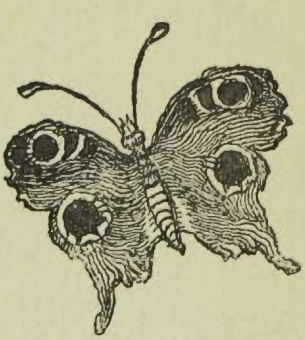
The Pentamerone

FT
BASILE
PENTAMERONE
1893

37131 009552365
II, 588

THE CHILDREN'S LIBRARY

THE PENTAMERONE



THE CHILDREN'S LIBRARY.

THE BROWN OWL.
STORIES FROM FAIRYLAND.
THE CHINA CUP.
ADVENTURES OF PINOCCHIO.
THE LITTLE PRINCESS.
TALES FROM THE MABINOGION.
IRISH FAIRY TALES.
AN ENCHANTED GARDEN.
LA BELLE NIVERNAISE.
THE FEATHER.
FINN AND HIS COMPANIONS.
NUTCRACKER AND MOUSE-KING.
ONCE UPON A TIME.
THE PENTAMERONE.

(*Others in the Press.*)

THE
PENTAMERONE
THE STONE IN THE COCK'S HEAD
Masecco Aniello before King Nibbler

THE PENTAMERONE

OR

THE STORY OF STORIES

BY

GIAMBATTISTA BASILE

TRANSLATED FROM THE NEAPOLITAN BY

JOHN EDWARD TAYLOR

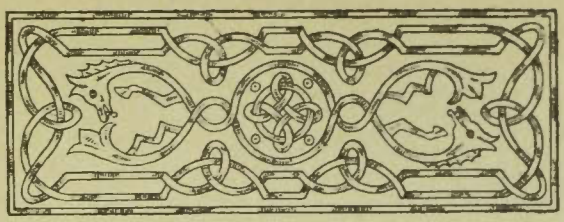
NEW EDITION REVISED AND EDITED BY HELEN ZIMMERN

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY GEORGE CRUIKSHANK

LONDON

T. FISHER UNWIN

1893



PREFACE

IN the seventeenth century there lived and wrote at Naples a man named Gian Battista Basile, concerning whom little that is certain is known except that he travelled much throughout the length and breadth of Italy, and that his sister was a celebrated singer in her day, to whom Milton was introduced when at Rome, and whose daughter's charms the great poet has celebrated in three of his Latin epigrams, and in an Italian canzone. Basile was himself a poet. From his pen there exists a great epic poem, whose hero is Charles V., and a collection of sonnets and songs.

The dust lies thick on these volumes, written in the extravagant and affected style of his century; none reads them, and none would remember them had not Basile also a more solid claim to fame, in the fact that he was also the author, or more probably the compiler-author, of the *Pentamerone*, though doubtless in his day it was little thought either by himself or his readers that this, the work of his declining years, would constitute his only claim to remembrance. The *Pentamerone* is a collection of fifty fairy tales written in the Neapolitan dialect, which have become since their appearance the veritable storehouse, the inexhaustible mine from which all other authors of fairy tales have drawn their stories, notably the Frenchman, Charles Perrault, as well as Madame d'Aulnoy. The work was planned after the method of Boccaccio's *Decamerone*, and hence its title, since it consists not of a hundred but of fifty stories. They are supposed to be told by ten persons in the course of five days, each day ending with a play or a song. As

in the *Decamerone*, these are written in verse while the rest of the tales are told in prose.

There is perhaps no more difficult dialect in all Italy than the Neapolitan, which contains a large admixture of Spanish, Greek, and Arabic words, so that even Italians born can neither read it nor understand it when spoken. Translators of Basile's work into the current speech of Italy therefore soon appeared, but the gross licentious language, the impropriety intermingled with but too many of the tales, rendered them unfit for youthful readers, notwithstanding that Basile had placed as a second title on his frontispiece the words, *Amusement for the Little Ones.* A German eighteenth-century savant of the name of Fernow first drew general European attention to the work, which was afterwards translated by another German, Felix Liebrecht, to which book the learned student of Folklore, Dr. Jacob Grimm, affixed a weighty preface.

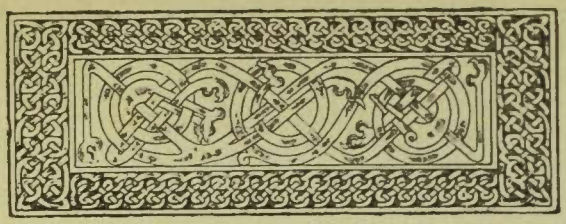
At the very same moment that Liebrecht

was thus engaged in making these tales accessible to readers outside Italy, an Englishman was occupied in the same task. He was no less a person than J. E. Taylor, a member of that great literary family to whom English readers are indebted for their first introduction to the treasure-house of German literature in the days when the knowledge of the German tongue was rare indeed among Englishmen, and they were wholly dependent on translations for an acquaintance with foreign authors. Mr. Taylor, deterred by the grossness of the language and contents, which made some of the stories quite inadmissible for English readers, translated thirty of the fifty, and even so he saw himself obliged to omit many objectionable portions, since the book was intended for the general reader, and not like Liebrecht's for students only. But even so Mr. Taylor's volume as it stands is unadapted for young readers of the present day, and I have therefore been obliged to revise many pages, omitting offensive words and expressions

and adapting the stories to juvenile ears. Wherever such an adaptation has been made I have followed the version prepared for Italian children by G. L. Ferri, which is considered as a classic in its own country, and is the version always put into children's hands. In all other respects I have left Mr. Taylor's language untouched. The original designs made for the volume by George Cruikshank have been here reproduced. They felicitously render the grotesque, wildly fanciful character of the tales. Much ingenious research has been brought to bear on the point as to whether Basile was the author or merely the collector of these stories, and learned criticism has waxed hot and furious. This is not of a character likely to appeal to juvenile readers who ask to be amused and nothing more. Suffice it for them to say that Basile probably found the germs of many of these tales extant in the folk-lore, the oral traditions of his native province, and that many of them he may have heard during his visit to Crete, from which island

Boccaccio is said to have derived the material for many of his stories. That they present analogies with other popular tales of fiction is evident, but even so they have a flavour all their own. Owing to the eminently Meridional and Neapolitan character Basile has impressed upon them, by his language and his imagery, they partake of Neapolitan raciness, sportive drollery, and Southern wealth of invention, modes of thought, and turns of speech.

HELEN ZIMMERN.



CONTENTS

	PAGE
Introduction	1
Peruonto	14
Vardiello	25
The Flea	35
The Enchanted Doe	46
Parsley	56
The Three Sisters	63
Violet	72
Gagliuso	80
The Serpent	88
The She-Bear	102
The Dove	112
The Booby	128

PAGE

THE STONE IN THE COCK'S HEAD . 138

THE TWO CAKES. . . . 147

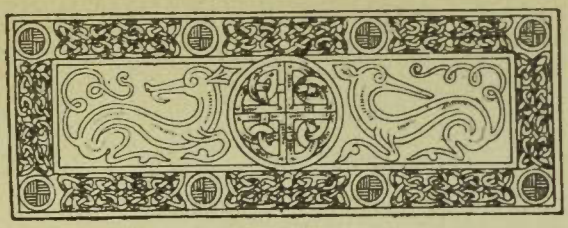
THE SEVEN DOVES . . . 157

THE GOLDEN ROOT . . . 176

NENNILLO AND NENNELLA . . 190

THE THREE CITRONS . . . 199

CONCLUSION 216



LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Minecco Aniello before King Nibbler *Frontispiece*

Peruonto . . . *Facing page* 16

Vardiello . . . ,, 28

Porziella and the Ogre . ,, 42

Parsley . . . ,, 58

The Three Sisters . ,, 66

The She-Bear . . ,, 108

The Booby . . . ,, 136

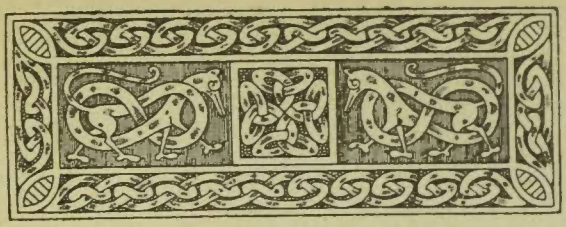
The Geese singing to the King of Chiunzo . ,, 152

Marziella feeding the Geese ,, 154

The Seven Doves . . ,, 170

The Golden Root . . ,, 186

Nennillo and Nennella . ,, 196



INTRODUCTION

IT is an old saying, that he who seeks what he should not, finds what he would not; and every one has heard of the ape, who, in trying to pull on the boots, was caught by the foot. And it happened in like manner to a wretched slave, who, though she never had shoes to her feet, wanted to wear a crown on her head. But as the straight road is the best, and, sooner or later a day comes which settles all accounts, at last, having by evil means usurped what belonged to another, she fell to the ground; and the higher she had mounted, the greater was her fall, as you will presently see.

Once upon a time, the king of Woody Valley had a daughter named Zoza, who, like another Zoroaster or Heraclitus, was never seen to laugh. The unhappy father, who had no other comfort in life but this

only daughter, left nothing untried to drive away her melancholy. Accordingly he sent for folks who walk on stilts, for fellows who jump through hoops, for boxers, for jugglers who perform sleight-of-hand tricks, for men as strong as Hercules, for dancing dogs, for leaping clowns, for the jackass that drinks out of a tumbler,—and in short he tried first one thing and then another to make her laugh. But all was time lost, for nothing brought a smile upon her lips.

So at length the poor father, to make a last trial, and not knowing what else to do, ordered a large fountain of oil to be made in front of the palace gates; thinking to himself, that when the oil ran down the street, along which the people passed to and fro like a troop of ants, they would be obliged, in order not to soil their clothes, to skip like grasshoppers, leap like goats, and run like hares; while one would go picking and choosing his way, and another go creeping along close to the wall. In short, he hoped that something might come to pass that would make his daughter laugh.

So the fountain was made; and as Zoza was one day standing at the window, grave and demure, and looking as sour as vinegar, there came by chance an old woman, who, soaking up the oil with a sponge, began to fill a little pitcher which she had brought

with her. And as she was labouring hard at this ingenious device, a pert young page of the court, passing by, threw a stone so exactly to a hair, that it hit the pitcher and broke it in pieces. Whereupon the old woman turned to the page full of wrath, and exclaimed, 'Ah! you impertinent young dog, you mule, you spindle-legs, ill luck to you! may you be hung with a rope's-end, and your blood be not spilt—may a thousand ills befall you, and something more to boot, you thief, you knave!'

The lad, who had little beard and less discretion, hearing this string of abuse, repaid the old woman in the same coin, saying, 'Have you done, you devil's grandmother, you old hag!'

When the old woman heard these compliments, she flew into such a rage that she acted like a madwoman, cutting capers in the air and grinning like an ape. At this strange spectacle, Zoza burst into such a fit of laughter that she well-nigh fainted away. But when the old woman saw herself played this trick, she flew into a passion, and turning a fierce look on Zoza, she exclaimed, 'May you never have the least little bit of a husband, unless you take the Prince of Roundfield.'

Upon hearing this, Zoza ordered the old woman to be called, and desired to know whether in her words she had laid on her a

curse, or had only meant to insult her. And the old woman answered, 'Know then, that the prince whom I spoke of is a most handsome creature, and is named Taddeo, who, by the wicked spell of a fairy, having given the last touch to the picture of life, has been placed in a tomb outside the walls of the city; and there is an inscription upon a stone, saying, that whatever woman shall in three days fill with her tears a pitcher which hangs there upon a hook, will bring the prince to life again, and shall take him for a husband. But as it is impossible for two human eyes to weep so much as to fill a pitcher that would hold half a barrel, unless it were those of Egeria, who, as I've heard say, was turned into a fountain of tears at Rome, I have wished you this wish, in return for your scoffing and jeering at me; and I pray Heaven that it may come to pass, to avenge the wrong you have done me.' So saying she scudded down the stairs, for fear of a beating.

Zoza pondered over the words of the old woman, and after ruminating and turning over a hundred thoughts in her mind, until her head was like a mill full of doubts, she was at last struck by a dart of the passion which blinds the judgment and puts a spell upon the reason of man; and taking with her a handful of dollars from her father's coffers, she left the palace, and

walked on and on, until she arrived at the castle of a fairy, to whom she unburdened her heart. The fairy, out of pity for such a fair young girl, who had two spurs to make her fall—little help, and plenty of love for an unknown object—gave her a letter of recommendation to a sister of hers, who was also a fairy. And this second fairy received her likewise with great kindness; and on the following morning, when Night commands the birds to proclaim, that whoever has seen a flock of black shadows gone astray shall be well rewarded, she gave her a beautiful walnut, saying, 'Take this, my dear daughter, and keep it carefully; but never open it except in time of the greatest need.' And so saying, she in like manner gave her a letter commending her to another sister.

After journeying a long way, Zoza arrived at the fairy's castle, and was received with the same affection as before. And the next morning this fairy likewise gave her a letter to another sister, together with a chestnut; but at the same time cautioning her as before.

After travelling on for some time, Zoza came to the castle of the fairy, who showered on her a thousand caresses. The next morning, at her departure, the fairy gave her a filbert, cautioning her in like manner never to open it, unless the greatest

necessity obliged her. Then Zoza set out upon her journey, and travelled so far, and passed so many forests and rivers, that at the end of seven years, just at the time of day when the Sun, awakened by the crowing of the cocks, has saddled his steeds to run his accustomed stages, she arrived almost lame at Roundfield.

There, at the entrance to the city, she saw a marble tomb, at the foot of a fountain, which was weeping tears of crystal at seeing itself shut up in a porphyry prison. And lifting up the pitcher, which hung over it, she placed it in her lap, and began to weep into it, and imitating the fountain to make two little fountains of her eyes. And thus she continued without ever raising her head from the mouth of the pitcher; until, at the end of two days, it was full within two inches of the top. But being wearied with so much weeping, she was unawares overtaken by sleep, and was obliged to rest for an hour or two under the canopy of her eyelids.

Meanwhile a certain Slave, with the legs of a grasshopper, came, as she was wont, to that fountain to fill her water-cask. Now she knew the meaning of the inscription, which was talked of everywhere; and when she saw Zoza weeping so incessantly, and making two little streams from her eyes, she was always watching and spying until

the pitcher should be full enough for her to add the last drops to fill it, and thus to leave Zoza cheated of her hopes. Now therefore, seeing Zoza asleep, she seized the opportunity, and dexterously removing the pitcher from under Zoza, and placing her own eyes over it, she filled it in four seconds. But hardly was it full, when the Prince arose from the white marble shrine, as if awakened from a deep sleep, and embraced that mass of black flesh; and carrying her straightway to his palace, feasts and marvellous illuminations were made, and he took her for his wife.

When Zoza awoke, and saw the pitcher gone, and her hopes with it, and the shrine open, her heart grew so heavy that she was on the point of unpacking the bales of her soul at the custom-house of Death. But at last, seeing that there was no help for her misfortune, and that she could blame only her own eyes, which had watched so ill, she went her way, step by step, into the city. And when she heard of the feasts which the Prince had made, and the dainty creature he had taken to wife, she instantly conceived how all this mischief had come to pass; and said to herself, sighing, 'Alas, two dark things have brought me to the ground—sleep and a black slave.' Then, in order to try all means possible to avert death, against whom every living being defends itself with

all in its power, she took a handsome house facing the palace of the Prince; from whence, although she could not see the idol of her heart, she viewed at least the walls of the temple wherein the treasure she sighed for was enclosed.

But Taddeo, who was constantly flying like a bat around that black night of a Slave, chanced to perceive Zoza, and he became an eagle, to gaze fixedly at her person, the casket of the graces of Nature, and the *ne plus ultra* of the bounds of Beauty. When the Slave perceived this, she was beside herself with rage; and threatened her husband, that if he did not instantly leave the window, her child should not be born alive.

Taddeo, who was anxiously expecting the birth of the child, trembled like a reed at offending his wife, and tore himself away, like a soul from the body, from the sight of Zoza; who, seeing this little balm for the sickness of her hopes taken from her, knew not what to do in her extreme need. But recollecting the gifts which the fairies had given her, she opened the walnut, and out of it hopped a little dwarf, like a doll, the most graceful toy that ever was seen in the world. Then, seating himself upon the window, the dwarf began to sing with such a trill, and gurgling, that he surpassed all the most famous singers.

The Slave, when she saw and heard this, was so enraptured, that, calling Taddeo, she said, 'Bring me the little fellow who is singing yonder, or the child shall not be born alive.' So the Prince, who allowed the ugly woman to rule him, sent instantly to Zoza, to ask if she would sell the little dwarf. Zoza answered that she was not a merchant, but that he was welcome to it as a gift. So Taddeo accepted the offer; for he was anxious to keep his wife in good humour. Four days after this Zoza opened the chestnut, when out came a hen with twelve little chickens, all of pure gold. And being placed on the same window, the Slave saw them, and took a vast fancy to them; then calling Taddeo, she showed him the beautiful sight, and said, 'Get me the hen and chickens, or depend upon it the child shall not be born alive.' So Taddeo, who let himself be caught in the net, and become the sport of the ugly creature, sent again to Zoza, offering her any price she might ask for the beautiful hen. But Zoza gave the same answer as before, that he might have it as a gift, but that as for selling, it was only a loss of time. Taddeo therefore, who could do no otherwise, made necessity kick at discretion; and taking the beautiful present, he was obliged to confess himself outdone by the liberality of woman.

But after four days more Zoza opened

the hazel-nut, and forth came a doll, which spun gold,—a sight indeed to amaze one. And as soon as it was placed at the same window, the Slave saw it, and calling to Taddeo, said, 'Bring me the doll, or I promise you the child shall not be born alive.' Taddeo, who let his proud hussy of a wife toss him about like a shuttle, and lead him by the nose, had nevertheless not the heart to send to Zoza for the doll, but resolved to go himself, recollecting the saying, 'No messenger is better than yourself'; and, 'If a man wants a thing, let him go for it,—if he does not want it, let him send'; and, 'Let him who would eat a fish take it by the tail.' So he went and besought Zoza to pardon his impertinence, on account of the caprices of his wife; and Zoza, who was in ecstasies at beholding the cause of her sorrow, put a constraint upon herself, so as to let him entreat her the longer, and to keep in her sight the object of her love, who was stolen from her by an ugly slave. At length she gave him the doll, as she had done the other things; but before placing it in his hands she prayed the little doll to put a desire into the heart of the Slave to hear stories told her. And when Taddeo saw the doll in his hand, without his paying a single carlino, he was so filled with amazement at such courtesy, that he offered his kingdom and his life in

exchange for the gift. Then, returning to the palace, he gave the doll to his wife, who had no sooner placed it in her bosom, to play with it, than it seemed to be Love in the form of Ascanius in Dido's bosom, who shot a dart into her breast; for instantly such a longing seized her to hear stories told, that, being unable to resist, she called her husband, and said, 'Bid some story-tellers come and tell me stories, or I promise you the child shall not be born alive.'

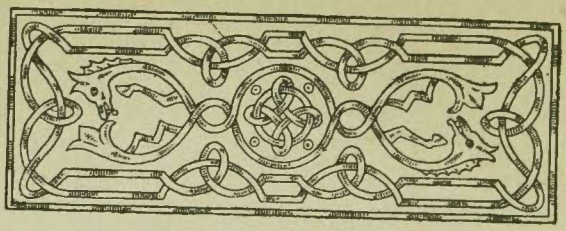
Taddeo ordered a proclamation instantly to be made, that all the women of the land should come on an appointed day. And on that day, at the hour when the star of Venus appears, who awakes the Dawn, to strew the road along which the Sun has to pass, the ladies were all assembled at the appointed place. But Taddeo, not wishing to detain such a rabble for the mere amusement of his wife, and being moreover suffocated by the crowd, chose ten only of the best of the city, who appeared to him most capable and eloquent. These were, Bushy-haired Zeza, bandy-legged Cecca, wen-necked Meneca, long-nosed Tolla, humpbacked Popa, bearded Antonella, dumpy Ciulla, blear-eyed Paola, bald-pated Ciommetella, and square-shouldered Jacova. These he wrote down on a sheet of paper, and then, dismissing the others, he arose with the Slave from under the canopy, and they went gently gently to

the garden of the palace, where the leafy branches were so closely interlaced, that the Sun could not separate them with all the industry of his rays. And seating themselves under a pavilion, formed by a trellis of vines, in the middle of which ran a great fountain, Taddeo thus began:

'There is nothing in the world more glorious, my gentle dames, than to listen to the deeds of others; nor was it without reason that the great philosopher placed the highest happiness of man in listening to pretty stories; since, in hearing pleasing things told, griefs vanish, troublesome thoughts are put to flight, and life is lengthened. And for this reason you see the artisans leave the workshops, the merchants their counting-houses, the lawyers their causes, the shopkeepers their business, and all repair with open mouth to the barbers' shops and the groups of chatterers, to listen to stories, fictions, and gazettes in the air. I cannot therefore but pardon my wife, who has gotten this strange fancy into her head of hearing stories told; and so, if you will please to satisfy the whim of my princess, and comply with my wishes, you will, during these four or five days until the birth takes place, each of you relate daily one of those tales which old women are wont to tell for the amusement of the little ones. And you will come regularly to this spot, where, after a

good repast, you shall begin to tell stories, so as to pass life pleasantly, and sorrow to him that dies!'

At these words, all present bowed assent to the commands of Taddeo. And the tables being meanwhile set out, and the feast spread, they sat down to eat; and when they had done eating, the Prince made a sign that the story-telling should begin.



PERUONTO

A GOOD deed is never lost: he who sows courtesy reaps benefit, and he who plants kindness gathers love. Pleasure bestowed upon a grateful mind was never sterile, but generates gratitude, and begets reward. Instances of this occur continually in the actions of men, and you will see an example of it in the story which I will tell you.

A good woman at Casoria, named Ceccarella, had a son called Peruonto, who was the most hideous figure, the greatest fool and the most doltish idiot that Nature had ever created. So that the heart of his unhappy mother was blacker than a dish-clout, and a thousand times a day did she bestow a hearty curse on all who had a hand in bringing into the world such a blockhead, who was not worth a dog's mes s

For the poor woman might scream at him till she burst her throat, and yet the moon-calf would not stir to do the slightest hand's turn for her.

At last, after a thousand dinnings at his brain, and a thousand splittings of his head, and a thousand 'I tell you' and 'I told you,' bawling to-day and yelling to-morrow, she got him to go to the wood for a faggot, saying, 'Come now, it is time for us to get a morsel to eat; so run off for some sticks, and don't forget yourself on the way, but come back as quick as you can, and we will boil ourselves some cabbage, to keep the life in us.'

Away went Peruonto, the blockhead, and he went just like one that was going to the gallows: away he went, and he moved as if treading on eggs, with the gait of a jackdaw, and counting his steps, going fair and softly, at a snail's gallop, and making all sorts of zigzags and circumbendibuses on his way to the wood. And when he reached the middle of a plain, through which a river ran, growling and murmuring at the want of manners in the stones that were stopping his way, he met three youths, who had made themselves a bed of the grass, and a pillow of a flint stone, and were lying dead asleep under the blaze of the Sun, who was shooting his rays down point blank. When Peruonto saw these poor creatures, who

were made a fountain of water in the midst of a furnace of fire, he felt pity for them, and cutting some branches of an oak he made a handsome arbour over them. Meanwhile the youths, who were the sons of a fairy, awoke, and seeing the kindness and courtesy of Peruonto, they gave him a charm, that everything he asked for should be done.

Peruonto, having performed this good action, went his ways towards the wood, where he made up such an enormous faggot that it would have required an engine to drag it; and seeing that it was all nonsense for him to think of carrying it on his back, he got astride on it, and cried, 'Oh what a lucky fellow I should be if this faggot would carry me riding a-horseback!' And the word was hardly out of his mouth, when the faggot began to trot and to gallop like a good horse; and when it came in front of the king's palace, it pranced and capered and curveted in a way that would amaze you. The ladies, who were standing at one of the windows, on seeing such a wonderful sight, ran to call Vastolla, the daughter of the king, who, going to the window and observing the caracoles of a faggot and the bounds of a bundle of wood, burst out a-laughing—a thing which, owing to a natural melancholy, she never remembered to have done before. Peruonto raised his head, and seeing that it was at

PERUONTO

him they were laughing, exclaimed, 'O Vastolla, may you never know peace till you have married me whom now you deride,' and so saying, he struck his heels into the flanks of his faggot, and in a dashing faggoty gallop he was at home before many minutes, with such a train of little boys at his heels, bawling and shouting after him, that if his mother had not been quick to shut the door, they would have killed him with rotten fruit and vegetables.

Vastolla from that day began to be tormented with the thought of marrying Peruonto, and when the King proposed that she should wed the son of the Emperor of Trebisonde, she replied that she would marry no one else but that countryman whom she had seen passing one day before her palace astride on a faggot of wood. The father of Vastolla, angered by this refusal, called together his councillors, and said he was determined to punish the Princess; but the councillors decreed that, before he took such severe measures, it would be well to know who was the countryman of whom the Princess was enamoured. The King was satisfied with this counsel, and wrote out a decree ordering a great banquet to be prepared, and inviting every nobleman and every man of rank to come into the city, proposing that when they had done feasting, he should place them all in a row and let

them pass before Vastolla, hoping that she would select from among them the man who had taken possession of her heart. They came, but of not one of them would Vastolla take any notice, so the King was angered, and stamped with his feet upon the ground and swore he would punish his daughter.

But the councillors said to him, 'Softly, softly, your Majesty! quiet your wrath. Let us make another banquet to-morrow, not for people of condition, but for the lower sort; maybe, as a woman always attaches herself to the worst, we shall find among the cutlers, and bead-makers, and comb-sellers, the root of your anger, which we have not discovered among the cavaliers.'

This reasoning jumped with the humour of the King, and he ordered a second banquet to be prepared; to which, on proclamation being made, came all the riff-raff and tag-rag-and-bobtail of the city, such as rogues, scavengers, tinkers, pedlars, penny-boys, sweeps, beggars, and such-like rabble, who were all in high glee; and taking their seats, like noblemen, at a great long table, they began to feast and gobble away.

Now when Ceccarella heard this proclamation, she began to urge Peruonto to go there too, until at last she got him to set out for the feast. And scarcely had he arrived there and begun to eat with the

others, than the King's daughter, not thinking of what she did, exclaimed, 'That is he!'

When the king heard this he tore his beard, seeing that the prize in this lottery had fallen to an ugly boor. Heaving a deep sigh, he said, 'What can that jade of a daughter of mine have seen to make her take a fancy to this sea-ogre? Ah, vile, false creature, what metamorphosis is this? But why do we delay? let her suffer the punishment she deserves: let her undergo the penalty that shall be decreed by you; and take her from my presence, for I cannot endure the sight of her.'

Then the councillors consulted together, and they resolved that she and the malefactor should be shut up in a cask, and thrown into the sea; so that, without the King's dipping his hands in his own blood, they might put a full stop to the sentence of their lives. No sooner was the judgment pronounced, than the cask was brought, and the couple were put into it; but before they coopered it up, some of Vastolla's ladies, crying and sobbing as if their hearts would break, put into it also a little basket of raisins and dried figs, that she might have wherewithal to live on for some little time. And when the cask was closed up, it was carried and flung into the open sea, along which it went floating as the wind drove it.

Meanwhile Vastolla, weeping and making two rivers of her eyes, said to Peruonto, 'What a sad misfortune is this of ours, to have the cradle of Bacchus for our coffin! Oh, if I but knew who has played me this trick, to have me caged in this dungeon! Alas, alas! to find myself in this plight without knowing how. Tell me, tell me, O cruel man, what incantation was it you made, and what wand did you employ, to bring me within the circle of this cask?' Peruonto, who had been for some time lending her an indifferent ear, at last said, 'If you want me to tell you, you must give me some figs and raisins.' So Vastolla, to draw the secret out of him, gave him a handful of both; and as soon as he had his gullet full, he told her accurately all that had befallen him with the three youths, and then with the faggot, and then with herself at the window; which when the poor lady heard, she took heart, and said to Peruonto, 'Brother of mine, shall we then let our lives run out in a cask? Why don't you cause this tub to be changed into a fine ship, and run into some good harbour to escape this danger?' And Peruonto replied:

> If you would have me say the spell,
> With figs and raisins stuff me well.

So Vastolla, to make him open his throat,

instantly filled his throat with the figs and raisins. And lo! as soon as Peruonto had said what she desired, the cask was turned into a ship, with all the rigging necessary for sailing, and with all the sailors required for working the vessel. There you might see one pulling at a sheet, another mending the rigging, one taking the helm, another setting the sails, another mounting to the round-top, one crying 'Larboard!' and another 'Starboard!' one sounding a trumpet, another firing the guns, one doing one thing and one another; so that Vastolla was swimming in a sea of delight.

