine it, and ascertain its faults or its merits. I do not assent to the barbarous licence which these kinsmen of mine have assumed, to forsake their wives or chastise them when the humour takes them; and as I do not intend to do anything which calls for punishment, I will not take for my mate one who will abandon me at his own caprice."

"You are right, Preciosa," said Andrew; "and so if you would have me quiet your fears and abate your doubts, by swearing not to depart a jot from the conditions you prescribe, choose what form of oath I shall take, or what other assurance I shall give you, and I will do exactly as you desire."

"The oaths and promises which the captive makes to obtain his liberty are seldom fulfilled when he is free," returned Preciosa; "and it is just the same, I fancy, with the lover, who to obtain his desire will promise the wings of Mercury, and the thunderbolts of Jove; and indeed a certain poet promised myself no less, and swore it by the Stygian lake. I want no oaths or promises, Señor Andrew, but to leave everything to the result of this novitiate. It will be my business to take care of myself, if at any time you should think of offending me."

"Be it so," said Andrew. "One request I have to make of these señores and comrades mine, and that is that they will not force me to steal anything for a month or so; for it strikes me that it will take a great many lessons to make me a thief."

"Never fear, my son," said the old gipsy; "for we will instruct you in such a manner that you will turn out an eagle in our craft; and when you have learned it, you will like it so much, that you will be ready to eat your hand, it will so itch after it. Yes, it is fine fun to go out empty-handed in the morning, and to return loaded at night to the rancho."

"I have seen some return with a whipping," said Andrew.

"One cannot catch trouts dry shod," the old man replied: "all things in this life have their perils: the acts of the thief are liable to the galleys, whipping, and the scragging-post; but it is not because one ship encounters a storm, or springs a leak, that others should cease to sail the seas. It would be a fine thing if there were to be no soldiers, because war consumes men and horses. Besides, a whipping by the hand of justice is for us a badge of honour, which becomes us better worn on the shoulders than on the breast. The main point is to avoid having to dance upon nothing in our young days and for our first offences; but as for having our shoulders dusted, or thrashing the water in a galley, we don't mind that a nutshell. For the present, Andrew, my son, keep snug in the nest under the shelter of our wings; in due time, we will take you out to fly, and that where you will not return without a prey; and the short and the long of it is, that by and by you will lick your fingers after every theft."

"Meanwhile," said Andrew, "as a compensation for what I might bring in by thieving during the vacation allowed me, I will divide two hundred gold crowns among all the members of the rancho."

The words were no sooner out of his mouth, than several gitanos caught him up in their arms, hoisted him upon their shoulders, and bore him along, shouting, "Long life to the great Andrew, and long life to Preciosa his beloved!" The gitanas did the same with Preciosa, not without exciting the envy of Christina, and the other gitanillas present; for envy dwells alike in the tents of barbarians, the huts of shepherds, and the palaces of princes; and to see another thrive who seems no better than oneself is a great weariness to the spirit.

This done, they ate a hearty dinner, made an equitable division of the gift money, repeated their praises of Andrew, and exalted Preciosa's beauty to the skies. When night fell, they broke the mule's neck, and buried it, so as to relieve Andrew of all fear of its leading to his discovery; they likewise buried with it the trappings, saddle, bridle, girths and all, after the manner of the Indians, whose chief ornaments are laid in the grave with them.

Andrew was in no small astonishment at all he had seen and heard, and resolved to pursue his enterprise without meddling at all with the customs



of his new companions, so far as that might be possible. Especially he hoped to exempt himself, at the cost of his purse, from participating with them in any acts of injustice. On the following day, Andrew requested the gipsies to break up the camp, and remove to a distance from Madrid; for he feared that he should be recognised if he remained there. They told him they had already made up their minds to go to the mountains of Toledo, and thence to scour all the surrounding country, and lay it under contribution. Accordingly they struck their tents, and departed, offering Andrew an ass to ride; but he chose rather to travel on foot, and serve as attendant to Preciosa, who rode triumphantly another ass, rejoicing in her gallant esquire; whilst he was equally delighted at finding himself close to her whom he had made the mistress of his freedom.

O potent force of him who is called the sweet god of bitterness—a title given him by our idleness and weakness—how effectually dost thou enslave us! Here was Andrew, a knight, a youth of excellent parts, brought up at court, and maintained in affluence by his noble parents; and yet since yesterday such a change has been wrought in him that he has deceived his servants and friends; disappointed the hopes of his parents; abandoned the road to Flanders, where he was to have exercised his valour and increased the honours of his line; and he has prostrated himself at the feet of a girl, made himself the lackey of one who, though exquisitely beautiful, is after all a gitana! Wondrous prerogative of beauty, which brings down the strongest will to its feet, in spite of all its resistance!

In four days' march, the gipsies arrived at a pleasant village, within two leagues of the great Toledo, where they pitched their camp, having first given some articles of silver to the alcalde of the district, as a pledge that they would steal nothing within all his bounds, nor do any other damage that might give cause of complaint against them. This done, all the old gitanas, some young ones, and the men, spread themselves all over the country, to the distance of four or five leagues from the encampment. Andrew went with them to take his first lesson in thievery; but though they gave him many in that expedition, he did not profit by any of them. On the contrary, as was natural in a man of gentle blood, every theft committed by his masters wrung his very soul, and sometimes he paid for them out of his own pocket, being moved by the tears of the poor people who had been despoiled. The gipsies were in despair at this behavior: it was in

contravention, they said, of their statutes and ordinances, which prohibited the admission of compassion into their hearts; because if they had any they must cease to be thieves,—a thing which was not to be thought of on any account. Seeing this, Andrew said he would go thieving by himself; for he was nimble enough to run from danger, and did not lack courage to encounter it; so that the prize or the penalty of his thieving would be exclusively his own.

The gipsies tried to dissuade him from this good purpose, telling him that occasions might occur in which he would have need of companions, as well to attack as to defend; and that one person alone could not make any great booty. But in spite of all they could say, Andrew was determined to be a solitary robber; intending to separate from the gang, and purchase for money something which he might say he had stolen, and thus burden his conscience as little as possible. Proceeding in this way, in less than a month, he brought more gain to the gang than four of the most accomplished thieves in it. Preciosa rejoiced not a little to see her tender lover become such a smart and handy thief; but for all that she was sorely afraid of some mischance, and would not have seen him in the hands of justice for all the treasures of Venice; such was the good feeling towards him which she could not help entertaining, in return for his many good offices and presents. After remaining about a month in the Toledan district, where they reaped a good harvest, the gipsies entered the wealthy region of Estramadura.

