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BOCCACCIO'S  
OLYMPIA

Olin

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1913

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Tacoma, Wash.

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¶ Of this edition of Boccaccio's Olympia  
550 copies have been printed, of which  
500 are for sale.

This is No. *147*.....

BOCCACCIO'S OLYMPIA WITH ENGLISH RENDERING  
BY PROFESSOR I. GOLLANCZ, LITT.D., F.B.A.  
PRINTED AT THE FLORENCE PRESS, LONDON  
TO COMMEMORATE THE SIX HUNDREDTH  
ANNIVERSARY OF BOCCACCIO'S BIRTH MCMXIII







BOCCACCIO'S  
OLYMPIA


EDITED WITH AN ENGLISH RENDERING  
BY ISRAEL GOLLANCZ

AT THE FLORENCE PRESS  
LONDON: CHATTO & WINDUS  
MCMXIII





## MCCCXIII - MCMXIII

LYMPIAN! From thy laurel that ne'er fades  
A tender leaf athwart our pathway falls,  
And, fragrant with sweet violet, recalls  
The dearest blossom in thy love-lit glades.

Far from thy Roses, with desire imbrued,  
Far from thy Garden, where with wanton lays  
Plague-haunted dames & gallants sped their days,  
A floweret all too frail thy tears bedew'd.

Not Fiammetta, but thy Angel-child  
Led thee foot-sore the Hill-top to ascend,  
The high Olympus of the undefiled.

There Beatrice on Violante smiled,  
And told of fair Eletta, thy child-friend,  
And played with Pleasant Pearl, so wise and mild.



**FROM BOCCACCIO'S LETTERS TO  
PETRARCH & MARTIN DA SIGNA.**

JOHANNIS BOCCACCI DE CERTALDO  
AD FRANCISCUM PETRARCHAM LAU-  
REATUM FAMILIARIS EPISTOLA.

**I**NTERLOCUTI sumus in hortulo tuo, assistentibus ex amicis nonnullis, consedimus; ibi explicationi placidoque sermone, domum, libros, et tua omnia obtulit, et quantum in ea fuit, matronali semper gravitate servata, sumpsissem.

Inde has inter oblationes et ecce modestiori passu quam deceret aetatem Electa tua dilecta mea, et antequam me nosceret ridens aspexit. Quam ego non laetus tantum sed avidus ulnis suscepi. Primo intuitu virgunculam olim meam suspicatus. Quid dicam? Si mihi non credis, Guilelmo Ravennati medico, et Donato nostro qui novere credito. Eadem, quae meae fuit, Electae tuae facies est, idem risus, eademque oculorum laetitia, gestus incessusque et eadem totius corpusculi habitudo, quamquam grandiuscula mea, eoque aetate esset provecior, quintum quippe jam annum attigerat et dimidium, dum ultimo illam vidi. Insuper si idem idioma fuisset, verba eadem erant atque simplicitas. Quid multa!

FROM BOCCACCIO'S LETTER TO PETRARCH, DESCRIBING HIS VISIT TO FRANCESCA, PETRARCH'S DAUGHTER, AT VENICE, IN THE YEAR MCCCLXVII, & TELLING OF ELETTA, FRANCESCA'S LITTLE DAUGHTER.

**W**E sat chatting in your garden, and some of your friends who were there joined in the talk. Francesca most graciously pressed me to make myself at home, and proffered me your books & all your belongings, - all she had I was to consider mine; but not for a moment did she forget the modest demeanour of the perfect wife. She was welcoming me, when, lo, there before me was your dear little Eletta, my little friend! How gracefully she came along! One could not have expected such grace in so young a child. Before she could know who I was, she smiled at me so sweetly. What joy was mine when I saw her! What a hunger seized my heart as I held her in my arms! At first I thought it was my own girlie - the little maid once mine. Need I say more? You'll hardly believe me. But ask Doctor William of Ravenna and our friend Donatus. They know. Your little Eletta is the very image of my lost one. She has the same laugh, the

In nihilo differentes esse cognovi, nisi quia aurea  
caesaries tuae est, meae inter nigram rufamque fuit.  
Heu mihi! quotiens dum hanc prosaepe ample-  
ctor, et suis delector colloctionibus, memoria sub-  
tractae mihi puellulae lacrimas ex oculis usque de-  
duxit, quas demum in suspirium versas emisi, adver-  
tente nemine.

same joyous eyes, the same bearing and gait; she holds her dear little body just the same way. My girlie was perhaps slightly taller, but then she was older; she was five and a half when I saw her last. Had their dialect been the same, they would have spoken the same words - the same simple artless words. I can see no difference, except that Eletta's hair is golden, while my girlie's was chestnut brown. Ah me! how often, while I fondled your little one, and listened to her sweet prattle, did the memory of the little daughter reft from me bring tears to my eyes! How often, when no one observed, did I sigh away my tears!

## EPISTOLA AD FRATREM MARTINUM DE SIGNA.

**Q**UARTA decima Ecloga Olympia dicitur Olympus graece, quod splendidum seu lucidum latine sonat, et inde caelum; et ideo huic eclogae attributum est, quoniam in ea plurimum de qualitate caelestis regionis habeatur sermo. Collocutores quattuor sunt: Silvius, Camalus, Therapon, et Olympia. Pro Silvio me ipsum intellego, quem sic nuncupo eo quod in sylva quadam hujus eclogae primam cogitationem habuerim. Camalos graece, latine sonat hebes vel torpens, eo quod in eo demonstrentur mores torpentis servi. Therapon, hujus significatum non pono, quia non memini, nisi iterum revisam librum, ex quo de caeteris sumpsi, et ideo ignoscas. Scis hominis memoriam labilem esse et potissime senum. Pro Olympia intellego parvulam filiam meam olim mortuam ea in aetate in qua morientes caelestes effici cives credimus: et ideo ex Violante dum viveret, mortuam caelestem, id est Olympiam, voco.