It being now the hour when the Moon begins to play at see-saw with the Sun, Vastolla said to Peruonto: 'My fine lad, now make this ship be changed into a beautiful palace, for we shall then be more secure: you know the saying, Praise the sea, but keep to the land.' And Peruonto replied:

> If you would have me say the spell,
> With figs and raisins stuff me well.

So Vastolla instantly repeated the operation; and Peruonto, swallowing them down, asked what was her pleasure; and immediately the ship came to land, and was changed into a beautiful palace, fitted up in a most complete manner, and so full of furniture, and curtains, and hangings, that

there was nothing left to desire. So that Vastolla, who a little before would have given her life for a farthing, would not now change places with the greatest lady in the world, seeing herself served and treated like a queen. Then, to put the seal to all her good fortune, she besought Peruonto to obtain grace to become handsome and polished in his manners, that they might live happy together. And Peruonto replied as before:

> If you would have me say the spell,
> With figs and raisins stuff me well.

Then Vastolla quickly removed the stoppage of his speech; and scarcely had he spoken the word, when he was changed from an owl into a nightingale, from an ogre into a Narcissus, from a scarecrow into a dapper little doll. Vastolla, seeing such a transformation, clasped him in her arms, and was almost beside herself with joy.

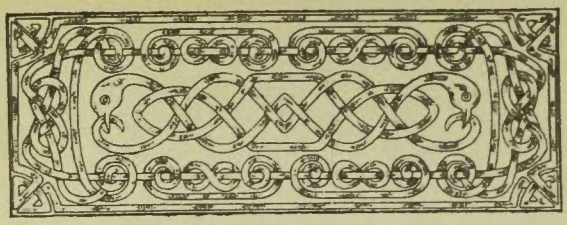
Meantime the King, who from the day that he had pronounced this cruel sentence knew no peace, was one day for amusement brought out to hunt by his courtiers. Night overtook them, and seeing a light in the window of that palace, he sent a servant to inquire if they would entertain him; and he was answered, that he might not merely break a glass but even smash a jug there. So the King went to the palace; and up

the staircase, and through the chambers, without seeing a living being. Surprised and astonished, he stood like one that was enchanted; then sat down to rest himself at a table. To his amazement he saw invisibly spread on it a Flanders tablecloth, with dishes full of roast meats, and viands of various kinds; so that he feasted in truth like a king: and all the while he sat at table, a concert of lutes and tambourines never ceased,—such delicious music that it went to the very tips of his fingers and toes. When he had done eating, a bed suddenly appeared, all made of gold; and having his boots taken off, he went to rest, and all his courtiers did the same, after having feasted heartily at a hundred tables, which were laid out in the other rooms.

When morning came, and the King was about to depart, he wished to know who were his hosts. Then Vastolla made her appearance with her husband, and casting herself at his feet, she asked his pardon, and related to him her whole story. The King, seeing that he had found a son-in-law who was a fay, embraced first one and then the other, and carried them with him to the city. Then he made a great feast, that lasted for many days, on account of this good luck, solemnly confessing to his whole court that

Man proposes,
But God disposes.

When Meneca had ended her story, which was considered beautiful from the number of curious adventures, which kept the attention of the hearers awake to the very end, Tolla, at the command of the Prince, began the following story.



VARDIELLO

IF Nature had given to animals the necessity of clothing themselves, and of buying their food, the race of quadrupeds would inevitably be destroyed. Therefore it is that they find their food without trouble,—without gardener to gather it, purchaser to buy it, cook to prepare it, or carver to cut it up; whilst their skin defends them from the rain and snow, without the merchant giving them cloth, the tailor making the dress, or the errand-boy begging for a drink-penny. To man, however, who has intelligence, Nature did not care to grant these indulgences, since he is able to procure for himself what he wants. This is the reason that we commonly see clever men poor, and blockheads rich; as you may gather from the story which I am going to tell you.

Grannonia of Aprano was a woman of great sense and judgment, but she had a son named Vardiello, who was the greatest booby and simpleton in the whole country round about. Nevertheless, as a mother's eyes are bewitched and see what does not exist, she doted upon him so much, that she was for ever caressing and fondling him as if he were the handsomest creature in the world.

Now Grannonia kept a brood-hen, that was sitting upon a nest of eggs, in which she placed all her hope, expecting to have a fine brood of chickens, and to make a good profit off them. And having one day to go out on some business, she called her son, and said to him, 'My pretty son of your own mother, listen to what I say; keep your eye upon the hen, and if she should get up to scratch and pick, look sharp and drive her back to the nest; for otherwise the eggs will grow cold, and then we shall have neither eggs nor chickens.'

'Leave it to me,' replied Vardiello, 'you are not speaking to deaf ears.'

'One thing more,' said his mother; 'look ye, my blessed son, in yon cupboard is a pot full of certain poisonous things; take care that ugly Sin does not tempt you to touch them, for they would make you stretch your legs in a trice.'

'Heaven forbid!' replied Vardiello; 'poison indeed will not tempt me; but you

have done wisely to give me the warning; for if I had got at it, I should certainly have eaten it all up.'

Thereupon the mother went out, but Vardiello stayed behind; and, in order to lose no time, he went into the garden to dig holes, which he covered with boughs and earth, to catch the little thieves who come to steal the fruit. And as he was in the midst of his work, he saw the hen come running out of the room; whereupon he began to cry, 'Hish, hish! this way, that way!' But the hen did not stir a foot; and Vardiello, seeing that she had something of the donkey in her, after crying 'Hish, hish,' began to stamp with his feet; and after stamping with his feet, to throw his cap at her, and after the cap a cudgel, which hit her just upon the pate, and made her quickly stretch her legs.

When Vardiello saw this sad accident, he bethought himself how to remedy the evil; and making a virtue of necessity, in order to prevent the eggs growing cold, he set himself down upon the nest; but in doing so, he gave the eggs an unlucky blow, and quickly made an omelet of them. In despair at what he had done, he was on the point of knocking his head against the wall: at last, however, as all grief turns to hunger, feeling his stomach begin to grumble, he resolved to eat up the hen.

So he plucked her, and sticking her upon a spit, he made a great fire, and set to work to roast her. And when she was cooked, Vardiello, to do everything in due order, spread a clean cloth upon an old chest; and then, taking a flagon, he went down into the cellar to draw some wine. But just as he was in the midst of drawing the wine, he heard a noise, a disturbance, an uproar in the house, which seemed like the clattering of horses' hoofs. Whereat starting up in alarm, and turning his eyes, he saw a big tom-cat, which had run off with the hen, spit and all; and another cat chasing after him, mewing, and crying out for a part.

Vardiello, in order to set this mishap to rights, darted upon the cat like an unchained lion, and in his haste he left the tap of the barrel running. And after chasing the cat through every hole and corner of the house, he recovered the hen, but the cask had meanwhile all run out; and when Vardiello returned, and saw the wine running about, he let the cask of his soul empty itself through the tap-holes of his eyes. But at last judgment came to his aid, and he hit upon a plan to remedy the mischief, and prevent his mother's finding out what had happened: so taking a sack of flour, filled full to the mouth, he sprinkled it over the wine on the floor.

But when he meanwhile reckoned up on

VARDIELLO
George Cruikshank

his fingers all the disasters he had met with, and thought to himself that, from the number of fooleries he had committed, he must have lost the game in the good graces of Grannonia, he resolved in his heart not to let his mother see him again alive. So thrusting his hand into the jar of pickled walnuts, which his mother had said contained poison, he never stopped eating until he came to the bottom; and when he had right well filled his stomach, he went and hid himself in the oven.

In the meanwhile his mother returned, and stood knocking for a long time at the door; but at last, seeing that no one came, she gave it a kick; and going in, she called her son at the top of her voice. But as nobody answered, she imagined that some mischief must have happened, and with increased lamentation she went on crying louder and louder, 'Vardiello! Vardiello! are you deaf, that you don't hear? have you the cramp, that you don't run? have you the pip, that you don't answer? Where are you, you gallows-faced rogue? where are you hidden, you naughty fellow?'

Vardiello, on hearing all this hubbub and abuse, cried out at last with a piteous voice, 'Here I am! here I am in the oven; but you will never see me again, mother!'

'Why so?' said the poor mother.

'Because I am poisoned,' replied the son.

'Alas! alas!' cried Grannonia, 'how came you to do that? what cause have you had to commit this homicide? and who has given you the poison?' Then Vardiello told her, one after another, all the pretty things he had done; on which account he wished to die, and not to remain any longer a laughing-stock in the world.

The poor woman, on hearing all this, was miserable and wretched, and she had enough to do and to say to drive this melancholy whimsey out of Vardiello's head. And being infatuated and dotingly fond of him, she gave him some nice sweetmeats, and so put the affair of the pickled walnuts out of his head, and convinced him that they were not poison, but good and comforting to the stomach. And having thus pacified him with cheering words, and showered on him a thousand caresses, she drew him out of the oven. Then giving him a fine piece of cloth, she bade him go and sell it, but cautioned him not to do business with folks of too many words.

'Tut, tut!' said Vardiello; 'let me alone, —I know what I'm about, never fear.' So saying he took the cloth, and went his way through the city of Naples, crying, 'Cloth! cloth!' But whenever any one asked him, 'What cloth have you there?' he replied, 'You are no customer for me — you are a man of too many words.' And when another said to him, 'How do you sell your

cloth?' he called him a chatterbox, who deafened him with his noise. At length he chanced to espy, in the courtyard of a house which was deserted, a plaster statue; and being tired out, and wearied with going about and about, he sat himself down upon a bench. But not seeing any one astir in the house, which looked like a sacked village, he was lost in amazement, and said to the statue, 'Tell me, comrade, does no one live in this house?' Vardiello waited a while; but as the statue gave no answer, he thought this surely was a man of few words. So he said, 'Friend, will you buy my cloth? I'll sell it you cheap.' And seeing that the statue still remained dumb, he exclaimed, 'Faith then I've found my man at last! there, take the cloth, examine it, and give me what you will; to-morrow I'll return for the money.'

So saying, Vardiello left the cloth on the spot where he had been sitting, and the first mother's son who passed that way found the prize and carried it off.

When Vardiello returned home without the cloth, and told his mother all that had happened, she well-nigh swooned away, and said to him, 'When will you put that head-piece of yours in order? See now what tricks you have played me—only think! but I am myself to blame for being too tender-hearted, instead of having given you a good beating at first; and now I perceive that a

pitiful doctor only makes the wound incurable. But you'll go on with your pranks, until at last we come to a serious falling out, and then there will be a long reckoning, my lad!'

'Softly, mother,' replied Vardiello; 'matters are not so bad as they seem: do you want more than crown-pieces bran new from the mint? do you think me a fool, and that I don't know what I am about? To-morrow is not yet here—wait a while, and you shall see whether I know how to fit a handle to a shovel.'

The next morning, as soon as the shades of Night, pursued by the constables of the Sun, had fled the country, Vardiello repaired to the courtyard where the statue stood, and said, 'Good-day, friend! can you give me those few pence you owe me? come, quick, pay me for the cloth!' But when he saw that the statue remained speechless, he took up a stone, and hurled it at its breast with such force that it burst a vein, which proved indeed the cure to his own malady; for some pieces of the statue falling off, he discovered a pot full of golden crown-pieces. Then taking it in both his hands, off he ran home, head over heels, as fast as he could scamper, crying out, 'Mother, mother! see here, what a lot of red lupins I've got! how many, how many!'

His mother, seeing the crown-pieces, and

knowing very well that Vardiello would soon make the matter public, told him to stand at the door, until the man with milk and new-made cheese came past, as she wanted to buy a pennyworth of milk. So Vardiello, who was a great glutton, went quickly and seated himself at the door; and his mother showered down from the window above raisins and dried figs for more than half an hour. Whereupon Vardiello, picking them up as fast as he could, cried aloud, 'Mother, mother! bring out some baskets, give me some bowls! here, quick with the tubs and buckets! for if it goes on to rain thus we shall be rich in a trice.' And when he had eaten his fill Vardiello went up to sleep.

It happened one day that two countrymen fell out, and went to law about a gold crown-piece which they had found on the ground; and Vardiello passing by said, 'What jackasses you are to quarrel about a red lupin like this! for my part I don't value it at a pin's head, for I've found a whole potful of them.'

When the judge heard this he opened wide his eyes and ears, and examined Vardiello closely, asking him how, when, and where he had found the crowns. And Vardiello replied, 'I found them in a palace, inside a dumb man, when it rained raisins and dried figs.' At this the judge

stared with amazement; but instantly understood that he had to deal with a booby, so he sent him off without further ado and without suspecting by what cunning the mother had caused him to make this absurd reply.

And so the treasure remained in the hands of Grannonia of Aprano.

The Prince and the Slave laughed till they were ready to burst at Vardiello's stupidity, and praised the cleverness of his mother, who had the wit to foresee and provide against his folly. But when all the others had turned the key on their chattering, Popa, being requested to tell a story, began as follows.

THE FLEA

RESOLUTIONS taken without thought bring disasters without remedy. He who behaves like a fool repents like a wise man; as happened to the King of High-Hill, who, through unexampled folly, commited an act of madness, putting in jeopardy both his daughter and his honour.

Once upon a time the King of High-Hill, being bitten by a flea, caught him by a wonderful feat of dexterity; and seeing how handsome and stately he was, he could not in conscience pass sentence on him upon the bed of his nail. So he put him into a bottle, and feeding him every day with the blood of his own arm, the little beast grew at such a rate, that at the end of seven months it was necessary to shift his quarters, for he was grown bigger than a

sheep. When the king saw this, he had him flayed, and the skin dressed. Then he issued a proclamation, that whoever could tell to what animal this skin had belonged should have his daughter to wife.

As soon as this decree was made known, the people all flocked in crowds, and they came from the ends of the world to be present at the scrutiny, and to try their luck. One said that it belonged to an ape, another to a lynx, a third to a crocodile, and in short some gave it to one animal, and some to another; but they were all a hundred miles from the truth, and not one hit the nail on the head. At last there came to this anatomical trial an ogre, who was the most frightfully ugly being in the world, the very sight of whom would make the boldest man tremble and quake with fear. But no sooner had he come, and turned the skin round and smelt it, than he instantly guessed the truth, saying, 'This skin belongs to the arch-rascal of the fleas!'

Now the king saw that the ogre had hit the apple; but, not to break his word, he ordered his daughter Porziella to be called. Porziella had a face like milk and blood, and was such a miracle of beauty that you could devour her with your eyes, she was so lovely. And the king said to her, 'My daughter, thou knowest the proclamation I

have issued, and thou knowest who I am; in short, I cannot go back from my promise. My word is given; I must keep it, though my heart should break. Who could ever have imagined that this prize would have fallen to an ogre? But since not a leaf shakes without the will of Heaven, we must believe that this marriage has been made first there above, and then here below. Have patience then, and if thou art a good and dutiful girl do not oppose thy father, for my heart tells me that thou wilt be happy, since treasures are often found inside a rough earthen jar.'

When Porziella heard this sad resolution, her eyes grew dim, her face turned yellow, her lips fell, her legs trembled, and she was on the point of letting fly the falcon of her soul after the quail of grief. At last, bursting into tears, she said to her father, 'What crime have I committed that I should be punished thus? How have I acted ill toward you, that I should be given up to this monster? O wretched Porziella, behold you are running like a weasel into the toad's throat of your own accord! like an unfortunate sheep you are the prey of a ravenous wolf! Is this, O father, the affection you bear your own blood? is this the love you show to her whom you used to call the joy of your soul? do you thus tear from your heart her who is a part of your blood?

do you drive from your sight her who is the apple of your eye? O father, O cruel father! you surely are not born of human flesh; the sea-orks gave you blood, the wild-cats suckled you. But why do I talk of beasts of the land and sea? for every animal loves its young; you alone loathe and hate your own offspring, you alone hold your daughter in abhorrence. Oh, better had it been if my mother had strangled me at my birth, if my cradle had been my deathbed, my swaddling-clothes a halter, and the whistle they tied round my neck a millstone; since I have lived to see this evil day, to see myself caressed by the hand of a harpy, embraced by two bear's paws, and kissed by two boar's tusks.'

Porziella was going on to say more, when the king in a furious rage exclaimed, 'Stay your anger, fair and softly, for appearances deceive! stop, stop; hold your tongue, you ill-mannered chatterbox! what I do is well done. Is it for a girl to teach her father forsooth? have done, I say, for if I lay these hands upon you, I'll not leave a whole bone in your skin, and will make you bite the dust. Prithee how long has a child, with the milk still upon her lips, dared to oppose my will? Quick then, I say! take his hand, and set off with him home this very instant; for I will not have that saucy, impudent face a minute longer in my sight.'

Poor Porziella, seeing herself thus caught in the net, with the face of a person condemned to death, with the eye of one possessed, with the mouth of one who has taken an emetic, with the heart of a person whose head is lying between the axe and the block, took the hand of the ogre, who dragged her off, without any one accompanying them, to a wood, where the trees made a palace for the meadow, to prevent its being discovered by the sun, and the brooks murmured at having knocked against the stones in the dark, whilst the wild beasts wandered where they liked without paying toll, and went safely through the thicket, whither no man ever came unless he had lost his way. Upon this spot, which was as black as an unswept chimney, and hideous as the face of hell, stood the ogre's house, ornamented and hung all round with the bones of men whom he had devoured. Think but for a moment, good Christians, on the trembling, the quivering, the horror and affright which the poor girl endured! depend upon it there did not remain a drop of blood in her body.

But all this was nothing at all in comparison with what was to come. The ogre went out to hunt, and returned home laden with the quarters of men whom he had killed, saying, 'Now, wife, you cannot complain that I don't take good care of you;

here's a fine store of eatables for you; take and make merry, and love me well, for the sky will fall before I let you want for food.'

Poor Porziella was sick at this horrible sight, and turned her face away. But when the ogre saw this, he cried, 'Ha! this is throwing sweatmeats before swine: no matter, however; only have patience till to-morrow morning; for I have been invited to a wild-boar hunt, and will bring you home a couple of boars, and we'll make a grand feast with our kinsfolk, and celebrate our wedding.' So saying, away he went into the forest.

Now as Porziella stood weeping at the window, it chanced that an old woman passed by, who, being famished by hunger, begged some refreshment of her. 'Ah, my good woman!' said Porziella, 'Heaven knows I am in the power of a devil, who brings me home nothing but quarters and pieces of men he has killed; indeed I know not how it is that I have the stomach even to look upon such odious things. I pass the most miserable life that ever a Christian soul led; and yet I am the daughter of a king, and have been reared on dainties, and passed my life in plenty.' And so saying, she began to cry.

The old woman's heart was softened at this sight, and she said to Porziella, 'Be of good heart, my pretty girl; do not spoil

your beauty with crying, for you have fallen in with luck; I can help you. Listen now. I have seven sons, who, you see, are seven oaks, seven giants,—Mase, Nardo, Cola, Micco, Petrullo, Ascaddeo, and Ceccone,—who have more virtues than rosemary, especially Mase; for every time he lays his ear to the ground, he hears all that is passing within thirty miles around: Nardo, every time he spits, makes a great sea of soap-suds: every time that Cola throws a bit of iron on the ground, he makes a field of sharp razors: Micco, every time he flings down a little stick, makes a tangled wood spring up: Petrullo, whenever he throws on the ground a drop of water, makes a terrific river: Ascaddeo, every time he flings a stone, causes a strong tower to spring up: and Ceccone shoots so straight with a cross-bow, that he can hit a hen's eye a mile off. Now, with the help of my sons, who are all courteous and friendly, and who will all take compassion on your condition, I will contrive to free you from the claws of the ogre; for such a delicate morsel is not food for the huge throat of this monster.'

'No time is better than now,' replied Porziella; 'for that evil shadow of a husband of mine is gone out, and will not return this evening, and we shall have time to slip off and run away.'

'It cannot be this evening,' replied the

old woman, 'for I live a long way off; but I promise you that to-morrow morning I and my sons will all come together and help you out of your trouble.'

So saying the old woman departed, and Porziella went to rest with a light heart, and slept soundly all night. But as soon as the birds began to cry, 'Long live the Sun!' lo and behold there was the old woman with her seven sons; and placing Porziella in the midst of them, they proceeded towards the city. But they had not gone above half a mile when Mase put his ear to the ground, and cried, 'Hallo, have a care! here's the fox! The ogre is come home, and not finding his wife, he is hastening after us with his cap under his arm.'

No sooner did Nardo hear this, than he spat upon the ground, and made a sea of soap; and when the ogre came, and saw all the suds, he ran home, and fetching a sack of bran, he strewed it about, and worked away, treading it down with his feet, until at last he got over this obstacle, though with great difficulty.

But Mase put his ear once more to the ground, and exclaimed, 'Look sharp, comrade! here he comes!' Thereupon Cola flung the piece of iron on the ground, and instantly a field of razors sprung up. When the ogre saw the path stopped, he ran home again, and clad himself in iron from

PORZIELLA & the OGRE

head to foot, and then returned, and got over this peril.

Then Mase, again putting his ear to the ground, cried, 'Up, up, to arms! to arms! for see here is the ogre coming at such a rate that he is actually flying.' But Micco was ready with his little stick, and in an instant he caused a terrible wood to rise up, so thick that it was quite impenetrable. When the ogre came to this difficult pass, he laid hold of a Carrara knife that he wore at his side, and began to fell the poplars and oaks right and left, to tumble down the pine-trees and cornel-trees; insomuch that with four or five strokes he laid the whole forest on the ground, and got clear out of the maze.

Presently Mase, who kept his ears on the alert like a hare, again raised his voice and cried, 'Now we must be off, for the ogre has put on wings, and see here he is at our heels!' As soon as Petrullo heard this, he took a sip of water from a little fountain that was spurting out of a stone basin, squirted it on the ground, and in the twinkling of an eye a large river rose up on the spot. When the ogre saw this new obstacle, and that he could not make holes as fast as they found bungs to stop them, he stripped himself stark naked, and swam across to the other side of the river with his clothes upon his head.

Mase, who put his ear to every chink, heard the ogre coming, and exclaimed, 'Alas! matters go ill with us now; I already hear the clatter of the ogre's heels: Heaven help us! So let us be upon our guard, and prepare to meet this storm, or else we are done for.'

'Never fear,' said Ascaddeo, 'I will soon settle this ugly ragamuffin.' So saying he flung a pebble on the ground, and instantly up rose a tower, in which they all took refuge without delay and barred the door. But when the ogre came up, and saw that they had betaken themselves to a place of safety, he ran home, got a vine-dresser's ladder, and hied with it on his shoulder back to the tower.

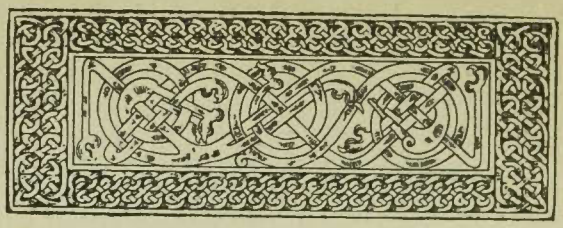
Now Mase, who kept his ears hanging down, heard at a distance the approach of the ogre, and cried, 'We are now at the butt-end of the candle of hope! Ceccone is our last resource, for the ogre is coming back in a terrible fury. Alas, how my heart beats, for I foresee an evil day!'

'You coward!' answered Ceccone; 'trust to me, and I will hit him with a ball.'

As Ceccone was speaking, the ogre came, planted his ladder, and began to climb up; but Ceccone, taking aim at him, shot out one of his eyes, and laid him at full length on the ground, like a pear dropped from the tree: then he went out of the tower, and cut

off the ogre's head with the big knife he carried about him, just as if it had been new-made cheese. Thereupon they took the head with great joy to the king, who rejoiced at recovering his daughter, for he had repented a hundred times having given her to an ogre. And not many days after, the king procured a handsome husband for Porziella, and he heaped riches on the seven sons and their mother, who had delivered his daughter from such a wretched life. Nor did he omit to call himself a thousand times to blame for his conduct to Porziella, and having out of mere caprice exposed her to such peril, without thinking what an error he commits who goes looking for wolf's eggs.

The auditors looked like statues, as they sat listening to the story of the Flea, and they declared one and all that King Stupid was an ass, to put in peril the welfare of his own flesh and blood, and the inheritance of his kingdom, for just nothing at all. When they had all shut their mouths again, Antonella opened hers and began the following story.



THE ENCHANTED DOE

REAT is doubtless the power of friendship, which makes us bear toils and perils willingly to serve a friend. We value our wealth as a trifle, honour as nothing at all, life as a straw, when we can give them for a friend's sake; fables teach us this, history is full of instances of it, and I will give you an example which my grandmother Semmonella —may she be in glory!—used to relate to me. So open your ears and shut your mouths, and hear what I shall tell you.

There was once a certain king named Giannone, who, desiring greatly to have children, had prayers continually made to the gods that they would grant his wish: and in order to incline them the more to give him this gratification, he was so charitable to beggars and pilgrims that he shared

with them all he possessed. But seeing at last that matters were protracted, and there was no end to putting his hand into his pocket, he bolted his door fast, and shot with a cross-bow at whoever came near.

Now it happened that at this time a long-bearded Capuchin was passing that way, and not knowing that the king had turned over a new leaf, or perhaps knowing it and wishing to make him change his mind again, he went to Giannone and begged for entertainment in his house. But, with a fierce look and a terrible growl, the king said to him, 'If you have no other candle than this, you may go to bed in the dark. The time is gone by; I am no longer a fool.' And when the old man asked what was the cause of this change, the king replied, 'From my desire to have children, I have spent and have lent to all who came and all who went, and have squandered away all my wealth. At last, seeing that the beard was gone, I stopped and laid aside the razor.'

'If that be all,' replied the old man, 'you may set your mind at rest, for I promise that your wish shall be forthwith fulfilled, on pain of losing my ears.'

'Be it so,' said the king, 'and I pledge my word that I will give you one half of my kingdom.' And the man answered, 'Listen now to me,—if you wish to hit the mark, you have only to get the heart of a sea-

dragon, and have it dressed by a young maiden. And as soon as the heart is dressed, give it to the queen to eat, and you'll see that what I say will speedily come to pass.'

'If that be the case,' replied the king, 'I must this very moment get the dragon's heart.'

So he sent a hundred fishermen out, and they got ready all kinds of fishing-tackle, drag-nets, casting-nets, seine-nets, bow-nets, and fishing-lines; and they tacked and turned, and cruised in all directions, until at last they caught a dragon; then they took out its heart and brought it to the king, who gave it to a handsome young lady to dress.

When the heart was dressed, and the queen had tasted it, in a few days she and the young lady both had a son, so like the one to the other that nobody could tell which was which. And the boys grew up together in such love for one another that they could not be parted for a moment; and their attachment was so great that the queen began to be jealous at seeing her son testify more affection for the son of one of her servants than he did for herself, and she knew not in what way to remove this thorn from her eyes.

Now one day the prince wished to go a-hunting with his companion; so he had a fire lighted in the fireplace in his chamber, and began to melt lead to make balls; and

being in want of I know not what, he went himself to look for it. Meanwhile the queen came in to see what her son was about, and finding nobody there but Canneloro, the son of the maiden, she thought to put him out of the world. So stooping down she flung the hot bullet-mould at his face, which hit him over the brow and gave him an ugly wound. She was just going to repeat the blow, when her son Fonzo came in; so pretending that she was only come to see how he was, after giving him a few trifling caresses she went away.

Canneloro, pulling his hat down on his forehead, said nothing of his wound to Fonzo, but stood quite quiet, though he was burning with the pain. And as soon as they had done making balls, he requested leave of the prince to go out. Fonzo, all in amazement at this new resolution, asked him the reason; but he replied, 'Inquire no more, my dear Fonzo; let it suffice that I am obliged to go away, and Heaven knows that in parting with you, who are my heart, the soul is ready to leave my bosom, but since it cannot be otherwise, farewell, and keep me in remembrance!'

Then, after embracing one another and shedding many tears, Canneloro went to his own room, where taking a suit of armour and a magic sword, he armed himself from top to toe; and having taken a

horse out of the stable, he was just putting his foot into the stirrup when Fonzo came weeping and said, that since he was resolved to abandon him, he should at least leave him some token of his love, to diminish his anguish for his absence. Thereupon Canneloro laid hold on his dagger and stuck it into the ground, and instantly a fine fountain rose up. Then said he to the prince, 'This is the best memorial I can leave you; for by the flowing of this fountain you will know the course of my life; if you see it run clear, know that my life will likewise be clear and tranquil; if you see it turbid, think that I am passing through troubles; and if you find it dry (which Heaven forbid!) depend on it that the oil of my lamp is all consumed, and I have paid the toll that belongs to Nature.'

So saying he took his sword, and sticking it into the ground, he made a plant of myrtle spring up, saying to the prince, 'As long as you see this myrtle green, know that I am green as a leek; if you see it wither, think that my fortunes are not the best in the world; but if it becomes quite dried up, you may say a requiem for your Canneloro.'

