NARRATIONS OF VALERIO TO OUR AFORE-NAMED FATHER DONADEO, ACCOUNT OF MY GRIEF, EXPLANATION OF MY TRIALS

1. Long ago when I, an unworthy sinner, a native of the province of Astorga, engrossed in worldly pleasures during my adolescence, eager for earthly riches, intent upon vain learning, in my concern for these things in the darkness of this lower world, was slackening the reins, suddenly I was driven by a desire for divine grace to attain the beginnings of the religious life. Setting out with the supreme effort of one fleeing the world, like one riding on a ship, I hastened to cross the sea to the shore of the monastery of Compludo, inflamed with an ardent desire, and terrified by the fear of future judgment, hoping through the path of conversion to attain at length the light of truth. But then, oppressed by the waves of the sea of this world, and driven by the terrible blasts of the tempest, often stirred up by the devil,
I was not able to reach the port I desired.

Fleeing and driven by necessity to a desert hermitage between the limits of the city of Astorga and Castro Pedroso, I found a rock, a spot like in hardship to the iniquity of my heart, a place sacred to God, situated on a lofty height at the top of a mountain, bare of human habitation, baked in the harshness of complete sterility, stripped of all growth of brush, not green with any pleasant groves, nor marked by a growth of grass, and, finally, a place struck by the violent tempests of all the winds threatening from every side, and often smitten by storms of pelting rain and by tremendous blizzards, and at the same time gripped by all the rigors of intolerable cold. Although I often beheld my misery increase with so many blows of misfortune, at the same time beholding my wretched soul suffering the want of everything, and straitened by unspeakable needs, enduring it all with equanimity, I bore up courageously, fearing lest by abandoning the thing begun, I would go down to the lowest depths. For it is written that no one setting out to avoid the wicked dangers of the world he has spurned and looking back again shall be saved. And the ploughman doing his worthy task should not look behind him.

And so the cunning enemy frequently worked to deceive my

pestatis procellis expulsus \[12\] desideratum non valui pertingere portum. Necessitate compulsus inter Asturiensis urbis et Castri Petrensis confinio ad eremis deserta confugiens,\[13\] juxta duritiam nequitiae cordis mei \[14\] repperi saxum locum Deo sacratum eminente celsitudine in montis cacamine situm, ab humana habitatione desertum,\[15\] austeritate immensae sterilitatis arenem cunctae argis densitate detersum;\[16\] nulla nemoris amoeritatem vernantem neque herbarum fecunditate conspicuam, denique cunctorum undique flaborum diris imminentibus procellis impulfum, saepeque tempestibus aequor imbribus atque nivali immanitate infectum,\[17\] cunctisque simul intolerabilis algoris rigoribus occupatum. Cumque infelicitatis meae tot cladibus crebro cernerem expediti miseriam, simulque cunctis intuens meum infaustum animum affligi penuriam, atque inenarrabilibus necessitatibus\[18\] coactari, cuncta aequanimitate tolerans, animo sustinebam. Metuens scilicet ne coepta deserendo, infima repeterem. Scriptum est enim quia nemo retrorsum noxia contemplit vitans discrimina mundi aspiciens salvandus est. Nee debet arator dignum opus exercens vultum in sua terga referre.\[19\]

Crebro igitur astutus inimicus \[20\] ad decipiendum variis cogitationi-
brutish heart by divers thoughts. One must resist skillfully and fight back manfully, lest either a deceptive appearance of justice deceive one, or irresolute fickleness, futile in its softness, compel him to abandon things once begun. The labor is greatest when one aims at lofty heights. For one cannot attain the highest point unless he sweats hard over the work, wrestling with difficulties, which a delicate spirit knows not how to seize upon. For the first palm of victory is to conquer by conquering oneself. He who will be armed with the fire of faith and the unbroken strength of future hope, even to a contempt of death—concerning which things I speak but too truly—he will struggle the more powerfully and will win.

