

800.- Basile, Giovanni 13.

893.

IL PENTAMERONE

IL PENTAMERONE; OR, THE TALE
OF TALES. BEING A TRANS-
LATION BY THE LATE SIR
RICHARD BURTON, K.C.M.G., OF
IL PENTAMERONE; OVERO LO
CUNTO DE LI CUNTE, TRAT-
TENEMENTO DE LI PECCERILLE,
OF GIOVANNI BATTISTA BASILE,
COUNT OF TORONE (GIAN
ALESSIO ABBATTUTIS).

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME THE SECOND.



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THE LARGE CRAB-LOUSE, THE MOUSE, AND THE CRICKET.

FIFTH DIVERSION

Of the Third Day.

Nardiello is sent three times by his father to buy some wares with an hundred ducats each time. The first time he buyeth a mouse, the next a large crab-louse, and then a cricket, and being expelled by his father for this, he reacheth a city where by means of his purchases he cureth the king's daughter, and after various adventures becometh her husband.

THE prince and the slave praised highly the good judgment of Sapia the Glutton: but they commended Tolla the more for the way in which she related the story, for she made it seem as if they had been present, and because, following the order of the list, it came to the turn of Popa to speak, she behaved as a very Roland, saying in this way:

Fortune is a captious woman, who escheweth all sages, because they make more count of the turning of a paper than the wheeling of the wheel. She standeth the more willingly by the ignorant, and unworthy; and objecteth not to plebeian honour, nor to divide her goods with boors, as I will relate to you in the story which followeth.

Once upon a time there dwelt at Vommaro a very rich farmer, Miccone hight, and he had a son named Nardiello, who was the most wretched good-for-nothing

to be met with amongst all the good for naught. The life of the unhappy father was embittered and darkened through his son's folly, and he knew not what to do, nor how to set him straight, nor how to make him do things as they ought to be and in good order. If he went to the tavern to eat his surfeit, he was sure to choose the most treacherous companions to quarrel with; if he had anything to do with fast women, he was sure to take hold of the worst flesh and pay for the best; if he went to a gambling-place, they would trick him, and putting him between them, they would pluck him well from right to left, so that in this way he had cast away half of his father's goods, for which reason Miccone was always up in arms, swearing, scolding, threatening, and saying, 'What dost thou think of doing, thou spend-thrift? dost thou not perceive that my goods are going from high to low tide? Leave these accursed taverns, which begin with the name of foes and end with an evil signification: leave them, for they are a migraine of the brains, dropsy of the throat, and dysentery of the purse! Leave this accursed play, where thou endangerst thy life, and thy goods are eaten up, and thy monies are lost, and thy happiness is gone, and the stones bring thee to naught, and the words bring thee down to a pill. Leave the bad whoredom and that evil race, the daughters of sin, where thou spillest and spendest, and for a common fish consumest thy substance, and for some rotten flesh thou sickenest, reducing thyself over the bone that thou art gnawing: not a prostitute, but the Thracian sea, where thou art taken by the Turks; fly from the occasion, and thou shalt lose the vice; remove the cause, 'tis said, and the effect is removed. Therefore take these hundred ducats, and go to the fair at Salern, and buy some

calves, and in three or four years they will become oxen; and we will sow a field of wheat, and when the wheat becomes ripe, we will gather it, and turn corn-merchants, and if a scarcity should come, then we will measure the crowns with the corn measure; and when there is naught more to do, I will buy thee a title with the fief of some land of a friend of ours, and thou also shalt be titled like so many others; therefore listen thou to me, O my son, as every head lifteth thee higher, and whoso beginneth not cannot go forward.' Answered Nardiello, 'Leave it to me, now I shall keep proper accounts, and I have done with all other matters.' Replied the father, 'And thus I like it to be,' and handing him the money, Nardiello farewelled him, and fared to the fair.

Now he had hardly reached the waters of Sarno, that lovely river, from which the ancient family of Sarnelli taketh its name, when in an avenue of elm-trees, at the foot of a large stone which was watered continually by the fresh water, and had covered itself with a covering of creeping ivy, he beheld a fairy, who was amusing herself with a crab-louse, which played a small guitar, so that had a Spaniard heard it, he would have said that it was a most surprising and wonderful thing. Nardiello, sighting this sight, stood still, like one in a spell, to listen, saying that he would have given anything to be the owner of such a clever beast, and the fairy answered that if he would pay for it an hundred crowns, she would give it to him. Answered Nardiello, 'Never was there a better time than this, as I have them ready for thee'; and thus saying he threw down the one hundred crowns, and taking the crab-louse, which was laid inside a small box, ran to his father in great glee, happy even unto the marrow of his bones; saying, 'Now shalt thou see,

O my lord, if I am a man of genius, and if I know how to do mine affair, because without even tiring myself till the evening I have found midway my fortune, and for a hundred crowns I have had such a gem.' The sire, viewing the small case, held for certain that he had bought a rough diamond, but opening the box, and beholding the crab-louse, his contempt, and anger, and vexation for the loss were as bellows puffing him with wrath, and making him swell like the toad.