So saying, after embracing one another again, Canneloro set out on his travels; and journeying on and on, after various adventures which would be too long to

recount,—such as quarrels with vetturini, disputes with landlords, murderous attacks by toll-gatherers, perils of bad roads, encounters with robbers,—he at length arrived at Long-Trellis, just at the time when they were holding a most splendid tournament, the hand of the king's daughter being promised to the victor. Here Canneloro presented himself, and bore him so bravely that he overthrew all the knights who were come from divers parts to gain a name for themselves. Whereupon Fenicia, the king's daughter, was given to him to wife, and a great feast was made.

When Canneloro had been there some months in peace and quiet, an unhappy fancy came into his head for going to the chase. Then he told it to the king, who said to him, 'Take care of your legs, my son-in-law; do not be blinded by the evil one; be wise and open your eyes, sir! for in these woods there is the devil's own ogre, who changes his form every day, one time appearing like a wolf, at another like a lion, now like a stag, now like an ass, now like one thing and now like another; and by a thousand stratagems he decoys those who are so unfortunate as to meet him, into a cave, where he devours them. So, my son, do not put your safety in peril, or you will leave your rags there.'

Canneloro, who did not know what fear

was, paid no heed to the advice of his father-in-law; and as soon as the Sun with the broom of his rays had cleared away the soot of the Night, he set out for the chase; and on his way he came to a wood, where, beneath the awning of the leaves, the Shades had assembled to maintain their sway, and to make a conspiracy against the Sun. The ogre, seeing him coming, turned himself into a handsome doe, which as soon as Canneloro perceived he began to give chase to her; then the doe doubled and turned, and led him about hither and thither at such a rate, that at last she brought him into the very heart of the wood, where she made such a tremendous snowstorm arise that it looked as if the sky was going to fall. Canneloro, finding himself in front of the ogre's cave, went into it to seek shelter; and being benumbed with the cold, he took some sticks which he found within it, and pulling his steel out of his pocket he kindled a large fire. As he was standing by it to dry his clothes, the doe came to the mouth of the cave and said, 'Sir Knight, pray give me leave to warm myself a little while, for I am shivering with the cold.' Canneloro, who was of a kind disposition, said to her, 'Draw near, and welcome.' 'I would gladly,' replied the doe, 'but that I am afraid you would kill me.' 'Fear nothing,' answered Canneloro; 'come,

trust to my word.' 'If you wish me to enter,' rejoined the doe, 'tie up those dogs, that they may not hurt me, and tie up your horse that he may not kick me.'

So Canneloro tied up his dogs and fettered his horse, and the doe said, 'I am now half assured, but unless you bind fast your sword, by the soul of my grandsire I will not go in!' Then Canneloro, who wished to become friends with the doe, bound his sword, as a countryman does his when he carries it in the city, for fear of the constables. As soon as the ogre saw Canneloro defenceless, he took his own form, and laying hold on him, flung him into a pit that was at the bottom of the cave, and covered it up with a stone, to keep him to eat.

But Fonzo, who morning and evening visited the myrtle and the fountain, to learn news of the fate of Canneloro, finding the one withered and the other troubled, instantly thought that his friend was passing through some misfortunes; and being desirous of giving him succour, he mounted his horse without asking leave of his father or mother, and arming himself well, and taking two enchanted dogs, he went rambling through the world; and he roamed and rambled here and there and everywhere, until at last he came to Long-Trellis, which he found all in mourning for the supposed death of Canneloro. And scarcely was he

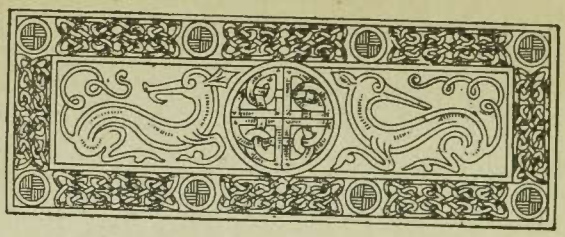
come to the court, when every one, thinking it was Canneloro from the likeness he bore him, hastened to tell Fenicia the good news, who ran tumbling down the stairs, and embracing Fonzo exclaimed, 'My husband! my heart! where have you been all this time?'

Fonzo immediately perceived that Canneloro had come to this country, and had left it again; so he resolved to examine the matter adroitly, to learn from the princess's discourse where he might be found; and hearing her say that he had put himself in such great danger by that accursed hunting, especially if that cruel ogre should meet him, he at once concluded that his friend must be there.

The next morning, as soon as the Sun had gone forth to give the gilded pills to the Sky, he jumped out of bed, and neither the prayers of Fenicia nor the commands of the king could keep him back, but he would go to the chase. So mounting his horse, he went with the enchanted dogs to the wood, where the same thing befell him that had befallen Canneloro; and entering the cave, he saw Canneloro's arms and dogs and horse fast bound, by which he became certain that his friend had there fallen into a snare. Then the doe told him in like manner to tie his arms, dogs, and horse; but he instantly set them upon her, and they tore

her to pieces. And as he was looking about for some other traces of his friend, he heard his voice down in the pit; so lifting up the stone he drew out Canneloro, with all the others whom the ogre had buried alive to fatten. Then embracing each other with great joy, the two friends went home, where Fenicia, seeing them so much alike, did not know which to choose for her husband; but when Canneloro took off his cap, she saw the wound, and recognised and embraced him. And after staying there a month, taking his amusement, Fonzo wished to return to his own country, and to go back to his nest; and Canneloro wrote by him to his mother, bidding her come and partake of his greatness, which she did, and from that time forward he never would hear either of dogs or of hunting, recollecting the saying,

Unhappy is he who corrects himself at his own cost.



PARSLEY

SO great is my desire to keep the Princess amused, that the whole of the past night, when all were sound asleep and nobody stirred hand or foot, I have done nothing but turn over the old papers of my brain, and ransack all the closets of my memory, choosing from among the stories which that good soul my uncle's grandmother (whom Heaven take to glory !) used to tell, such as seemed most fitting to relate to you ; and unless I have put on my spectacles upside down, I fancy they will give you pleasure ; or, should they not serve, as armed squadrons, to drive away tedium from your mind, they will at least be as trumpets to incite my companions here to go forth to the field, with greater power than my poor strength possesses, to supply by the abundance of their wit the deficiencies of my discourse.

There was once upon a time a woman named Pascadozzia. As she was standing one day at a window, which looked into the garden of an ogress, she saw a beautiful bed of parsley, for which she took such a longing that she was on the point of fainting away; and being unable to resist her desire, she watched until the ogress went out, and then plucked a handful of it. But when the ogress came home, and was going to cook her pottage, she found that some one had been at the parsley, and said, 'Ill luck to me but I'll catch this long-fingered rogue, and make him repent it, and teach him to his cost that every one should eat off his own platter, and not meddle with other folks' cups.'

The poor woman went again and again down into the garden, until one morning the ogress met her, and in a furious rage exclaimed, 'Have I caught you at last, you thief, you rogue? Prithee do you pay the rent of the garden, that you come in this impudent way and steal my plants? By my faith, but I'll make you do penance!'

Poor Pascadozzia, in a terrible fright, began to make excuses, saying that neither from gluttony nor the craving of hunger had she been tempted by the devil to commit this fault, but fear she had lest the child should be born with a crop of parsley on its face; and she added that the ogress ought

rather to thank her, for not having given her sore eyes.

'Words are but wind,' answered the ogress; 'I am not to be caught with such prattle; you have closed the balance-sheet of life, unless you promise to give me the child you bring forth, girl or boy, whichever it may be.'

Poor Pascadozzia, in order to escape the peril in which she found herself, swore with one hand upon another to keep the promise: so the ogress let her go free. But when her time was come, Pascadozzia gave birth to a little girl, so beautiful that she was a joy to look upon, who, from having a fine sprig of parsley on her bosom, was named Parsley. And the little girl grew from day to day, until when she was seven years old her mother sent her to school; and every time she went along the street and met the ogress, the old woman said to her, 'Tell your mother to remember her promise.' And she went on repeating this message so often, that the poor mother, having no longer patience to listen to the same tale, said one day to Parsley, 'If you meet the old woman as usual, and she reminds you of the hateful promise, answer her, "Take it!"'

When Parsley, who dreamt of no ill, met the ogress again, and heard her repeat the same words, she answered innocently as

PARSLEY

her mother had told her; whereupon the ogress, seizing her by her hair, carried her off to a wood, which the Sun never entered. Then she put the poor girl into a tower, which she caused to arise by her art, and which had neither gate nor ladder, but only a little window, through which she ascended and descended by means of Parsley's hair, which was very long, as the sailor is used to run up and down the mast of a ship.

Now it happened one day, when the ogress had left the tower, that Parsley put her head out of the little window, and let loose her tresses in the sun; and the son of a prince passing by saw these two golden banners, which invited all souls to enlist under the standard of Love; and beholding with amazement in the midst of those gleaming waves a siren's face, that enchanted all hearts, he fell desperately in love with such wonderful beauty; and sending her a memorial of sighs, she decreed to receive him into favour. Matters went on so well with the prince, that there was soon a nodding of heads and kissing of hands, thanks and offerings, hopes and promises, soft words and compliments. And when this had continued for several days, Parsley and the prince became so intimate that they made an appointment to meet, and agreed that it should be at night, and that Parsley should give the ogress

some poppy-juice, and draw up the prince with her tresses. So when the appointed hour came, the prince went to the tower, where Parsley, letting fall her hair at a given signal, he seized it with both his hands, and cried, 'Draw up!' And when he was drawn up, he crept through the little window into the chamber.

The next morning early, the prince descended by the same golden ladder, to go his way home. And having repeated these visits many times, a gossip of the ogress, who was for ever prying into things that did not concern her, and poking her nose into every corner, got to find out the secret, and told the ogress to be upon the look-out, for that Parsley was courted by a youth. The ogress thanked the gossip for the information, and said she would take good care to stop up the road; and as to Parsley, it was impossible for her to escape, as she had laid a spell upon her, so that, unless she had in her hand the three gallnuts which were in a rafter in the kitchen, it would be labour lost to attempt to get away.

Whilst they were talking thus together, Parsley, who stood with her ears wide open, and had some suspicion of the gossip, overheard all that passed. And when Night had spread out her black garments, and the prince had come as usual, she made him climb on to the rafters and find the gall-

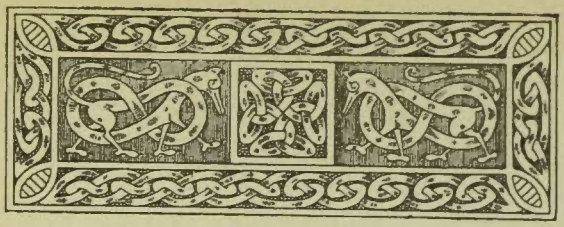
nuts, knowing well what effect they would have, as she had been enchanted by the ogress. Then, having made a rope-ladder, they both descended to the ground, took to their heels, and scampered off towards the city. But the gossip happening to see them come out, set up a loud halloo, and began to shout and make such a noise that the ogress awoke; and seeing that Parsley had fled, she descended by the same ladder, which was fastened to the window, and set off running after the lovers, who, when they saw her coming at their heels faster than a horse let loose, gave themselves up for lost. But Parsley, recollecting the gallnuts, quickly threw one on the ground, and lo! instantly a Corsican bulldog started up,—a terrible beast!—which with open jaws and barking loud flew at the ogress as if to swallow her at a mouthful. But the old woman, who was more cunning and spiteful than the devil, put her hand into her pocket, and pulling out a piece of bread, gave it to the dog, which made him hang his tail and allay his fury. Then she turned to run after the fugitives again; but Parsley, seeing her approach, threw the second gallnut on the ground, and lo! a fierce lion arose, who, lashing the earth with his tail, and shaking his mane, and opening wide his jaws a yard apart, was just preparing to make a slaughter of the ogress; when,

turning quickly back, she stripped the skin off an ass that was grazing in the middle of a meadow, and ran at the lion, who, fancying it a real jackass, was so frightened that he bounded away as fast as he could.

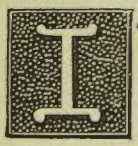
The ogress, having leaped over this second ditch, turned again to pursue the poor lovers, who, hearing the clatter of her heels and seeing the cloud of dust that rose up to the sky, conjectured that she was coming again. But the old woman, who was every moment in dread lest the lion should pursue her, had not taken off the ass's skin; and when Parsley now threw down the third gallnut, there sprang up a wolf, who, without giving the ogress time to play any new trick, gobbled her up just as she was, in the shape of a jackass. So the lovers, being now freed from danger, went their way leisurely and quietly to the kingdom of the prince, where, with his father's free consent, he took Parsley to wife; and thus, after all these storms of fate, they experienced the truth, that

> One hour in port, the sailor freed from fears
> Forgets the tempests of a hundred years.

Zeza's story was listened to with such delight to the end, that, had it even continued for an hour longer, the time would have appeared only a moment. But it now being Cecca's turn, she began as follows.



THE THREE SISTERS



T is a great truth, if we make the saying good, that from the same wood are formed the statues of idols and the rafters of the gallows, kings' thrones and cobblers' stalls; and another strange thing is, that from the same rags are made the paper on which the wisdom of sages is recorded, and the crown which is placed on the head of a fool,—a thing that would puzzle the cleverest astrologer in the world. The same too may be said of a mother, who brings forth one good daughter and another bad, one an idle hussy, another a good housewife; one fair, another ugly; one spiteful, another kind; one unfortunate, another born to good luck,—who, all being of one family, ought to be of one nature. But leaving this subject to those who know more about it, I will merely give you an example of what

I have said, in the story of three daughters of one and the same mother, wherein you will see the difference of manners, which brought the wicked daughters into a ditch, and the good daughter to the top of the wheel of fortune.

There was one time a woman who had three daughters, two of whom were so unlucky that nothing ever succeeded with them; all their projects went wrong, all their hopes were turned to chaff. But the youngest, who was named Nella, was born to good luck, and I verily believe that at her birth all things conspired to bestow on her the best and choicest gifts in their power; the Sky gave her the perfection of its light, Venus a matchless beauty of form, Love the first dart of his power, Nature the flower of manners. She never set about any work, that it did not go off to a nicety; she never took anything in hand, that it did not succeed to a hair; she never stood up to dance, that she did not sit down with applause. On which account she was envied by her jealous sisters, and yet not so much as she was loved and wished well to by all others; and greatly as her sisters desired to put her underground, still much more did other folks carry her on the palms of their hands.

Now there was in that country an en-

chanted prince, who sailed along the sea of her beauty, and flung out the hook of amorous servitude to this beautiful goldfish, until at length he caught her by the gills of affection and made her his own. And in order that they might enjoy one another's company without exciting the suspicion of the mother, who was a wicked woman, the prince made a crystal passage, which led from the royal palace directly into Nella's apartment, although it was eight miles distant; and giving her a certain powder, he said, 'Every time you wish to feed me, like a sparrow, with a sight of your charming beauty, throw a little of this powder into the fire, and instantly I will come through the passage as quick as a bird, running along a crystal road to gaze upon this face of silver.'

Having arranged it thus, not a night passed that the prince did not go in and out, backwards and forwards, along the crystal passage; until at last the sisters, who were spying the actions of Nella, found out the secret, and laid a plan to put a stop to the sport. And in order to cut the thread at once, they went and broke the passage here and there; so that when the unhappy girl threw the powder into the fire, to give the signal to her lover, the prince, who used always to come running in furious haste, hurt himself in such a manner against the broken

crystal that he was truly a pitiable sight to see. And being unable to pass farther on, he turned back, all cut and slashed. Then he laid himself in his bed, and sent for all the doctors in the town; but as the crystal was enchanted, the wounds were mortal, and no human remedy availed. When the king saw this, despairing of his son's condition, he sent out a proclamation, that whoever would cure the wounds of the prince,—if a woman, she should have him for her husband, —if a man, he should have half his kingdom.

Now when Nella, who was pining away for the loss of the prince, heard this, she dyed her face, and disguised herself, and unknown to her sisters she left home, to go and see him before his death. But as by this time the Sun's gilded balls, with which he plays in the fields of Heaven, were running towards the west, night overtook her in a wood, close to the house of an ogre, where, in order to get out of the way of danger, she climbed up into a tree. Meanwhile the ogre and his wife were sitting at table, with the windows open, in order to enjoy the fresh air while they ate; and as soon as they had emptied their cups, and put out the lamps, they began to chat of one thing and another; so that Nella, who was as near to them as the mouth to the nose, heard every word they spoke.

Among other things, the ogress said to

THE THREE SISTERS

her husband, 'My pretty Hairy-hide, tell me, what news? what do they say abroad in the world?' And he answered, 'Trust me there's not a hand's-breadth clean; everything is going topsy-turvy and awry.' 'But what is it?' replied his wife. 'Why, I could tell pretty stories of all the confusion that is going on,' said the ogre; 'for one hears things that are enough to drive one mad, such as buffoons rewarded with gifts, rogues esteemed, cowards honoured, robbers and assassins protected, and honest men little thought of and less prized. But as these things are enough to make one burst with vexation, I will merely tell you what has befallen the king's son. He had made a crystal path, along which he used to go to visit a pretty lass; but by some means or other, I know not how, all the road has been broken; and as he was going along the passage as usual he wounded himself in such a manner, that before he can stop the leak the whole conduit of his life will run out. The king has indeed issued a proclamation, with great promises to whoever cures his son; but it is all labour lost, and the best thing he can do is quickly to get ready mourning and prepare the funeral.'

When Nella heard the cause of the prince's illness, she sobbed and wept bitterly, and said to herself, 'Who is the wicked soul that has broken the passage along which

my painted bird used to pass?' But as the ogress now went on speaking, Nella was as silent as a mouse and listened.

'And is it possible,' said the ogress, 'that the world is lost to this poor prince, and that no remedy can be found for his malady? Bid physic then creep into the oven—bid the doctors put a halter round their necks and return the money to their pupils, since they cannot find any effectual recipe to restore health to the prince.'

'Hark ye, Granny,' replied the ogre, 'the doctors are not called upon to find remedies that may pass the bounds of nature. This is no common colic that an oil-bath might remove; it is not a boil to be cured with fig-poultices, nor a fever that will yield to medicine and diet; much less are these ordinary wounds which require pledgets of lint and oil of hypericon; for the charm that was on the broken glass produces the same effect as onion-juice does on the iron heads of arrows, which makes the wound incurable. There is one thing only that could save his life; but don't ask me to tell it you, for it is a thing of importance.' 'Do tell me, dear old Long-tusk!' cried the ogress; 'tell me, if you would not see me die.' 'Well then,' said the ogre, 'I will tell you, provided you promise me not to confide it to any living soul; for it would be the ruin of our house and the destruction of our

lives.' 'Fear nothing, my dear sweet little husband,' replied the ogress; 'for you shall sooner see pigs with horns, apes with tails, moles with eyes, than a single word shall pass my lips.' And so saying she put one hand upon the other and swore to it. 'You must know then,' said the ogre, 'that there is nothing under the sky nor above the ground that can save the prince from the snares of death but our fat: if his wounds are anointed with this, his soul will be arrested which is just on the point of leaving the dwelling of his body.'

Nella, who overheard all that passed, gave time to Time, to let them finish their chat; and then getting down from the tree, and taking heart, she knocked at the ogre's door, crying, 'Ah! my good ogrish masters, I pray you for charity, alms, some sign of compassion! have a little pity on a poor, miserable, wretched creature, who is banished by fate far from her own country and deprived of all human aid, who has been overtaken by night in this wood and is dying of cold and hunger.' And crying thus, she went on knocking and knocking at the door.

Upon hearing this deafening noise, the ogress was going to throw her half a loaf and send her away; but the ogre, who was more greedy of Christian flesh than the squirrel is of nuts, the bear of honey, the cat of fish, the sheep of salt, or the ass of bran,

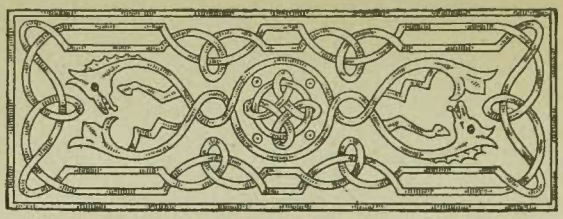
said to his wife, 'Let the poor creature come in; for if she sleeps in the fields, who knows but she may be eaten up by some wolf.' In short he talked and talked so much that his wife at length opened the door for Nella; whilst, with all his pretended charity, he was all the time reckoning on making four mouthfuls of her. But the glutton counts one way and the host another; for the ogre and his wife having drunk till they were fairly tipsy and lain down to sleep, Nella took a knife from a cupboard and made a hash of them in a trice; then she put all the fat into a phial, and went straight to the court, where presenting herself before the king she offered to cure the prince. At this the king was overjoyed, and led her to the chamber of his son; and no sooner had she anointed him well with the fat than the wounds closed in a moment, just as if she had thrown water on a fire; and he became as sound as a fish.

When the king saw this, he said to his son, 'This good woman deserves the reward promised by the proclamation,—that you should take her to wife.' But the prince replied, 'It is hopeless, for I have no storeroom full of hearts in my body to share among so many; my heart is already disposed of, and another woman is the mistress of it.' Nella, hearing this, replied, 'You should no longer think of her who has been the cause of all your misfortune.'

'My misfortune has been brought on me by her sisters,' answered the prince, 'and they shall repent it.' 'Then do you really love her?' said Nella: and the prince replied, 'More than my own life.' 'Embrace me then,' said Nella, 'for I am the fire of your heart.' But the prince, seeing the dark hue of her face, answered, 'I should sooner take you for the coal than the fire; so keep off—don't blacken me.' Whereupon Nella, perceiving that he did not know her, called for a basin of clean water and washed her face; and as soon as the cloud of soot was removed, the sun shone forth; and the prince recognising her, pressed her to his heart, and took her for his wife. Then he had her sisters thrown into an oven, that like leeches they might discharge in the ashes their blood, that was corrupted by envy, thus proving the truth of the old saying,

No evil ever went without punishment.

This story went to the hearts of all who heard it, and they praised the prince a thousand times for his conduct to Nella's sisters, while they lauded to the stars the deep love of the maiden, who had with such pains cured the prince's wounds. But Taddeo, making a sign for all to be silent, now commanded Meneca to do her part, and she consequently paid the debt in the following manner.



VIOLET

ENVY is a wind which blows with such violence that it throws down the props of the reputation of good men, and levels with the ground the crops of good fortune. But very often, as a punishment from Heaven, when this envious blast seems as if it would cast a person flat on the ground, it aids him instead to attain the happiness he is expecting sooner even than he hoped; as you will hear in the story which I shall now tell you.

There was once upon a time a good kind of man named Cola Aniello, who had three daughters, Rose, Pink, and Violet; the last of whom was so beautiful that her very look was a syrup of love, which relieved the hearts of beholders of all uneasiness. Ciullone, the king's son, was burning with love of her, and every time he passed by

the little cottage where these three sisters sat at work, he took off his cap and said, 'Good day, good day, Violet!' and she replied, 'Good day, king's son! I know more than you.' At these words her sisters grumbled and murmured, saying, 'You are an ill-bred creature, and will make the prince in a fine rage!' But as Violet paid no heed to what they said, they made a spiteful complaint of her to their father, telling him that she was too bold and forward, and that she answered the prince without any respect, as if she were just as good as he, and that some day or other she would get into trouble, and suffer the just punishment of her offence. So Cola Aniello, who was a prudent man, in order to prevent any mischief, sent Violet to stay with an aunt named Cuccepannella, to be set to work.

Now the prince, when he passed by the house as usual, no longer seeing the object of his love, was for some days like a nightingale that does not find her young ones in the nest, and goes from leaf to leaf wailing and lamenting her loss; but he put his ear so often to the chink, that at last he discovered where Violet lived. Then he went to the aunt, and said to her, 'Madam, you know who I am, and what power I have; so, between ourselves, do me a favour, and then ask me for whatever you wish.' 'If I can do anything to serve you,' replied the

old woman, 'I am entirely at your command.' 'I ask nothing of you,' said the prince, 'but to let me give Violet a kiss.' 'If that's all,' answered the old woman, 'go and hide yourself in the room downstairs in the garden, and I will find some pretence or another for sending Violet to you.'

As soon as the prince heard this, he stole into the room without loss of time, and the old woman, pretending that she wanted to cut a piece of cloth, said to her niece, 'Violet, if you love me, go down and fetch me the yard-measure.' So Violet went, as her aunt bade her; but when she came to the room, she perceived the ambush, and taking the yard-measure she slipped out of the room as nimbly as a cat, leaving the prince bursting with vexation.

When the old woman saw Violet come running so fast, she suspected that the trick had not succeeded; so presently after she said to the girl, 'Go downstairs, niece, and fetch me the ball of Brescian thread that is on the top shelf in the cupboard.' So Violet ran, and taking the thread slipped like an eel out of the hands of the prince. But after a little while the old woman said again, 'Violet, my dear, if you do not go downstairs and fetch me the scissors, I am totally undone.' Then Violet went down again, but she sprang as vigorously as a dog out of the trap; and when she came

upstairs, she took the scissors and cut off one of her aunt's ears, saying, 'Take that, madam, as a reward for your pains—every deed deserves its meed; and if I don't cut off your nose, it is only that you may smell the bad odour of your reputation.' So saying she went away home with a hop, skip, and jump, leaving her aunt eased of her ear, and the prince full of Let-me-alone.

Not long afterwards the prince again passed by the house of Violet's father, and seeing her at the window where she was used to stand, he began to his old tune, 'Good day, good day, Violet!' whereupon she answered as quickly as a good parish-clerk, 'Good day, king's son! I know more than you.' But Violet's sisters could no longer bear this behaviour, and they plotted together how to get rid of her. Now one of the windows looked into the garden of an ogre; so they proposed to drive the poor girl away through this; and letting fall from it a skein of thread, with which they were working a door-curtain for the queen, they cried, 'Alas, alas! we are ruined and undone, and shall not be able to finish the work in time, if Violet, who is the smallest and lightest of us, does not let herself down by a cord and pick up the thread that has fallen.'

Violet could not bear to see her sisters grieving thus, and instantly offered to go

down; so tying a cord to her, they lowered her into the garden; but no sooner did she reach the ground, than they let go the rope. It happened that just at that time the ogre came out to take a look at his garden, and having caught cold from the dampness of the ground, he gave such a tremendous sneeze, with such a noise and explosion, that Violet screamed out with terror, 'Oh, mother, help me!' Thereupon the ogre turned round, and seeing the beautiful maiden behind him, he received her with the greatest kindness and affection; and treating her as his own daughter, he gave her in charge of three fairies, bidding them take care of her, and rear her up on cherries.

The prince, no longer seeing Violet, and hearing no news of her, good or bad, fell into such grief, that his eyes became swollen, his face grew pale as ashes, his lips livid, and he neither ate a morsel to get flesh on his body, nor slept a wink to get any rest to his mind. But trying all possible means, and offering large rewards, he went about spying and inquiring everywhere, until at last he discovered where Violet was. Then he sent for the ogre, and told him that, finding himself ill (as he might see was the case), he begged of him permission to spend a single day and night in his garden, adding that a small chamber would suffice

for him to repose in. Now, as the ogre was a subject of the prince's father, he could not refuse him this trifling pleasure; so he offered him all the rooms in his house, if one was not enough, and his very life itself. The prince thanked him, and chose a room which by good luck was near to Violet's; and as soon as night came, the prince, finding that Violet had left her door open, as it was summer-time and the place was safe, stole softly into the room, and taking Violet's arm gave her two pinches. Thereupon she awoke, and exclaimed, 'O father, father, what a quantity of fleas!' Then she went to another bed, and the prince did the same again, and Violet cried out in the same way; then she changed first the mattress, and afterwards the sheet, and so the sport went on the whole night long, until the dawn.

As soon as it was day, the prince passing by that house, and seeing the maiden at the door, said, as he was wont to do, 'Good day, good day, Violet!' and when Violet replied, 'Good day, king's son! I know more than you,' the prince answered, 'O father, father, what a quantity of fleas!'

The instant Violet felt this shot, she guessed at once that the prince had been the cause of her annoyance in the past night; so off she ran and told it to the fairies. 'If it be he,' said the fairies,

'we will soon give him tit for tat and as good in return; and if this dog has bitten you, we will contrive to get a hair from him: he has given you one, and we will give him back one and a half. Only get the ogre to make you a pair of slippers covered with little bells, and leave the rest to us: we will take care to pay him in good coin.'

Violet, who was eager to be revenged, instantly got the ogre to make the slippers for her; and waiting until night had fallen, they went all four together to the house of the prince, where the fairies and Violet hid themselves in the chamber. And as soon as ever the prince had closed his eyes, the fairies made a great noise and racket, and Violet began to stamp with her feet at such a rate that, what with the clatter of her heels and the jingling of the bells, the prince awoke in great terror and cried out, 'O mother, mother, help me!' And after repeating this two or three times, they slipped away home.