Meanwhile Andrew frequently held honourable and loving converse with Preciosa, who was gradually becoming enamoured of his good qualities; while, in like manner, his love for her went on increasing, if that were possible: such were the virtues, the good sense and beauty of his Preciosa. Whenever the gipsies engaged in athletic games, he carried off the prize for running and leaping: he played admirably at skittles and at ball, and pitched the bar with singular strength and dexterity. In a short while, his fame spread through all Estramadura, and there was no part of it where they did not speak of the smart young gitano Andrew, and his graces and accomplishments. As his fame extended, so did that of Preciosa's beauty; and there was no town, village, or hamlet, to which they were not invited, to enliven their patron saints' days, or other festivities. The tribe consequently became rich, prosperous, and contented, and the lovers were happy in the mere sight of each other.

It happened one night, when the camp was pitched among some evergreen oaks, a little off the highway, they heard their dogs barking about the middle watch, with unusual vehemence. Andrew and some others got up to see what was the matter, and found a man dressed in white battling with them, whilst one of them held him by the leg. "What the devil brought you here, man," said one of the gipsies, after they had released him, "at such an hour, away from the high road? Did you come to thieve? If so, you have come to the right door?"

"I do not come to thieve; and I don't know whether or not I am off the road, though I see well enough that I am gone astray," said the wounded man. "But tell me, señores, is there any venta or place of entertainment where I can get a night's lodging, and dress the wounds which these dogs have given me?"

"There is no venta or public place to which we can take you," replied Andrew; "but as for a night's lodging, and dressing your wounds, that you can have at our ranchos. Come along with us; for though we are gipsies, we are not devoid of humanity."

"God reward you!" said the man: "take me whither you please, for my leg pains me greatly." Andrew lifted him up, and carried him along with the help of some of the other compassionate gipsies; for even among the fiends there are some worse than others, and among many bad men you may find one good.

It was a clear moonlight night, so that they could see that the person they carried was a youth of handsome face and figure. He was dressed all in white linen, with a sort of frock of the same material belted round his waist. They arrived at Andrew's hut or shed, quickly kindled a fire, and fetched Preciosa's grandmother to attend to the young man's hurts. She took some of the dogs' hairs, fried them in oil, and after washing with wine the two bites she found on the patient's left leg, she put the hairs and the oil upon them, and over this dressing a little chewed green rosemary. She then bound the leg up carefully with clean bandages, made the sign of the cross over it, and said, "Now go to sleep, friend and with the help of God your hurts will not signify."

Whilst they were attending to the wounded man, Preciosa stood by, eyeing him with great curiosity, whilst he did the same by her, insomuch that Andrew took notice of the eagerness with which he gazed; but he attributed this to the extraordinary beauty of Preciosa, which naturally attracted all eyes. Finally, having done all that was needful for the youth, they left him alone on a bed of dry hay, not caring to question him then as to his road, or any other matter.

As soon as all the others were gone, Preciosa called Andrew aside, and said to him, "Do you remember, Andrew, a paper I let fall in your house, when I was dancing with my companions, and which caused you, I think, some uneasiness?"

"I remember it well," said Andrew; "it was a madrigal in your praise, and no bad one either."

"Well, you must know, Andrew, that the person who wrote those verses is no other than the wounded youth we have left in the hut. I cannot be mistaken, for he spoke to me two or three times in Madrid, and gave me too a very good romance. He was then dressed, I think, as a page,—not an ordinary one, but like a favourite of some prince. I assure you, Andrew, he is a youth of excellent understanding, and remarkably well behaved; and I cannot imagine what can have brought him hither, and in such a garb."

"What should you imagine, Preciosa, but that the same power which has made me a gitano, has made him put on the dress of a miller, and come in search of you? Ah, Preciosa! Preciosa! how plain it begins to be that you pride yourself on having more than one adorer. If this be so, finish me first, and then kill off this other, but do not sacrifice both at the same time to your perfidy."

"God's mercy, Andrew, how thin-skinned you are! On how fine a thread you make your hopes and my reputation hang, since you let the cruel sword of jealousy so easily pierce your soul. Tell me, Andrew, if there were any artifice or deceit in this case, could I not have held my tongue about this youth, and concealed all knowledge of him? Am I such a fool that I cannot help telling you what should make you doubt my integrity and good behaviour? Hold your tongue, Andrew, in God's name, and try to-morrow to extract from this cause of your alarm whither he is bound, and why he is

come hither. It may be that you are mistaken in your suspicion, though I am not mistaken in what I told you of the stranger. And now for your greater satisfaction—since it is come to that pass with me that I seek to satisfy you—whatever be the reason of this youth's coming, send him away at once. All our people obey you, and none of them will care to receive him into their huts against your wish. But if this fails, I give you my word not to quit mine, or let myself be seen by him, or by anybody else from whom you would have me concealed. Look you, Andrew, I am not vexed at seeing you jealous, but it would vex me much to see you indiscreet."

"Unless you see me mad, Preciosa," said Andrew, "any other demonstration would be far short of showing you what desperate havoc jealousy can make of a man's feelings. However, I will do as you bid me, and find out what this señor page-poet wants, whither he is going, and whom he is in search of. It may be, that unawares he may let me get hold of some end of thread which shall lead to the discovery of the whole snare which I fear he is come to set for me."

"Jealousy, I imagine," said Preciosa, "never leaves the understanding clear to apprehend things as they really are. Jealousy always looks through magnifying glasses, which make mountains of molehills, and realities of mere suspicions. On your life, Andrew, and on mine, I charge you to proceed in this matter, and all that touches our concerns, with prudence and discretion; and if you do, I know that you will have to concede the palm to me, as honest, upright, and true to the very utmost."