## FROM A LETTER TO MARTIN DA SIGNA.

**T**HIS fourteenth Eclogue is called Olympia, from the Greek Olympus, signifying in Latin splendidus or lucidus, & so Heaven. Hence the name Olympia is given to this Eclogue, since much is told herein concerning the heavenly realm.<sup>v</sup> The speakers are four in number: Silvius, Camalus, Therapon, and Olympia. By Silvius I mean myself, and so I name myself here, because the first thought of this Eclogue came to me in a wood. Camalos is from a Greek word signifying hebes or torpens, that is, dull or sluggish - a type of the lazy servant. Of Therapon I am not giving you the meaning; indeed I cannot recall it unless I refer to the book whence I took the rest. So this you will not learn from me. You know how slippery is memory, and especially the memory of old men. By Olympia I mean my little daughter, who died at that age at which, as we believe, those who die become the citizens of heaven. And so for Violante, as she was named when living, I call her now Olympia - the angelic.

INCIPIT EGLOGA QUARTA DECIMA,  
CUI TITULUS EST OLYMPIA, COLLOCU-  
TORES AUTEM SUNT SILVIUS, CAMA-  
LUS, THERAPON, ET OLYMPIA.

HERE BEGINS BOCCACCIO'S FOUR-  
TEENTH ECLOGUE ENTITLED OLYM-  
PIA, WHEREIN THE SPEAKERS ARE  
SILVIUS, CAMALUS, THERAPON, AND  
OLYMPIA.

SILVIUS, CAMALUS, THERAPON,  
OLYMPIA

SILVIUS.

**S**ENTIO, ni fallor, pueri, pia numina ruris  
Laetari, & cantu volucrum nemus omne repleti,  
Itque reditque Lycos blando cum murmure; quidnam  
Viderit ignoro; cauda testatur amicum.  
Ite igitur, jam clara dies diffunditur umbris  
Praecantata diu; quid sit perquirite, quidve  
Viderit inde Lycos noster, compertaque ferte.

CAMALUS.

**D**UM nequit in somnum miserum componere pectus,  
Imperat ex molli recubans heu cespite maestus  
Silvius, et noctis pavidas lustrare tenebras  
Vult pueros longo fessos in luce labore.

SILVIUS.

**C**AMALE, dum primos terris praestabit Iberus  
Nocturnos ignes, currus dum Delia fratris  
Ducet ad occasum, dum sternet cerva leones,  
Obsequium praestabit hero sine murmure servus.

## SILVIUS, CAMALUS, THERAPON, OLYMPIA

### SILVIUS.

**I**F I err not, the sylvan sprites rejoice.  
List, boys, with song of birds the grove is filled.  
With gentle whine Luke scampers to and fro;  
Something he sees; as for a friend he wags.  
Bright day, long heralded, bestreaks the shades:  
Go, seek ye what it is, and what good Luke  
Yonder has seen; and quickly bring me word.

### CAMALUS.

**O**UR master, when - alack! - he cannot lull  
His aching heart to sleep, from downy bed  
Gives orders, and poor we, toil-weary boys,  
-What recketh he? - must forth & view dread night.

### SILVIUS.

**I**N Western Ocean when the Dawn's first streak  
Illumines Earth, when Delia westward leads  
Her brother's team, when hinds o'er lions vaunt,  
A servant then perchance will do as bid.

O Therapon, stabuli tu solve repagula nostri,  
Pone metum, videas catulus quid viderit, oro. ~

**THERAPON.**

**F**ESTINA, fac, surge senex! Jam corripit ignis  
Jam veteres quercus, & noctem lumine vincit;  
Uritur omne nemus, fervens jam flamma penates  
Lambit, & occurso lucis perterritus intra  
Festinus redii. Lambit jam flamma penates!

**SILVIUS.**

**P**Astorum venerande deus, Pan, deprecor adsis!  
Et vos, o pueri, flammis occurrere lymphis.  
Siste parum, Therapon, paulum consiste. Quid istud?  
Quid video? sanusne satis sum? dormio forsan.  
Non facio! Lux ista quidem, non flamma vel ignis.  
Nonne vides laetas frondes corylosque virentes  
Luminis in medio, validas ac undique fagos  
Intactas? Immo, nec nos malus ardor adurit.

**THERAPON.**

**S**I spectes caelo testantur sidera noctem,  
In silvis lux alma diem. Quid grande paratur?

But, Therapon, do thou unbar the door!  
Fear not; see thou, I pray, what Luke has seen. -

**THERAPON.**

**H**ASTE, sir, arise, come forth! Our ancient oaks  
Are all by fire possessed; light conquers night.  
The grove is all a-glow; fierce flames now lap  
The very gods within. Awed by the sight,  
I hied me thence. The flames the gods now lap!

**SILVIUS.**

**P**AN, holy God of shepherds, be my help!  
Go ye, my boys, with water face the flames.  
Stay, Therapon! stay here awhile. - What is't?  
What see I? Am I sane? Perchance I sleep.  
Nay, yonder light, it is nor flame nor fire.  
Seest not the branches fair, the hazels green  
Amid the glow, the beech-trees all about  
Inviolatè? Here burns no evil heat.

**THERAPON.**

**L**OOK skyward! Spangled stars betoken night.  
Daylight the wood illumes. What wonder next?

**SILVIUS.**

**S**IC natura vices variat, noctemque diemque  
Explicuit mixtos terris; nec lumina Phœbae,  
Nec Solis radios cerno. Non sentis odores  
Insolitos silvis, nemus hoc si forte Sabaeum  
Fecisset natura parens? Quos inde recentes  
Nox peperit flores? Quos insuper audio cantus?  
Haec superos ambire locos et pascua signant.~

**OLYMPIA.**

**S**ALVE dulce decus nostrum, pater optime, salve!  
Ne timeas, sum nata tibi. Quid lumina flectis?

**SILVIUS.**

**N**ESCIO num vigilem, fateor, seu somnia cernam,  
Nam coram genitae voces & dulcis imago  
Stant equidem; timeo falli, quia saepe per umbras  
Illudere dei stolidos. Nos claustra petamus!