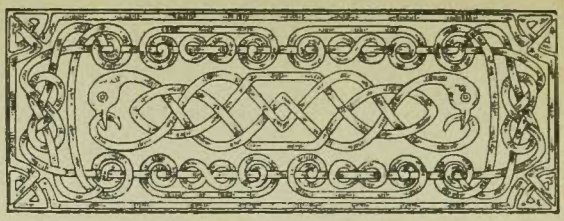
The next morning the prince, having taken some citron-juice and other cordials to relieve his fear, went to take a walk in the garden; for he could not live a moment without the sight of Violet. And seeing her standing at the door, he said, 'Good day, good day, Violet!' and Violet answered, 'Good day, king's son! I know more than

you.' Then the prince said, 'O father, father, what a quantity of fleas!' but Violet replied, 'O mother, mother, help me!'

When the prince heard this, he said to Violet, 'You have won—you have outwitted me: I yield—you have conquered; and now that I see you really know more than I do, I will marry you without further ado.' So he called the ogre, and asked her of him for his wife; but the ogre said it was not his affair, for he had learnt that very morning that Violet was the daugher of Cola Aniello. So the prince ordered her father to be called, and told him of the good fortune that was in store for his daughter; whereupon the marriage feast was celebrated with great joy, and the truth of the saying was seen, that

A fair maiden soon gets married.

The delight was unspeakable which all felt at the good fortune which Violet had obtained by her cleverness, in spite of the malice of her sisters, who, the enemies of their own blood and kindred, played her so many tricks on purpose to cause her to come to grief. But it being now time for Paola to pay the debt she owed, she disbursed from her mouth the golden money of her beautiful discourse, and thus cleared her account.



GAGLIUSO

INGRATITUDE, my lord, is a nail, which, driven into the tree of courtesy, causes it to wither; it is a broken channel, by which the foundations of affection are undermined; and a lump of soot, which falling into the dish of friendship destroys its scent and savour; as is seen in daily instances, and among others in the story which I will now tell you.

There was one time in my dear city of Naples an old man who was as poor as poor could be: he was so wretched, so bare, so light, and with not a farthing in his pocket, that he went naked as a flea. And being about to shake out the bags of life, he called to him his sons, Oratiello and Pippo, and said to them, 'I am now called upon by the tenor of my bill to pay the debt I owe to

Nature; and believe me I should feel great pleasure in leaving this abode of misery, but that I leave you here behind me, a pair of miserable fellows, without a stitch upon your backs, without so much as a fly can carry upon its foot; so that were you to run a hundred miles, not a farthing would drop from you. My ill-fortune has indeed brought me to such beggary that I lead the life of a dog; for I have all along, as you well know, gaped with hunger and gone to bed without a candle. Nevertheless, now that I am dying, I wish to leave you some token of my love. So do you, Oratiello, who are my first-born, take the sieve that hangs yonder against the wall, with which you can earn your bread; and do you, little fellow, take the cat, and remember your daddy.' So saying he began to whimper, and presently after said, 'God be with you, for it is night!'

Oratiello had his father buried by charity, and then took the sieve, and went riddling here and there and everywhere to gain a livelihood; and the more he riddled the more he earned. And Pippo, taking the cat, said, 'Only see now what a pretty legacy my father has left me! I, who am not able to support myself, must now provide for two. Who ever beheld such a miserable inheritance?' But the cat, who overheard this lamentation, said to him, 'You are grieving without need, and have more luck than

sense; but you little know the good fortune in store for you, and that I am able to make you rich if I set about it.' When Pippo heard this, he thanked her pussyship, stroked her three or four times on the back, and commended himself warmly to her. So the cat took compassion upon poor Gagliuso, and every morning she betook herself either to the shore of the Chiaja or to the Fish-rock, and catching a goodly gray mullet, or a fine dory, she bagged it, and carried it to the king, and said, 'My lord Gagliuso, your Majesty's most humble slave, sends you this fish with all reverence, and says, "A small present to a great lord."' Then the king with a joyful face, as one usually shows to those who bring a gift, answered the cat, 'Tell this lord, whom I do not know, that I thank him heartily.'

At another time the cat would run to the marshes or fields, and when the fowlers had brought down a blackbird, a snipe, or a lark, she caught it up, and presented it to the king with the same message. She repeated this trick again and again, until one morning the king said to her, 'I feel infinitely obliged to this lord Gagliuso, and am desirous of knowing him, that I may make a return for the kindness he has shown me.' And the cat replied, 'The desire of my lord Gagliuso is to give his life and blood for your Majesty's crown, and to-morrow morn-

ing without fail, as soon as the Sun has set fire to the stubble of the fields of air, he will come and pay his respects to you.'

So when the morning came the cat went to the king, and said to him, 'Sire, my lord Gagliuso sends to excuse himself for not coming; as last night some of his servants robbed him and ran off, and have not left him a single shirt to his back.' When the king heard this, he instantly commanded his servants to take out of his wardrobe a quantity of clothes and linen, and sent them to Gagliuso; and before two hours had passed Gagliuso went to the palace, conducted by the cat, where he received a thousand compliments from the king, who made him sit beside him, and gave him a banquet that would amaze you.

While they were eating Gagliuso from time to time turned to the cat, and said to her, 'My pretty puss, prithee take care that those rags don't slip through our fingers.' Then the cat answered, 'Be quiet, be quiet; don't be talking of these beggarly things.' The king wishing to know what it was, the cat made answer that he had taken a fancy for a small lemon, whereupon the king instantly set out to the garden for a basketful. But Gagliuso returned to the same tune about the old clothes and shirts, and the cat again told him to hold his tongue. Then the king once more asked what was

the matter, and the cat had another excuse ready to make amends for Gagliuso's rudeness.

At last when they had eaten and had chatted for some time of one thing and another, Gagliuso took his leave; and the cat stayed with the king, describing the worth, and the genius, and the judgment of Gagliuso, and, above all, the great wealth he had in the plains of Rome and Lombardy, which well entitled him to marry into the family of a crowned king. Then the king asked what might be his fortune; and the cat replied that no one could ever count the movables, the immovables, and the household furniture of this immensely rich man, who did not even know what he possessed; and if the king wished to be informed of it, he had only to send people with her out of the kingdom, and she would prove to him that there was no wealth in the world equal to his.

Then the king called some trusty persons, and commanded them to inform themselves minutely of the truth; so they followed in the footsteps of the cat, who, as soon as they had passed the frontier of the kingdom, from time to time ran on before, under the pretext of providing refreshments for them on the road; and whenever she met a flock of sheep, a herd of cows, a troop of horses, or a drove of pigs, she would say to the herds-

men and keepers, 'Ho! have a care! there's a troop of robbers coming to carry off everything in the country. So if you wish to escape their fury, and to have your things respected, say that they all belong to the lord Gagliuso, and not a hair will be touched.'

She said the same at all the farmhouses that she passed on the road; so that wherever the king's people came, they found the pipe tuned; for everything they met with, they were told, belonged to the lord Gagliuso. So at last they were tired of asking, and went back to the king, telling seas and mountains of the riches of lord Gagliuso. The king, hearing this report, promised the cat a good drink if she should manage to bring about the match; and the cat concluded the marriage. So Gagliuso came, and the king gave him his daughter and a large portion.

At the end of a month of festivities Gagliuso said he wished to take his bride to his estates: so the king accompanied them as far as the frontiers, and he went to Lombardy, where, by the cat's advice, he purchased a quantity of lands and territories, and became a baron.

Gagliuso, now seeing himself so extremely rich, thanked the cat more than words can express, saying that he owed his life and his greatness to her good offices, and that the ingenuity of a cat had done more for him

than the wit of his father; therefore she might dispose of his life and property as she pleased; and he gave her his word that when she died, which he prayed might not be for a hundred years, he would have her embalmed and put into a golden coffin, and set in his own chamber, that he might keep her memory always before his eyes.

The cat listened to these lavish professions, and before three days were over she pretended to be dead, and stretched herself at her full length in the garden; and when Gagliuso's wife saw her, she cried out, 'O husband, what a sad misfortune! the cat is dead!' 'Devil die with her!' said Gagliuso, 'better she than we!' 'What shall we do with her?' asked the wife. 'Take her by the leg,' said he, 'and fling her out of the window.'

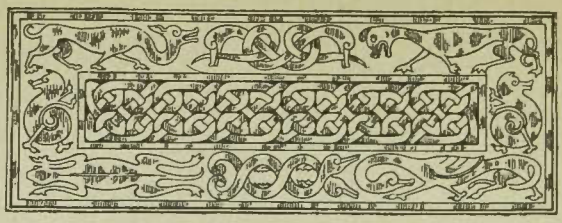
Then the cat, who heard this fine reward when she least expected it, began to say, 'Is this the return you make for my taking you from beggary? is this the thanks I get for freeing you from rags that you might have hung distaffs with? is this my reward for having put good clothes on your back, and fed you well when you were a poor, starved, miserable, tatter-brogued ragamuffin? But such is the fate of him who washes an ass's head. Go, a curse upon all I have done for you! you are not worth spitting upon in the face. A fine gold coffin you had prepared for me! a fine funeral

you were going to give me! Go now, serve labour, toil, sweat, to get this fine reward! Unhappy is he who does a good deed in hopes of a return! Well was it said by the philosopher, 'He who lies down an ass, an ass he finds himself.' But let him who does most expect least: smooth words and ill deeds deceive alike both wise and fools.'

So saying she threw her cloak about her, and went her way; and all that Gagliuso with the utmost humility could do to soothe her was of no avail: she would not return, but kept running on without ever turning her head about, and saying,

Heaven protect us from a rich man grown poor,
And from a beggar who of wealth has got store.

The poor cat was compassionated beyond measure for seeing herself so ill rewarded; but one of those present observed, that she might have found some consolation in not being alone; for at the present day ingratitude has become a domestic evil; and there are many others also who, after they have worked and toiled, and spent their money, and ruined their health, to serve this race of ungrateful people, and have fancied themselves sure of another and a better reward than a golden coffin, find themselves destined to be buried in the hospital. Meanwhile, seeing that Popa was preparing to speak, all present were silent, and she began as follows.



THE SERPENT

IT always happens that he who is over-curious in prying into the affairs of other people strikes his own foot with the axe; and the King of Long Furrow is a proof of this, who, by poking his nose into secrets, brought his daughter into trouble, and ruined his unhappy son-in-law, who, in attempting to make a thrust with his head, was left with his head broken.

There was once on a time a gardener's wife, who longed to have a son more than the suitor longs for a sentence in his favour, a sick man for cold water, or the innkeeper for the arrival of the mail-coach.

It chanced one day that the poor man went to the mountain to get a faggot; and when he came home and opened it, he found a pretty little serpent among the twigs.

At the sight of this, Sapatella (for that was the name of the gardener's wife) heaved a deep sigh and said, 'Alas! even the serpents have their little serpents; but I brought ill-luck with me into this world.' At these words the little serpent spoke, and said, 'Well then, since you cannot have children, take me for a child, and you will make a good bargain, for I shall love you better than my own mother.' Sapatella, hearing a serpent speak thus, had like to have fainted; but plucking up courage she said, 'If it were for nothing else than for the affection which you offer, I am content to take you, and treat you as if you were really my own child.' So saying, she assigned him a hole in a corner of the house for a cradle, and gave him for food a share of what she had, with the greatest affection in the world.

The serpent increased in size from day to day; and when he was grown pretty big, he said to Cola Matteo, the gardener, whom he looked upon as his father, 'Daddy, I want to get married.' 'With all my heart,' said Cola Matteo; 'we must look out for another serpent like yourself, and try to make up a match between you.' 'What serpent are you talking of?' said the little serpent: 'I suppose, forsooth, we are all the same with the vipers and adders! It is easy to see you are nothing but an Antony, and make

a nosegay of every plant. I want the king's daughter; so go this very instant and ask the king for her, and tell him it is a serpent that demands her.'

Cola Matteo, who was a plain, straightforward sort of man, and knew nothing about matters of this kind, went innocently to the king and delivered his message, saying, 'The messenger should not be beaten more than the sands upon the shore. Know then that a serpent wants your daughter for his wife, and I am come therefore to try if we can make a match between a serpent and a dove.' The king, who saw at a glance that he was a blockhead, to get rid of him said, 'Go and tell the serpent that I will give him my daughter if he turns all the fruit of this orchard into gold.' And so saying, he burst out a-laughing and dismissed him.

When Cola Matteo went home, and delivered the answer to the serpent, he said, 'Go to-morrow morning and gather up all the fruit-stones you can find in the city, and sow them in the orchard, and you will see pearls strung on rushes.' Cola Matteo, who was no conjurer, knew neither how to comply nor refuse; so next morning he took a basket on his arm, and went from street to street picking up all the stones of peaches, plums, nectarines, apricots, and cherries that he could find: then he went to the orchard

of the palace, and sowed them as the serpent had desired. In an instant the trees shot up, and stems and branches, leaves, flowers, and fruit, were all of glistening gold; at the sight of which the king was in an ecstasy of amazement, and cried aloud with joy.

But when Cola Matteo was sent by the serpent to the king to demand the performance of his promise, the king said, 'Fair and easy, I must first have something else, if he would have my daughter; and it is that he make all the walls and the ground in the orchard to be of precious stones.'

When the gardener told this to the serpent, he made answer, 'Go to-morrow morning and gather up all the bits of broken crockery-ware you can find, and throw them on the walks, and on the wall of the orchard, for we will not let this difficulty stand in our way.' As soon as it was morning, Cola Matteo took a basket under his arm, and went about collecting bits of tiles, lids and bottoms of pipkins, pieces of plates and dishes, handles of jugs, spouts of pitchers; picking up all the spoilt, broken, flawed, cracked lamps, and all the fragments of pottery of every sort he could find in his way. And when he had done all that the serpent had told him, there was to be seen the whole orchard mantled with emeralds and chalcedonies, and coated with rubies and carbuncles. The king was struck all of

a heap at the sight, and knew not what had befallen him. But when the serpent sent again to let him know that he was expecting the performance of his promise, the king answered, 'Oh! all that has been done is nothing, if he does not turn this palace into gold.'

When Cola Matteo told the serpent this new fancy of the king's, the serpent said, 'Go and get a bundle of herbs of different kinds, and rub the bottom of the palace walls with them: we shall see if we cannot satisfy this whim.' Away went Cola Matteo that very moment, and made a great broom of cabbages, radishes, rockets, purslain, turnips, and carrots; and when he had rubbed the lower part of the palace with it, instantly you might see it shining like gold. And when the gardener came again to demand the princess to wife in the name of the serpent, the king, seeing all retreat cut off, called his daughter, and said to her: 'My dear Grannonia, I have endeavoured to get rid of a suitor who asked you for his wife, by making such conditions as seemed to me impossible; but seeing myself foiled, and obliged to consent, I know not how, I pray you, as you are a dutiful daughter, to enable me to keep my word, and to be content with what Heaven wills and I am obliged to do.'

'Do as you please, papa,' said Grannonia; 'I shall not oppose a single jot of

your will.' The king hearing this bade Cola Matteo tell the serpent to come.

The serpent, on receiving the invitation, set out for the palace mounted on a car all of gold, and drawn by four golden elephants. But wherever he came the people fled away in terror, at seeing such a large and frightful serpent making his progress through the city: and when he arrived at the palace the courtiers all trembled like rushes, and ran away, and even the very scullions did not dare to stay in the place. The king and queen also, shivering with fear, crept into a chamber, and Grannonia alone stood her ground; for though her father and her mother kept crying out, 'Fly, fly, Grannonia! save yourself!' she would not stir from the spot, saying, 'Why should I fly from the husband whom you have given me?' And when the serpent came into the room, he took Grannonia by the waist in his tail, and gave her such a shower of kisses, that the king writhed like a worm; and I warrant, if he had been bled, not a single drop of blood would have come. Then the serpent carried her into another room, and fastened the door; and shaking off his skin on the ground, he became a most beautiful youth, with a head all covered with ringlets of gold, and with eyes that would enchant you.

When the king saw the serpent going into the room with his daughter, and shut-

ting the door after him, he said to his wife, 'Heaven have mercy on that good soul my daughter! for she is dead to a certainty, and that accursed serpent has doubtless swallowed her down like the yolk of an egg!' Then he put his eye to the keyhole to see what had become of her; but when he saw the exceeding beauty of the youth, and the skin of the serpent that he had left lying on the ground, he gave the door a kick; then in they rushed, and taking the skin flung it into the fire and burned it.

When the youth saw this, he cried out, 'Ah, you renegade dogs, you have done for me!' and instantly he turned himself into a dove, and was going to fly away through the window; but he struck his head against the panes until he broke them, and cut himself in such a manner that there did not remain a whole spot on his pate.

Grannonia, who thus saw herself at the same moment happy and unhappy, joyful and miserable, rich and poor, tore her face and bewailed her fate, reproaching her father and mother for this interruption of pleasure, this poisoning of sweets, this overthrow of good fortune; but they excused themselves, declaring that they had not meant to do harm. But Grannonia went on weeping and wailing until night; and when she saw that all were in bed, she took her jewels, which were in a writing-desk, and went out

by a back-door, intending to search everywhere till she found the treasure she had lost.

So she went out of the city, guided by the light of the moon, and on her way she met a fox, who asked her if she wished for company. 'Of all things, my friend,' answered Grannonia, 'I should be delighted, for I am not over-well acquainted with the country.' So they travelled along together till they came to a wood, where the trees, at play like children, were making baby-houses for the shadows to lie in; and being now wearied with their journey, and wishing to repose, they retired to the covert of the leaves, where a fountain was playing carnival pranks with the green grass, flinging the water on it by dishfuls; and stretching themselves on a mattress of tender soft grass, they paid the duty of repose which they owed to Nature for the merchandise of life.

They did not awake till the Sun, with his usual fire, gave the signal to sailors and couriers to set out on their road; and after they awoke, they still stayed for some time listening to the singing of the various birds, for Grannonia showed great pleasure in hearing the warbling and twittering they made; and the fox seeing this said to her, 'You would feel twice as much pleasure if you understood, like me, what they are

saying.' At these words Grannonia—for women are by nature as curious as they are talkative—begged the fox to tell her what he had heard the birds saying in their own language. So after having let her entreat him for a long time, in order to raise her curiosity about what he was going to relate, he told her that the birds were talking to one another of what had lately befallen the king's son, who was as beautiful as a fay, and because he would not comply with the wishes of a wicked ogress, had been laid under a spell by her magic power to pass seven years in the form of a serpent; that he had nearly ended the seven years, when he fell in love with the daughter of a king; and being one day in a room with the maiden, and having cast his skin on the ground, her father and mother, out of curiosity, rushed in and burned his skin; whereupon as the prince was flying away in the shape of a dove, he broke a pane in the window to escape, and had hurt his head in such a manner that he was given over by the doctors.

Grannonia, who thus heard her own story spoken of, first of all asked whose son this prince was, and then if there was any hope of cure for his accident. And the fox replied, that the birds had said his father was the king of Big Valley, and that there was no other secret for stopping the holes

in his skull, to prevent his soul getting out at them, than to anoint his wounds with the blood of those very birds who had been telling the story. When Grannonia heard these words, she fell down on her knees to the fox, entreating of him to oblige her, by catching those birds for her, that she might get their blood; adding, that then, like honest comrades, they would share the gain. 'Fair and softly,' said the fox, 'let us wait till night, and when the birds are gone to bed, let your mammy alone, for I will climb up the tree and weasen them one after another.'

So they passed the whole day, talking one time of the beauty of the young prince, then of the mistake made by the maiden's father, then of the mishap that had befallen the prince, chatting and chatting away till Day was gone. Then the fox, as soon as he saw all the birds fast asleep on the branches, stole up quite softly, and, one after another, throttled all the linnets, larks, tomtits, blackbirds, woodpeckers, thrushes, jays, flycatchers, little owls, goldfinches, bullfinches, chaffinches and redbreasts that were on the trees. And when he had killed them all, they put the blood into a little bottle, which the fox carried with him to refresh himself on the road.

Grannonia was so overjoyed that she hardly touched the ground; but the fox

said to her, 'What fine joy in a dream is this, my daughter! you have done nothing unless you have my blood also to mix with that of the birds;' and so saying he set off running away. Grannonia, who saw all her hopes destroyed, had recourse to woman's art, cunning and flattery; and she said to him, 'Gossip fox, there would be some reason for your saving your hide if I were not under so many obligations to you, and if there were no other foxes in the world; but as you know how much I owe you, and know also that there is no scarcity of the like of you in these plains, you may rely on my good faith. So don't act like the cow that kicks down the pail when she has just filled it with milk. You have done the chief part, and now you fail at the best. Do stop; believe me, and come with me to the city of this king, where you may sell me for a slave if you will.'

The fox, who never dreamed that the quintessence of foxery was to be met with, found himself out-foxed by a woman. So he agreed to travel on with Grannonia; but they had hardly gone fifty paces, when she lifted up the stick she carried, and gave him with it such a neat rap that he forthwith stretched his legs. Then cutting his throat, she quickly took the blood and poured it into the little bottle; and setting off again, she stopped not until she came to

Big Valley, where she went straightway to the royal palace, and sent word to the king that she was come to cure the prince.

Then the king ordered her to come into his presence, and he was astonished at seeing a girl undertake a thing which the best doctors in his kingdom had failed to do: however, as a trial could do no harm, he said that he wished greatly to see the experiment made. But Grannonia answered, 'If I show you the effect that you desire, you must promise to give him to me for a husband.' The king, who looked upon his son to be as good as dead, answered her, 'If you give him to me safe and sound, I will give him to you sound and safe; for it is no great matter to give a husband to her who gives me a son.'

So they went to the chamber of the prince, and hardly had she anointed him with the blood, when he found himself just as if nothing had ever ailed him. And Grannonia, when she saw the prince stout and hearty, bade the king keep his word; whereupon the king turning round to his son said, 'My son, a moment ago you were all but dead, and now I see you alive, and can hardly believe it. Therefore, as I have promised this maiden, that if she cured you she should have you for a husband, now that Heaven has shown you favour, enable me to perform my promise, by all the love

you bear me, since gratitude obliges me to pay this debt.'

When the prince heard these words he replied, 'Sir, I would that I had such freedom of my will as to prove to you the love I bear you; but as I have already pledged my faith to another woman, you would not consent that I should break my word, nor would this maiden wish me to do such a wrong to her whom I love; nor can I indeed alter my mind.'

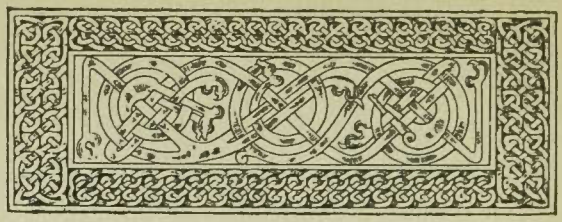
Grannonia, hearing this, felt a secret pleasure not to be described at finding herself still alive in the memory of the prince; her whole face became crimson, and she said, 'If I should induce this maiden whom you love to resign her claims to me, would you then consent to my wish?' 'Never,' replied the prince, 'never will I banish from this breast the fair image of her I love; I shall ever remain of the same mind and will; and I would sooner see myself in danger of losing my place at the table of life, than play such a trick or make this exchange.'

Grannonia could no longer remain in the trammels of disguise, and discovered to the prince who she was; for the chamber being darkened on account of the wounds in his head, and she being disguised, he had not known her. But the prince, now that he recognised her, embraced her with a joy that would amaze you, telling his father who

she was, and what he had done and suffered for her. Then they sent to invite her parents, the king and queen of Long Furrow, and they celebrated the wedding with wonderful festivity, making great sport of the ninny of a fox, and concluding at the last of the last, that

> Pain doth indeed a seasoning prove
> Unto the joys of constant love.

From beginning to end Popa's story made the women laugh outright; but where it spoke of their cunning, which was sufficient to outwit a fox, they were delighted. But let us return to Antonella, who was impatient to speak; and presently, after mustering her thoughts, she spoke as follows.



THE SHE-BEAR

TRULY the wise man said well, that a command of gall cannot be obeyed like one of sugar. A man must require just and reasonable things, if he would see the scales of obedience properly trimmed. From orders which are improper springs resistance which is not easily overcome; as happened to the King of Rough-Rock, who, by asking what he ought not of his daughter, caused her to run away from him, at the risk of losing both honour and life.

There was once upon a time a King of Rough-Rock, who had a wife who was the most beautiful woman in the world, and whom he loved dearly. Now it came about that in the full career of her years she fell a victim to a cruel death, leaving him a widower with an only daughter. Before

dying the Queen said to the King of Rough-Rock: 'I beg you for the sake of the tender love that you have borne to me to be good to our poor daughter, who will need your love doubly, now that I am taken away; and when the hour shall have come to marry her, seek a husband for her in such a wise that she shall not have to leave our royal palace, so that she may remain mistress there where she has been born in our realm of Rough-Rock.'

And the king promised that he would do all that which she demanded of him.

Now when Preziosa his daughter had grown up to the age when it would be well to give her a husband, the King of Rough-Rock commanded that there should be invited to the palace the youths of all the greatest families of the kingdom, so that among them he might choose the husband of the princess, and the future successor to the realm. When they had all come, the King of Rough-Rock, instead of looking to their merits, chose among them the least attractive and the ugliest of all, because he was the most noble and the richest.

When Preziosa saw the ugly and stupid husband whom her father destined for her, she broke forth into a furious invective against his avarice and his pride, and reminded him of the promises made to her dying mother, who certainly would not have wished her to be sacrificed in this way.

When the king had listened to her speech, he answered, 'Be silent, you naughty girl, and make up your mind at once to enter into this marriage, otherwise I will punish you as you deserve.'

When Preziosa heard this menace she retired to her chamber, and bewailed her ill fortune. And whilst she was lamenting thus, an old woman came to her, who was her confidante. As soon as she saw Preziosa, who seemed to belong more to the other world than to this, and heard the cause of her grief, the old woman said to her, 'Cheer up, my daughter; do not despair; there is a remedy for every evil save death. Now listen: if your father continues to press this matter put this bit of wood into your mouth, and instantly you will be changed into a she-bear; then off with you! for in his fright he will let you depart; and go straight to the wood, where heaven has kept good fortune in store for you since the day you were born; and whenever you wish to appear a woman, as you are and will remain, only take the piece of wood out of your mouth, and you will return to your true form.' Then Preziosa embraced the old woman, and giving her a good apronful of meal, and ham and bacon, sent her away.

As soon as the Sun began to set the king ordered the musicians to come; and inviting all his lords and vassals he held a great

feast. And after dancing for five or six hours, they all sat down to table, and ate and drank beyond measure. Then the king asked his courtiers whether he could not oblige Preziosa to marry whom he wished. But the instant Preziosa heard this, she slipped the bit of wood into her mouth, and took the figure of a terrible she-bear; at the sight of which all present were frightened out of their wits, and ran off as fast as they could scamper.

Meanwhile Preziosa went out, and took her way to a wood. And there she stayed in the pleasant companionship of the other animals, until the son of the King of Running-Water came to hunt in that part of the country, who at the sight of the bear had like to have died on the spot. But when he saw the beast come gently up to him, wagging her tail like a little dog and rubbing her sides against him, he took courage, and patted her, and said, 'Good bear, good bear! there, there! poor beast, poor beast!' Then he led her home, and ordered that she should be taken good care of; and he had her put into a garden close to the royal palace, that he might see her from the window whenever he wished.

One day when all the people of the house were gone out, and the prince was left alone, he went to the window to look out at the bear; and there he beheld Preziosa, who

had taken the piece of wood out of her mouth, combing her golden tresses. At the sight of this beauty, he had like to have lost his senses with amazement, and tumbling down the stairs he ran out into the garden. But Preziosa, who was on the watch and observed him, popped the piece of wood into her mouth, and was instantly changed into a bear again.

When the prince came down and looked about in vain for Preziosa, whom he had seen from the window above, he was so amazed at the trick that a deep melancholy came over him, and in four days he fell sick, crying continually, 'My bear, my bear!' His mother, hearing him wailing thus, imagined that the bear had done him some hurt, and gave orders that she should be killed. But the servants, enamoured of the tameness of the bear, who made herself beloved by the very stones in the road, took pity on her, and, instead of killing her, they led her to the wood, and told the queen that they had put an end to her.

When this came to the ears of the prince he acted in a way to pass belief. Regardless of his sickness he jumped out of bed, and was going at once to make mincemeat of the servants. But when they told him the truth of the affair, he jumped on horseback, half dead as he was, and went rambling about and seeking everywhere, until at length

he found the bear. Then he took her home again, and putting her into a chamber said to her, 'O lovely morsel for a king who art shut up in this skin! O candle of love, who art enclosed within this hairy lanthorn! wherefore all this trifling? do you wish to see me pine and pant, and die by inches? I am wasting away, without hope, and tormented by thy beauty; and you see clearly the proof, for I am shrunk two-thirds in size, like wine boiled down, and am nothing but skin and bone, for the fever is double-stitched to my veins. So lift up the curtain of this hairy hide, and let me gaze upon the spectacle of thy beauty! raise, O raise the leaves off this basket, and let me get a sight of the fine fruit beneath! lift up that curtain, and let my eyes pass in to behold the pomp of wonders! Who has shut up so smooth a creature in a prison woven of hair? who has locked up so rich a treasure in a leathern chest? Let me behold this display of graces, and take in payment all my love.'