With these words she quitted Andrew, leaving him impatient for daylight, that he might receive the confession of the wounded man, and distracted in mind by a thousand various surmises. He could not believe but that this page had come thither attracted by Preciosa's beauty; for the thief believes that all men are such as himself. On the other hand, the pledge voluntarily made to him by Preciosa appeared so highly satisfactory, that he ought to set his mind quite at ease, and commit all his happiness implicitly to the keeping of her good faith. At last day appeared: he visited the wounded man; and after inquiring how he was, and did his bites pain him, he asked what was his name, whither he was going, and how it was he travelled so late and so far off the road. The youth replied that he was better, and felt no pain so that he was able to resume his journey. His name was Alonzo

Hurtado; he was going to our Lady of the Peña de Francia, on a certain business; he travelled by night for the greater speed; and having missed his way, he had come upon the encampment, and been worried by the dogs that guarded it. Andrew did not by any means consider this a straightforward statement: his suspicions returned to plague him; and, said he, "Brother, if I were a judge, and you had been brought before me upon any charge which would render necessary such questions as those I have put to you, the reply you have given would oblige me to apply the thumb-screw. It is nothing to me who you are, what is your name, or whither you are going: I only warn you, that if it suits your convenience to lie on this journey, you should lie with more appearance of truth. You say you are going to La Peña de Francia, and you leave it on the right hand more than thirty leagues behind this place. You travel by night for sake of speed, and you quit the high road, and strike into thickets and woods where there is scarcely a footpath. Get up, friend, learn to lie better, and go your ways, in God's name. But in return for this good advice I give you, will you not tell me one truth? I know you will, you are such a bad hand at lying. Tell me, are you not one I have often seen in the capital, something between a page and a gentleman? One who has the reputation of being a great poet, and who wrote a romance and a sonnet upon a gitanilla who some time ago went about Madrid, and was celebrated for her surpassing beauty? Tell me, and I promise you, on the honour of a gentleman gipsy, to keep secret whatever you may wish to be so kept. Mind you, no denial that you are the person I say will go down with me; for the face I see before me is unquestionably the same I saw in Madrid. The fame of your talents made me often stop to gaze at you as a distinguished man, and therefore your features are so strongly impressed on my memory, though your dress is very different from that in which I formerly saw you. Don't be alarmed, cheer up, and don't suppose you have fallen in with a tribe of robbers, but with an asylum, where you may be guarded and defended from all the world. A thought strikes me; and if it be as I conjecture, you have been lucky in meeting me above all men. What I conjecture is, that being in love with Preciosa—that beautiful young gipsy, to whom you addressed the verses—you have come in search of her; for which I don't think a bit the worse of you, but quite the reverse: for gipsy though I am, experience has shown me how far the potent force of love reaches, and the transformations it makes those undergo whom it brings

beneath its sway and jurisdiction. If this be so, as I verily believe it is, the fair gitanilla is here."

"Yes, she is here; I saw her last night," said the stranger. This was like a death-blow to Andrew; for it seemed at once to confirm all his suspicions.

"I saw her last night," the young man repeated; "but I did not venture to tell her who I was, for it did not suit my purpose."

"So, then," said Andrew, "you are indeed the poet of whom I spoke."

"I am: I neither can nor will deny it. Possibly it may be that where I thought myself lost I have come right to port, if, as you say, there is fidelity in the forests, and hospitality in the mountains."

"That there is, beyond doubt," said Andrew; "and among us gipsies the strictest secrecy in the world. On that assurance, señor, you may unburden your breast to me: you will find in mine no duplicity whatever. The gitanilla is my relation, and entirely under my control. If you desire her for a wife, myself and all other relations will be quite willing; and if for a mistress, we will not make any squeamish objections, provided you have money, for covetousness never departs from our ranchos."

"I have money," the youth replied; "in the bands of this frock, which I wear girt round my body, there are four hundred gold crowns."

This was another mortal blow for Andrew, who assumed that the stranger could carry so large a sum about him for no other purpose than to purchase possession of the beloved object. With a faltering tongue he replied, "That is a good lump of money; you have only to discover yourself, and go to work: the girl is no fool, and will see what a good thing it will be for her to be yours."

"O friend," exclaimed the youth, "I would have you know that the power which has made me change my garb is not that of love, as you say, nor any longing for Preciosa; for Madrid has beauties who know how to steal hearts and subdue souls as well as the handsomest gitanas, and better; though I confess that the beauty of your kinswoman surpasses any I have ever seen. The cause of my being in this dress, on foot, and bitten by dogs, is not love but my ill luck."

Upon this explanation, Andrew's downcast spirit began to rise again; for it was plain that the wind was in quite a different quarter from what he had supposed. Eager to escape from this confusion, he renewed his assurances of secrecy, and the stranger proceeded thus:—

"I was in Madrid, in the house of a nobleman, whom I served not as a master but as a relation. He had an only son and heir, who treated me with great familiarity and friendship, both on account of our relationship, and because we were both of the same age and disposition. This young gentleman fell in love with a young lady of rank, whom he would most gladly have made his wife, had it not been for his dutiful submission to the will of his parents, who desired him to marry into a higher family. Nevertheless, he continued furtively to pay court to the lady of his choice, carefully concealing his proceedings from all eyes but mine. One night, which ill luck must have especially selected for the adventure I am about to relate to you, as we were passing by the lady's house, we saw ranged against it two men of good figure apparently. My kinsman wished to reconnoitre them, but no sooner had he made a step towards them than their swords were out, their bucklers ready, and they made at us, whilst we did the same on our side, and engaged them with equal arms. The fight did not last long, neither did the lives of our two opponents; for two thrusts, urged home by my kinsman's jealousy and my zeal in his defence, laid them both low—an extraordinary occurrence, and such as is rarely witnessed. Thus involuntarily victorious, we returned home, and taking all the money we could, set off secretly to the church of San Geronimo, waiting to see what would happen when the event was discovered next day, and what might be the conjectures as to the persons of the homicides.

"We learned that no trace of our presence on the scene had been discovered, and the prudent monks advised us to return home, so as not by our absence to arouse any suspicion against us. We had already resolved to follow their advice, when we were informed that the alcaldes of the court had arrested the young lady and her parents; and that among their domestics, whom they examined, one person, the young lady's attendant, had stated that my kinsman visited her mistress by night and by day. Upon this evidence they had sent in search of us; and the officers not finding us, but many indications of our flight, it became a confirmed opinion throughout the whole city, that we were the very men who had slain the two cavaliers, for



such they were, and of very good quality. Finally, by the advice of the count, my relation, and of the monks, after remaining hid a fortnight in the monastery, my comrade departed in company with a monk, himself disguised as one, and took the road to Aragon, intending to pass over to Italy, and thence to Flanders, until he should see what might be the upshot of the matter. For my part, thinking it well to divide our fortunes, I set out on foot, in a different direction, and in the habit of a lay brother, along with a monk, who quitted me at Talavera. From that city I travelled alone, and missed my way, till last night I reached this wood, when I met with the mishap you know. If I asked for La Peña de Francia, it was only by way of making some answer to the questions put to me; for I know that it lies beyond Salamanca."

"True," observed Andrew, "you left it on your right, about twenty leagues from this. So you see what a straight road you were taking, if you were going thither."