**OLYMPIA.**

**S**ILVI, quid dubitas? an credis, Olympia patrem  
Ludat, & in lucem sese sine numine divum



**SILVIUS.**

**S**O Nature marks her changes; day and night  
Commingle she displays. But here I see  
Nor Phœbe's beams nor Sol's. Rare fragrances  
Feel'st not, as if Dame Nature here had made  
A grove of Araby? What flowers fresh  
Has Night brought forth? What strains hear I above?  
God-haunted spots & pastures these things show. -

**OLYMPIA.**

**H**AIL, chiefest glory, dearest father, hail!  
Fear not, I am thy daughter. Why this look?

**SILVIUS.**

**I**' FAITH, I know not, do I wake or dream!  
My child's voice hear I, and her image sweet  
Stands here before me. Fool! Too oft the gods  
With shadows trick dull mortals. Let us home!

**OLYMPIA.**

**S**ILVIUS, doubt not! Think'st thou Olympia  
Would mock her father, or herself reveal

Praebeat? Huc veni lacrimas demptura dolentes.

**SILVIUS.**

**A**GNOSCO, nec fallit amor, nec somnia fallunt.  
O nimium dilecta mihi, spes unica patris,  
Quis te, nata, deus tenuit? Te Fusca ferebat,  
Chalcidicos colles, & pascua lata Vesevi  
Dum petii, raptam nobis, Cybelisque sacrato  
Absconsam gremio, nec post haec posse videri.  
Quod credens maerensque miser, mea virgo, peraltos  
Te montes, umbrasque graves, saltusque remotos  
Ingemui flevique diu, multumque vocavi.  
Sed tu, si mereor, resera quibus, obsecro, lustris  
Te tenuit tam longa dies? Dic munere cujus  
Intertexta auro vestis tibi candida flavo?  
Quae tibi lux oculis olim non visa refulget?  
Qui comites? Mirum, quam grandis facta diebus  
In paucis! Matura viro mihi, nata, videris.

**OLYMPIA.**

**E**XUVIAS, quas ipse mihi, venerande, dedisti,  
Ingenti gremio servat Berecynthia mater.  
Has vestes formamque dedit, faciemque coruscam  
Parthenos, secumque fui. Sed respice, numquid  
Videris hos usquam comites; vidisse juvabit!

Against God's will? To dry thy tears I come.

**SILVIUS.**

**N**OW know I, 'tis no trick of love or dream.  
O too beloved! thy father's dearest hope!  
What god restrained thee, child? Me Fusca told  
That, whilst I journey'd to Campania's hills,  
Vesuvian pastures, thou from us wast reft,  
And, hid in sacred soil, wast lost to sight.  
Thinking 'twas so, in misery I mourned;  
I wailed thee, daughter mine, on mountain heights,  
In woods and far-off glades, and called thee oft.  
But me, if I be worthy, tell what haunts  
Have held thee this long day. Who gave to thee  
Thy robe so white, entwined with yellow gold?  
What light shines in thine eyes, ne'er seen before?  
Thy comrades - who? Wondrous, how grown art thou  
In so brief time! Thou seem'st for spousal fit.

**OLYMPIA.**

**T**HE vestments, sire, which thou to me didst give,  
Great Mother Earth holds in her mighty lap.  
These robes, this form, this beauty, heavenly bright,  
The Virgin gave; with Her I was. But, lo,  
My comrades hast ne'er seen before? Rejoice!

SILVIUS.

**N**ON memini vidisse quidem, nec pulchrior, inquam,  
His Narcissus erat, non talis denique Daphnis,  
Qui Dryadum spes laeta fuit, non pulcher Alexis!

OLYMPIA.

**N**ON Marium Julumque tuos dulcesque sorores  
Noscis, & egregios vultus? Tua pulchra propago est!

SILVIUS.

**A**BSTULIT effigies notas lanugine malas,  
Umbratas vidisse, meis. Jam jungite dextras,  
Amplexusque meos ac oscula laeta venite  
Ut praestem satiemque animam! Quas, Pan, tibi laudes,  
Quas, Silvane, canam? Pueri, nudate palaestras,  
Et ludos agitote patrum. Stent munera fagis  
Victorum suspensa sacris, paterasque parate  
Spumantes vino; laetum cantate Lyaeum,  
Et sertis ornate lares; altaria surgant  
Caespitem gramineo; Triviae mactate bidentem  
Candidulam, Noctique piae sic caedite fulvam.  
Fer calamos pueris, Therapon, fer sertia puellis.

**SILVIUS.**

**I** CALL them not to mind. More beauteous sure  
Was not Narcissus, nor was Daphnis such,  
The wood-nymphs' darling, nor Alexis fair!

**OLYMPIA.**

**K** NOW'ST thou thy Marius not, thy Julius, too,  
And these sweet sisters mine? Thy dear ones all!

**SILVIUS.**

**T** HE down-soft cheeks I knew, their image lacks;  
Beshaded cheeks I see. Now join we hands;  
Embrace we now; and come, let kisses sweet  
Be pressed, to sate my soul. Thy praises, Pan,  
How shall I sing, and thine, Sylvanus? Boys,  
Strip you for wrestling; lead our ancient games!  
From sacred beeches hang the victors' meeds!  
Let beakers foam; and jocund Bacchus laud!  
With garlands deck the gods; with grassy turf  
Heap high their altars! To Diana slay  
A heifer white; to Night a tawny beast!  
Reeds for the lads, good youth; for lasses wreaths!

**OLYMPIA.**

**S**UNT, Silvi, calami, suntserta decentia nobis;  
Et si tanta tibi cura est deducere festum,  
Ignotos silvismodulos cantabimus istis.