But when he had said and had said this and a great deal more, and still saw that all his words were thrown away, he took to his bed again, and had such a desperate fit that the doctors prognosticated badly of his case. Then his mother, who had no other joy in the world, sat down by his bedside, and said to him, 'My son, whence comes all this grief? what melancholy humour has seized

you? You are young, you are loved, you are great, you are rich,—what then is it you want, my son? Speak—a bashful beggar carries an empty bag. If you want a wife, only choose, and I will bring the match about; do you take, and I'll pay. Do you not see that your illness is an illness to me? Your pulse beats with fever in your veins, and my heart beats with illness in my brain, for I have no other support of my old age than you. So be cheerful now, and cheer my heart, and do not see the whole kingdom thrown into mourning, this house into lamentation, and your mother forlorn and heartbroken.'

When the prince heard these words he said, 'Nothing can console me but the sight of the bear; therefore, if you wish to see me well again, let her be brought into this chamber. I will have no one else to attend me, and make my bed, and cook for me, but she herself; and you may be sure that this pleasure will make me well in a trice.'

Thereupon his mother, although she thought it ridiculous enough for the bear to act as cook and chambermaid, and feared that her son was not in his right mind, yet, in order to gratify him, had the bear fetched. And when the bear came up to the prince's bed, she raised her paw, and felt the patient's pulse, which made the queen laugh outright,

THE SHE BEAR

for she thought every moment that the bear would scratch his nose. Then the prince said, 'My dear bear, will you not cook for me, and give me my food, and wait upon me?' and the bear nodded her head to show that she accepted the office. Then his mother had some fowls brought, and a fire lighted on the hearth in the same chamber, and some water set to boil; whereupon the bear laying hold on a fowl, scalded and plucked it handily, and drew it, and then stuck one portion of it on the spit, and with the other part she made such a delicious hash that the prince, who could not relish even sugar, licked his fingers at the taste. And when he had done eating, the bear handed him drink with such grace that the queen was ready to kiss her on her forehead. Thereupon the prince arose, and the bear quickly set about making the bed; and running into the garden she gathered a clothful of roses and citron-flowers, and strewed them over it, so that the queen said the bear was worth her weight in gold, and that her son had good reason to be so fond of her.

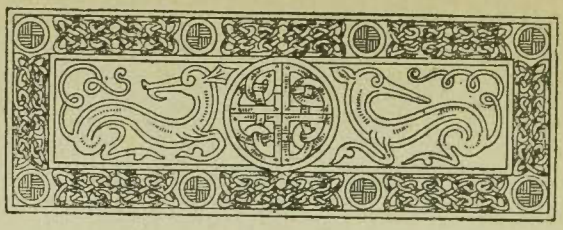
But when the prince saw these pretty offices, they only added fuel to the fire; and if before he wasted by ounces, he now melted away by pounds; and he said to the queen, 'My lady mother, if I do not give this bear a kiss, the breath will leave

my body.' Whereupon the queen, seeing him fainting away, said, 'Kiss him, kiss him, my beautiful beast; let me not see my poor son die of longing.' Then the bear went up to the prince, and taking him by the cheeks kissed him again and again. Meanwhile (I know not how it was) the piece of wood slipped out of Preziosa's mouth, and she remained in the arms of the prince, the most beautiful creature in the world; and pressing her to his heart he said, 'I have caught you, my little rogue! you shall not escape from me again without a good reason.' At these words Preziosa, adding the colour of modesty to the picture of her natural beauty, said to him, 'I am indeed in your hands,—only guard my honour, and take me where you will.'

Then the queen inquired who the beautiful maiden was, and what had brought her to this savage life; and Preziosa related the whole story of her misfortunes, at which the queen, praising her as a good and virtuous girl, told her son that she was content that Preziosa should be his wife. Then the prince, who desired nothing else in life, forthwith pledged her his faith; and the mother giving them her blessing, this happy marriage was celebrated with great feasting and illuminations, and Preziosa experienced the truth of the saying that

One who acts well may always expect good.

When Antonella's story was ended, it was loudly applauded as beautiful and charming, and offering a good example of a virtuous maiden. And now Ciulla's turn being come, she began as follows.



THE DOVE

HE who is born a prince should not act like a beggar-boy: a man who is high in rank ought not to set a bad example to those below him, for the little jackass learns from the big one to eat straw. It is no wonder therefore that Heaven sends him troubles by bushels, as happened to a prince, who was brought into constant trouble for ill-treating and tormenting a poor woman; so that he was near losing his life miserably.

About eight miles from Naples, in the direction of the Astruni, there was once a wood of fig-trees and poplars, which the sun's darts shot at, but could never penetrate. In this wood stood a half-ruined cottage, in which dwelt an old woman, who was as light of teeth as she was burdened with

years, as high with her hump as she was low in fortune: she had a hundred wrinkles in her face, but a great many more in her purse; and although her head was covered with silver, she had not the hundred-and-twentieth part of a carlino to revive her spirit; so that she went from one thatched cottage to another begging alms to keep life in her. But as folks nowadays much sooner give a purse full of crowns to a crafty spy than a farthing to a poor needy man, she had to labour for a whole day to get a dish of kidney-beans, and at a time when there was such a plenty of them in the land that few houses could contain the heaps. But of a truth an old kettle never lacks holes and bumps, nor a starved horse flies, nor a fallen tree the axe. Now one day the poor old woman, after having washed the beans, and put them into a pot, and placed it outside the window, went her way to the wood to get some sticks, in order to boil them. And as she was going and returning, Nardo Aniello, the king's son, passed by the cottage on his way to the chase, and seeing the pot at the window, he took a great fancy to have a fling at it; and he made a bet with his attendants, to see who should fling the straightest, and hit it in the middle with a stone. Then they began to throw at the innocent pot, and in three or four casts

the prince hit it to a hair and won the wager.

The old woman returned just at the moment when they had gone away; and seeing the sad disaster, she began to act as if she were beside herself, crying, 'Ay, let him stretch out his arm, and go about boasting how he has broken this pot! the villainous rascal, who has sown my beans out of season! And yet, if he had no compassion for my misery, he should have had some regard for his own interest, and not have cast to the ground the escutcheon of his own house, nor trodden underfoot things that other folks carry on their heads. But let him go! and I pray heaven on my bare knees, and from the bottom of my soul, that he may fall in love with the daughter of some ogress, who may plague and torment him in every way. May his mother-in-law give him such a curse that he may see himself live on and bewail himself as dead; and being spell-bound by the beauty of the daugher and the arts of the mother, may he never be able to escape, but be obliged to remain, and may she order him about with a cudgel in her hand, and give him plenty of work and little to eat, that he may have good cause to sigh and lament over my beans which he has spilt on the ground.'

The old woman's curses took wing and

flew up to heaven in a trice; so that notwithstanding what the proverb says, 'For a woman's curse you are never the worse,' and 'The coat of a horse that has been cursed always shines,' she rated the prince so soundly that he wellnigh jumped out of his skin.

Scarcely had two hours passed, when the prince, losing himself in a wood and parted from his attendants, met a beautiful maiden, who was going along picking up snails, and saying with a laugh,

> Snail, snail, put out your horn,
> Your mother is laughing you to scorn,
> For she has a little son just born.

When the prince saw appear before him this lovely vision he knew not what had befallen him.

Now Filadoro (for so the maiden was named) was no wiser than other people; and the prince, being a smart young fellow with handsome moustachios, pierced her heart through and through; so that they stood looking at one another with their eyes. After they both remained thus for a long time, unable to utter a single word, the prince at last addressed Filadoro thus: 'From what meadow has this flower of beauty sprung? from what heaven has this store of grace been showered down? from what mine has this

treasure of beauteous things come to light? O happy woods, O fortunate groves, which this nobility inhabits.'

'I kiss your hands, Sir Cavalier,' said Filadoro, 'but I beg you not to continue praising me in this fashion, for I am only just a woman like any other. But such as I am I am wholly at your command, for your manly form has captivated my heart.'

The prince, delighted with these words, grew more and more attentive, and he kissed and rekissed the white hand of Filadoro.

But in this wretched life there is no wine of enjoyment without dregs of vexation, and just at this moment Filadoro's mother suddenly appeared, who was such an ugly ogress that Nature seemed to have formed her as a model of horrors; she had hair like a besom of holly, her forehead was a stone, her eyes were comets; in short, she carried terror in her face, affright in her looks, horror in her steps, and dread in her words; her mouth had tusks like a boar's, was wide as an abyss, and opened like that of a person who has the apoplexy. From head to foot she looked a quintessence of ugliness; insomuch that the prince must for certain have carried some charm sown into his doublet, that he did not faint away at the sight. Then the ogress seized Nardo

Aniello by the nape of his neck, saying, 'Hallo! what now, you thief, you rogue!'

'Yourself the rogue!' replied the prince; 'back with you, old hag!' And he was just going to draw his sword, which was an old Damascus blade, when all at once he stood fixed, like a sheep that has seen the wolf and can neither stir nor utter a sound; so that the ogress led him like an ass by a halter to her house. And when they came there she said to him, 'Mind now, and work like a dog, unless you wish to die like a hog; and for your first task, take care in the course of to-day to have this acre of land dug and sown as level as this room: and recollect, that if I return in the evening and do not find the work finished, I shall eat you up.' Then bidding her daughter take care of the house, she went to a meeting of the other ogresses in the wood.

Nardo Aniello, seeing himself dragged into this dilemma, began to bathe his breast with tears, cursing his fate, which had brought him to this pass. But Filadoro, on the other hand, comforted him, bidding him be of good heart, for that she would even risk her life to assist him; and adding, that he ought not to lament his fate, which had led him to that house, where he was loved so dearly by her, and that he showed little return for her love by standing so in

despair at what had happened. The prince replied, 'I am not grieved at having exchanged the royal palace for this hovel, the splendid banquets for a crust of bread, the troop of servants for field-labour, the sceptre for a spade, nor at seeing myself, who have terrified armies, now frightened by this hideous scarecrow; for I should deem all my disasters good fortune to be with you, and to gaze upon you with these eyes. But what pierces me to the heart is that I have to dig till my hands are covered with hard skin—I whose fingers were as delicate and soft as Barbary wool; and, what is still worse, I have to do more than two oxen could get through in a day; and if I do not finish the task this evening, your mother will eat me up; yet withal I should not grieve so much to quit this wretched body as to be parted from so beautiful a creature.'

So saying he heaved sighs by bushels and shed tears by casksful. But Filadoro, drying his eyes, said to him, 'Fear not, my life, that my mother will touch a hair of your head; trust to Filadoro, and fear not; for you must know that I possess magical powers, and am able to make water set cream, and to darken the sun. Enough and sufficient—be of good heart, for by the evening the piece of land will be dug and sown, without any one's stirring a hand.'

When Nardo Aniello heard this, he answered, 'If you have magic power, as you say, O beauty of the world, why do we not fly from this country? for you shall live like a queen in my father's house.' And Filadoro replied, 'A certain conjunction of the stars prevents this; but the trouble will soon pass, and we shall be happy.'

With these and a thousand other pleasant discourses the day passed; and when the ogress came back, she called to her daughter from the road, and said, 'Filadoro, let down your hair!' for as the house had no staircase, she always ascended by her daughter's tresses. As soon as Filadoro heard her mother's voice, she unbound her hair and let fall her tresses: whereupon the old woman mounted up quickly and ran into the garden. But when she found it all dug and sown, she was beside herself with amazement; for it seemed to her impossible that a delicate lad could have accomplished such dog's labour.

But the next morning, hardly had the Sun risen, when the ogress went down again, bidding Nardo Aniello take care that in the evening she should find ready split six stacks of wood which were in the cellar, with every log cleft into four pieces; or otherwise she would cut him up like bacon, and make a fry of him for supper.

On hearing this decree the poor prince

had like to have died of terror; and Filadoro, seeing him half dead and pale as ashes, said, 'Why, what a coward you are to be frightened at such a trifle!' 'Do you think it a trifle,' replied Nardo Aniello, 'to split six stacks of wood, with every log cleft into four pieces, between this time and the evening? Alas! I shall sooner be cleft in halves myself, to fill the mouth of this horrid old woman.'

'Fear not,' answered Filadoro; 'for without your giving yourself any trouble, the wood shall all be split in good time; but meanwhile cheer up if you love me, and do not split my heart with such lamentation.'

Now when the Sun had set, the old woman returned, and bidding Filadoro let down the usual ladder, she ascended; and finding the wood all ready split, she began to suspect that it was her daughter who had given her this checkmate. And the third day, in order to make a third trial, she ordered the prince to clean out for her a cistern which held a thousand casks of water, for she wished to fill it anew; adding, that if the task were not finished by the evening she would make mincemeat of him.

When the old woman went away, Nardo Aniello began again to weep and wail; and Filadoro, seeing that the labours in-

creased, and that the old woman had something of the jackass in her to burden the poor fellow with such tasks and troubles, said to him, 'Be quiet, and as soon as the moment is past that interrupts my art, before the Sun says 'I am off,' we will say good-bye to this house; sure enough this evening my mother shall find the land cleared, and I will go off with you, alive or dead.' The prince, on hearing this news, rejoiced; and embracing Filadoro he said, 'Thou art the pole-star of this storm-tossed bark, thou art the prop of my hopes.'

Now when evening drew nigh, Filadoro having dug a hole in the garden, under which there was a large underground passage, they went out and took the way to Naples. But when they arrived at the grotto of Pozzuolo, Nardo Aniello said to Filadoro, 'It will never do, my dear, for me to take you to the palace on foot and dressed in this manner; therefore wait at this inn, and I will soon return with horses, carriages, servants, and clothes.' So Filadoro stayed behind, and the prince went his way to the city.

Meanwhile the ogress returned home, and as Filadoro did not answer to her usual summons, she grew suspicious, ran into the wood, and cutting a great long pole, placed it against the window, and climbed up like a cat. Then she went into the

house, and hunted everywhere, inside and out, high and low, but found no one: at last she perceived the hole, and seeing that it led into the open air, in her rage she did not leave a hair upon her head, cursing her daughter and the prince, and praying that at the first kiss Filadoro's lover should receive he might forget her.

But let us leave the old woman to say her wicked paternosters, and return to the prince, who on arriving at the palace, where he was thought to be dead, put the whole house in an uproar, every one running to meet him and crying, 'Welcome, welcome! here he is safe and sound! how happy we are to see him back to this country!' and a thousand other words of affection. But as he was going up the stairs, his mother met him half-way, and embraced and kissed him, saying, 'My son, my jewel, the apple of my eye, where have you been? how is it you have stayed away so long, to make us all die with anxiety?' The prince knew not what to answer, for he did not wish to tell her his misfortunes; but no sooner had his mother kissed him with her poppy lips than, owing to the curse of the ogress, all that had passed went from his memory. Then the queen told her son that, to put an end to his going to the chase and wasting his life in the woods, she wished to have him married.

'Well and good,' replied the prince; 'I am ready and prepared to do all that my lady mother desires.' 'Spoken like a good son!' answered the queen. So it was settled that within four days they should lead home to him the bride, who was a lady of distinction just arrived in that city from the country of Flanders; and thereupon a great feasting and banquets were held.

But meanwhile Filadoro, seeing that her husband stayed away so long, and hearing (I know not how) of the feast, the news of which had spread everywhere far and wide, waited in the evening till the servant-lad of the inn had gone to bed; and then taking his clothes from the head of the bed, she left her own in their place; and disguising herself like a man, she went to the court of the king, where the cooks, being in want of help as they had so much to do, took her as kitchen-boy. And when the appointed morning was come, the bride arrived with the sound of flutes and trumpets. Then the tables were set out, and they all took their seats; and just as the dishes were showering down, and the carver was cutting up a large pie, which Filadoro had made with her own hands, lo! out flew such a beautiful dove, that the guests, in their astonishment forgetting to eat, fell to admiring the pretty bird, which said to the prince in a piteous voice, 'Have you eaten

the brains of a cat, O prince, that you have so forgotten the love of Filadoro? have all the services you received from her, ungrateful man, gone from your memory? is it thus you repay the benefits she has done you—she who took you out of the claws of the ogress, and gave you life and her own self too? is this the return you make to the unhappy maiden for all the love she has shown you? Tell her to get up and be off! bid her pick this bone until the roast meat come. Woe to the woman that trusts too much to the words of men, who ever requite kindness with ingratitude, benefits with thanklessness, and pay debts with forgetfulness! Just when the poor girl was imagining that she should live with you and share your fortunes, she is left and forsaken. But go! forget your promises, false man! and may the curses follow you which the unhappy maiden sends you from the bottom of her heart! you shall learn what it is to deceive a young maiden, to make sport of a poor girl, to cheat an innocent damsel, treating her with contempt whilst she served you so faithfully. But if Heaven has not bandaged its eyes, if the gods have not locked up their ears, they will witness the wrong you have done her; and when you least expect it, the lightning and thunder, the fever and the illness will come to you. Enough! eat and drink,

take your sports and frolics and triumph with the new bride; for unhappy Filadoro, deceived and forsaken, will leave you the field open to make merry with your new wife.' So saying the dove flew away quickly and vanished like the wind.

The prince, hearing the murmuring of the dove, stood for a while stupefied: at length he inquired whence the pie came, and when the carver told him that a scullion-boy who had been taken to assist in the kitchen had made it, he ordered him to be brought before him. Then Filadoro, throwing herself at the feet of Nardo Aniello, and shedding a torrent of tears, said merely, 'What have I done to you?' Whereupon the prince, struck by Filadoro's beauty, at once recalled to mind the engagement he had made with her, and instantly raising her up, he seated her by his side. And when he related to his mother the great obligation he was under to this beautiful maiden, and all that she had done for him, and how it was necessary that the promise he had given should be fulfilled, his mother, who had no other joy in life than her son, said to him, 'Do as you please, so that you offend not the honour or the good pleasure of this lady whom I have given you to wife.'

'Be not troubled,' said the lady, 'for, to tell the truth, I am very loath to remain in

this country; with your kind permission, I wish to return to my dear Flanders.'

Thereupon the prince with great joy offered her a vessel and attendants; and ordering Filadoro to be dressed like a princess, when the tables were removed, the musicians came, and they began the ball, which lasted until evening. But as soon as the lights were brought a great noise of bells was heard on the stairs, whereat the prince said to his mother, 'This must surely be some pretty masquerade, to do honour to the feast; upon my word the Neapolitan cavaliers are vastly polite, and when called upon they spare neither pains nor money.'

But whilst they were discoursing thus, there appeared in the middle of the hall an ugly figure, who was not more than three feet high, but as big as a tub; and stepping up to the prince she said, 'Know, Nardo Aniello, that your caprices and ill deeds brought on you all the troubles you have gone through: I am the spirit of that old woman whose pot you broke, so that she died of hunger. I laid a curse upon you, wishing that you might be seized by the claws of an ogress, and my wish was fulfilled: by the power of this beautiful fairy, however, you escaped from those troubles, but afterwards you received another curse from the ogress, that at the first kiss given

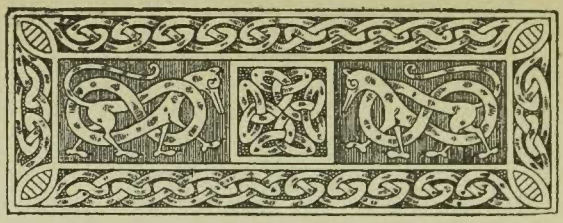
you, you should forget Filadoro; your mother kissed you, and Filadoro went out of your mind. But now I lay another curse upon you, that, in remembrance of the injury you did me, you may always have before you those beans of mine which you threw on the ground, so that the proverb may come true, "He who sows beans gets a crop of horns."' So saying she vanished like quicksilver, and not a trace of smoke was to be seen.

The fairy, seeing the prince grow pale at these words, bade him take courage, saying, 'Fear not, my husband, I will save you from the fire.' Then she pronounced the words, 'Scatola and matola! thus the charm of all power I disarm'; and instantly the spell was at an end.

So the feast being now ended, they all betook themselves to rest; and the prince and Filadoro lived happy ever after, proving the truth of the proverb that

> He who stumbles and does not fall,
> Is helped on his way like a rolling ball.

'Of a truth,' said the prince, 'every man ought to act according to his station,—the nobleman as a nobleman, the lacquey as a lacquey, and the constable as a constable; for as the beggar-boy, wishing to act the prince, becomes ridiculous, so the prince acting like a beggar-boy loses his reputation.'



THE BOOBY

AN ignorant man who associates with clever people has always been more praised than a wise man who keeps the company of fools; for as much profit and fame as one may gain from the former, so much wealth and honour one may lose by the fault of the latter; and as the proof of the pudding is in the eating, you will know from the story which I am going to tell you whether my proposition be true.

There was once a man who was as rich as the sea, but as there can never be any perfect happiness in this world, he had a son so idle and good-for-nothing that he could not tell a carob from a cucumber. So being unable any longer to put up with his folly, he gave him a good handful of crowns, and sent him to trade in the

Levant; for he well knew that seeing various countries and mixing with divers people awaken the genius, sharpen the judgment, and make men expert.

Moscione (for that was the name of the son) got on horseback, and began his journey towards Venice, the arsenal of the wonders of the world, to embark on board some vessel bound for Cairo; and when he had travelled a good day's journey, he met with a person who was standing fixed at the foot of a poplar, to whom he said, 'What is your name, my lad? whence are you? and what is your trade?' And the lad replied, 'My name is Lightning; I am from Arrowland, and I can run like the wind.' 'I should like to see a proof of it,' said Moscione; and Lightning answered, 'Wait a moment, and you will see whether it is dust or flour.'

When they had stood waiting a little while, a doe came bounding over the plain, and Lightning, letting her pass on some way, to give her the more law, darted after her so rapidly and light of foot, that he would have gone over a place covered with flour without leaving the mark of his shoe, and in four bounds he came up with her. Moscione, amazed at this exploit, asked if he would come and live with him, and promised to pay him royally.

So Lightning consented, and they went

on their way together; but they had not journeyed many miles when they met another youth, to whom Moscione said, 'What is your name, comrade? what country are you from? and what's your trade?' 'My name,' replied the lad, 'is Hare's-ear; I am from Vale-Curious; and when I put my ear to the ground I hear all that is passing in the world without stirring from the spot. I perceive the monopolies and agreements of trades-people to raise the prices of things, the ill-offices of courtiers, the appointments of lovers, the plots of robbers, the reports of spies, the complaints of servants, the gossiping of old women, and the oaths of sailors.'

'If that be true,' said Moscione, 'tell me what they are now saying at my home.'

So the lad put his ear to the ground, and replied, 'An old man is talking to his wife, and saying, "Praised be Sol in Leo! I have got rid from my sight of that fellow Moscione, that face of old-fashioned crockery, that nail in my heart. By travelling through the world he will at least become a man, and no longer be such a stupid ass, such a simpleton, such a lose-the-day fellow, such a——"'

'Stop, stop!' cried Moscione; 'you tell the truth, and I believe you. So come along with me, for you have found the road to good luck.'

'Well and good!' said the youth. So they all went on together and travelled ten miles farther, when they met another man, to whom Moscione said, 'What is your name, my brave fellow? where were you born? and what can you do in the world?' And the man answered, 'My name is Shootstraight; I am from Castle Aimwell; and I can shoot with a crossbow so point-blank as to hit a crab-apple in the middle.'

'I should like to see the proof,' said Moscione. So the lad charged his crossbow, took aim, and made a pea leap from the top of a stone; whereupon Moscione took him also like the others into his company. And they travelled on another day's journey, till they came to some people who were building a large pier in the scorching heat of the sun. So Moscione had compassion on them, and said, 'My masters, how is it you have the head to stand in this furnace, which is fit to roast a buffalo?' And one of them answered, 'Oh, we are as cool as a rose; for we have a young man here who blows upon us from behind in such a manner that it seems just as if the west wind were blowing.' 'Let me see him, I pray,' cried Moscione. So the mason called the lad, and Moscione said to him, 'Tell me, by the life of your father, what is your name? what country are you from? and what is your profession?' And

the lad replied, 'My name is Blowblast; I am from Windy-Land; and I can make all the winds with my mouth. If you wish for a zephyr, I will breathe one that will send you into transports; if you wish for a squall, I will throw down houses.'

'Seeing is believing,' said Moscione. Whereupon Blowblast breathed at first quite gently, so that it seemed to be the wind that blows towards evening; then turning suddenly to some trees, he sent forth such a furious blast that it uprooted a row of oaks.

When Moscione saw this he took him for a companion; and travelling on as far again, he met another lad, to whom he said, 'What is your name, if I may make so bold? whence are you, if one may ask? and what is your trade, if it is a fair question?' And the lad answered, 'My name is Strongback; I am from Valentino, and I have such strength that I can take a mountain on my back, and it seems to me only a feather.'

'If that be the case,' said Moscione, 'you deserve to be king of the custom-house, and you should be chosen for standard-bearer on the first of May. But I should like to see a proof of what you say.'

Then Strongback began to load himself with masses of rock, trunks of trees, and so many other weights, that a thousand large waggons could not have carried them;

which when Moscione saw, he agreed with the lad to join him.

So they travelled on, till they came to Fair-Flower, the king of which place had a daughter who ran like the wind, and could pass over the waving corn without bending an ear; and the king had issued a proclamation, that whoever could overtake her in running should have her to wife, but whoever was left behind should lose his head.

When Moscione arrived in this country, and heard the proclamation, he went straight to the king, and offered to run with his daughter, making the wise agreement either to win the race or leave his noddle there. But in the morning he sent to inform the king that he was taken ill, and being unable to run himself, he would send another young man in his place. 'Come who will!' said Ciannetella (for that was the king's daughter), 'I care not a fig—it is all one to me.'

So when the great square was filled with people come to see the race, insomuch that the men swarmed like ants, and the windows and roofs were all as full as an egg, Lightning came out and took his station at the top of the square, waiting for the signal. And lo! forth came Ciannetella, dressed in a little gown, tucked half-way up her legs, and a neat and pretty little shoe with a single sole. Then they placed themselves shoulder to shoulder; and as soon as the

tarantara and too-too of the trumpets was heard, off they darted, running at such a rate that their heels touched their shoulders, and in truth they seemed just like hares with the greyhounds after them, horses broken loose from the stable, dogs with kettles tied to their tails, or jackasses with furze-bushes behind them. But Lightning (as he was both by name and nature) left the princess more than a handsbreadth behind him, and came first to the goal. Then you should have heard the huzzaing and shouting, the cries and the uproar, the whistling and clapping of hands of all the people, bawling out, 'Hurra! Long life to the stranger!' Whereat Ciannetella's face turned as red as a schoolboy's who is going to be whipped, and she stood lost in shame and confusion at seeing herself vanquished. But as there were to be two heats to the race, she fell to planning how to be revenged for this affront; and going home she put a charm into a ring, of such power, that if any one had it upon his finger, his legs would totter so that he would not be able to walk, much less to run; then she sent it as a present to Lightning, begging him to wear it on his finger for love of her.

Quickear, who heard this trick plotted between the father and daughter, said nothing, and waited to see the upshot of the affair. And when the sun rose, they

returned to the field, where at the usual signal they fell to plying their heels. But if Ciannetella was like another Atalanta, Lightning had become no less like a shoulder-slipped ass and a foundered horse, for he could not stir a step. But Shoot-straight, who saw his comrade's danger, and heard from Quickear how matters stood, laid hold on his crossbow, and shot a bolt so exactly that it hit Lightning's finger, and out flew the stone from the ring, in which the virtue of the charm lay; whereupon his legs, that had been tied, were set free, and with four goat-leaps he passed Ciannetella and won the race.

The king, seeing this victory of a block-head, the palm thus carried off by a simpleton, the triumph of a fool, bethought himself seriously whether or no he should give him his daughter; and taking counsel with the wiseacres of his court, they replied that Ciannetella was not a mouthful for the tooth of such a miserable dog and lose-the-day bird, and that without breaking his word he might commute the promise of his daughter for a gift of crowns, which would be more to the taste of a poor beggar like Moscione than all the women in the world.

This advice pleased the king, and he asked Moscione how much money he would take instead of the wife who had been promised him. Then Moscione, after consult-

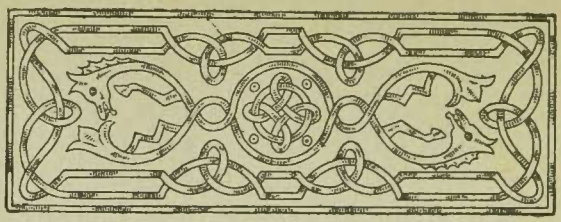
ing with the others, answered, 'I will take as much gold and silver as one of my comrades can carry on his back.' The king consented; whereupon they brought Strongback, on whom they began to load bales of ducats, sacks of patacas, large purses full of crowns, barrels of copper money, chests full of chains and rings; but the more they loaded him the firmer he stood, just like a tower, so that the treasury, the banks, the usurers, and the money-dealers of the city did not suffice, and the king sent to all the great people in every direction to borrow their silver candlesticks, basins, jugs, plates, trays, and baskets; and yet all was not enough to make up the full load. At length they went away, not laden, but tired and satisfied.