"The road I did intend to take was that to Seville; for there I should find a Genoese gentleman, a great friend of the count my relation, who is in the habit of exporting large quantities of silver ingots to Genoa; and my design is, that he should send me with his carriers, as one of themselves, by which means I may safely reach Carthagena, and thence pass over to Italy; for two galleys are expected shortly to ship some silver. This is my story, good friend: was I not right in saying it is the result of pure ill luck, rather than disappointed love? Now if these señores gitanos will take me in their company to Seville, supposing they are bound thither, I will pay them handsomely; for I believe that I should travel more safely with them, and have some respite from the fear that haunts me."

"Yes, they will take you," said Andrew; "or if you cannot go with our band—for as yet I know not that we are for Andalusia—you can go with another which we shall fall in with in a couple of days; and if you give them some of the money you have about you, they will be able and willing to help you out of still worse difficulties." He then left the young man, and reported to the other gipsies what the stranger desired, and the offer he had made of good payment for their services.

They were all for having their guest remain in the camp; but Preciosa was against it; and her grandmother said, that she could not go to Seville or its neighbourhood, on account of a hoax she had once played off upon a capmaker named Truxillo, well known in Seville. She had persuaded him to put himself up to his neck in a butt of water, stark naked, with a crown of cypress on his head, there to remain till midnight, when he was to step out, and look for a great treasure, which she had made him believe was concealed in a certain part of his house. When the good cap-maker heard matins ring, he made such haste to get out of the butt, lest he should lose his chance, that it fell with him, bruising his flesh, and deluging the floor with water, in which he fell to swimming with might and main, roaring out that he was drowning. His wife and his neighbours ran to him with lights, and found him striking out lustily with his legs and arms. "Help! help!" he cried; "I am suffocating;" and he really was not far from it, such was the effect of his excessive fright. They seized and rescued him from his deadly peril. When he had recovered a little, he told them the trick the gipsy woman had played him; and yet for all that, he dug a hole, more than a fathom deep, in the place pointed out to him, in spite of all his neighbours could say; and had he not been forcibly prevented by one of them, when he was beginning to undermine the foundations of the house, he would have brought the whole of it down about his ears. The story spread all over the city; so that the little boys in the streets used to point their fingers at him, and shout in his ears the story of the gipsy's trick, and his own credulity. Such was the tale told by the old gitana, in explanation of her unwillingness to go to Seville.

The gipsies, knowing from Andrew that the youth had a sum of money about him, readily assented to his accompanying them, and promised to guard and conceal him as long as he pleased. They determined to make a bend to the left, and enter La Mancha and the kingdom of Murcia. The youth thanked them cordially, and gave them on the spot a hundred gold crowns to divide amongst them, whereupon they became as pliant as washed leather. Preciosa, however, was not pleased with the continuance among them of Don Sancho, for that was the youth's name, but the gipsies changed it to Clement. Andrew too was rather annoyed at this arrangement; for it seemed to him that Clement had given up his original intention upon very slight grounds; but the latter, as if he read his thoughts, told him that

he was glad to go to Murcia, because it was near Carthage, whence, if galleys arrived there, as he expected, he could easily pass over to Italy. Finally, in order to have him more under his own eye, to watch his acts, and scrutinise his thoughts, Andrew desired to have Clement for his own comrade, and the latter accepted this friendly offer as a signal favour. They were always together, both spent largely, their crowns came down like rain; they ran, leaped, danced, and pitched the bar better than any of their companions, and were more than commonly liked by the women of the tribe, and held in the highest respect by the men.

Leaving Estramadura they entered La Mancha, and gradually traversed the kingdom of Murcia. In all the villages and towns they passed through, they had matches at ball-playing, fencing, running, leaping, and pitching the bar; and in all these trials of strength, skill, and agility Andrew and Clement were victorious, as Andrew alone had been before. During the whole journey, which occupied six weeks, Clement neither found nor sought an opportunity to speak alone with Preciosa, until one day when she and Andrew were conversing together, they called him to them, and Preciosa said, "The first time you came to our camp I recognised you, Clement, and remembered the verses you gave me in Madrid; but I would not say a word, not knowing with what intention you had come among us. When I became acquainted with your misfortune, it grieved me to the soul, though at the same time it was a relief to me; for I had been much disturbed, thinking that as there was a Don Juan in the world who had become a gipsy, a Don Sancho might undergo transformation in like manner. I speak this to you, because Andrew tells me he has made known to you who he is, and with what intention he turned gipsy." (And so it was, for Andrew had acquainted Clement with his whole story, that he might be able to converse with him on the subject nearest to his thoughts.) "Do not think that my knowing you was of little advantage to you, since for my sake, and in consequence of what I said of you, our people the more readily admitted you amongst them, where I trust in God you may find things turn out according to your best wishes. You will repay me, I hope, for this good will on my part, by not making Andrew ashamed of having set his mind so low, or representing to him how ill he does in persevering in his present way of life; for though I imagine that his will is enthralled to mine, still it would grieve me to see him show signs, however slight, of repenting what he has done."

"Do not suppose, peerless Preciosa," replied Clement, "that Don Juan acted lightly in revealing himself to me. I found him out beforehand: his eyes first disclosed to me the nature of his feelings; I first told him who I was, and detected that enthrallment of his will which you speak of; and he, reposing a just confidence in me, made his secret mine. He can witness whether I applauded his determination and his choice; for I am not so dull of understanding, Preciosa, as not to know how omnipotent is beauty; and yours, which surpasses all bounds of loveliness, is a sufficient excuse for all errors, if error that can be called for which there is so irresistible a cause. I am grateful to you, señora, for what you have said in my favour; and I hope to repay you by hearty good wishes that you may find a happy issue out of your perplexities, and that you may enjoy the love of your Andrew, and Andrew that of his Preciosa, with the consent of his parents; so that from so beautiful a couple there may come into the world the finest progeny which nature can form in her happiest mood. This is what I shall always desire, Preciosa; and this is what I shall always say to your Andrew, and not anything which could tend to turn him from his well-placed affections."