**SILVIUS.**

**I**MMO, silva silet, tacitus nunc defluit Arnus,  
Et silet omnis ager, pueri, vos atque silete.

**OLYMPIA.**

**V**IVIMUS aeternummeritis et numine Codri,  
Aurea qui nuper celso demissus Olympto  
Parthenu in gremium, revocavit saecula terris;  
Turpia pastorum passus convitia, cedro  
Affixus, leto concessit sponte triumphum:  
**Vivimus aeternummeritis et numine Codri.**

Sic priscas sordes, morbos, scabiemque vetustam  
Infecti pecoris praeclaro sanguine lavit.  
Hincque petens valles Plutarchi saepta refrinxit,  
In solem retrahens pecudes armentaque patrum:  
**Vivimus aeternummeritis et numine Codri.**

Morte hinc prostrata, campos reseravit odoros  
Elysii, sacrumque gregem deduxit in hortos  
Mellifluos, victor lauro quercuque refulgens,

**OLYMPIA.**

**R**EEDS, Silvius, have we here, & goodly wreaths;  
And, if so please thee festal cheer to stir,  
Strains will we chant these woods have never known.

**SILVIUS.**

**H**USHED is the wood; Arno flows silently;  
Hushed are the fields; & hushed be ye, my boys,

**OLYMPIA.**

**'E**NDLESS our life by Codrus' grace divine!  
He, sent of late from high Olympus down  
Into the Maid, the Golden Age recalled;  
Shepherds' vile scorn He dreed, on cedar hung;  
A triumph gave He Death, of His free will.  
Endless our life by Codrus' grace divine!

So from the blemished sheep He washed old taints,  
Old maladies and sores, with His bright blood;  
Then sought He Pluto's dales, broke up his folds,  
And brought to light the Father's flocks and herds.  
Endless our life by Codrus' grace divine!

Death slain, Elysium's fragrant fields He oped;  
To gardens honey-sweet His host He led,  
Victor all-bright with laurel and with oak,

Optandasque dedit nobis per saecula sedes:  
**Vivimus aeternum meritis et numine Codri.**

Exuvias in fine sibi pecus omne resumet;  
Ipse, iterum veniens, capros distinguet ab agnis,  
Hosque feris linquet, componet sedibus illas  
Perpetuis, caeloque novo post tempora claudet:  
**Vivimus aeternum meritis et numine Codri.'**

### **SILVIUS.**

**S**ENTIS, quam stulti Latios cantare putamus  
Pastores calamis perdentes tempora vocum?  
Maenalios vidi juvenes per dorsa Lycaeï,  
Threicium et vatem solitum deducere cautes  
Carmine, nec quemquam possum concedere tanti,  
Ut similem natis faciam. Quae guttura! quae vox!  
Quis concentus erat! stipulis quis denique flatus!  
Non equidem nemoris custos, regina canori,  
Calliope, non ipse Deus, qui praesidet antro  
Gorgoneo, aequiparet! Flexere cacumina quercus,  
Et tenues nymphae tacitos petiere regressus  
In lucem; mansere lupi catulique tacentes.  
Praeterea, o juvenes sensistis carminis hujus  
Caelestes sensus? Numquam mihi Tityrus olim  
Cantavit similes, senior nec Mopsus apricis  
Parrhasius silvis. Sanctum & memorabile totum est!



And gave us evermore the wished-for homes.  
**Endless our life by Codrus' grace divine !**

At doomsday, when their slough all kinds resume,  
He comes again, to part the lambs from goats,-  
These to wild beasts, to Thrones eternal those:  
Anon a heaven new will compass them.  
**Endless our life by Codrus' grace divine !'**

### **SILVIUS.**

**W**HAT fools be we, to think that Latin swains  
Can pipe and sing ! Their notes are out of time.  
Arcadian youths upon their mountain-slopes,  
The Thracian sire who with his song drew rocks,  
All have I known ; yet none so high I hold  
As like unto these youths. What throats ! what tones !  
What harmony ! What music from their reeds !  
The Guardian of the Grove, the Queen of Song,  
Calliope, nor e'en the God who rules  
O'er Helicon, could vie ! The oaks bent low,  
And tender wood-nymphs sought the silent glades  
Unto the light ; yea, wolves and hounds stood mute.  
Tell me, ye youths, caught ye the heavenly sense  
Of yon sweet strain ? Ne'er Tityrus sang so,  
Nor aged Mopsus in his sunny wood.  
Sacred it is, to be remembered aye !

Virginibus niveae dentur, mea cura, columbae;  
Ast pueris fortes dederat quos Ischiros arcus.

**OLYMPIA.**

**S**INT tua, nil fertur quod sit mortale per oras  
Quas dites colimus; renuunt aeterna caducum!

**SILVIUS.**

**Q**UAS oras, mea nata, refers? Quas, deprecor, oras?  
Nos omnes teget illa domus, somnosque quietos  
Herba dabit viridis, caespesque sub ilice mensam.  
Vitreus is large praestabit pocula rivus,  
Castaneas mites, & poma recentia nobis  
Rustica silva feret, teneros grex fertilis haedos,  
Lacque simul pressum. Quas ergo exquiritis oras?

**OLYMPIA.**

**N**ON tibi, care pater, dixi, Berecynthia mater  
Exuvias gremio servat, quas ipse dedisti?  
Non sum quae fueram dum tecum parvula vixi;  
Nam numero sum juncta deum; me pulcher Olympus  
Expectat, comitesque meos. Stat vertere gressus  
In patriam. Tu vive, pater dulcissime, felix!

**SILVIUS.**

**H**EU! moriar lacrimans, miserum si nata relin-  
quis.

Unto the maids, from me, give snow-white doves;  
Unto the lads strong bows from Ischiros!

**OLYMPIA.**

**H**OLD thou them! To the glorious climes we haunt  
Nought mortal comes. Immortals shun things frail.

**SILVIUS.**

**W**HAT climes, oh, daughter mine, what climes, I pray?  
Yon roof us all will cover; quiet sleep  
Green sward will give; a turf 'neath oak our board;  
The crystal brook our fount of richest draughts;  
And our wild woodlands chestnuts ripe will bring,  
And apples fresh; our fruitful herd young kids  
And cheese. What other climes, then, would ye seek?

**OLYMPIA.**

**H**AVE I not told thee, father dear, that Earth  
The trappings keeps that thou to me didst give?  
I am not what I was, the child thou knewest;  
Now am I numbered with the god-like throng.  
Me fair Olympus calls, my comrades eke;  
Homeward we turn. Sweet father mine, farewell!