When the councillors saw what heaps and stores these four miserable dogs were carrying off, they said to the king that it was a great piece of assery to load them with all the sinews of his kingdom, and that it would be well to send people after them to lessen the load of that Atlas who was carrying on his shoulders a heaven of treasure. The king gave ear to this advice, and immediately despatched a party of armed men, foot and horse, to overtake Moscione and his friends. But Quickear, who had heard this counsel, informed his comrades; and while the dust was rising to the sky from the trampling of those who were coming to

THE BOOBY.

unload the rich cargo, Blowblast, seeing that things were come to a bad pass, began to blow at such a rate, that he not only made their enemies fall flat on the ground, but he sent them flying more than a mile distant, as the north wind does folks who pass through that country. So without meeting any more hindrance, Moscione arrived at his father's house, where he shared the booty with his companions, since, as the saying goes, a good deed deserves a good meed. So he sent them away content and happy; but he stayed with his father, rich beyond measure, and saw himself an ass laden with gold, not giving the lie to the saying,

Heaven sends biscuits to him who has no teeth.



THE STONE IN THE COCK'S HEAD

THE robber's wife does not always laugh: he who weaves fraud works his own ruin: there is no deceit which is not at last discovered, no treachery that does not come to light: walls have ears, and are spies to rogues: the earth gapes and discovers theft; as I will prove to you if you pay attention.

There was once in the city of Dark-Grotto a certain man named Minecco Aniello, who was so persecuted by fortune that all his fixtures and movables consisted only of a short-legged cock, which he had reared upon bread-crumbs. But one morning, being pinched with appetite (for hunger drives the wolf from the thicket), he took it into his head to sell the cock; and taking it to the market, he met two thievish magicians, with

whom he made a bargain, and sold it for half-a-crown. So they told him to take it to their house, and they would count him out the money. Then the magicians went their way, and Minecco Aniello following them, overheard them talking gibberish together, and saying, 'Who would have told us that we should meet with such a piece of good luck, Jennarone? This cock will make our fortune to a certainty by the stone which, you know, he has in his pate: we will quickly have it set in a ring, and then we shall have everything we can ask for.'

'Be quiet, Jacovuccio,' answered Jennarone; 'I see myself rich and can hardly believe it; and I am longing to twist the cock's neck, and give a kick in the face of beggary; for in this world virtue without money goes for nothing, and a man is judged of by his coat.'

When Minecco Aniello, who had travelled about in the world and eaten bread from more than one oven, heard this gibberish, he turned on his heel and scampered off. And running home he twisted the cock's neck, and opening its head found the stone, which he had instantly set in a brass ring. Then, to make a trial of its virtue, he said, 'I wish to become a youth eighteen years old.'

Hardly had he uttered the words when his blood began to flow more quickly, his nerves became stronger, his limbs firmer,

his flesh fresher, his eyes more fiery, his silver hairs were turned into gold, his mouth, which was a sacked village, became peopled with teeth, his beard, which was as thick as a wood, became like a nursery-garden; in short, he was changed to a most beautiful youth. Then he said again, 'I wish for a splendid palace, and to marry the king's daughter.' And lo! there instantly appeared a palace of incredible magnificence, in which were apartments that would amaze you, columns to astound you, pictures to fill you with wonder: silver glittered around, and gold was trodden underfoot; the jewels dazzled your eyes; the servants swarmed like ants, the horses and carriages were not to be counted; in short, there was such a display of riches, that the king stared at the sight, and willingly gave him his daughter Natalizia.

Meanwhile the magicians, having discovered Minecco Aniello's great wealth, laid a plan to rob him of his good fortune; so they made a pretty little doll, which played and danced by means of clockwork; and dressing themselves like merchants, they went to Pentella, the daughter of Minecco Aniello, under pretext of selling it to her. When Pentella saw the beautiful little thing, she asked them what price they put upon it; and they replied, that it was not to be bought for money, but that she might have

it and welcome if she would only do them a favour, which was, to let them see the make of the ring which her father possessed, in order to take the model and make another like it; then they would give her the doll without any payment at all.

Pentella, who had never heard the proverb, 'Think well before you buy anything cheap,' instantly accepted this offer; and bidding them return the next morning, she promised to ask her father to lend her the ring. So the magicians went away, and when her father returned home, Pentella coaxed and caressed him, until at last she persuaded him to give her the ring, making the excuse that she was sad at heart, and wished to divert her mind a little.

When the next day came, as soon as the scavenger of the Sun had swept the last trace of the Shades from the streets and squares of Heaven, the magicians returned; and no sooner had they the ring in their hands than they instantly vanished, and not a trace of them was to be seen; so that poor Pentella had like to have died with terror.

But when the magicians came to a wood, they desired the ring to destroy the spell by which the old man had become young again. And instantly Minecco Aniello, who was just at that minute in the presence of the king, was suddenly seen to grow hoary, his hairs to whiten, his forehead to wrinkle, his eye-

brows to grow bristly, his eyes to sink in, his face to be furrowed, his mouth to become toothless, his beard to grow bushy, his back to be humped, his legs to tremble, and above all his glittering garments to turn to rags and tatters.

The king, seeing this miserable beggar seated beside him at table, ordered him to be instantly driven away with blows and hard words; whereupon Aniello, thus suddenly fallen from his good luck, went weeping to his daughter, and asked for the ring in order to set matters to rights again. But when he heard the fatal trick played by the false merchants, he was ready to throw himself out of the window, cursing a thousand times the ignorance of his daughter, who for the sake of a silly doll had turned him into a miserable scarecrow, and for a paltry thing of rags had brought him to rags himself; adding that he was resolved to go wandering about in the world, like a bad shilling, until he should get tidings of those merchants. So saying he threw a cloak about his neck and a wallet on his back, drew his sandals on his feet, took a staff in his hand, and leaving his daughter all chilled and frozen, he set out walking desperately on and on until he arrived at the kingdom of Deep-Hole, inhabited by the mice, where, being taken for a big spy of the cats, he was instantly

led before Nibbler the king. Then the king asked him who he was, whence he came, and what he was about in that country; and Minecco Aniello, after first giving the king a cheese-paring, in sign of tribute, related to him all his misfortunes one by one, and concluded by saying that he was resolved to continue his toil and travel, until he should get tidings of those thievish villains who had robbed him of so precious a jewel, taking from him at once the flower of his youth, the source of his wealth, and the prop of his honour.

At these words Nibbler felt pity gnawing at his heart; and wishing to comfort the poor man, he summoned the eldest mice to a council, and asked their opinions on the misfortunes of Minecco Aniello, commanding them to use all diligence and endeavour to obtain some tidings of those false merchants. Now among the rest it happened that Pecker and Saltariello Skipjack were present,—mice who were well used to the ways of the world, and had lived for six years at a tavern of great resort hard by; and they said to Aniello, 'Be of good heart, comrade! matters will turn out better than you imagine. You must know that one day, when we were in a room in the hostelry of the "Horn," where the most famous men in the world lodge and make merry, two persons from Hook-Castle came

in, who, after they had eaten their fill and had seen the bottom of their flagon, fell to talking of a trick they had played a certain old man of Dark-Grotto, and how they had cheated him out of a stone of great value, which one of them named Jennarone said he would never take from his finger, that he might not run the risk of losing it as the old man's daughter had done.'

When Minecco Aniello heard this, he told the two mice that if they would trust themselves to accompany him to the country where these rogues lived, and recover the ring for him, he would give them a good lot of cheese and salt meat, which they might eat and enjoy with his majesty the king. Then the two mice, after bargaining for a reward, offered to go over sea and mountain; and taking leave of his mousy majesty, they set out.

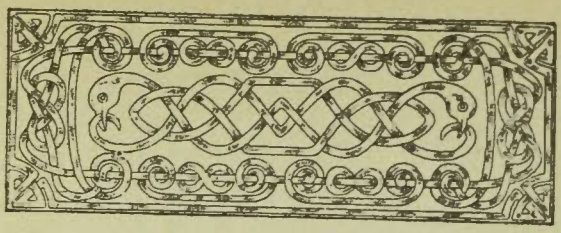
After journeying a long way, they arrived at Hook-Castle, where the mice told Minecco Aniello to remain under some trees on the brink of a river, which like a leech drew the moisture from the land and discharged it into the sea. Then they went to seek the house of the magicians; and observing that Jennarone never took the ring from his finger, they sought to gain the victory by stratagem. So waiting till Night had dyed with purple grape-juice the sunburnt face of Heaven, and the magicians had gone to bed

and were fast asleep, Pecker began to nibble the finger on which the ring was; whereupon Jennarone, feeling the smart, took the ring off and laid it on a table at the head of the bed. But as soon as Saltariello saw this, he popped the ring into his mouth, and in four skips he was off to find Minecco Aniello, who with even greater joy than a man at the gallows feels when a pardon arrives, instantly turned the magicians into two jackasses; and throwing his mantle over one of them, he bestrode him like a noble count; then he loaded the other with cheese and bacon, and set off toward Deep-Hole, where having given presents to the king and his councillors, he thanked them for all the good fortune he had received by their assistance, praying Heaven that no mousetrap might ever lay hold of them, that no cat might ever harm them, and that no arsenic might ever poison them.

Then leaving that country, Minecco Aniello returned to Dark-Grotto even more handsome than before, and was received by the king and his daughter with the greatest affection in the world. And having ordered the two asses to be cast down from a rock, he lived happy with his wife, never more taking the ring from his finger, that he might not again commit such a folly; for

The dog who has been scalded with hot water has ever after a dread of cold water.

The adventures of Minecco Aniello gave great satisfaction to the Prince and his wife, and they blessed the mice a thousand times for getting the stone again for the poor man, and rewarding the magicians as they deserved. But as Meneca had now taken her station on the racecourse of story-telling, all present barred the door of words with the bolt of silence, and she began as follows.



THE TWO CAKES

HAVE always heard say, that he who gives pleasure finds it: the bell of Manfredonia says, 'Give me, I give thee': he who does not bait the hook of the affections with courtesy never catches the fish of kindness; and if you wish to hear the proof of this, listen to my story, and then say whether the covetous man does not always lose more than the liberal one.

There were once two sisters, named Luceta and Troccola, who had two daughters, Marziella and Puccia. Marziella was as fair to look upon as she was good at heart; whilst, on the contrary, Puccia by the same rule had a face of ugliness and a heart of pestilence; but the girl resembled her parent, for Troccola was a harpy within and a very scarecrow without.

Now it happened that Luceta had occasion to boil some parsnips, in order to fry them with green sauce; so she said to her daughter, 'Marziella, my dear, go to the well and fetch me a pitcher of water.'

'With all my heart, mother,' replied the girl; 'but if you love me give me a cake, for I should like to eat it with a draught of the fresh water.'

'By all means,' said her mother; so she took from a basket that hung upon a hook a beautiful cake (for she had baked a batch the day before), and gave it to Marziella, who set the pitcher on a pad upon her head, and went to the fountain, which, like a charlatan upon a marble bench, to the music of the falling water was selling secrets to drive away thirst. And as she was stooping down to fill her pitcher, up came an old woman; and seeing the beautiful cake, which Marziella was just going to bite, she said to her, 'My pretty girl, give me a little piece of your cake, and may Heaven send you good fortune!'

Marziella, who was as generous as a queen, replied, 'Take it all, my good woman; and I am only sorry that it is not made of sugar and almonds, for I would equally give it you with all my heart.'

The old woman, seeing Marziella's kindness, said to her, 'Go, and may Heaven reward you for the goodness you have shown

me! and I pray all the stars that you may ever be content and happy,—that when you breathe, roses and jessamines may fall from your mouth; that when you comb your locks, pearls and garnets may fall from them, and where you set your foot on the ground, lilies and violets may spring up.'

Marziella thanked the old woman, and went her way home, where her mother having cooked a bit of supper, they paid the natural debt to the body, and thus ended the day. And the next morning, as Marziella was combing her hair, she saw a shower of pearls and garnets fall from it into her lap; whereupon calling her mother with great joy, they put them all into a basket, and Luceta went to sell a great part of them to a usurer, who was a friend of hers. Meanwhile Troccola came to see her sister, and finding Marziella in great delight and busied with the pearls, she asked her how, when, and where she had gotten them. But the maiden, who did not understand the ways of the world, and had perhaps never heard the proverb, 'Do not all you are able, eat not all you wish, spend not all you have, and tell not all you know,' related the whole affair to her aunt, who no longer cared to await her sister's return, for every hour seemed to her a thousand years until she got home again. Then giving a cake to her daughter, she sent her

for water to the fountain, where Puccia found the same old woman. And when the old woman asked her for a little piece of cake, she answered gruffly, 'Have I nothing to do forsooth but to give you cake? do you take me for such an ass as to give you what belongs to me? Look ye, charity begins at home.' And so saying she swallowed the cake in four pieces, making the old woman's mouth water, who, when she saw the last morsel disappear, and her hopes buried with the cake, exclaimed in a rage, 'Begone! and whenever you breathe may you foam at the mouth like a doctor's mule, may toads drop from your lips, and every time you set foot to the ground may there spring up ferns and thistles!'

Puccia took the pitcher of water and returned home, where her mother was all impatience to hear what had befallen her at the fountain. But no sooner did Puccia open her lips than a shower of toads fell from them; at the sight of which her mother added the fire of rage to the snow of envy, sending forth flame and smoke through nose and mouth.

Now it happened some time afterwards that Ciommo, the brother of Marziella, was at the court of the king of Chiunzo; and the conversation turning on the beauty of various women, he stepped forward unasked

and said that all the handsome women might hide their heads when his sister made her appearance, who, besides the beauty of her form, possessed also a wonderful virtue in her hair, mouth, and feet, which was given to her by a fairy. When the king heard these praises, he told Ciommo to bring his sister to the court, adding that, if he found her such as he had represented, he would take her to wife.

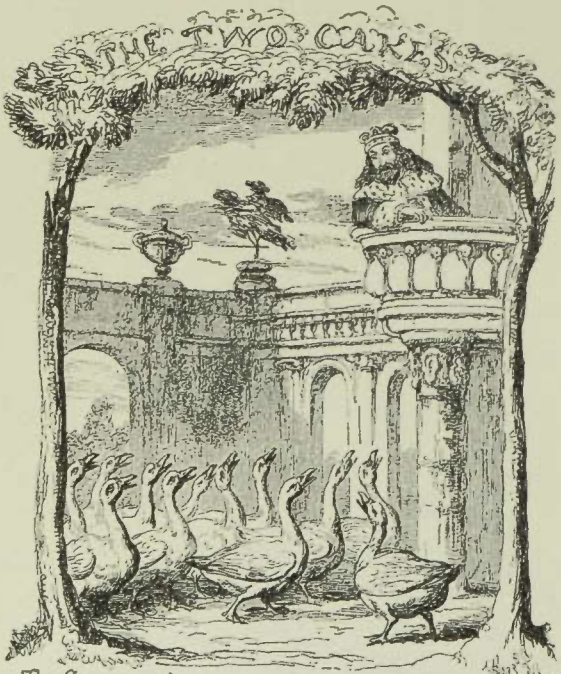
Now Ciommo thought this a chance not to be lost; so he forthwith sent a messenger post-haste to his mother, telling her what had happened, and begging her to come instantly with her daughter, in order not to let slip the good luck. But Luceta, who was very unwell, begged her sister to have the kindness to accompany Marziella to the court of Chiunzo. Whereupon Troccola, who saw that matters were playing into her hand, promised her sister to take Marziella safe and sound to her brother, and then embarked with her niece and Puccia in a boat. But when they were some way out at sea, whilst the sailors were asleep, she threw Marziella into the water; and just as the poor girl was on the point of being drowned, there came a most beautiful syren, who took her in her arms and carried her off.

When Troccola arrived at Chiunzo, Ciommo, who had not seen his sister for so long a time, mistook Puccia, and received

her as if she were Marziella, and led her instantly to the king. But no sooner did she open her lips than toads dropped on the ground; and when the king looked at her more closely, he saw that, as she breathed hard from the fatigue of the journey, she made a lather at her mouth, which looked just like a washtub; then looking down on the ground, he saw a meadow of stinking plants, the sight of which made him turn quite sick. Upon this he drove Puccia and her mother away, and sent Ciommo in disgrace to keep the geese of the court.

Then Ciommo, in despair and not knowing what had happened to him, drove the geese into the fields, and letting them go their way along the seashore, he used to retire into a little straw shed, where he bewailed his lot until evening, when it was time to return home. But whilst the geese were running about on the shore, Marziella would come out of the water, and feed them with sweetmeats, and give them rose-water to drink; so that the geese grew as big as a sheep, and were so fat that they could not see out of their eyes. And in the evening when they came into a little garden under the king's window, they began to sing—

Pire, pire, pire!
The sun and the moon are bright and clear,
But she who feeds us is still more fair.



The Geese — singing to the King of Chiunzo

Now the king, hearing this goose-music every evening, ordered Ciommo to be called, and asked him where, and how, and upon what he fed his geese. And Ciommo replied, 'I give them nothing to eat but the fresh grass of the field.' But the king, who was not satisfied with this answer, sent a trusty servant after Ciommo, to watch and observe where he drove the geese. Then the man followed in his footsteps, and saw him go into the little straw shed, leaving the geese to themselves; and going their way, they had no sooner come to the shore than Marziella rose up out of the sea, fair as the day. When the servant of the king saw this, he ran back to his master, beside himself with amazement, and told him the pretty spectacle he had seen upon the stage of the seashore.

The curiosity of the king was increased by what the man told him, and he had a great desire to go himself and see the beautiful sight. So the next morning, when Ciommo went with the geese to the accustomed spot, the king followed him closely; and when the geese came to the seashore, without Ciommo, who remained as usual in the little shed, the king saw Marziella rise out of the water. And after giving the geese a trayful of sweetmeats to eat and a cupful of rose-water to drink, she seated herself on a rock and began to

comb her locks, from which fell handfuls of pearls and garnets; at the same time a cloud of flowers dropped from her mouth, and under her feet was a Syrian carpet of lilies and violets.

When the king saw this sight, he ordered Ciommo to be called, and pointing to Marziella, asked him whether he knew that beautiful maiden. Then Ciommo recognising his sister ran to embrace her, and in the presence of the king heard from her all the treacherous conduct of Troccola, and how the envy of that wicked creature had brought that fair fire of love to dwell in the waters of the sea.

The joy of the king is not to be told at the acquisition of so fair a jewel; and turning to her brother, he said that he had good reason to praise Marziella so much, and indeed that he found her three times more beautiful than he had described her: he deemed her therefore more than worthy to be his wife, if she would be content to receive the sceptre of his kingdom.

'Alas, would to heaven it could be so!' answered Marziella, 'and that I could serve you as the slave of your crown! but see you not this golden chain upon my foot, by which the sorceress holds me prisoner? When I take too much fresh air, and tarry too long on the shore, she draws me into

Marziella feeding the Geese
George Cruikshank

the waves, and thus keeps me held in rich slavery by a golden chain.'

'What way is there,' said the king, 'to free you from the claws of this syren?'

'The way,' replied Marziella, 'would be to cut this chain with a smooth file, and to loose me from it.'

'Wait till to-morrow morning,' answered the king; 'I will then come with all that is needful, and take you home with me, where you shall be the pupil of my eye, the core of my heart, and the life of my soul.' And then exchanging a shake of the hands as the earnest-money of their love, *she* went back into the water and he into the fire,—and into such a fire indeed that he had not an hour's rest the whole day long. And when the Night came he never closed an eye, but lay ruminating in his memory over the beauties of Marziella, discoursing in thought of the marvels of her hair, the miracles of her mouth, and the wonders of her feet; and applying the gold of her graces to the touchstone of judgment, he found that it was four-and-twenty carats fine.

But whilst he was thus thinking of her who was all the while *in* the sea, behold the Sun appeared. Then the king dressed himself, and went with Ciommo to the seashore, where he found Marziella; and the king with his own hand cut the chain

from the foot of the beloved object with the file which they had brought, but all the while he forged a still stronger one for his heart; and setting her on the saddle behind him he set out for the royal palace, where by his command all the handsome ladies of the land were assembled, who received Marziella as their mistress with all due honour. Then the king married her, and there were great festivities; and among all the casks which were burnt for the illuminations, the king ordered that Troccola should be shut up in a tub, and made to suffer for the treachery she had shown to Marziella. Then sending for Luceta, he gave her and Ciommo enough to live upon like princes; whilst Puccia, driven out of the kingdom, wandered about as a beggar; and, as the reward of her not having sown a little bit of cake, she had now to suffer a constant want of bread; for it is the will of Heaven that

He who shows no pity finds none.

The story of the two cakes was verily a cake stuffed full of plums, which all relished so much that they licked their fingers after it. But as Paola was ready to start with the relation of her story, the Prince commanded silence, which robbed every one of speech, and she began as follows.

THE SEVEN DOVES

HE who gives pleasure meets with it: kindness is the bond of friendship and the hook of love: he who sows not reaps not; of which truth Ciulla has given you the foretaste of example, and I will give you the dessert, if you will bear in mind what Cato says, 'Speak little at table.' Therefore have the kindness to lend me your ears a while; and may Heaven cause them to stretch continually, to listen to pleasant and amusing things.

There was once in the county of Arzano a good woman to whom every year gave a son, until at length there were seven of them, who looked like a syrinx of the god Pan, with seven reeds, one larger than another. And when they had changed their first teeth, they said to Jannetella their mother,

'Hark ye, mother, if, after so many sons, you do not this time have a daughter, we are resolved to leave home, and go wandering through the world like the sons of the blackbirds.'

When their mother heard this sad announcement, she prayed Heaven to remove such an intention from her sons, and prevent her losing seven such jewels as they were. But the sons said to Jannetella, 'We will retire to the top of yonder hill or rock opposite; if Heaven sends you another son, put an inkstand and a pen up at the window; but if you have a little girl, put up a spoon and a distaff. For if we see the signal of a daughter, we shall return home and spend the rest of our lives under your wings; but if we see the signal of a son, then forget us, for you may know that we have taken ourselves off.'

Soon after the sons had departed it pleased Heaven that Jannetella should have given her a pretty little daughter; then she told the nurse to make the signal to the brothers, but the woman was so stupid and confused that she put up the inkstand and the pen. As soon as the seven brothers saw this signal, they set off, and walked on and on, until at the end of three years they came to a wood, where the trees were performing the sword-dance to the sound of a river which made counterpoint upon the stones. In

this wood was the house of an ogre, whose eyes having been blinded whilst asleep by a woman, he was such an enemy to the sex that he devoured all whom he could catch.

When the youths arrived at the ogre's house, tired out with walking and exhausted with hunger, they begged him for pity's sake to give them a morsel of bread. And the ogre replied, that if they would serve him, he would give them food, and they would have nothing else to do but to watch over him, like a dog, each in turn for a day. The youths, upon hearing this, thought they had found mother and father; so they consented, and remained in the service of the ogre, who having gotten their names by heart, called one time Giangrazio, at another Cecchitiello, now Pascale, now Nuccio, now Pone, now Pezzillo, and now Carcavecchia, for so the brothers were named; and giving them a room in the lower part of his house, he allowed them enough to live upon.

Meanwhile their sister had grown up; and hearing that her seven brothers, owing to the stupidity of the nurse, had set out to walk through the world, and that no tidings of them had ever been received, she took it into her head to go in search of them. And she begged and prayed her mother so long, that at last, overcome by her entreaties, she gave her leave to go, and dressed her like a

pilgrim. Then the maiden walked and walked, asking at every place she came to whether any one had seen seven brothers. And thus she journeyed on, until at length she got news of them at an inn, where having inquired the way to the wood, one morning, she arrived at the ogre's house, where she was recognised by her brothers with great joy, who cursed the inkstand and pen for writing falsely such misfortune for them. Then giving her a thousand caresses, they told her to remain quiet in their chamber, that the ogre might not see her; bidding her at the same time give a portion of whatever she had to eat to a cat which was in the room, or otherwise she would do her some harm. Cianna (for so the sister was named) wrote down this advice in the pocket-book of her heart, and shared everything with the cat, like a good companion, always cutting justly, and saying, 'This for me—this for thee,—this for the daughter of the king!' giving the cat a share to the last morsel.

Now it happened one day that the brothers, going to hunt for the ogre, left Cianna a little basket of chick-peas to cook; and as she was picking them, by ill luck she found among them a hazel-nut, which was the stone of disturbance to her quiet; for having swallowed it without giving half to the cat, the latter out of spite ran up to the

hearth and put out the fire. Cianna seeing this, and not knowing what to do, left the room, contrary to the command of her brothers, and going into the ogre's chamber begged him for a little fire. Then the ogre, hearing a woman's voice, said, Welcome, madam! wait a while,—you have found what you are seeking.' And so saying he took a Genoa stone, and daubing it with oil he fell to whetting his tusks. But Cianna, who saw that she had made a mistake, seizing a lighted stick, ran to her chamber; and bolting the door inside, she placed against it bars, stools, bedsteads, tables, stones, and everything there was in the room.

As soon as the ogre had put an edge on his teeth he ran to the chamber of the brothers, and finding the door fastened, he fell to kicking it to break it open. At this noise and disturbance the seven brothers came home, and hearing themselves accused by the ogre of treachery for making their chamber the abode of his women-enemies, Giangrazio, who was the eldest and had more sense than the others, and saw matters going badly, said to the ogre, 'We know nothing of this affair, and it may be that this wicked woman has perchance come into the room whilst we were at the chase; but as she has fortified herself inside, come with me, and I will take you to a place where

we can seize her without her being able to defend herself.'

Then they took the ogre by the hand, and led him to a deep, deep pit, where giving him a push they sent him headlong to the bottom; and taking a shovel, which they found on the ground, they covered him with earth. Then they bade their sister unfasten the door, and they rated her soundly for the fault she had committed, and the danger in which she had placed herself; telling her to be more careful in future, and to beware of plucking grass upon the spot where the ogre was buried, or they would be turned into seven doves.

'Heaven keep me from bringing such a misfortune upon you!' replied Cianna. So taking possession of all the ogre's goods and chattels, and making themselves masters of the whole house, they lived there merrily enough, waiting until winter should pass away.

Now it happened one day, when the brothers were gone to the mountains to get firewood, to defend themselves against the cold, which increased from day to day, that a poor pilgrim came to the ogre's wood, and made faces at an ape that was perched up in a pine-tree; whereupon the ape threw down one of the fir-apples from the tree upon the man's pate, which made such a terrible bump that the poor fellow set up a loud cry.

Cianna hearing the noise went out, and taking pity on his disaster, she quickly plucked a sprig of rosemary from a tuft which grew upon the ogre's grave; then she made him a plaster of it with chewed bread and salt, and after giving the man some breakfast she sent him away.

Whilst Cianna was laying the cloth, and expecting her brothers, lo! she saw seven doves come flying, who said to her, 'Ah! better that your hand had been cut off, you cause of all our misfortune, ere it plucked that accursed rosemary and brought such a calamity upon us! Have you eaten the brains of a cat, O sister, that you have driven our advice from your mind? Behold us turned to birds, a prey to the talons of kites, hawks, and falcons! behold us made companions of water-hens, snipes, goldfinches, woodpeckers, jays, owls, magpies, jackdaws, rooks, starlings, woodcocks, cocks, hens and chickens, turkey-cocks, blackbirds, thrushes, chaffinches, tomtits, jenny-wrens, lapwings, linnets, greenfinches, crossbills, flycatchers, larks, plovers, kingfishers, wagtails, redbreasts, redfinches, sparrows, ducks, fieldfares, wood-pigeons and bullfinches! A rare thing you have done! and now we may return to our country to find nets laid and twigs limed for us! To heal the head of a pilgrim, you have broken the heads of seven brothers; nor is there any help for our mis-

fortune, unless you find the Mother of Time, who will tell you the way to get us out of trouble.'

Cianna, looking like a plucked quail at the fault she had committed, begged pardon of her brothers, and offered to go round the world until she should find the dwelling of the old woman. Then praying them not to stir from the house until she returned, lest any ill should betide them, she set out, and journeyed on and on without ever tiring; and though she went on foot, her desire to aid her brothers served her as a sumpter-mule, with which she made three miles an hour. At last she came to the seashore, where with the blows of the waves the sea was banging the rocks. Here she saw a huge whale, who said to her, 'My pretty maiden, what go you seeking?' And she replied, 'I am seeking the dwelling of the Mother of Time.' 'Hear then what you must do,' replied the whale: 'go straight along this shore, and on coming to the first river, follow it up to its source, and you will meet with some one who will show you the way. But do me one kindness,—when you find the good old woman, beg of her the favour to tell me some means by which I may swim about safely, without so often knocking upon the rocks and being thrown on the sands.'