With such emotion did Clement utter these words, that Andrew was in doubt whether they were spoken in courtesy only, or from love; for the infernal plague of jealousy is so susceptible that it will take offence at the motes in the sunbeams; and the lover finds matter for self-torment in everything that concerns the beloved object. Nevertheless, he did not give way to confirmed jealousy; for he relied more on the good faith of his Preciosa than on his own fortune, which, in common with all lovers, he regarded as luckless, so long as he had not obtained the object of his desires. In fine, Andrew and Clement continued to be comrades and friends, their mutual good understanding being secured by Clement's upright intentions, and by the modesty and prudence of Preciosa, who never gave Andrew an excuse for jealousy. Clement was somewhat of a poet, Andrew played the guitar a little, and both were fond of music. One night, when the camp was pitched in a valley four leagues from Murcia, Andrew seated himself at the foot of a cork-tree, and Clement near him under an evergreen oak. Each of them had a guitar; and invited by the stillness of the night, they sang alternately, Andrew beginning the descant, and Clement responding.

ANDREW.

Ten thousand golden lamps are lit on high,  
    Making this chilly night  
    Rival the noon-day's light;  
Look, Clement, on yon star-bespangled sky,  
    And in that image see,  
    If so divine thy fancy be,  
    That lovely radiant face,  
Where centres all of beauty and of grace.

CLEMENT

Where centres all of beauty and of grace,  
    And where in concord sweet  
    Goodness and beauty meet,  
And purity hath fixed its dwelling-place.  
    Creature so heavenly fair,  
    May any mortal genius dare,  
    Or less than tongue divine,  
To praise in lofty, rare, and sounding line?

ANDREW

To praise in lofty, rare, and sounding line  
    Thy name, gitana bright!  
    Earth's wonder and delight,  
Worthy above the empyrean vault to shine;  
    Fain would I snatch from Fame  
    The trump and voice, whose loud acclaim  
    Should startle every ear,  
And lift Preciosa's name to the eighth sphere.

CLEMENT

To lift Preciosa's fame to the eighth sphere  
    Were meet and fit, that so

The heavens new joy might know  
Through all their shining courts that name to hear,  
Which on this earth doth sound  
Like music spreading gladness round,  
Breathing with charm intense  
Peace to the soul and rapture to the sense.

It seemed as though the freeman and the captive were in no haste to bring their tuneful contest to conclusion, had not the voice of Preciosa, who had overheard them, sounded from behind in response to theirs. They stopped instantly, and remained listening to her in breathless attention. Whether her words were delivered impromptu, or had been composed some time before, I know not; however that may be, she sang the following lines with infinite grace, as though they were made for the occasion.

While in this amorous emprise  
An equal conflict I maintain,  
'Tis higher glory to remain  
Pure maid, than boast the brightest eyes.

The humblest plant on which we tread,  
If sound and straight it grows apace,  
By aid of nature or of grace  
May rear aloft towards heaven its head.

In this my lowly poor estate,  
By maiden honour dignified,  
No good wish rests unsatisfied;  
Their wealth I envy not the great.

I find not any grief or pain  
In lack of love or of esteem;  
For I myself can shape, I deem,  
My fortunes happy in the main.

Let me but do what in me lies  
The path of rectitude to tread;  
And then be welcomed on this head

Whatever fate may please the skies.

I fain would know if beauty hath  
Such high prerogative, to raise  
My mind above the common ways,  
And set me on a loftier path.

If equal in their souls they be,  
The humblest hind on earth may vie  
In honest worth and virtue high  
With one of loftiest degree.

What inwardly I feel of mine  
Doth raise me all that's base above;  
For majesty, be sure, and love  
Do not on common soil recline.

Preciosa having ended her song, Andrew and Clement rose to meet her. An animated conversation ensued between the three; and Preciosa displayed so much intelligence, modesty, and acuteness, as fully excused, in Clement's opinion, the extraordinary determination of Andrew, which he had before attributed more to his youth than his judgment. The next morning the camp was broken up, and they proceeded to a place in the jurisdiction of Murcia, three leagues from the city, where a mischance befel Andrew, which went near to cost him his life.

After they had given security in that place, according to custom, by the deposit of some silver vessels and ornaments, Preciosa and her grandmother, Christina and two other gitanillas, Clement, and Andrew, took up their quarters in an inn, kept by a rich widow, who had a daughter aged about seventeen or eighteen, rather more forward than handsome. Her name was Juana Carducha. This girl having seen the gipsies dance, the devil possessed her to fall in love with Andrew to that degree that she proposed to tell him of it, and take him for a husband, if he would have her, in spite of all her relations. Watching for an opportunity to speak to him, she found it in a cattle-yard, which Andrew had entered in search of two young asses, when she said to him, hurriedly, "Andrew" (she already knew his name), "I am single and wealthy. My mother has no other child: this inn is her own;

and besides it she has large vineyards, and several other houses. You have taken my fancy; and if you will have me for a wife, only say the word. Answer me quickly, and if you are a man of sense, only wait, and you shall see what a life we shall lead."

Astonished as he was at Carducha's boldness, Andrew nevertheless answered her with the promptitude she desired, "Señora doncella, I am under promise to marry, and we gitanos intermarry only with gitanas. Many thanks for the favour you would confer on me, of which I am not worthy."

Carducha was within two inches of dropping dead at this unwelcome reply, to which she would have rejoined, but that she saw some of the gitanos come into the yard. She rushed from the spot, athirst for vengeance. Andrew, like a wise man, determined to get out of her way, for he read in her eyes that she would willingly give herself to him with matrimonial bonds, and he had no wish to find himself engaged foot to foot and alone in such an encounter; accordingly, he requested his comrades to quit the place that night. Complying with his wishes as they always did, they set to work at once, took up their securities again that evening, and decamped. Carducha, seeing that Andrew was going away and half her soul with him, and that she should not have time to obtain the fulfilment of her desires, resolved to make him stop by force, since he would not do so of good will. With all the cunning and secrecy suggested to her by her wicked intentions, she put among Andrew's baggage, which she knew to be his, a valuable coral necklace, two silver medals, and other trinkets belonging to her family. No sooner had the gipsies left the inn than she made a great outcry, declaring that the gipsies had robbed her, till she brought about her the officers of justice and all the people of the place. The gipsies halted, and all swore that they had no stolen property with them, offering at the same time to let all their baggage be searched. This made the old gipsy woman very uneasy, lest the proposed scrutiny should lead to the discovery of Preciosa's trinkets and Andrew's clothes, which she preserved with great care. But the good wench Carducha quickly put an end to her fears on that head, for before they had turned over two packages, she said to the men, "Ask which of these bundles belongs to that gipsy who is such a great dancer. I saw him enter my room twice, and probably he is the thief."



Andrew knew it was himself she meant, and answered with a laugh, "Señora doncella, this is my bundle, and that is my ass. If you find in or upon either of them what you miss, I will pay you the value sevenfold, beside submitting to the punishment which the law awards for theft."