2. When I had borne these things for an extended period with the help of the Lord, after an interval of some years, when at length Christian pity had been moved by dutiful affection, a varied crowd of persons of both sexes, flocking together, began to gather there, to offer help to me, the unfortunate one, to tender service, and to furnish food. And just when the greatest need was turned into pleasure through the kind help of the Lord, a certain bar-


2. Cum haec omnia prolixo jam tempore, opitulante Domino, tolerarem, post aliquantorum annorum intervallo tandem Christiana videlicet miseratio pietate commota, coepit se ibidem diversa utrumque sexu vulgi caterva confluentes glomerare meae quoque infelici adjutorium praebere, obsequium impendere, vel stipendia ministrare. Cumque jam summa necessitas suffragante

Domini pietate vereteretur in volupitate, ilico insurgens quidam vir

34 ne gnaviter Mr 35 vitaliter Fl Mr || est om. F 36 inutiles F inutile Mr inutili Fl Fr || lentitate Ps 37 maxime F Fl Mr 38 perveniri Fl 39 desudes Mr || quae Fl Mr Fr 40 est om. T || sed T Po || subiendo T Fr Po 41 his F Mr ei Fr 42 spei om. T spei futurae Fl Fr Mr Fr || ut add. Fr 43 potiss F.

CHAPTER 2
me unduly like one beside himself with fear. But when he saw that he was again unable to strike fear into me confiding in the strength of the Lord, he burst out anew in an unusually savage fury, gathering his satellites together, and began to fight openly against me with untiring persistence through the space of about a year or longer, and otherwise struggling with the greatest violence, he in no way abandoned his efforts at my overthrow, when, less through the strength of my endurance than through the terrible chiding of the might of the omnipotent Lord, he was finally put to flight and slunk away.

5. The savage adversary, seeing that his perfidious efforts were exerted in vain and that he had by no means succeeded, through a hidden trick of his deceptive treachery approached the illustrious man, Ricimer by name, whom he knew to be the owner of that very estate. And when he had disclosed that approaching death threatened him, he incited him (Ricimer) to destroy my little dwelling; and this at once he did. For he, forthwith tearing down the hut, hurled me as if falling from heaven, rushing into hell, out again into the theater of the world. And when on the very site of my expulsion he strove to erect a sacred altar of a church, this clearly he decided with cunning thought at the instigation of the
persecuting enemy that he might make me the priest of that church for a more ruinous downfall, ensnared as it were by many worldly attractions, enriched by many fat offerings.

For it is written: Thus truly does the servant of the almighty Lord fear to lose the security of his poverty as the avaricious rich are accustomed to guard fleeting wealth. And again: I will call upon tribulation and misery. Just as one in exaltation calls on the Lord, so a holy man and an unconquerable warrior in order to exercise and prove himself, desires to find tribulation and misery. And again: The pomp of this world is insignificant and there is little rest or enjoyment. Nor is its suffering to be compared with the contemplation of the future. Do not go through your evil preoccupation and through small enjoyment of this present life, to arrive at the punishment of the future judgment.

For the present life is vanity, and the honor received in it is the temporary and brief memory of this world whose riches disappear like a cobweb. Blessed is he to whom the Lord has granted to preserve his soul blameless before God, the Maker of all, so that he, sincere and innocent, may draw near to His power to show a soul stainless as it was given him when he received it from God.

me quasi secularibus illecebris captum multis opulentiae stipendii dittatum pro majoris ruinae interitum ipsius ecclesiae ordinaret.\textsuperscript{66} presbyterum.\textsuperscript{67} Scriptum est enim: sic quippe servus omnipotentis Domini metuit paupertatis suae securitatem perdere sicut avari divites solent perituras divitias custodire. Et iterum: tribulationem et miseriam invocabo,\textsuperscript{68} ut quomodo elatus invocat Dominum, sic sanctus vir et bellator invictus ad exercendum se et probandum, tribulationem et miseriam invenire desiderat. Et rursum: exigua est ambitio et parva requies vel delectamenta hujus mundi. Nec comparandum est futuri contemplatione supplicium. Nolite pervenire praesentis mala occupatione et delectatione modica ad futuri poenam pervenire judiciti.\textsuperscript{69} Quia vita praesens vanitas est,\textsuperscript{70} et honor qui in ea suscipitur temporalis ac brevis muni itius commemorative cujus divitiae sicut araneae dissolvuntur. Beatus autem ille est cui Deus tribuit ut inculpabilem\textsuperscript{71} animam istam factori omnium Deo conservat, ut valeat sinceris atque innocens potentiae illius proximare, ut talem eam exhibeat immaculatam qualis ab eo dum suscipetur illata est.\textsuperscript{72} Nam
Autobiography of Valerio

For he is a vain and empty-headed man who wishes now to rejoice in the world, and afterwards to rejoice with Christ in the future. Indeed it is more blessed to go forth free, than to seek freedom after bondage. For it is better to lead a laborious life than to drag out a heinous exile. It is much better to pass through this life as pilgrims and poor persons than through riches to run into the snare of this world's errors. Frequently there springs up the vast and insatiable consuming concupiscence of the world, but great and praiseworthy is the mercy of the good Lord, who will safeguard all those hoping in him with the superabounding care of his protection and will redeem his poor from the savage oppression of want; and thrusts down the cruel madness of the powerful from the citadel of their pride.