'Trust to me,' said Cianna: then thank-

ing the whale for pointing out the way, she set off walking along the shore; and after a long journey she came to the river, which was disbursing itself into the sea. Then taking the way up to its source, she arrived at a beautiful open country, where the meadow vied with the heaven, displaying her green mantle starred over with flowers; and there she met a mouse, who said to her, 'Whither are you going thus alone, my pretty girl?' And Cianna replied, 'I am seeking the Mother of Time.'

'You have a long way to go,' said the mouse; 'but do not lose heart,—everything has an end: walk on therefore toward yon mountains, and you will soon have more news of what you are seeking. But do me one favour,—when you arrive at the house you wish to find, get the good old woman to tell you what we can do to get rid of the tyranny of the cats; then command me, and I am your slave.'

Cianna, after promising to do the mouse this kindness, set off toward the mountains, which, although they appeared to be close at hand, seemed never to be reached. But having come to them at length, she sat down tired out upon a stone; and there she saw an army of ants carrying a large store of grain, one of whom turning to Cianna said, 'Who art thou, and whither art thou going?' And Cianna, who was courteous to every

one, said to her, 'I am an unhappy girl, who for a matter that concerns me am seeking the dwelling of the Mother of Time.'

'Go on farther,' replied the ant, 'and where these mountains open into a large plain you will obtain more news. But do me a great favour,—get the secret from the old woman what we ants can do to live a little longer; for it seems to me a folly in worldly affairs to be heaping up such a large store of food for so short a life.'

'Be at ease,' said Cianna; 'I will return the kindness you have shown me.'

Then she passed the mountains and arrived at a wide plain; and proceeding a little way over it, she came to a large oak-tree, whose fruit tasted like sweetmeats to the maiden, who was satisfied with little. Then the oak, making lips of its bark and a tongue of its pith, said to Cianna, 'Whither are you going so sad, my little daughter? come and rest under my shade.' Cianna thanked him much, but excused herself, saying that she was going in haste to find the Mother of Time. And when the oak heard this he replied, 'You are not far from her dwelling; for before you have gone another day's journey you will see upon a mountain a house, in which you will find her whom you seek. But if you have as much kindness as beauty, I prithee learn for me what I can do to regain my lost honour; for

instead of being food for great men, I am now only made the food of hogs.'

'Leave that to me,' replied Cianna; 'I will take care to serve you.' So saying she departed, and walking on and on without ever resting, she came at length to the foot of an impertinent mountain, which was poking its head into the face of the clouds. There she found an old man, who wearied and wayworn had lain down upon some hay: and as soon as he saw Cianna, he knew her at once, and that it was she who had cured his bump.

When the old man heard what she was seeking, he told her that he was carrying to Time the rent for the piece of earth which he had cultivated, and that Time was a tyrant who usurped everything in the world, claiming tribute from all, and especially from people of his age; and he added that, having received kindness from Cianna, he would now return it a hundredfold, by giving her some good information about her arrival at the mountain; and that he was sorry he could not accompany her thither, since his old age, which was condemned rather to go down than up, obliged him to remain at the foot of those mountains, to cast up accounts with the clerks of Time, which are the labours, the sufferings, and the infirmities of life, and to pay the debt of Nature. So the old man said to her,

'Now, my pretty innocent child, listen to me: you must know that on the top of this mountain you will find a ruined house, which was built long ago time out of mind; the walls are cracked, the foundations crumbling away, the doors worm-eaten, the furniture all worn out, and in short everything is gone to wrack and ruin. On one side are seen shattered columns, on another broken statues, and nothing is left in a good state except a coat-of-arms over the door, quartered, on which you will see a serpent biting its tail, a stag, a raven, and a phœnix. When you enter, you will see on the ground files, saws, scythes, sickles, pruning-hooks, and hundreds and hundreds of vessels full of ashes, with the names written on them, like gallipots in an apothecary's shop; and there may be read Corinth, Saguntum, Carthage, Troy, and a thousand other cities, the ashes of which Time preserves as trophies of his conquests.

'When you come near the house, hide yourself until Time goes out; and as soon as he has gone forth, enter, and you will find an old, old woman, with a beard that touches the ground and a hump reaching to the sky: her hair, like the tail of a dapple-gray horse, covers her heels; her face looks like a plaited collar, with the folds stiffened by the starch of years. The old woman is seated upon a clock, which

is fastened to a wall; and her eyebrows are so large that they overshadow her eyes, so that she will not be able to see you. As soon as you enter, quickly take the weights off the clock; then call to the old woman, and beg her to answer your questions; whereupon she will instantly call her son to come and eat you up; but the clock upon which the old woman sits having lost its weights, her son cannot move, and she will therefore be obliged to tell you what you wish. But do not trust any oath she may make, unless she swear by the wings of her son: then give faith to her, and do what she tells you, and you will be content.'

So saying, the poor old man fell down and crumbled away, like a dead body brought from a catacomb to the light of day. Then Cianna took the ashes, and mixing them with a pint of tears, she made a grave and buried them, praying Heaven to grant them quiet and repose. And ascending the mountain, till she was quite out of breath, she waited until Time came out, who was an old man with a long, long beard, and who wore a very old cloak covered with slips of paper, on which were worked the names of various people: he had large wings, and ran so fast that he was out of sight in an instant.

When Cianna entered the house of his mother, she started with affright at the sight of that black old chip; and instantly

seizing the weights of the clock, she told what she wanted to the old woman, who setting up a loud cry called to her son. But Cianna said to her, 'You may butt your head against the wall as long as you like, for you will not see your son whilst I hold these clock-weights.'

Thereupon the old woman, seeing herself foiled, began to coax Cianna, saying, 'Let go of them, my dear, and do not stop my son's course; for no man living has ever done that. Let go of them, and may Heaven preserve you! for I promise you by the aquafortis of my son, with which he corrodes everything, that I will do you no harm.'

'That's time lost,' answered Cianna; 'you must say something better if you would have me quit my hold.'

'I swear to you by those teeth which gnaw all mortal things, that I will tell you all you desire.'

'That is all nothing,' answered Cianna; 'for I know you are deceiving me.'

'Well then,' said the old woman, 'I swear to you by those wings which fly over all, that I will give you more pleasure than you imagine.'

Thereupon Cianna, letting go the weights, kissed the old woman's hand, which had a mouldy feel and a musty smell. And the old woman, seeing the courtesy of the damsel, said to her, 'Hide yourself behind this door,

THE SEVEN DOVES

and when Time comes home I will make him tell me all you wish to know. And as soon as he goes out again—for he never stays quiet in one place—you can depart. But do not let yourself be heard or seen, for he is such a glutton that he does not spare even his own children; and when all fails, he devours himself, and then springs up anew.'

Cianna did as the old woman told her, and lo! soon after Time came flying quick, quick, high, and light, and having gnawed whatever came to hand, down to the very mouldiness upon the walls, he was about to depart, when his mother told him all she had heard from Cianna, beseeching him to answer exactly all her questions. After a thousand entreaties her son replied, 'To the tree may be answered, that it can never be prized by men so long as it keeps treasures buried under its roots:—to the mice, that they will never be safe from the cat, unless they tie a bell to her leg, to tell them when she is coming:—to the ants, that they will live a hundred years, if they can dispense with flying; for when the ant is going to die she puts on wings:—to the whale, that it should be of good cheer, and make friends with the sea-mouse, who will serve him as a guide, so that he will never go wrong:—and to the doves, that when they alight on the column of wealth, they will return to their former state.'

So saying, Time set out to run his accustomed post; and Cianna, taking leave of the old woman, descended to the foot of the mountain, just at the very time that the seven doves, who had followed their sister's footsteps, arrived there. Wearied with flying so far, they stopped to rest upon the horn of a dead ox; and no sooner had they alighted, than they were changed into handsome youths, as they were at first. But while they were marvelling at this, they heard the reply which Time had given, and saw at once that the horn, as the symbol of plenty, was the column of wealth of which Time had spoken. Then embracing their sister with great joy, they all set out on the same road by which Cianna had come. And when they came to the oak-tree, and told it what Cianna had heard from Time, the tree begged them to take away the treasure from its roots, since it was the cause why its acorns had lost their reputation. Thereupon the seven brothers, taking a spade which they found in a garden, dug and dug, until they came to a great heap of gold money, which they divided into eight parts, and shared among themselves and their sister, so that they might carry it away conveniently. But being wearied with the journey and the load, they laid themselves down to sleep under a hedge. Presently a band of robbers coming by, and seeing the poor fellows asleep, with

their heads upon the clothsful of dollars, bound them hand and foot to some trees, and took away the money, leaving them to bewail not only their wealth, which had slipped through their fingers as soon as found, but their life; for being without hope of succour, they were in peril of either soon dying of starvation or allaying the hunger of some wild beast.

As they were lamenting their unhappy lot, up came the mouse, who, as soon as she heard the reply which Time had given, in return for the good service nibbled the cords with which they were bound and set them free. And having gone a little way farther they met on the road the ant, who, when she heard the advice of Time, asked Cianna what was the matter, that she was so pale-faced and cast down. And when Cianna told her their misfortune, and the trick which the robbers had played them, the ant replied, 'Be quiet, I can now requite the kindness you have done me. You must know, that whilst I was carrying a load of grain underground, I saw a place where these dogs of assassins hide their plunder; they have made some holes under an old building, in which they shut up all the things they have stolen; they are just now gone out for some new robbery, and I will go with you and show you the place, so that you may recover your money.'

So saying she took the way toward some tumble-down houses, and showed the seven brothers the mouth of a pit; whereupon Giangrazio, who was bolder than the rest, entering it, found there all the money of which they had been robbed. Then taking it with them, they set out, and walked towards the seashore, where they found the whale, and told him the good advice which Time—who is the father of counsel—had given them. And whilst they stood talking of their journey, and all that had befallen them, they saw the robbers suddenly appear, armed to the teeth, who had followed in their footsteps. At this sight they exclaimed, 'Alas, alas! we are now wholly lost, for here come the robbers armed, and they will not leave the skin on our bodies!'

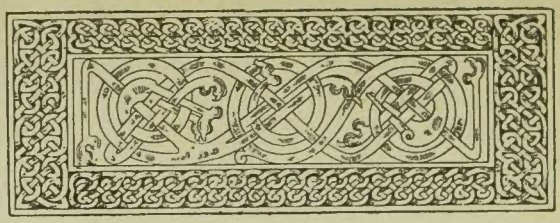
'Fear not,' replied the whale, 'for I can save you out of the fire, and will thus requite the love you have shown me: so get upon my back, and I will quickly carry you to a place of safety.'

Cianna and her brothers, seeing the foe at their heels and the water up to their throat, climbed upon the whale, who, keeping far off from the rocks, carried them to within sight of Naples; but being afraid to land them on account of the shoals and shallows, he said, 'Where would you like me to land you? on the shore of Amalfi?' And Giangrazio answered, 'See whether that cannot

be avoided, my dear fish; I do not wish to land at any place hereabouts; for at Massa they say barely good-day, at Sorrento thieves are plenty, at Vico they say you may go your way, at Castel-a-mare no one says how are ye?'

Then the whale, to please them, turned about and went toward the Salt-rock, where he left them; and they got put on shore by the first fishing-boat that passed. Thereupon they returned to their own country, safe and sound and rich, to the great joy and consolation of their mother and father; and, thanks to the goodness of Cianna, they enjoyed a happy life, verifying the old saying,

Do good whenever you can, and forget it.



THE GOLDEN ROOT

A PERSON who is over-curious, and wants to know more than he ought, always carries the match in his hand to set fire to the powder-room of his own fortunes; and he who pries into others' affairs is frequently a loser in his own; for generally he who digs holes to search for treasures comes to a ditch, into which he himself falls; as happened to the daughter of a gardener in the following manner.

There was once a gardener, who was so very very poor that, however hard he worked, he could not manage to get bread for his family: so he gave three little pigs to three daughters whom he had, that they might rear them, and thus get something for a little dowry. Then Pascuzza and Cice, who were the eldest, drove their little pigs

to feed in a beautiful meadow, but they would not let Parmetella, who was the youngest daughter, go with them, and drove her away, telling her to go and feed her pig somewhere else. So Parmetella drove her little animal into a wood, where the Shades were holding out against the assaults of the Sun; and coming to a pasture, in the middle of which flowed a fountain, that like the hostess of an inn where cold water is sold, was inviting the passers-by with its silver tongue, she found a certain tree with golden leaves. Then plucking one of them, she took it to her father, who with great joy sold it for more than twenty ducats, which served to stop up a hole in his affairs. And when he asked Parmetella where she had found it, she said, 'Take it, sir, and ask no questions, unless you would spoil your good fortune.' The next day she returned and did the same, and she went on plucking the leaves from the tree until it was entirely stripped, as if it had been plundered by the winds of Autumn. Then she perceived that the tree had a large golden root, which she could not pull up with her hands; so she went home, and fetching an axe set to work to lay bare the root round the foot of the tree; and raising the trunk as well as she could, she found under it a beautiful porphyry staircase.

Parmetella, who was curious beyond

measure, went down the stairs, and walking through a large and deep cavern, she came to a beautiful plain, on which was a splendid palace, where nothing but gold and silver were trodden underfoot, and pearls and precious stones everywhere met the eye. And as Parmetella stood wondering at all these splendid things, not seeing any person moving among so many beautiful fixtures, she went into a chamber, in which were a number of pictures; and on them were seen painted various beautiful things, especially the ignorance of a man esteemed wise, the injustice of him who held the scales, and the injuries avenged by Heaven, —things truly to amaze one: and in the same chamber also was a splendid table, set out with things to eat and to drink.

Seeing no one, Parmetella, who was very hungry, sat down at table to eat like a fine count; but while she was in the midst of the feast, behold a handsome slave entered, who said, 'Stay! do not go away, for I will have you for my wife, and will make you the happiest woman in the world.' In spite of her fear Parmetella took heart at this good offer, and consenting to what the Slave proposed, a coach of diamonds was instantly given her, drawn by four golden steeds, with wings of emeralds and rubies, who carried her flying through the air, to take an airing; and a number of

apes clad in cloth-of-gold were given to attend on her person, who forthwith arrayed her from head to foot, and adorned her so that she looked just like a queen.

When night was come, the Slave said to Parmetella, 'My dear, now go to rest in this bed; but remember first to put out the candle, and mind what I say, or ill will betide you.' Then Parmetella did as he told her; but no sooner had she closed her eyes, than the blackamoor changing to a handsome youth, lay down to sleep. But the next morning ere the Dawn the youth arose and took his other form again, leaving Parmetella full of wonder and curiosity.

And again the following night, when Parmetella went to rest, she put out the candle as she had done the night before, and the youth came as usual and lay down to sleep. But no sooner had he shut his eyes than Parmetella arose, took a steel which she had provided, and lighting the tinder applied a match: then taking the candle, she raised the coverlet, and beheld the ebony turned to ivory, the caviar to milk and cream, and the coal to chalk. And whilst she stood gazing with open mouth, and contemplating the most beautiful pencilling that Nature had ever given upon the canvas of Wonder, the youth awoke, and began to reproach Parmetella, saying, 'Ah, woe is me! for your prying

curiosity I have to suffer another seven years this accursed punishment: but begone! run, scamper off, take yourself out of my sight! you know not what good fortune you lose.' So saying he vanished like quicksilver.

The poor girl left the palace, cold and stiff with affright, and with her head bowed to the ground; and when she had come out of the cavern she met a fairy, who said to her, 'My child, how my heart grieves at your misfortune! Unhappy girl, you are going to the slaughter-house, where you will pass over the bridge no wider than a hair; therefore, to provide against your peril, take these seven spindles, with these seven figs, and a little jar of honey, and these seven pairs of iron shoes, and walk on and on without stopping until they are worn out; then you will see seven women standing upon a balcony of a house, and spinning from above down to the ground, with the thread wound upon the bone of a dead person. Remain quite still and hidden, and when the thread comes down, take out the bone and put in its place a spindle besmeared with honey, with a fig in the place of the little button. Then as soon as the women draw up the spindles, and taste the honey, they will say, "He who has made my spindle sweet, shall in return with good fortune meet!" And after

repeating these words, they will say one after another, "O you who have brought us these sweet things, appear!" Then you must answer, "Nay, for you will eat me." And they will say, "We swear by our spoon that we will not eat you!" But do not stir; and they will continue, "We swear by our spit that we will not eat you!" But stand firm, as if rooted to the spot; and they will say, "We swear by our broom that we will not eat you!" Still do not believe them; and when they say, "We swear by our pail that we will not eat you!" shut your mouth, and say not a word, or it will cost you your life. At last they will say, "We swear by Thunder-and-Lightning that we will not eat you!" Then take courage and mount up, for they will do you no harm.'

When Parmetella heard this, she set off and walked over hill and dale, until at the end of seven years the iron shoes were worn out; and coming to a large house, with a projecting balcony, she saw the seven women spinning. So she did as the fairy had advised her, and after a thousand wiles and allurements, they swore by Thunder-and-Lightning, whereupon she showed herself and mounted up. Then they all seven said to her, 'Traitress, you are the cause that our brother has lived twice seven long years in the cavern, far away from us, in the

form of a blackamoor! But never mind—although you have been clever enough to stop our throat with the oath, you shall on the first opportunity pay off both the old and the new reckoning. But now hear what you must do: hide yourself behind this trough, and when our mother comes, who would swallow you down at once, rise up and seize her behind her back; hold her fast, and do not let her go until she swears by Thunder-and-Lightning not to harm you.'

Parmetella did as she was bid, and after the ogress had sworn by the fire-shovel, by the spinning-wheel, by the reel, by the sideboard, and by the peg, at last she swore by Thunder-and-Lightning; whereupon Parmetella let go her hold, and showed herself to the ogress, who said, 'You have caught me this time; but take care, traitress! for at the first shower I'll send you to the Lava.'

One day the ogress, who was on the lookout for an opportunity to devour Parmetella, took twelve sacks of various seeds—peas, chick-peas, lentils, vetches, kidney-beans, beans, and lupins—and mixed them all together; then she said to her, 'Traitress, take these seeds and sort them all, so that each kind may be separated from the rest; and if they are not all sorted by this evening, I'll swallow you like a penny tart.'

Poor Parmetella sat down beside the

sacks, weeping, and said, 'O mother, mother, how will this golden root prove a root of woes to me! Now is my misery completed; by seeing a black face turned white, all has become black before my eyes. Alas! I am ruined and undone—there is no help for it: I already seem as if I were in the throat of that horrid ogress; there is no one to help me, there is no one to advise me, there is no one to comfort me!'

As she was lamenting thus, lo! Thunder-and-Lightning appeared like a flash, for the banishment laid upon him by the spell had just ended. Although he was angry with Parmetella, yet he still loved her, and seeing her grieving thus he said to her, 'Traitress, what makes you weep so?' Then she told him of his mother's ill-treatment of her, and her wish to make an end of her and eat her up. But Thunder-and-Lightning replied, 'Calm yourself and take heart, for it shall not be as she said.' And instantly scattering all the seeds on the ground, he made a deluge of ants spring up, who forthwith set to work to heap up all the seeds separately, each kind by itself, and Parmetella filled the sacks with them.

When the ogress came home and found the task done, she was almost in despair, and cried, 'That dog Thunder-and-Lightning has played me this trick; but you shall not escape thus! So take these pieces of

bed-tick, which are enough for twelve mattresses, and mind that by this evening they are filled with feathers, or else I will make mincemeat of you.'

The poor girl took the bed-ticks, and sitting down upon the ground began to weep and lament bitterly, making two fountains of her eyes. But presently Thunder-and-Lightning appeared, and said to her, 'Do not weep, traitress,—leave it to me, and I will bring you to port: so let down your hair, spread the bed-ticks upon the ground, and fall to weeping and wailing, and crying out that the king of the birds is dead; then you'll see what will happen.'

Parmetella did as she was told, and behold a cloud of birds suddenly appeared that darkened the air; and flapping their wings they let fall their feathers by basketfuls, so that in less than an hour the mattresses were all filled. When the ogress came home and saw the task done, she swelled up with rage till she almost burst, saying, 'Thunder-and-Lightning is determined to plague me, but may I be dragged at an ape's tail if I let her escape!' Then she said to Parmetella, 'Run quickly to my sister's house, and tell her to send me the musical instruments; for I have resolved that Thunder-and-Lightning shall marry, and we will make a feast fit for a king.' At the same time she sent to bid her sister, when the poor girl came to ask for the

instruments, instantly to kill and cook her, and she would come and partake of the feast.

Parmetella, hearing herself ordered to perform an easier task, was in great joy, thinking that the weather had begun to grow milder. Alas, how crooked is human judgment! On the way she met Thunder-and-Lightning, who, seeing her walking at a quick pace, said to her, 'Whither are you going, wretched girl? See you not that you are on the way to the slaughter, that you are forging your own fetters, and sharpening the knife and mixing the poison for yourself, that you are sent to the ogress for her to swallow you? But listen to me and fear not: take this little loaf, this bundle of hay, and this stone; and when you come to the house of my aunt, you will find a bulldog, which will fly barking at you to bite you; but give him this little loaf, and it will stop his throat. And when you have passed the dog, you will meet a horse running loose, which will run up to kick and trample on you; but give him the hay, and you will clog his feet. At last you will come to a door, banging to and fro continually; put this stone before it; and you will stop its fury. Then mount upstairs, and you will find the ogress, with a little child in her arms, and the oven ready heated to bake you. Whereupon she will say to you, "Hold this little creature, and

wait here till I go and fetch the instruments." But mind—she will only go to whet her tusks, in order to tear you in pieces. Then throw the little child into the oven without pity, take the instruments which stand behind the door, and hie off before the ogress returns, or else you are lost. The instruments are in a box, but beware of opening it, or you will repent.'

Parmetella did all that Thunder-and-Lightning told her; but on her way back with the instruments she opened the box, and lo and behold! they all flew out and about—here a flute, there a flageolet, here a pipe, there a bagpipe, making a thousand different sounds in the air, whilst Parmetella stood looking on and tearing her hair in despair.

Meanwhile the ogress came downstairs, and not finding Parmetella, she went to the window, and called out to the door, 'Crush that traitress!' But the door answered, 'I will not use the poor girl ill, for she has made me at last stand still.' Then the ogress cried out to the horse, 'Trample on the thief!' But the horse replied, 'Let the poor girl go her way, for she has given me the hay.' And lastly the ogress called to the dog, saying, 'Bite the rogue!' But the dog answered, 'I'll not hurt a hair of her head, for she it was who gave me the bread.'

Now as Parmetella ran crying after the

THE GOLDEN ROOT

instruments she met Thunder-and-Lightning, who scolded her well, saying, 'Traitress, will you not learn at your cost that by your fatal curiosity you are brought to this plight?' Then he called back the instruments with a whistle, and shut them up again in the box, telling Parmetella to take them to his mother. But when the ogress saw her, she cried aloud, 'O cruel fate! even my sister is against me, and refuses to give me this pleasure.'

Meanwhile the new bride arrived — a hideous pest, a compound of ugliness, a harpy, an evil shade, a horror, a monster. Then the ogress made a great banquet for her; and being full of gall and malice, she had the table placed close to a well, where she seated her seven daughters, each with a torch in one hand; but she gave two torches to Parmetella, and made her sit at the edge of the well, on purpose that, when she fell asleep, she might tumble to the bottom.

Now whilst the dishes were passing to and fro, and their blood began to get warm, Thunder-and-Lightning, who turned quite sick at the sight of the new bride, said to Parmetella, 'Traitress, do you love me?' 'Ay, to the top of the roof,' she replied. And he answered, 'If you love me give me a kiss.' 'Nay,' said Parmetella, '*you* indeed, who have such a pretty creature at your side! Heaven preserve her to you a hundred

years in health!' Then the new bride answered, 'It is very clear that you are a simpleton, and would remain so were you to live a hundred years, refusing to kiss so handsome a youth.'

At these words the bridegroom swelled with rage like a toad, so that his food remained sticking in his throat; however, he put a good face on the matter, and swallowed the pill, intending to make the reckoning and settle the balance afterwards. But when the tables were removed, and the ogress and his sisters had gone away, Thunder-and-Lightning said to the new bride, 'Wife, did you see this proud creature refuse me a kiss.' 'She was a simpleton,' replied the bride, 'to refuse a kiss to such a handsome young man.'

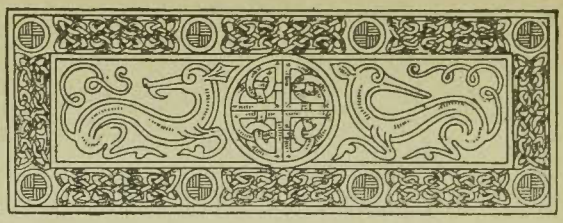
Thunder-and-Lightning could contain himself no longer; and with the flash of scorn and the thunder of action, he seized a knife and stabbed the bride, and digging a hole in the cellar he buried her. Then embracing Parmetella he said to her, 'You are my jewel, the flower of women, the mirror of honour! Turn those eyes upon me, give me that hand, my heart! for I will be yours as long as the world lasts.'

The next morning, the ogress came with fresh eggs; her surprise was great to see Parmetella in the place of the bride, and hearing what had passed, she ran to her sister, to concert

some means of removing this thorn from her eyes without her son being able to prevent it. But when she found that her sister, out of grief at the loss of her daughter had crept into the oven herself and was burnt, her despair was so great, that from an ogress she became a ram, and butted her head against the wall until she broke her pate. Then Thunder-and-Lightning made peace between Parmetella and her sisters-in-law, and they all lived happy and content, finding the saying come true, that

Patience conquers all.

The fate of the ogress, instead of exciting any compassion, was only the cause of pleasure, every one rejoicing that matters turned out with Parmetella much better than was expected.



NENNILLO AND NENNELLA

OE to him who thinks to find a governess for his children by giving them a stepmother! he only brings into his house the cause of their ruin. There never yet was a stepmother who looked kindly on the children of another; or if by chance such a one were ever found, she would be regarded as a miracle, and be called a white crow. But besides all those of whom you may have heard, I will now tell you of another, to be added to the list of heartless stepmothers, whom you will consider well deserving the punishment she purchased for herself with ready money.

There was once a good man named Jannuccio, who had two children, Nennillo and Nennella, whom he loved as much as his own life. But death having severed the

prison-bars of his wife's soul, he took to himself a cruel woman, who had no sooner set foot in his house than she began to ride the high horse, saying, 'I am come here indeed to look after other folk's children? A pretty job I have undertaken, to have all this trouble and be for ever teased by a couple of squalling brats! Would that I had broken my neck ere I ever came to this place, to have bad food, worse drink, and get no sleep at night! Here's a life to lead! Forsooth I came as a wife, and not as a servant; but I must find some means of getting rid of these creatures, or it will cost me my life: better to blush once than to grow pale a hundred times; so I've done with them, for I am resolved to send them away, or to leave the house myself for ever.'

The poor husband, who had some affection for this woman, said to her, 'Softly, wife! don't be angry; to-morrow morning, before the cock crows, I will remove this annoyance in order to please you.' So the next morning, Jannuccio took the children, one by each hand; and with a good basketful of things to eat upon his arm, he led them to a wood, where an army of poplars and beech-trees were holding the shades besieged. Then Jannuccio said, 'My little children, stay here in this wood, and eat and drink merrily; but if you want anything,

follow this line of ashes which I have been strewing as we came along; this will be a clue to lead you out of the labyrinth and bring you straight home.' Then giving them both a kiss, he returned weeping to his house.

But at night the two little children began to feel afraid at remaining in that lonesome place, where the waters of a river, which was thrashing the impertinent stones for obstructing its course, would have frightened even a Rodomonte. So they went slowly along the path of ashes, and it was already midnight ere they reached their home. When Pascozza, their stepmother, saw the children, she acted not like a woman, but a perfect fury, crying aloud, wringing her hands, stamping with her feet, snorting like a frightened horse, and exclaiming, 'What fine piece of work is this! Is there no way of ridding the house of these creatures? Is it possible, husband, that you are determined to keep them here to plague my very life out? Go, take them out of my sight! or else be assured that to-morrow morning off I'll go to my parents' house, for you do not deserve me. I have not brought you so many fine things, only to be made the slave of children who are not my own.'

Poor Jannuccio, who saw that matters were growing rather too warm, immediately took the little ones and returned to the

wood; where giving the children another basketful of food, he said to them, 'You see, my dears, how this wife of mine—who is come to my house to be your ruin and a nail in my heart—hates you; therefore remain in this wood, where the trees more compassionate will give you shelter from the sun, where the river more charitable will give you drink without poison, and the earth more kind will give you a pillow of grass without danger. And when you want food, follow this little path of bran which I have made for you in a straight line, and you can come and seek what you require.' So saying he turned away his face, not to let himself be seen to weep and dishearten the poor little creatures.