The officers of justice immediately unloaded the ass, and in the turn of a hand discovered the stolen property, whereat Andrew was so shocked and confounded that he stood like a stone statue. "I was not out in my suspicions," said Carducha; "see with what a good looking face the rogue covers his villany." The alcalde, who was present, began to abuse Andrew and the rest of the gipsies, calling them common thieves and highwaymen. Andrew said not a word, but stood pondering in the utmost perplexity, for he had no surmise of Carducha's treachery. At last, an insolent soldier, nephew to the alcalde, stepped up to him, saying "Look at the dirty gipsy thief! I will lay a wager he will give himself airs as if he were an honest man, and deny the robbery, though the goods have been found in his hands. Good luck to whoever sends the whole pack of you to the galleys. A fitter place it will be for this scoundrel, where he may serve his Majesty, instead of going about dancing from place to place, and thieving from venta to mountain. On the faith of a soldier, I have a mind to lay him at my feet with a blow."

So saying, without more ado he raised his hand, and gave Andrew such a buffet as roused him from his stupor, and made him recollect that he was not Andrew Caballero but Don Juan and a gentleman; therefore, flinging himself upon the soldier with sudden fury, he snatched his sword from its sheath, buried it in his body, and laid him dead at his feet. The people shouted and yelled; the dead man's uncle, the alcalde, was frantic with rage; Preciosa fainted, and Andrew, regardless of his own defence, thought only of succouring her. As ill luck would have it, Clement was not on the spot, having gone forward with some baggage, and Andrew was set upon, by so many, that they overpowered him, and loaded him with heavy chains. The alcalde would gladly have hanged him on the spot, but was obliged to send him to Murcia, as he belonged to the jurisdiction of that city. It was not, however, till the next day that he was removed thither, and meanwhile he was loaded with abuse and maltreatment by the alcalde and all the people of the place. The alcalde, moreover, arrested all the rest of the gipsies he could lay hands on, but most of them had made their escape, among others

Clement, who was afraid of being seized and discovered. On the following morning the alcalde, with his officers and a great many other armed men, entered Murcia with a caravan of gipsy captives, among whom were Preciosa and poor Andrew, who was chained on the back of a mule, and was handcuffed and had a fork fixed under his chin. All Murcia flocked to see the prisoners, for the news of the soldier's death had been received there; but so great was Preciosa's beauty that no one looked upon her that day without blessing her. The news of her loveliness reached the corregidor's lady, who being curious to see her, prevailed on her husband to give orders that she should not enter the prison to which all the rest of the gipsies were committed. Andrew was thrust into a dark narrow dungeon, where, deprived of the light of the sun and of that which Preciosa's presence diffused, he felt as though he should leave it only for his grave. Preciosa and her grand-mother were taken to the corregidor's lady, who at once exclaiming, "Well might they praise her beauty," embraced her tenderly, and never was tired of looking at her. She asked the old woman what was the girl's age. "Fifteen, within a month or two, more or less," was the reply. "That would be the age of my poor Constantia," observed the lady. "Ah, amigas! how the sight of this young girl has brought my bereavement back afresh to my mind."

Upon this, Preciosa took hold of the corregidora's bands, kissed them repeatedly, bathed them with tears, and said, "Señora mia, the gitano who is in custody is not in fault, for he had provocation. They called him a thief, and he is none; they gave him a blow on the face, though his is such a face that you can read in it the goodness of his soul. I entreat you, señora, to see that justice is done him, and that the señor corregidor is not too hasty in executing upon him the penalty of the law. If my beauty has given you any pleasure, preserve it for me by preserving the life of the prisoner, for with it mine ends too. He is to be my husband, but just and proper impediments have hitherto prevented our union. If money would avail to obtain his pardon, all the goods of our tribe should be sold by auction, and we would give even more than was asked of us. My lady, if you know what love is, and have felt and still feel it for your dear husband, have pity on me who love mine tenderly and honestly."

All the while Preciosa was thus speaking she kept fast hold of the corregidora's hands, and kept her tearful eyes fixed on her face, whilst the

lady gazed on her with no less wistfulness, and wept as she did. Just then the corregidor entered, and seeing his wife and Preciosa thus mingling their tears, he was surprised as much by the scene as by the gitanilla's beauty. On his asking the cause of her affliction, Preciosa let go the lady's hands, and threw herself at the corregidor's feet, crying, "Mercy, mercy, señor! If my husband dies, I die too. He is not guilty; if he is, let me bear the punishment; or if that cannot be, at least let the trial be delayed until means be sought which may save him; for as he did not sin through malice, it may be that heaven in its grace will send him safety." The corregidor was still more surprised to hear such language from the gitanilla's lips, and but that he would not betray signs of weakness, he could have wept with her.

While all this was passing, the old gitana was busily turning over a great many things in her mind, and after all this cogitation, she said, "Wait a little, your honour, and I will turn these lamentations into joy, though it should cost me my life;" and she stepped briskly out of the room. Until she returned, Preciosa never desisted from her tears and entreaties that they would entertain the cause of her betrothed, being inwardly resolved that she would send to his father that he might come and interfere in his behalf.

The old gipsy woman returned with a little box under her arm, and requested that the corregidor and his lady would retire with her into another room, for she had important things to communicate to them in secret. The corregidor imagined she meant to give him information respecting some thefts committed by the gipsies, in order to bespeak his favour for the prisoner, and he instantly withdrew with her and his lady to his closet, where the gipsy, throwing herself on her knees before them both, began thus:

"If the good news I have to give to your honours be not worth forgiveness for a great crime I have committed, I am here to receive the punishment I deserve. But before I make my confession, I beg your honours will tell me if you know these trinkets;" and she put the box which contained those belonging to Preciosa into the corregidor's hands. He opened it, and saw those childish gewgaws, but had no idea what they could mean. The corregidora looked at them, too, with as little consciousness as her husband, and merely observed that they were the ornaments of some little child. "That is true," replied the gipsy, "and to what child they belonged is written

in this folded paper." The corregidor hastily opened the paper, and read as follows:—

*"The child's name was Doña Constanza de Acevedo y de Menesis; her mother's, Doña Guiomar de Menesis; and her father's, D. Fernando de Acevedo, knight of the order of Calatrava. She disappeared on the day of the Lord's Ascension, at eight in the morning, in the year one thousand five hundred and ninety-five. The child had upon her the trinkets which are contained in this box."*

Instantly, on hearing the contents of the paper, the corregidora recognised the trinkets, put them to her lips, kissed them again and again, and swooned away; and the corregidor was too much occupied in assisting her to ask the gitana for his daughter. "Good woman, angel rather than gitana," cried the lady when she came to herself, "where is the owner of these baubles?"