**SILVIUS.**

**L**EAV' ST thou me wretched thus, I weep to  
death.

OLYMPIA.

**P**ONE, precor, luctus; credisne refringere fatum  
Nunc lacrimis? Omnes silvis quotcumque creati  
Nascimur in mortem; feci quod tu quoque, Silvi,  
Post facies. Noli, quaeso, lacerare deorum  
Invidia aeternos annos. Tibi crede quietem  
Post funus, laudesque pias mi reddito caelo,  
Quod moriens fugi mortem, nemorumque labores.  
Separor ad tempus, post haec me quippe videbis;  
Perpetuosque trahes mecum feliciter annos.

SILVIUS.

**I**N lacrimis oculos fundam, tristemque senectam!  
Heu, quibus in silvis post anxia fata requiram  
Te profugam, ex nostris bis raptam viribus ulnis?

OLYMPIA.

ELYSIUM repeto, quod tu scansurus es olim.

SILVIUS.

**E**LYSIUM, memini, quondam cantare solebat  
Minciades stipula, qua nemo doctior usquam.  
Estne, quod ille canit, vestrum? Didicisse juvabit.

OLYMPIA.

**S**enserat ille quidem vi mentis grandia quaedam,  
Ac in parte loci faciem, sed pauca canebat,

OLYMPIA.

**A**WAY with grief! Think'st thou to burst thy fate  
With tears? As many as created be,  
We all are born for death. I have but done  
What thou shalt do. Rate not with spleen, I pray,  
The gods' eternal years. Trow peace is thine  
Hereafter; render praise to Heav'n for me,  
That, dying, I'scaped death and toils below.  
Awhile apart, sure thou wilt see me soon,  
And lead with me in bliss unending years.

SILVIUS.

**M**INE eyes will waste with tears, mine age will pine.  
After life's woes in what wood shall I seek  
Thee, fleeing hence, twice reft from these mine arms?

OLYMPIA.

ELYSIUM I seek, where thou wilt come.

SILVIUS.

**E**LYSIUM! The Mantuan bard, methinks,  
Sang once & piped thereof; was none more skilled.  
Is thine the spot he sang? Fain would I learn.

OLYMPIA.

**H**IS mighty mind, indeed, some glories grasped,  
Some beauties of the place; he sang but few

Si videas, quam multa tenet, quam pulchra piorum  
Elysium sedesque deum gratissima nostrum.

**SILVIUS.**

**Q**UOS tenet iste locus montes? Quibus insitus oris?  
Quae non Minciades vidit, seu sponte reliquit,  
Da nobis. Audire fuit persaepe laborum  
Utile solamen; veniet mens forte videndi.

**OLYMPIA.**

**E**ST in secessu pecori mons invius aegro,  
Lumine perpetuo clarus, quo primus ab imis  
Insurgit terris Phoebus, cui vertice summo  
Silva sedet palmas tollens ad sidera celsas,  
Et laetas pariter lauros, cedrosque perennes,  
Palladis ac oleas optatae pacis amicas.  
Quis queat hinc varios flores, quis posset odores  
Quos lenis fert aura loco, quis dicere rivos  
Argento similes, mira scaturigine circum  
Omnia rorantes, lepido cum murmure flexus,  
Arbustis mixtos, nunc hinc nunc inde trahentes?  
Hesperidum potiora locus fert aurea poma.  
Sunt auro volucres pictae, sunt cornibus aureis  
Capreoli & mites damae, sunt insuper agnae  
Velleribus niveis, claro rutilantibus auro;  
Suntque boves, taurique simul, pinguesque juvencae

Of all the many joys Elysium holds,-  
Home of the blest, our Gods' most fair abode!

**SILVIUS.**

**W**HAT mountains hath it? In what regions set?  
What he saw not, or what he left unsung,  
Tell me! To hear was oft sweet balm for toil.  
Perchance the soul will yearn those sights to see.

**OLYMPIA.**

**R**EMOTE, beyond the reach of sickly sheep,  
Bright with perpetual light, a mountain rears;  
There Phœbus first, from Earth below, ascends;  
On topmost peak a wood, with towering palms,  
With festal laurels, cedars ever-green,  
Peace-loving olive-trees, to Pallas dear.  
Who could describe the many flowers? the scents  
The zephyrs waft? and who the silvery streams,  
Their wondrous waters sprinkling all about,  
Meandering here and there with murmur sweet,  
And drawing in their course full many a bough?  
Such golden fruit th' Hesperides ne'er saw;  
Gold-hued are birds there, and gold-hornèd goats  
And gentle deer; moreover, lambs are there  
Whose snowy fleeces gleam with brightest gold;  
And oxen, too, and bulls, and fatted cows,

Insignes omnes auro, mitesque leones,  
Crinibus & mites gryphes radiantibus auro:  
Aureus est nobis sol, ac argentea luna;  
Et majora quidem quam vobis sidera fulgent.  
Ver ibi perpetuum, nullis offenditur austris,  
Laetaque temperies loca possidet, exulat inde  
Terrestris nebula et nox et discordia rerum;  
Mors ibi nulla manet gregibus, non aegra senectus,  
Atque graves absunt curae maciesque dolorque.  
Sponte sua veniunt cunctis optata. Quid ultra?  
Dulcisono resonat cantu mitissimus aer.

### SILVIUS.

**M**IRA refers, sanctamque puto sedemque deorum  
Quam memoras silvam. Sed quisnam praesidet illi?  
Et comites, mea nata, refer, ritusque locorum.

### OLYMPIA.

**H**AC in gramineo summo sedet aggere grandis  
Arcesilas, servatque greges, & temperat orbis,  
Cujus enim si forte velis describere vultus,  
Incassum facies; nequeunt comprehendere mentes.  
Est alacer, pulcherque nimis, totusque serenus,  
Hujus et in gremio jacet agnus candidus, ex quo  
Silvicolis gratus cibus est, & vescimur illo.  
Inde salus venit nobis, & vita renatis.