When Nennillo and Nennella had eaten all that was in the basket, they wanted to return home; but alas! a jackass—the son of ill luck—had eaten up all the bran that was strewn upon the ground; so they lost their way, and wandered about forlorn in the wood for several days, feeding on acorns and chestnuts which they found fallen on the ground. But as Heaven always extends its arm over the innocent, there came by chance a prince to hunt in that wood. Then Nennillo, hearing the baying of the hounds, was so frightened that he crept into a hollow tree; and Nennella set off running at full speed, and ran until she came out of the

wood, and found herself on the seashore. Now it happened that some pirates, who had landed there to get fuel, saw Nennella and carried her off: and their captain took her home with him, where he and his wife, having just lost a little girl, took her as their daughter.

Meanwhile Nennillo, who had hidden himself in the tree, was surrounded by the dogs, which made such a furious barking that the prince sent to find out the cause; and when he discovered the pretty little boy, who was so young that he could not tell who were his father and mother, he ordered one of the huntsmen to set him upon his saddle and take him to the royal palace. Then he had him brought up with great care, and instructed in various arts, and among others he had him taught that of a carver; so that, before three or four years had passed, Nennillo became so expert in his art that he could carve a joint to a hair.

Now about this time it was discovered that the captain of the ship who had taken Nennella to his house was a sea-robber, and the people wished to take him prisoner; but getting timely notice from the clerks in the law-courts, who were his friends, and whom he kept in his pay, he fled with all his family. It was decreed, however, perhaps by the judgment of Heaven, that he who had committed his crimes upon the sea,

upon the sea should suffer the punishment of them; for having embarked in a small boat, no sooner was he upon the open sea than there came such a storm of wind and tumult of the waves, that the boat was upset and all were drowned — all except Nennella, who having had no share in the corsair's robberies, like his wife and children, escaped the danger; for just then a large enchanted fish, which was swimming about the boat, opened its huge throat and swallowed her down.

The little girl now thought to herself that her days were surely at an end, when suddenly she found a thing to amaze her inside the fish,—beautiful fields and fine gardens, and a splendid mansion, with all that heart could desire, in which she lived like a princess. Then she was carried quickly by the fish to a rock, where it chanced that the prince had come to escape the burning heat of summer, and to enjoy the cool sea-breezes. And whilst a great banquet was preparing, Nennillo had stepped out upon the balcony of the palace on the rock to sharpen some knives, priding himself greatly on acquiring honour from his office. When Nennella saw him through the fish's throat, she cried aloud,

Brother, brother, your task is done,
The tables are laid out every one;
But here in the fish I must sit and sigh,
For, O brother, without you I soon shall die.

Nennillo at first paid no attention to the voice ; but the prince, who was standing on another balcony and had also heard it, turned in the direction whence the sound came, and saw the fish. And when he again heard the same words, he was beside himself with amazement, and ordered a number of servants to try whether by any means they could ensnare the fish and draw it to land. At last, hearing the words 'Brother, brother!' continually repeated, he asked all his servants, one by one, whether any of them had lost a sister. And Nennillo replied, that he recollected, as a dream, having had a sister when the prince found him in the wood, but that he had never since heard any tidings of her. Then the prince told him to go nearer to the fish, and see what was the matter, for perhaps this adventure might concern him. As soon as Nennillo approached the fish, it raised up its head upon the rock, and opening its throat six palms wide, Nennella stepped out, so beautiful that she looked just like a nymph in a pantomime, come forth from that animal at the incantation of a magician. And when the prince asked her how it had all happened, she told him a part of her sad story, and the hatred of their stepmother ; but not being able to recollect the name of their father nor of their home, the prince caused a proclamation to be issued, commanding that

NENNILLO & NENNELLA
George Cruikshank

whoever had lost two children, named Nennillo and Nennella, in a wood, should come to the royal palace, and he would there receive joyful news of them.

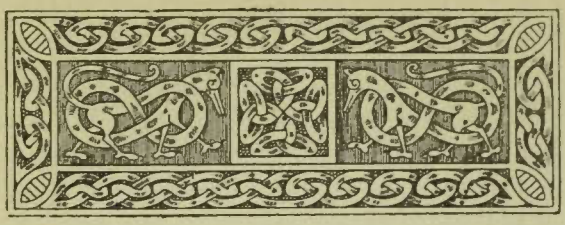
Jannuccio, who had all this time passed a sad and disconsolate life, believing that his children had been devoured by wolves, now hastened with the greatest joy to seek the prince, and told him that *he* had lost the children. And when he had related the story, how he had been compelled to take them to the wood, the prince gave him a good scolding, calling him a blockhead for allowing a woman to put her heel upon his neck, till he was brought to send away two such jewels as his children. But after he had broken Jannuccio's head with these words, he applied to it the plaster of consolation, showing him the children, whom the father embraced and kissed for half an hour without being satisfied. Then the prince made him pull off his jacket, and had him dressed like a lord; and sending for Jannuccio's wife, he showed her those two golden pippins, asking her what that person would deserve who should do them any harm and even endanger their lives. And she replied, 'For my part, I would put her into a closed cask, and send her rolling down a mountain.'

'So it shall be done!' said the prince; 'the goat has butted at herself. Quick

now! you have passed the sentence, and you must suffer it, for having borne these beautiful stepchildren such malice.' So he gave orders that the sentence should be instantly executed. Then choosing a very rich lord among his vassals, he gave him Nennella to wife, and the daughter of another great lord to Nennillo; allowing them enough to live upon, with their father, so that they wanted for nothing in the world. But the stepmother, shut *into* the cask and shut *out* from life, kept on crying out through the bunghole as long as she had breath,

> To him who mischief seeks shall mischief fall;
> There comes an hour that recompenses all.

It being now Ciommetella's turn to speak, on receiving the signal she began as follows.



THE THREE CITRONS

WELL was it in truth said by the wise man, 'Do not say all you know, nor do all you are able'; for both one and the other bring unknown danger and unforeseen ruin; as you shall hear of a certain slave (be it spoken with all reverence for my lady the Princess), who, after doing all the injury in her power to a poor girl, came off so badly in the court, that she was the judge of her own crime, and sentenced herself to the punishment she deserved.

The King of Long-Tower had once a son, who was the apple of his eye, and on whom he had built all his hopes; and he longed impatiently for the time when he should find some good match for him, and hear himself called grandpapa. But the prince was so averse to marriage and so obstinate,

that whenever a wife was talked of he shook his head and wished himself a hundred miles off; so that the poor king, finding his son stubborn and perverse, and foreseeing that his race would come to an end, was more vexed and melancholy, cast down and out of spirits, than a merchant whose correspondent has become bankrupt, or a peasant whose ass has died. Neither could the tears of his father move the prince, nor the entreaties of the courtiers soften him, nor the counsel of wise men make him change his mind; in vain they set before his eyes the wishes of his father, the wants of the people, and his own interest, representing to him that he was the full-stop in the line of the royal race; for with the obstinacy and the stubbornness of an old mule with a skin four fingers thick, he had planted his foot resolutely, stopped his ears, and closed his heart against all assaults. But as frequently more comes to pass in an hour than in a hundred years, and no one can say, Stop here or go there, it happened that one day, when all were at table, and the prince was cutting a piece of new-made cheese, whilst listening to the chit-chat that was going on, he accidentally cut his finger; and two drops of blood, falling upon the cheese, made such a beautiful mixture of colours, that—either it was a punishment inflicted by Love, or the will of Heaven to console the poor

father—the whim seized the prince to find a woman exactly as white and red as that cheese tinged with his blood. Then he said to his father, 'Sir, unless I have a wife as white and red as this cheese, it is all over with me: so now resolve, if you wish to see me alive and well, to give me all I require to go through the world in search of a beauty exactly like this cheese, or else I shall end my life and die by inches.'

When the king heard this mad resolution, he thought the house was falling about his ears; his colour came and went, but as soon as he recovered himself and could speak, he said, 'My son, the life of my soul, the core of my heart, the prop of my old age, what mad-brained fancy has made you take leave of your senses? Have you lost your wits? You want either all or nothing: first you wish not to marry, on purpose to deprive me of an heir, and now you are impatient to drive me out of the world. Whither, oh whither would you go wandering about, wasting your life? and why leave your house, your hearth, your home? You know not what toils and perils he brings on himself who goes rambling and roving. Let this whim pass, my son; be sensible, and do not wish to see my life worn out, this house fall to the ground, my household go to ruin.'

But these and other words went in at

the one ear and out at the other, and were all cast upon the sea; and the poor king seeing that his son was immovable gave him a handful of dollars, and two or three servants; and bidding him farewell, he felt as if his soul was torn out of his body. Then, weeping bitterly, he went to a balcony, and followed his son with his eyes until he was lost to sight.

The prince departed, leaving his unhappy father to his grief, and hastened on his way through fields and woods, over mountain and valley, hill and plain, visiting various countries, and mixing with various peoples, and always with his eyes wide awake to see whether he could find the object of his desire. At the end of several months he arrived at the coast of France, where, leaving his servants at an hospital with sore feet, he embarked alone in a Genoese boat, and set out toward the Straits of Gibraltar. There he took a larger vessel and sailed for the Indies, seeking everywhere, from kingdom to kingdom, from province to province, from country to country, from street to street, from house to house, in every hole and corner, whether he could find the original likeness of that beautiful image which he had pictured to his heart. And he wandered about and about, until at length he came to the Island of the Ogresses, where he cast anchor and landed. There

he found an old, old woman, withered and shrivelled up, and with a hideous face, to whom he related the reason that had brought him to that country. The old woman was beside herself with amazement when she heard the strange whim and the fanciful chimera of the prince, and the toils and perils he had gone through to satisfy himself; then she said to him, 'Hasten away, my son! for if my three daughters meet you, I would not give a farthing for your life; half alive and half roasted, a frying-pan would be your bier and a belly your grave. But away with you as fast as a hare! and you will not go far before you find what you are seeking.'

When the prince heard this, frightened, terrified, and aghast, he set off running at full speed, and ran till he came to another country, where he again met an old woman, more ugly even than the first, to whom he told all his story. Then the old woman said to him in like manner, 'Away with you! unless you wish to serve for a breakfast to the little ogresses my daughters; but go straight on, and you will soon find what you want.'

The prince, hearing this, set off running as fast as a dog with a kettle at its tail; and he went on and on, until he met another old woman, who was sitting upon a wheel, with a basket full of little pies

and sweetmeats on her arm, and feeding a number of jackasses, which thereupon began leaping about on the bank of a river and kicking at some poor swans. When the prince came up to the old woman, after making a hundred salaams, he related to her the story of his wanderings; whereupon the old woman, comforting him with kind words, gave him such a good breakfast that he licked his fingers after it. And when he had done eating, she gave him three citrons, which seemed to be just fresh gathered from the tree; and she gave him also a beautiful knife, saying, 'You are now free to return to Italy, for your labour is ended, and you have what you were seeking. Go your way therefore, and when you are near your own kingdom, stop at the first fountain you come to and cut a citron. Then a fairy will come forth from it, and will say to you, 'Give me to drink!' Mind and be ready with the water, or she will vanish like quicksilver. But if you are not quick enough with the second fairy, have your eyes open and be watchful that the third does not escape you, giving her quickly to drink, and you shall have a wife after your own heart.'

The prince, overjoyed, kissed the old woman's hairy hand a hundred times, which seemed just like a hedgehog's back. Then taking his leave he left that country, and

coming to the seashore sailed for the Pillars of Hercules, and arrived at our Sea; and after a thousand storms and perils, he entered port a day's distance from his own kingdom. There he came to a most beautiful grove, where the Shades formed a palace for the Meadows, to prevent their being seen by the Sun; and dismounting at a fountain, which with a crystal tongue was inviting the people to refresh their lips, he seated himself on a Syrian carpet formed by the plants and flowers. Then he drew his knife from the sheath and began to cut the first citron, when lo! there appeared like a flash of lightning a most beautiful maiden, white as milk and red as a strawberry, who said, 'Give me to drink!' The prince was so amazed, bewildered, and captivated with the beauty of the fairy that he did not give her the water quickly enough, so she appeared and vanished at one and the same moment. Whether this was a rap on the prince's head, let any one judge who, after longing for a thing, gets it into his hands and instantly loses it again.

Then the prince cut the second citron, and the same thing happened again; and this was the second blow he got on his pate; so making two little fountains of his eyes, he wept, face to face, tear for tear, drop for drop, with the fountain, and sighing he exclaimed, 'Good heavens, how is it

that I am so unfortunate? twice I have let her escape, as if my hands were tied; and here I sit like a rock, when I ought to run like a greyhound. But courage, man! there is still another, and three is the lucky number; either this knife shall give me the fay, or it shall take my life away.' So saying he cut the third citron, and forth came the third fairy, who said like the others, 'Give me to drink!' Then the prince instantly handed her the water; and behold there stood before him a delicate maiden, white as a junket with red streaks, —a thing never before seen in the world, with a beauty without compare, a fairness beyond the beyonds, a grace more than the most. In a word, she was so beautiful from head to foot, that a more exquisite creature was never seen. The prince knew not what had happened to him, and stood lost in amazement, gazing on such a beautiful offspring of a citron; and he said to himself, 'Are you asleep or awake, Ciommetiello? are your eyes bewitched, or are you blind? What fair white creature is this come forth from a yellow rind? what sweet dough, from the sour juice of a citron? what lovely maiden sprung from a citron-pip?' At length, seeing that it was all true and no dream, he embraced the fairy, giving her a hundred and a hundred kisses; and after a thousand tender words had passed between

them, the prince said, 'My soul, I cannot take you to my father's kingdom without handsome raiment worthy of so beautiful a person, and an attendance befitting a queen: therefore climb up into this oak-tree, where Nature seems purposely to have made for us a hiding-place in the form of a little room, and here await my return; for I will come back on wings, before a tear can dry, with dresses and servants, and carry you off to my kingdom.' So saying, he departed.

Now a black slave, who was sent by her mistress with a pitcher to fetch water, came to that well, and seeing by chance the reflection of the fairy in the water, she thought it was herself, and exclaimed in amazement, 'Poor Lucia, what do I see? me so pretty and fair, and mistress send me here! No, me will no longer bear.' So saying she broke the pitcher and returned home; and when her mistress asked her, 'Why have you done this mischief?' she replied, 'Me go to the well alone, pitcher break upon a stone.' Her mistress swallowed this idle story, and the next day she gave her a pretty little cask, telling her to go and fill it with water. So the slave returned to the fountain, and seeing again the beautiful image reflected in the water, she said with a deep sigh, 'Me no ugly slave, me no broad-foot goose! but pretty

and fine as mistress mine, and me not go to the fountain!' So saying, smash again! she broke the cask into seventy pieces, and returned home grumbling, and said to her mistress, 'Ass come past, tub fell, down at the well, and all was broken in pieces.' The poor mistress, on hearing this, could contain herself no longer, and seizing a broomstick she beat the slave so soundly that she felt it for many days; then giving her a leather bag, she said, 'Run, break your neck, you wretched slave, you black beetle! run and fetch me this bag full of water, or else I'll give you a good thrashing.'

Away ran the slave heels over head, for she had seen the flash and dreaded the thunder; and while she was filling the leather bag, she turned to look again at the beautiful image, and said, 'Me fool to fetch water! better live by one's wits: such a pretty girl indeed to serve a bad mistress!' So saying, she took a large pin which she wore in her hair, and began to prick holes in the leather bag, so that the water ran out, making a hundred little fountains. When the fairy saw this she laughed outright; and the slave hearing her, turned and espied her hiding-place up in the tree; whereat she said to herself, 'O ho! you make me be beaten? but never mind!' Then she said to her, 'What you doing up there, pretty lass?' And the fairy, who was

the very mother of courtesy, told her all she knew, and all that had passed with the prince, whom she was expecting from hour to hour and from moment to moment, with fine dresses and servants, to take her with him to his father's kingdom, where they should live happy together.

When the slave, who was full of spite, heard this, she thought to herself that she would get this prize into her own hands; so she answered the fairy, 'You expect your husband, — me come up and comb your locks, and make you more smart.' And the fairy said, 'Ay, welcome as the first of May!' So the slave climbed up the tree, and the fairy held out her white hand to her, which looked in the black paws of the slave like a crystal mirror in a frame of ebony. But no sooner did the slave begin to comb the fairy's locks than she suddenly stuck a hair-pin into her head. Then the fairy, feeling herself pricked, cried out, 'Dove, dove!' and instantly she became a dove and flew away; whereupon the slave stripped herself, and making a bundle of all the rags that she had worn, she threw them a mile away: and there she sat, up in the tree, looking like a statue of jet in a house of emerald.

In a short time the prince returned with a great cavalcade, and finding a

cask of caviar where he had left a pan of milk, he stood for a while beside himself with amazement. At length he said, 'Who has made this great blot of ink on the fine paper upon which I thought to write the brightest days of my life? Who has hung with mourning this newly-whitewashed house, where I thought to spend a happy life? How comes it that I find this touchstone, where I left a mine of silver, that was to make me rich and happy?' But the crafty slave, observing the prince's amazement, said, 'Do not wonder, my prince; for me turned by a wicked spell from a white lily to a black coal.'

The poor prince, seeing that there was no help for the mischief, drooped his head and swallowed this pill; and bidding the slave come down from the tree, he ordered her to be clothed from head to foot in new dresses. Then sad and sorrowful, cast-down and woebegone, he took his way back with the slave to his own country, where the king and queen, who had gone out six miles to meet them, received them with the same pleasure as a prisoner feels at the announcement of a death sentence, seeing the fine choice their foolish son had made, who, after travelling about so long to find a white dove, had brought home at last a

black crow. However, as they could do no less, they gave up the crown to their children, and placed the golden tripod upon that face of coal.

Now whilst they were preparing splendid feasts and banquets, and the cooks were busy plucking geese, killing little pigs, flaying kids, basting the roast-meat, skimming pots, mincing meat for dumplings, larding capons, and preparing a thousand other delicacies, a beautiful dove came flying to the kitchen window, and said,

> O cook of the kitchen, tell me, I pray,
> What the king and the slave are doing to-day.

The cook at first paid little heed to the dove ; but when she returned a second and a third time, and repeated the same words, he ran to the dining-hall to tell the marvellous thing. But no sooner did the lady hear this music, than she gave orders for the dove to be instantly caught and made into a hash. So the cook went, and he managed to catch the dove, and did all that the slave had commanded. And having scalded the bird, in order to pluck it, he threw the water with the feathers out from a balcony on to a garden-bed, on which before three days had passed there sprang up a beautiful citron-tree, which quickly grew to its full size.

Now it happened that the king, going by chance to a window that looked upon the garden, saw the tree, which he had never observed before; and calling the cook, he asked him when and by whom it had been planted. No sooner had he heard all the particulars from Master Pot-ladle, than he began to suspect how matters stood; so he gave orders, under pain of death, that the tree should not be touched, but that it should be tended with the greatest care.

At the end of a few days three most beautiful citrons appeared, similar to those which the ogress had given Ciommetiello; and when they were grown larger, he plucked them; and shutting himself up in a chamber, with a large basin of water and the knife which he always carried at his side, he began to cut the citrons. Then it all fell out with the first and second fairy just as it had done before; but when at last he cut the third citron, and gave the fairy who came forth from it to drink, behold there stood before him the self-same maiden whom he had left up in the tree, and who told him all the mischief that the slave had done.

Who now can tell the least part of the delight the king felt at this good turn of fortune? He embraced the fairy, and ordered her to be handsomely dressed from

head to foot; and taking her by the hand he led her into the middle of the hall, where all the courtiers and great folks of the city were met to celebrate the feast. Then the king called on them one by one, and said, 'Tell me, what punishment would that person deserve who should do any harm to this beautiful lady?' And one replied that such a person would deserve a hempen collar — another, a breakfast of stones — a third, a good beating — a fourth, a draught of poison — a fifth, a millstone for a brooch; in short, one said this thing and another that. At last he called on the black queen, and putting the same question, she replied, 'Such a person would deserve to be burned, and that her ashes should be thrown from the roof of the castle.'

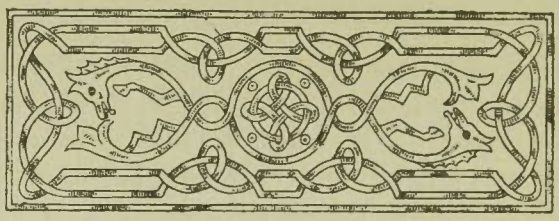
When the king heard this he said to her, 'You have struck your own foot with the axe, you have made your own fetters, you have sharpened the knife and mixed the poison, for no one has done this lady so much harm as yourself, you good-for-nothing creature! Know you that this is the beautiful maiden whom you wounded with the hair-pin? Know you that this is the pretty dove which you ordered to be killed and cooked in a stewpan? What say you now? it is all your own doing, and one who does ill

may expect ill in return.' So saying he ordered the slave to be seized and cast alive on to a large pile of burning wood, and her ashes were thrown from the top of the castle to all the winds of heaven, verifying the truth of the saying that

He who sows thorns should not go barefoot.

All sat listening attentively to Ciommetella's story; and some praised the skill with which she had related it, whilst others murmured at her indiscretion, saying that she ought not in the presence of the Princess slave to have exposed to blame the ill deeds of another slave, and run the risk of stopping the game. But Lucia sat upon thorns, and kept turning and twisting herself about all the time the story was related; insomuch that the restlessness of her body betrayed the storm which was in her heart, at seeing in the history of another slave the exact image of her own tricks. Gladly would she have dismissed the whole company, but that, owing to the desire which the doll had given her to hear stories, she could no more do without them than a man bitten by a tarantula can dispense with music; and partly also not to give Taddeo cause for suspicion, she swallowed this bitter pill,

intending to take a good revenge in proper time and place. But Taddeo, who had grown quite fond of this amusement, made a sign to Zoza to relate her story, and after making her curtsey she began.



CONCLUSION [1]

'TRUTH, my lord Prince, has always been the mother of hatred, and I would not wish therefore, by obeying your commands, to offend any one of those around me; for, not being accustomed to weave fictions or to invent stories, I am constrained, both by nature and habit, to speak the truth; and although the proverb says, Tell truth and fear nothing, yet, knowing well that truth is not welcome in the presence of princes, I tremble lest I say anything that may perchance offend you.'

'Say all you wish,' replied Taddeo; 'for nothing but what is sweet can come from those pretty lips.'

These words were stabs to the heart of the Slave, as would have been seen plainly if black faces were, like white

[1] See the Introduction, pages 1-13.

ones, the book of the soul. And she would have given a finger of her hand to have been rid of these stories, for all before her eyes had grown blacker even than her face. She feared that the last story was only the announcement of mischief that was to follow, and from a cloudy morning she foretold a bad day. But Zoza meanwhile began to enchant all around her with the sweetness of her words, relating her sorrows from first to last, and beginning with her natural melancholy, — the unhappy augury of all she had to suffer; bearing from the cradle the bitter root of her misfortunes, which on account of a forced laugh had forced her to shed so many tears. Then she went on to tell of the old woman's curse, her painful wanderings, her arrival at the fountain, her bitter weeping, and the treacherous sleep which had been the cause of her ruin.

The Slave, hearing Zoza tell the story in all its breadth and length, and seeing the boat going out of its course, exclaimed, 'Be quiet and hold your tongue!' But Taddeo, who had discovered how matters stood, could no longer contain himself. He exclaimed, 'Let her tell her story to the end, for I have been made a fool of long enough.' Then he commanded Zoza to continue her story, in spite of his wife;

and Zoza, who had only waited for the sign, went on to tell how the Slave had found the pitcher, and had treacherously robbed her of her good fortune. And thereupon she fell to weeping in such a manner that every person present was affected at the sight.

Taddeo, who from Zoza's tears and the Slave's silence discerned the truth of the matter, gave Lucia such a scolding as he would scarcely have bestowed on a jackass, and made her confess her treachery with her own lips. Then he gave instant orders that she should be buried alive up to her neck, that she might die a more painful death. And embracing Zoza, he caused her to be treated with all honour as his Princess and wife, sending to invite the King of Woody Valley to come to the feasts.

With these fresh nuptials terminated the greatness of the Slave and the amusement of these Stories. And may they do you much good, and promote your health; and may you lay them down as unwillingly as I do, taking my leave with regret at my heels and a good spoonful of honey in my mouth.

Printed by R. & R. Clark, *Edinburgh.*

A

SELECTED LIST

OF

JUVENILE BOOKS

—*—

Crown 8vo, cloth, 5s.

CHILDREN'S STORIES IN ENGLISH LITERATURE, from Shakespeare to Tennyson. By H. C. WRIGHT.

"A genial book.'—*Speaker.*

—*—

Crown 8vo, cloth, gilt edges, 5s.

BOYS' OWN STORIES. By ASCOTT R. HOPE. 3rd Edition. Eight Illustrations.

"The stories are well told."—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

Crown 8vo, cloth, gilt edges, 5s.

ROYAL YOUTHS: A Book of Princehoods. By ASCOTT R. HOPE. Illustrated.

"Well told and full of interest."—*National Observer.*

—✶—

Large crown 8vo, cloth, gilt edges, 5s.

ROBINSON CRUSOE. Newly Edited after the original Editions. 19 full-page Illustrations.

"Gives an account of Defoe which is very much to the point."—*Spectator.*

—✶—

Imperial 16mo, cloth extra, gilt edges, 3s. 6d.

DICK'S HOLIDAYS, and What He Did with Them. Illustrated. Cheaper Edition.

"A volume for which every budding botanist who gets it has good reason to be thankful."—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

—✶—

Small 8vo, cloth, gilt edges, 3s. 6d.

WHEN MOTHER WAS LITTLE. By S. P. YORKE. 13 full-page Illustrations.

"In all respects an agreeable and well-written story."—*Spectator.*

8vo, cloth, gilt edges, 6s.

TWO LITTLE CONFEDERATES. By THOMAS NELSON PAGE. Illustrated.

"A delightful book."—*Saturday Review.*

—✶—

Medium 4to, paper boards, 3s. 6d.

DADDY JAKE, the Runaway, and Other Stories. By JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS ("Uncle Remus"). Illustrated.

"A fresh and delightful addition to those quaint and laughable tales which have made the author of 'Uncle Remus' loved and fancied wherever the English tongue is spoken."—*Observer.*

—✶—

Crown 8vo, cloth, 5s.

SIX GIRLS: A Home Story. By FANNIE B. IRVING. Illustrated.

"Its interest is well sustained from first to last."—*Scotsman.*

—✶—

Square Imperial 16mo, cloth, 5s.

IN THE TIME OF ROSES: A Tale of Two Summers. By FLORENCE SCANNELL. 32 Illustrations.

'A very successful book.'—*Academy.*

Crown 8vo, cloth gilt, bevelled boards, 3s. 6d.

ALEXIS AND HIS FLOWERS. By BEATRIX CRESSWELL. Illustrated.

"The book is a very pleasant one—a nosegay of everlasting blooms of fancy."—*Academy.*

—*—

Square 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

THE PRINCE OF THE HUNDRED SOUPS. By VERNON LEE. Illustrated.

"I devoured it from cover to cover with a new zest." —*Truth.*

—*—

Imperial 16mo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

THE BIRD'S NEST, and Other Sermons for Children of all ages. By Rev. S. COX, D.D. 3rd Edition.

"Real honest preaching made fascinating and instructive by an exquisite literary style."—*Methodist Times.*

—*—

Small crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

EVERY-DAY MIRACLES. By BEDFORD POLLARD. Illustrated.

"A work worthy of the highest praise."—*Graphic.*

—*—

Imperial 16mo cloth gilt, gilt edges, 3s. 6d.

FAIRY TALES FROM BRENTANO. Told in English by KATE F. KRŒKER. 3rd Edition.

"Welcome in the nursery. The translation has been very cleverly accomplished." —*Academy.*

Illustrated paper boards, 5*s.*; *cloth, gilt edges*, 6*s.*

NEW FAIRY TALES FROM BRENTANO. By KATE F. KRŒKER. 8 coloured Illustrations.

"I read the book with edification and delight."—*Truth.*

—*—

Medium 4to, paper boards, 3*s.* 6*d.*

THE BROWNIES: Their Book. By PALMER COX. 4th Edition. Illustrated.

"The Brownies are such prime favourites."—*Guardian.*

—*—

Medium 4to, cloth, 6*s.*

ANOTHER BROWNIE BOOK. By PALMER COX. Illustrated.

"The illustrations are perhaps even more mirthful than the letterpress, but both are admirable."—*Morning Post.*

—*—

4to, bevelled boards, 3*s.* 6*d.*

MARJORIE AND HER PAPA: How they wrote a Story and made Pictures for it. A Book for Children.

"Altogether a book to be desired by and for children."—*Spectator.*

"*The best of all children's Magazines.*"
SPECTATOR.

St. Nicholas

For Young Folks.

CONDUCTED BY
MARY MAPES DODGE

Price 1s. monthly.

SUITABLE FOR
CHILDREN OF BOTH SEXES,
CHILDREN OF ALL AGES, AND
CHILDREN OF ALL SIZES.

Each Part contains 80 pp. of interesting matter, illustrated by about 50 high-class Engravings.

The Half-yearly Volumes, price 8s. each, are handsomely bound in red cloth, gilt.

LONDON: T. FISHER UNWIN,
PATERNOSTER SQUARE, E.C.