"Where, señora?" was the reply. "She is in your own house. That young gipsy who drew tears from your eyes is their owner, and is indubitably your own daughter, whom I stole from your house in Madrid on the day and hour named in this paper."

On hearing this, the agitated lady threw off her clogs, and rushed with open arms into the sala, where she found Preciosa surrounded by her doncellas and servants, and still weeping and wailing. Without a word she caught her hurriedly in her arms, and examined if she had under her left breast a mark in the shape of a little white mole with which she was born, and she found it there enlarged by time. Then, with the same haste, she took off the girl's shoe, uncovered a snowy foot, smooth as polished marble, and found what she sought; for the two smaller toes of the right foot were joined together by a thin membrane, which the tender parents could not bring themselves to let the surgeon cut when she was an infant. The mole on the bosom, the foot, the trinkets, the day assigned for the kidnapping, the confession of the gitana, and the joy and emotion which her parents felt when they first beheld her, confirmed with the voice of truth in the corregidora's soul that Preciosa was her own daughter: clasping her therefore in her arms, she returned with her to the room where she had left the corregidor and the old gipsy. Preciosa was bewildered, not knowing why she had made all those

investigations, and was still more surprised when the lady raised her in her arms, and gave her not one kiss, but a hundred.

Doña Guiomar at last appeared with her precious burthen in her husband's presence, and transferring the maiden from her own arms to his, "Receive, Señor, your daughter Constanza," she said; "for your daughter she is without any doubt, since I have seen the marks on the foot and the bosom; and stronger even than these proofs is the voice of my own heart ever since I set eyes on her."

"I doubt it not," replied the corregidor, folding Preciosa in his arms, "for the same sensations have passed through my heart as through yours; and how could so many strange particulars combine together unless it were by a miracle?"

The people of the house were now lost in wonder, going about and asking each other, "What is all this?" but erring widely in their conjectures; for who would have imagined that the gitanilla was the daughter of their lord? The corregidor told his wife and daughter and the old gipsy that he desired the matter should be kept secret until he should himself think fit to divulge it. As for the old gipsy, he assured her that he forgave the injury she had done him in stealing his treasure, since she had more than made atonement by restoring it. The only thing that grieved him was that, knowing Preciosa's quality, she should have betrothed her to a gipsy, and worse than that, to a thief and murderer. "Alas, señor mio," said Preciosa, "he is neither a gipsy nor a thief, although he has killed a man, but then it was one who had wounded his honour, and he could not do less than show who he was, and kill him."

"What! he is not a gipsy, my child?" said Doña Guiomar.

"Certainly not," said the old gitana; and she related the story of Andrew Caballero, that he was the son of Don Francisco de Cárcamo, knight of Santiago; that his name was Don Juan de Cárcamo, of the same order; and that she had kept his clothes after he had changed them for those of a gipsy. She likewise stated the agreement which Preciosa and Don Juan had made not to marry until after two years of mutual trial; and she put in their true light the honourable conduct of both, and the suitable condition of Don Juan.

The parents were as much surprised at this as at the recovery of their daughter. The corregidor sent the gitana for Don Juan's clothes, and she came back with them accompanied by a gipsy who carried them. Previously to her return, Preciosa's parents put a thousand questions to her, and she replied with so much discretion and grace, that even though they had not recognised her for their child, they must have loved her. To their inquiry whether she had any affection for Don Juan, she replied, not more than that to which she was bound in gratitude towards one who had humbled himself to become a gipsy for her sake; but even this should not extend farther than her parents desired. "Say no more, daughter Preciosa," said her father; "(for I wish you to retain this name of Preciosa in memory of your loss and your recovery); as your father, I take it upon myself to establish you in a position not derogatory to your birth."

Preciosa sighed, and her mother shrewdly suspecting that the sigh was prompted by love for Don Juan, said to the corregidor, "Since Don Juan is a person of such rank, and is so much attached to our daughter, I think, señor, it would not be amiss to bestow her upon him."

"Hardly have we found her to-day," he replied, "and already would you have us lose her? Let us enjoy her company for a while at least, for when she marries she will be ours no longer but her husband's."

"You are right, señor," said the lady, "but give orders to bring out Don Juan, for he is probably lying in some filthy dungeon."

"No doubt he is," said Preciosa, "for as a thief and homicide, and above all as a gipsy, they will have given him no better lodging."

"I will go see him," said the corregidor, "as if for the purpose of taking his confession. Meanwhile, señora, I again charge you not to let any one know this history until I choose to divulge it, for so it behoves my office." Then embracing Preciosa he went to the prison where Don Juan was confined, and entered his cell, not allowing any one to accompany him.

He found the prisoner with both legs in fetters, handcuffed, and with the iron fork not yet removed from beneath his chin. The cell was dark, only a scanty gleam of light passing into it from a loop-hole near the top of the wall. "How goes it, sorry knave?" said the corregidor, as he entered. "I

would I had all the gipsies in Spain leashed here together to finish them all at once, as Nero would have beheaded all Rome at a single blow. Know, thou thief, who art so sensitive on the point of honour, that I am the corregidor of this city, and come to know from thee if thy betrothed is a gitanilla who is here with the rest of you?"

Hearing this Andrew imagined that the corregidor had surely fallen in love with Preciosa; for jealousy is a subtle thing, and enters other bodies without breaking or dividing them. He replied, however, "If she has said that I am her betrothed, it is very true; and, if she has said I am not her betrothed, she has also spoken the truth; for it is not possible that Preciosa should utter a falsehood."

"Is she so truthful then?" said the corregidor. "It is no slight thing to be so and be a gitana. Well, my lad, she has said that she is your betrothed, but that she has not yet given you her hand; she knows that you must die for your crime, and she has entreated me to marry her to you before you die, that she may have the honour of being the widow of so great a thief as yourself."

"Then, let your worship do as she has requested," said Andrew; "for so I be married to her, I will go content to the other world, leaving this one with the name of being hers."

"You must love her very much?"

"So much," replied the prisoner, "that whatever I could say of it would be nothing to the truth. In a word, señor corregidor, let my business be despatched. I killed the man who insulted me; I adore this young gitana; I shall die content if I die in her grace, and God's I know will not be wanting to us, for we have both observed honourably and strictly the promise we made each other."