Resplendent all with gold; yea, lions tame,  
And griffins tame, their manes with gold all bright.  
Golden our sun, and silvern is our moon;  
Grander than yours the stars that shine on us.  
'Tis ever Spring; no southern gale strikes there;  
A joyous calm the place pervades. Earth's mists,  
And Night, all things that jar, are banished thence.  
Death comes not to the flocks, nor ailing Age;  
And far are grievous cares, and want, and grief.  
Things wished for freely come to all. What more?  
The air, so soft, with sweet-toned song resounds.

**SILVIUS.**

**M**ARVELS thou tell'st! Sure, sacred is that wood,  
The Gods' abode! But who o'errules it, say;  
Who dwell therein, and what the usages?

**OLYMPIA.**

**H**IGH, on a grassy mound, in glory sits  
Arcesilas, shepherding flocks and worlds.  
But, verily, would'st thou His aspect know,  
It were in vain; the mind this cannot grasp.  
All life is He, too fair, wholly serene;  
And in His bosom rests a Lamb, milk-white,  
Sweet Sustenance for folk, whereby we live;  
Thence comes our weal, and life to those re-born.

Ex his ambobus pariter sic evolat ignis,  
Ut mirum credas; hoc lumen ad omnia confert,  
Solatur maestos, & mentis lumina purgat,  
Consilium miseris praestat, viresque cadentum  
Instaurat, dulcesque animis infundit amores.  
Stat Satyrum longaeva cohors, hinc undique supplex  
Omnis cana quidem, roseis ornata coronis,  
Et cytharis agni laudes, & carmine cantat.  
Purpureus post ordo virum venerabilis, inquam,  
Et viridi cunctis cinguntur tempora lauro.  
Hi cecinere deum stipulis per compita verum.  
Et forti saevos animo vicere labores.  
Agmen adest niveum post hos, cui lilia frontes  
Circumdant, huic juncta cohors tua pulchra manemus  
Natorum. Crocei sequitur post ordo coloris  
Inclitus; et magno fulgens splendore, sonora  
Voce deum laudes cantat, regique ministrat.  
Quos inter placido vultu cantabat Asylas,  
Dum silvis assumpta prius sum monte levatis.

### SILVIUS.

**E**RGO, precor, noster montem conscendit Asylas?  
Emeruit, nam mitis erat, fideique vetustae  
Praeclarum specimen. Faciat deus ipse revisam!  
Sed dic; tene, precor, novit, dum culmen adires?

And from Them both alike there flames a fire,  
Wondrous to trow ! To all things spreads that light :  
The sad it comforts, purges the mind's eye,  
Counsels the wretched, strengthens those that fall,  
With sweetest love informs the souls of men.  
An aged band of Satyrs, suppliant,  
Their hoary locks with rosy chaplets crowned,  
Stand there; with lute & song the Lamb they praise.  
And then the Purple Order, well revered,  
Their temples all engirt with laurel green;  
At cross-roads these with pipes the true God sang,  
And, strong of soul, they conquered cruel toils.  
Then come the Snow-white Host; lilies their brows  
Enwreath. To these is joined our little band,  
Thy children fair. The Saffron Order next,  
Illustrious, resplendent, with loud voice  
Sing praises of the Gods, and serve the King.  
'Mong these Asylas sang; how calm his look,  
When first the mount received me from the woods!

**SILVIUS.**

**D**ID my Asylas then ascend the mount?  
Worthy was he, gentle, of ancient faith  
A noble type. God grant we meet again!  
But knew he thee, when to the heights thou camest?

### OLYMPIA.

**I**MMO equidem applaudens iniecit brachia collo;  
Et postquam amplexus laetos ac oscula centum  
Impressit fronti, multis comitantibus, inquit, -  
"Venisti, o nostri soboles carissima Silvi?  
'De Libano,' nunc, 'sponsa, veni,' sacrosque hymenaeos  
Cantemus, matremque viri mea neptis honora."  
Meque trahens, genibus flexis, quo pulchra sedebat  
Parthenos posuit. Laeta haec suscepit in ulnis  
Ancillam, dixitque pie: "Mea filia nostris  
Ecce choris jungere piis, sponsique frueris  
Aeternis thalamis, et semper Olympia caelo  
Quae fueras terris Violantes inclita fies."  
Inde dedit vestes quas cernis. Si tibi narrem  
Quos cantus tunc silva dedit, quos fistula versus  
Pastoris lyrici, credes vix. Omne per antrum  
Insonuit carmen montis, tantusque refulsit  
Ignis, ut exuri dixisses omnia flammis,  
Et totum rosei cecidere per aera flores.

### SILVIUS.

QUAE sit Parthenos nobis super adde, precamur.

### OLYMPIA.

**A**LMA Jovis genitrix haec est, et filia nati,  
Splendens aula deum, caeli decus, inscia noctis,

**OLYMPIA.**

**G**LEEFUL, he threw his arms about my neck;  
Kissed me a hundred times, embraced me oft;  
And then, a mighty concourse with him, said:  
"Hast come, my Silvius' beloved child?  
'Come hither, love,' and Hymen's holy lays  
Sing we; and Manhood's Mother honour thou!"  
Then me he led, and down I knelt where sat  
The Virgin beauteous. Joyful She clasped  
Her maid, & kindly spake: "Now, daughter mine,  
Enter Our blissful choirs; thou shalt enjoy  
Eternal Spousal, as Olympia  
In Heaven known, who Violante wast."  
The raiment that thou seest she gave me then.  
Were I to tell the strains the woods then gave,  
The tuneful Shepherds' notes, thou'dst scarce believe.  
The mountain's song resounded through the cave;  
And fire so flashed, that all things seemed a-glow;  
And scattered from above fell roseate flowers.

**SILVIUS.**

WHO is the Virgin? Tell me now, I pray.

