

*Exit* PIETRO.

ARROSTINO. This is a remarkable change, my son. A great improvement on our recent condition. Devoted as we now are to a life of contemplation — restricted by the rules of our order to a diet of bread and herbs — and not much of that — indigestion and its attendant inconveniences will be matters of tradition.

LUIGI. Still, it must be admitted that the old life was a pleasant one!

ARROSTINO. Yes, we had a jolly time of it while it lasted. (*Correcting himself.*) I should say that worldly allurements have the faculty of enlivening their devotees for the moment, but the evening's enjoyment seldom bears the morning's reflection, and the choicest banquet is but a feast of Dead Sea apples which turn to ashes in the mouth!

GIORGIO. Under the circumstances, we might have spared ourselves the trouble of luring the Duke and Duchess to the monastery.

ARROSTINO. No — no, I think not. It is true that, having regard to our present condition, we are about to receive our distinguished guests with scrupulous hospitality, but an hour will soon pass, and we shall then, unhappily, lapse once more into the deplorable condition of being able to avail ourselves of any small change their Highnesses may happen to have about them. It is dreadful to think of, but that's what we shall be in about an hour.

LUIGI *ascends to balcony of monastery.*