

A SONNET OF CIRO DI PERS ATTRIBUTED TO G. F. BUSENELLO

THE recent publication by Benedetto Croce of his anthology of *Lirici Marinisti* (Bari, Laterza, 1910, in *Scrittori d'Italia*), enables me to solve a small problem which arises in connection with my edition of the *Sonetti amorosi e morali* of Gian Francesco Busenello (Venice, Fabris, 1911). I included in that edition the sonnet entitled *Bella donna che aveva i capelli neri* (no. XXXVIII of the edition), on the authority of the miscellaneous Codex Correr, 1198, p. 240a, which bears the specific attribution: *del Businello*. Isolated attributions from such sources are suspect in themselves; yet we have no right to reject them unless definite evidence is forthcoming. This sonnet in fact offers a discrepancy with another sonnet, which properly could belong to the *amorosi*. This poem (no. I. of the *sonetti vari*), entitled erroneously *Per una recamatrice chiamata Margherita*, categorically describes the lady: "Dai begli occhi l'azzurro e l'or dai crini," whereas no. XXXVIII develops conceits around the black hair and the flashing eyes of the lover. Lacking specific descriptions of Lilla in these respects in the other sonnets, there was no satisfactory way of determining which of the two poems belonged to her, which to some other woman. I selected the sonnet on the *capelli neri* for the principal series as being the more interesting of the two.

This sonnet, however, belongs to *Ciro di Pers* and is put by Mr. Croce at the head of his selections from that author. At any rate it should be noted that the sonnet was printed in the 1689 Venice edition of the *Poesie* of *Pers*. This edition, to be sure, was made twenty-seven years after the death of *Pers* in 1662. How much authority it may have is therefore questionable, especially as we lack thoroughgoing examination of *Pers's* poetry. It is noteworthy for instance that *Busenello* and *Pers* were in correspondence with each other, and read and praised each other's works. Among the papers of either could be found easily copies of compositions by the other.

There is, however, little question of preference between the probable accuracy of the editor of the 1687 edition of Pers and of the careless compiler of a miscellaneous manuscript.

Inasmuch as the two sources for this sonnet differ materially in text I reproduce them here for the better intelligence of the verses as they stand in the *Lirici marinisti* and in my edition Codex Correr, 1198:

Ethiope chiome che dai raggi ardenti
Di due soli vicini il fosco avete,
Voi di mia vita i duri stami siete
Onde mi fila Cloto ore dolenti.
O del foco d'amor carboni spenti!
Ma che spenti! Non meno i cori ardete,
Giudici veri, che mostrar solete
Falsi d'ogn'altro crin gli ori lucenti.
O di notti celesti ombre divine,
In due emisferi è il ciel d'amor diviso,
E voi del giorno suo sete il confine.
Venga, chi mirar vuol dentro un bel viso
Con una bianca fronte in nero crine
Dipinto a chiaro scuro il paradiso.

Lirici marinisti, p. 363:

Le chiome nere.

Chiome etiòpe, che da' raggi ardenti
de' duo Soli vicini il fosco avete,
voi di mia vita i neri stami sète,
onde mi fila Cloto ore dolenti.
O del foco d'amor carboni spenti,
ma che spenti non meno i cori ardete;
pietre di Batto, che mostrar solete
falsi d'ogn'altro crin gli ori lucenti;
O di celeste notte ombre divine;
in duo emisperi è il ciel d'amor diviso,
e voi del giorno suo sète il confine.
Venga chi veder vuole entro un bel viso,
con una bianca fronte e un nero crine,
dipinto a chiaroscuro il paradiso.

ARTHUR LIVINGSTON.