And—that we may go through in orderly fashion the account begun—while Ricimer was trying to finish the church, the uncompleted building falling suddenly in ruin, he violently lost this present life. And he left me behind miserable in my often repeated catastrophes.

Ordo querimoniae

miser ille vanus et vacuus homo qui vult modo lactare in saeculo et postmodum in futuro gaudere cum Christo. Beatus quippe est liberum exire quam post vincula libertatem quaerere. Melius enim est laboriosam duce vitam, quam absentiam trahere criminam. Potius plerumque est, peregrinantes atque egentes, de hoc saeculo migrare, quam per divitias hujus mundi laqueum erroris incurrere. Crebra pullulat quidem cupiditatis saeculi ingens insatiata voracitas, sed magna et laudabiles est pietatis Domini misericordia, qui cunctos in se sperantes crebriora custodiae proteget cura et pauperes suos ob oppressionis saevis-sima redimet penuria, diraque potentium ab arce superbiae dejectit insania. Et ut coeptis sermonis ordinem percurramus, dum supra memoratus Riccimirus praefata perficiere conaretur ecclesia, nequid perfecta predestinatae constructionis fabrica repentinus irruent interitu, haec praesente crudeliter caruit vita, et infelicitatem meam in ipsa saepe revoluta reliquit naufragia.

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30 latere Mr laetari Fl Fr [lin] cum Fr 31 in futuro om. F Fl [regnare Fr 33 enim] namque Mr [absentiam om. Fr abstinentiam F Fl Mr 36 cupiditas Mr 37 inascarata F 38 crebri hora T crebriori Fl Mr crebrioris Fr 39 protegit Fr 40 dira om. FI Mr -que] quae F Fl Mr diramque Fr 41 dejecta F Fl Mr [insaniam Fl Mr Fr [coepti F Fl Mr Fr 42 Reccimirus T F Mr Fr Po [praefatam F Fl Mr Fr [ecclesia T ecclesiam Fl Mr Fr 44 hac Fl Mr Fr 45 ipsi . . . revolutis . . . naufragis Fr.]}
6. When among the stormy seas of the flood-swept world, I, beaten so often by anguish and suffering, struggled to reach a haven on the shore, then the old rival stirred up the hatred of his wonted malice, and prepared the usual stumbling-blocks for my latest undoing. For he picked out a very wicked man falsely called Justo, a weakling of puny stature, and with the color very black to behold of the barbarous Ethiopian race; for outwardly on account of his dark skin he was ugly in his sallow appearance, but in his secret heart he was absolutely blacker than a crow. Puny he was in body, but filled with criminal acts. Against my will, as he wickedly resisted me, they ordained this fellow a priest. He achieved this honor for no other reason of his being chosen except that he adopted every kind of scurrility which is proper to wilful luxury in the brashness of a manifold madness for the sake of a boisterous humor, and because he was adept in the soft art of eliciting music from the lyre. On account of this, running like a glutton to banquets at many houses, he attained through the

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6. Dum igitur inter ipsa fluctuagii saeculi procellarum frete demum anoris maeroribus crebris litoris niterer attingere portum, vetustissimis denique aemulus solitae malitiae concitat odium et novissimae subversionis consuetum praeparat impedimentum. Elegit namque nequissimum virum falsae nuncupationis nomine Justum, forma exiguae pusillitatis tantillum, ac tecterrimae visionis colore barbaricae nationis Aethiopum, extrinsecus enim picea cute furvo sordens obtutu, in cordis vero arcana nigror existit penitus corvo. Corpore quidem exiguum, sed criminum facinoribus copiosius. Hunc contra voluntatem mean, me pernicier resistentem, ordinaverunt presbyterum. Qui pro nulla alia electione ad hunc pervenit honorem nisi quia per ipsum multifariae dementiae temeritate temeritate propers nunciarum luxuriae petulantis diversam assumpsit scurrilitatem, atque musicae comparationis lyrae mulcente perdocitur arte. Per quam multorum domorum convivia voragine percurrente, lascivia cantilenae modum---