**OLYMPIA.**

**J**OVE'S Gracious Mother She, His Daughter eke,  
The Gods' Queen-Mother, Heaven's Gem, Night's Bane,

Aethereum sidus, pastorum certa salutis  
Spes, custosque gregum, requiesque optata laborum.  
Hanc fauni nymphaeque colunt, hanc grandis Apollo  
Laudibus extollit cythara, dominamque fatetur.  
Quae residens solio patris veneranda vetusti,  
A dextris geniti, tanto splendore refulget,  
Ut facie silvam, montem, collesque, polosque  
Laetificet formosa nimis. Cui candida circum  
Agmina cygnorum volitant, matremque salutant,  
Luminis aeterni sponsam, genitamque cientes.

### SILVIUS.

ET vos quid, pueri, plaudunt dum gutture cygni?

### OLYMPIA.

**N**OS pueri legimus flores, factisque corollis  
Cingimus intonsos crines, laetisque choreis  
Ambimus silvam, fontes, rivosque sonoros.  
Et, mediis herbis ludentes, vocibus altis  
Parthenu placidae meritos cantamus honores  
Et geniti laudes pariter. Quis gaudia silvae  
Enumerare queat? Quis verbis pandere? Nemo!  
Induat ut volucres pennas, quibus alta volatu  
Expetat et videat, opus est; sunt cetera frustra.

Celestial Star, the Shepherds' certain hope,  
Their flocks' sure guard, their wished-for rest from toil !  
Fauns Her adore, and nymphs; Apollo great  
With lute exalts Her praise, and owns Her Queen.  
She, worshipful, upon the Father's throne,  
On right-hand of the Son, full brightly shines.  
Her look the woods and mountains, hills and poles,  
Makes glad. Too fair is She. About Her fly  
White swan-like bands; as Mother hail they Her,  
As Spouse and Daughter of Eternal Light !

**SILVIUS.**

AND what do ye, while thus the swans acclaim ?

**OLYMPIA.**

**W**E youths cull flowers; & with the wreaths we make,  
Our unshorn locks we crown. With dances glad  
We circle woods and founts and sounding brooks;  
And, sporting 'mid the grasses, with loud voice  
We chant due praises of the gentle Maid;  
And eke the Son we laud. The wood's delights  
Who can recount ? Who tell in words ? Not one !  
First must he put on wings, as bird, by flight  
To seek and see the heights; else all is vain.

**SILVIUS.**

**S**UNT optanda quidem; sed quis mihi Daedalus usquam  
Qui tribuat pennas agiles, nectatque lacertis,  
Ostendatque viam facilem, doceatque volatum?

**OLYMPIA.**

**P**ASCE famem fratris, lactis da pocula fessis,  
Adsis detentis, et nudos contege, lapsos  
Erige dum possis, pateatque forensibus antrum;  
Haec aquilae volucres praestabunt munera pennas  
Atque, deo monstrante viam, volitabis in altum.

**SILVIUS.**

**Q**UO tendis? quo, nata, fugis, miserumque parentem  
Implicitum linquis lacrimis? Heu cessit in auras  
Aethereas, traxitque simul, quos duxit, odores.  
In mortem lacrimis ibo, ducamque senectam.  
Vos, pueri, vitulos in pascua pellite; surgit  
Lucifer, et mediis jam sol emittitur umbris.

**EXPLICIT OLYMPIA EGLOGA QUARTA  
DECIMA.**



SILVIUS.

**T**WERE to be wished ! But who, as Dædalus,  
Will give me agile wings, and bind them on,  
Show me the easy way, and teach me flight ?

OLYMPIA.

**T**HY brother feed, give to the weary milk,  
To prisoners alms; the naked clothe, the fallen  
Raise, while thou canst; and list to those who plead.  
Such offices will give thee eagle's wings;  
And, God thy guide, thou wilt to Heaven fly.~

SILVIUS.

**W**HITHER, my daughter, whither fleest thou,  
Leaving thy father tearful ? - Ah, she passed  
To upper air, and drew the scents she brought.  
With tears my life I'll dree, and fare to death.  
Boys, drive the calves afield ! Lo, Phosphor gleams,  
And Sol emerges now from misty shades.

HERE ENDS THE FOURTEENTH ECLO-  
GUE, ENTITLED OLYMPIA.



## POSTSCRIPT



**M**Y interest in Boccaccio's OLYMPIA dates from 1904, in which year my friend Professor W. H. Schofield, of Harvard, reprinted from the Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, xix, 1, an article on "The Nature and Fabric of The Pearl," in which he attempted, altogether unconvincingly in my judgment, to disprove the obvious autobiographical interpretation of the poem, and to maintain that its elegiac setting was a mere literary device for dealing with certain theological problems. An Appendix was added embodying supplementary information concerning the source of the Poem, in which Dr. Schofield stated that after his article had been printed his attention was directed by Dr. E. K. Rand, of Harvard, to Boccaccio's Eclogue. He proceeded to demonstrate the dependence of the English poem upon the Latin as its direct source, & somewhat strangely, instead of being induced by "the new fact" to modify his former contention, maintained that the undoubted elegiac reality of the alleged original actually confirmed his views as to the non-autobiographical character of "The Pearl." After comparing the two poems, he was, however, forced to admit that, in saying that the Eclogue was its source, he did

not mean more than that it was the "starting-point of the author's conception." I do not propose on the present occasion to traverse his arguments. I am none the less grateful to Dr. Schofield, although after long study of the two poems I have come to the conclusion that there is no definite evidence of any indebtedness on the part of the author of "Pearl" to Boccaccio's poem, & that such parallels as may be discovered in the two poems are due to the poets' common knowledge, ideas, and belief. Moreover, in one striking instance the similarity does not really exist. "In both cases," it was pointed out, "the poet, grieving for a dead child, falls asleep on the ground in a leafy arbor"; but "*ex molli caespite recubans*" indicates a soft pillow, and not the ground. With the dangers of parallelism before me, I attempted to consider the question independently; for which purpose I found it necessary, in the first place, to prepare an adequate text of the Eclogue, and further, in order to understand it aright, to render it into English.