"This night then I will send for you," said the corregidor, "and you shall marry Preciosa in my house, and to-morrow morning you shall be on the gallows. In this way I shall have complied with the demands of justice and with the desire of you both." Andrew thanked him; the corregidor returned home, and told his wife what had passed between them.

During his absence Preciosa had related to her mother the whole course of her life; and how she had always believed she was a gipsy and the old woman's grand-daughter; but that at the same time she had always esteemed herself much more than might have been expected of a gitana. Her mother bade her say truly, was she very fond of Don Juan? With great bashfulness and with downcast eyes she replied that, having considered herself a gipsy, and that she should better her condition by marrying a knight of Santiago, and one of such station as Don Juan de Cárcamo, and having, moreover, learned by experience his good disposition and honourable conduct, she had sometimes looked upon him with the eyes of affection; but that as she had said once for all, she had no other will than that which her parents might approve.

Night arrived; and about ten they took Andrew out of prison without handcuffs and fetters, but not without a great chain with which his body was bound from head to foot. In this way he arrived, unseen by any but those who had charge of him, in the corregidor's house, was silently and cautiously admitted into a room, and there left alone. A confessor presently entered and bade him confess, as he was to die next day. "With great pleasure I will confess," replied Andrew; "but why do they not marry me first? And if I am to be married, truly it is a sad bridal chamber that awaits me."

Doña Guiomar, who heard all this, told her husband that the terrors he was inflicting on Don Juan were excessive, and begged he would moderate them, lest they should cost him his life. The corregidor assented, and called out to the confessor that he should first marry the gipsy to Preciosa, after which the prisoner would confess, and commend himself with all his heart to God, who often rains down his mercies at the moment when hope is most parched and withering. Andrew was then removed to a room where there was no one but Doña Guiomar, the corregidor, Preciosa, and two servants of the family. But when Preciosa saw Don Juan in chains, his face all bloodless, and his eyes dimmed with recent weeping, her heart sank within her, and she clutched her mother's arm for support. "Cheer up, my child," said the corregidora, kissing her, "for all you now see will turn to your pleasure and advantage." Knowing nothing of what was intended, Preciosa could not console herself; the old gipsy was sorely disturbed, and the bystanders awaited the issue in anxious suspense.



"Señor Vicar," said the corregidor, "this gitano and gitana are the persons whom your reverence is to marry."

"That I cannot do," replied the priest, "unless the ceremony be preceded by the formalities required in such cases. Where have the banns been published? Where is the license of my superior, authorising the espousals?"

"The inadvertance has been mine," said the corregidor; "but I will undertake to get the license from the bishop's deputy."

"Until it comes then, your worships will excuse me," said the priest, and without another word, to avoid scandal, he quitted the house, leaving them all in confusion.

"The padre has done quite right," said the corregidor, "and it may be that it was by heaven's providence, to the end that Andrew's execution might be postponed; for married to Preciosa he shall assuredly be, but first the banns must be published, and thus time will be gained, and time often works a happy issue out of the worst difficulties. Now I want to know from Andrew, should matters take such a turn, that without any more of those shocks and perturbations, he should become the husband of Preciosa, would he consider himself a happy man, whether as Andrew Caballero, or as Don Juan de Cárcamo?"

As soon as Don Juan heard himself called by his true name, he said, "Since Preciosa has not chosen to confine herself to silence, and has discovered to you who I am, I say to you, that though my good fortune should make me monarch of the world, she would still be the sole object of my desires; nor would I aspire to have any blessing besides, save that of heaven."

"Now for this good spirit you have shown, Señor Don Juan de Cárcamo, I will in fitting time make Preciosa your lawful wife, and at present I bestow her upon you in that expectation, as the richest jewel of my house, my life, and my soul; for in her I bestow upon you Doña Constanza de Acevedo Menesis, my only daughter, who, if she equals you in love, is nowise inferior to you in birth."

Andrew was speechless with astonishment, while in a few words Doña Guiomar related the loss of her daughter, her recovery, and the indisputable proofs which the old gipsy woman had given of the kidnapping. More

amazed than ever, but filled with immeasurable joy, Don Juan embraced his father and mother-in-law, called them his parents and señores, and kissed Preciosa's hands, whose tears called forth his own. The secret was no longer kept; the news was spread abroad by the servants who had been present, and reached the ears of the alcalde, the dead man's uncle, who saw himself debarred of all hope of vengeance, since the rigour of justice could not be inflicted on the corregidor's son-in-law. Don Juan put on the travelling dress which the old woman had preserved; his prison and his iron chain were exchanged for liberty and chains of gold; and the sadness of the incarcerated gipsies was turned into joy, for they were all bailed out on the following day. The uncle of the dead man received a promise of two thousand ducats on condition of his abandoning the suit and forgiving Don Juan. The latter, not forgetting his comrade Clement, sent at once in quest of him, but he was not to be found, nor could anything be learned of him until four days after, when authentic intelligence was obtained that he had embarked in one of two Genoese galleys that lay in the port of Cartagena, and had already sailed. The corregidor informed Don Juan, that he had ascertained that his father, Don Francisco de Cárcano, had been appointed corregidor of that city, and that it would be well to wait until the nuptials could be celebrated with his consent and approbation. Don Juan was desirous to conform to the corregidor's wishes, but said that before all things he must be made one with Preciosa. The archbishop granted his license, requiring that the banns should be published only once.

The city made a festival on the wedding-day, the corregidor being much liked, and there were illuminations, bullfights, and tournaments. The old woman remained in the house of her pretended grandchild, not choosing to part from Preciosa. The news reached Madrid, and Don Francisco de Cárcamo learned that the gipsy bridegroom was his son, and that Preciosa was the gitanilla he had seen in his house. Her beauty was an excuse in his eyes for the levity of his son, whom he had supposed to be lost, having ascertained that he had not gone to Flanders. Besides, he was the more reconciled when he found what a good match Don Juan had made with the daughter of so great and wealthy a cavalier as was Don Fernando de Acevedo. He hastened his departure in order to see his children, and within twenty days he was in Murcia. His arrival renewed the general joy; the lives of the pair were related, and the poets of that city, which numbers some

very good ones, took it upon them to celebrate the extraordinary event along with the incomparable beauty of the gitanilla; and the licentiate Pozo wrote in such wise, that Preciosa's fame will endure in his verses whilst the world lasts. I forgot to mention that the enamoured damsel of the inn owned that the charge of theft she had preferred against Andrew was not true, and confessed her love and her crime, for which she was not visited with any punishment, because the joyous occasion extinguished revenge and resuscitated clemency.