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CHAPTER 6
1 cum F Fl Mr 2 niteret T F Po 3 aemulus] hostis meus Fr [militiae Mr 4 praeparat impedimentum om. T 8 obtutum T Po] sordibus obsitus Fr [vero om. Po abreco Fr 9 exigius Fr 10 copiosum T Fl Mr 11 resistente Fl Mr Fr 13 ipsum Fl Mr [loci Fr 15 perdocitur Fl Mr mulcentis perdoctus artem Fr nuitarum Fl Mr Fr 16 daemonum F Al] voraci Fl Mr Fr.
lascivious harmony of his frequent singing a wide reputation for music. After he had reached ordination unworthily in his insane arrogation of so high an honor, he even dared through a hypocritical pretension, to profane holy religion. For while he publicly displayed a simulated sanctity in the eyes of men, in secret he was carrying out a truly diabolical iniquity.

After my latest experience of being upset and shaken by shipwreck, I was left alone by everyone, getting the help of consolation from no one, except that I found one person, a very faithful Christian levite of the Lord, Simplicio by name, whose merit corresponded with his name, who, humbly received me with great love of charity into his dwelling. When he set himself at my service with the greatest filial obedience, and when only we two remained for the daily offices of the church, then the envious devil aroused that oft-named shame to the priesthood so that, scheming hatred against us for a long time, out of the excessive plaguing of his invidious malice, he strove with many false ruses of his treacherous madness to put obstacles in our way. But when, with God helping us, he found no grounds for injuring us, in-
flamed with the fire of diabolical violence, he covered me publicly
with insult, and many times before many witnesses; he inflicted
the unspeakable scandal of his invective upon me. Raging, and
gripped by a heavy drunkenness that could not be shaken off, he
burned in such madness of frenzied insanity that he would allow
me no quiet even during the night. For when, in the silence of
night, I was in hope that I had evaded the pest, he shamelessly
often broke in with petulant importunity and at mealtime boldly
coming to my poor dwelling, raging at me, as we were eating he
introduced only ugly quarreling in place of consoling charity,
goaded by his arrogant madness and drunkenness, and glaring like
a mad dog, raging with teeth gnashing in unspeakable revilings,
full of drink and foaming at the mouth, struggled to tear me apart
with his own hands. Frustrated and aflame with the fires of
envious iniquity, he struck out with such blind hatred that he did
not spare me before the sacred altar. In his rage he was trying

diabolicae atrocitates succensus in meam publice insiluit contu-
meliam et crebro coram multis mihi infandum convictorum ir-
rogavit scandulum. In tanta exarist freneticae insaniae dementiae
truclentus, atque inexplicabile ebrietatis temulentiae "irrititus,
\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\nt\t
to cut my throat with a sword there in the plain view of many, if I confounded beyond measure by his terrible wrongs had not been rescued by the intervention of the brethren.

After the madness of such fury had finally abated, he, then turned in another direction by his insanity, forgetful of his orders wrongfully received, in vulgar fashion whirled about in the obscene giddiness of theatrical immodesty, the while swinging his arms this way and that, in another place circling his wanton feet, going around with mincing steps timed to the routine of the tripudium and hopping on shaky feet, singing wicked ditties, the frightful songs of a sinful dance, he carried on with the devil's ruinous obscenity. Then indeed he was so over-heated and drowned in wine, buried in drunkenness, that he, as a drunken man does, suffered hunger and thirst while he was vomiting. He, giving himself to sleep and enveloped in slothful torpor, was not among those frequently singing hymns and dedicating their nights to God. Never did Christ deign to have such pests as servants!

7. Meanwhile to the unfortunate and cruel increase of my heart's grief, when I was regularly receiving the alms of food and consoling charity from the very wealthy house which I have

51 fratri F Fl Mr ||intercessione T ||exceptus Fl 52 furens Fr 53 insania F Fl ||tament ... insania ... sedatam Fr insania ... sedatum Mr ||susceptoris T Po injusti suspeti ordinis Fr honorum add. Fr 54 vulgari F 56 lubricantibus T lubricantibus Mr lubricantibus Fr ||circuiniens Fr 59 luxuriam Fl Mr luxuriam Fr ||mersus om. Fr ||et add. Fr 60 temulentiae Fr ||patiatur Al Mr Fr ||luxuiriem F 62 psallentes et in ... ducentes noctes Fr.

CHAPTER 7

1 faustum T ||crudele F Fl Mr Fr 2 opulentissima domo Fl Fr opulentissimam domu Mr 3 sic F.