The poem was included in collections of Latin Eclogues printed in Florence, 1504, and in Basle, 1546; and again in "*Carmina Illustrium Poetarum Italorum*," Florence, 1719. All these texts are unsa-

tisfactory, though the last is perhaps the best of them. To Dr. Oscar Hecker belongs the high distinction of having discovered what he has proved to be Boccaccio's autograph manuscript of the *Eclogues*, including "Olympia." His discovery is set forth in a remarkable volume, "Boccaccio-Funde," 1901, where among other treasures he prints from the precious volume in the *Bibliotheca Riccardiana* at Florence the text of "Olympia," letter for letter, in the poet's own orthography, minutely reproducing the original. With the help of this text, I have been able to correct some bad errors in the 1719 text, which I have taken as the basis of the present edition. The spelling and punctuation have been normalized in accordance with modern usage. Among the chief emendations due to Dr. Hecker's discovery, the following may be noted: "mixtos" for "myrtos," p. 20; "agitote" for "agitate," 24; "surgant" for "surgunt," 24; "sit" for "si," 30; "moriar" for "moriat," 30; "credisne" for "credisfe," 32. Many obvious misprints in the 1719 text presented no great difficulty. In one or two cases I have perhaps taken an unwarrantable liberty in altering Boccaccio's Latin, as in giving "Calliope" for "Calliopes," 28; -cp. "Violantes," 40 -and "inde" for "inque," 40; but I hope that this

normalizing may be pardoned in so far as it adds to the pleasure of the reader.

The extracts from Boccaccio's letters to Petrarch and Martin da Signa are from Corrazzi's "Le Lettere edite e inedite di Messer Giovanni Boccaccio," with some slight modifications.

The first page of the MS. is reproduced as frontispiece. To Professor Robert Davidsohn, the historian of Florence, I am indebted for much kindness in the matter.

In addition to Dr. Hecker's work, the following investigations should be noted: Hortis, *Studij sulle opere latine del Boccaccio*, 1879; Zumbini, *Le Ecloghe del Boccaccio*, *Giornale storico della lett. ital.* vii; Dobelli, *Il culto del Boccaccio per Dante*, *Giornale Dantesco*, An. v, fasc. v, vi, vii; Enrico Carrara, *Un oltretomba Bucolico*, 1899—the last an interesting effort to explain allusions, proper names, and sources, with special reference to Dante. So far as diction is concerned, the poet's chief debt, directly and indirectly, is to Virgil. Whatever occasional defects may be found in the Latinity of the poem are amply compensated by the all-pervading grace of sentiment and feeling.

The date of "Olympia" is about 1361, some two or



three years after the child's death at the age of five and a half.

It is not known who is to be understood by Fusca, probably the child's mother. Asylas is evidently a reference to Boccaccio's father. By Mopsus Homer is to be understood; Virgil by Tityrus; Dante by Minciades. Codrus, for Christ, in Olympia's Hymn, is explained by the Athenian king's self-sacrifice for his country's sake. Ischiros is the Greek Ἰσχυρός, strong, mighty. Similarly, the form Pärthenos, with the second vowel as lengthened, should be noted. Arcesilas is probably used in its etymological sense of "Chieftain." A gloss in the margin of the MS. gives "Lycos," the name of the dog, as from the Greek, and equivalent to "albus." Therapon, the source of which the poet forgot, is evidently *θεράπων*, an attendant.

"De Libano, sponsa, veni," the song Asylas invites Olympia to sing with him, is from the fourth chapter of the Song of Songs:—

"Tota pulchra es, amica mea, et macula non est in te.

Veni de Libano, sponsa mea, veni de Libano, veni. Coronaberis de capite Amana, de vertice Sanir et Hermon;" etc.,

perhaps suggested by Purgatorio xxx, 11:

“ed un di loro, quasi da ciel messo,  
‘Veni, sponsa, de Libano’ cantando  
Grido tre volte, e tutti gli altri appresso.”

The words, as the burden of a religious love-song, occur frequently in mediaeval literature. Their use in “Pearl” is very striking, though the situation is not parallel. In feeling the two poems are indeed linked together; and by way of illustrating this identity of spirit, though difference in form, the whole stanza may fittingly be quoted:

“**M**Y spotless Lamb, Who can better all,  
Quoth she, “my Destiny so dear,  
Chose me His bride, though all unfit  
The Spousal might awhile well seem.  
When I went forth from your wet world,  
He called me to His Goodliness, -  
‘Come hither to Me, My true-love sweet,  
For stain or spot is none in thee.’  
He gave me strength and beauty, too;  
In His Blood He wash’d my weeds on the Throne;  
And, crownèd clean in maidenhood,  
With spotless pearls He me adorned.”

A like sorrow befell two poets, and each found solace in song. The one - a pioneer of the Renaissance - characteristically, under the influence of his great Italian Master, harmonized Virgilian form with Christian belief. The other - a didactic English poet, far from the new literary currents - be-thought him of the Pearl of the Gospel, and found his inspiration in the visionary scenes of the New Jerusalem, coloured by mediaeval allegory. In his poem, "the river from the Throne" of the Apocalypse met "the waters of the wells," devised by Sir Mirth for the Garden of the Rose.

In accordance with theological fancy, in each poem the transfigured child, grown in wisdom, appears as matured also in age, "joined in Eternal Spousal." No longer the children they were, they teach with bold authority lessons of resignation & the mystic properties of Heaven - "Pearl," more particularly, who in her argumentative skill recalls the figure of Reason in the "Romaunt." Yet, at the same time, to the dreamer she is still "my little queen," and, for all "her royal array," his treasure "so small and sweetly slight." So, too, Olympia's voice and image are those of Violante - "virguncula mea." The child angelic, matured in Heaven - "for spousal fit" - is still the child for dreamer and

poet. In the Kingdom all are as children. And so even to Dante, in the hour of his imperilled loyalty to her memory, Beatrice first appears "con quelle vestimenta sanguigne, colle quali apparve prima agli occhi miei, e pareami giovane, in simile etade a quella in che prima la vidi."

I.G.

University of London, King's College;  
December, 1913.