Nardiello desired to relate the truth about the crab-louse and its ability, but it was impossible for him to do so, for his father would not allow him to speak one word, saying continually, 'Hold thy tongue, be silent, shut thy mouth, speak not, do not even whisper, thou seed of a mule, sense of a horse, head of an ass, and at this very moment go and take back the crab-louse to whomsoever sold it to thee. Here are another hundred crowns, I give them to thee, buy calves, and return at once; and mind not to be blinded by the evil one, or else I will make thee bite thine hands.' Nardiello took the money, and fared toward the tower of Sarno, and arriving at the same spot, he met the fairy who was now amusing herself with a mouse, which was dancing the most pretty figures of dances that ever could be seen. Nardiello stood sometime with mouth wide open, staring at the bows, and jumps, and turnings, and twistings of the animal, and he wondered with excessive wonder, and enquired of the fairy if she would sell it, for he would give her an hundred ducats. The fairy accepted the offer, and took the monies, and handed him the mouse within a small box, and he returned home, and shewed to the wretched Miccone the fine wares he had bought. Again the father waxed wroth with excessive wrath, and did

things out of mind, stamping about like a fantastical horse; and if it had not been for a gossip who happened to be at the show, the son would have received good measure for his hump. At last Miccone, who was in great wrath, took another hundred ducats, and said to him, 'Be careful and do thy fine tricks no more, for the third will not succeed. Go to Salerno and buy the calves, for by the soul of my dead, if thou playest me another trick, wretched will be the mother that gave thee birth.' Nardiello, with his head bowed downwards, slunk toward Salerno, and arriving at the same place, he was met by the fairy who was amusing herself with a cricket, which sang so sweetly that the folk fell asleep with the sound. Nardiello, who heard this new style of nightingale, at once longed to buy it for his wares; and agreeing to pay the hundred ducats, he laid the cricket in a small cage hollowed out of a vegetable marrow and bits of wood. Thus he returned to his father, and the latter, beholding this third bad service, lost all patience, and taking up a stump, laid it about his shoulders in bad manner, like a Rodomonte.

Nardiello, when he could escape from the claws, took up the three little animals, and left the country, and fared toward Lombardy, where lived a high and mighty lord, Cenzone hight, and he was blessed with an only daughter, named Milla, who for a certain sickness from which she suffered had become melancholy, so much so that for the space of seven years no one had seen her smile. And her sire, being in despair, had attempted a thousand remedies, and spent the cooked and the raw, and at last commanded the crier to publish a ban, that whosoever would cause the lady Milla to laugh, he would give her to him in marriage. Nardiello having heard

the ban, the whim seized him to tempt his fortune, and going before Cenzone, he offered to make Milla smile, to which offer answered the lord, 'Be careful, O my comrade, for if the trial be not successful, the mould of thy hood shall pay for it.' Answered Nardiello, 'Let the shape and the shoe go, I will try it, and let happen what will happen.'

The king sent for his daughter, and seating her under the dais, and taking seat himself, Nardiello came and stood before them, and taking out of the boxes the three animals, put them before them, and they played, and danced, and sang with such grace and sprightliness, that the princess laughed heartily. But the king wept within his heart, because by virtue of the ban, he was obliged to give a jewel of a woman to the dregs of humanity to wife. Yet as he could not withdraw his promise, he said to Nardiello; 'I will give thee my daughter in marriage and my estates as a dowry, if thou wilt agree, that if thou do not consummate within three days the act of matrimony, I will send thee to be food for the lions.' 'I am not afraid,' said Nardiello, 'for in that time I am man enough to consummate the marriage of thy daughter and of all thine house. Slowly we will go on, said the flame: at the trial are proved the melons.'

The marriage feast was spread, and the guests ate and enjoyed their sufficiency, and when the evening came, when the sun, like unto a thief, is carried with the hood over against the jail of the west, the bride and bridegroom went to bed.

Now the king had maliciously given Nardiello some opium, so that all night he did naught else but snore loudly, which thing continued to the second and the third day, when the king bade that he should be cast in the

lions' den, where Nardiello finding himself in such a strait, opened the boxes which contained the three animals, saying, 'As my evil fate has brought me to such a dark pass, as I have naught to leave you, O my beautiful animals, I give you your freedom, so that ye may go whither ye please.' The animals, as soon as they were free, began to antic about, and dance, and play in such manner, that the lions remained like statues watching them.

Meanwhile the mouse spake to Nardiello, whose spirit was ready to take flight, saying, 'Hearten thine heart, O our master, that although thou hast given us our liberty, we will be thy slaves, more than ever, because thou hast fed us with so much love, and preserved us with great affection; and at the last thou hast shown unto us signs of such passionate love as to give us our freedom; but doubt not that who doeth good good expecteth. Do a good action and forget it. And thou must know that we are charmed; and to let thee see if we can and will help thee, follow us, and we will save thee from this danger.' And Nardiello followed them, and the mouse at once bored a hole the size of a man, cut stair-wise, by which they went upstairs quite safely, and they led him to an hayloft, and they said to him that he should command whatever he should desire, since they would not leave a thing undone to please him. Said Nardiello, 'The thing that would please me most, is that if the king hath given another husband to Milla, ye would oblige me, if ye were not to allow him to consummate this marriage, because it would be a consummation of this wretched life.' Answered the animals, 'That which thou requirest and naught is all one, hearten thine heart, and await for us in this hayloft, and now we will go to chase away all rottenness.' And they fared

toward the court, where they found that the king had wed his daughter to an English lord, and that very night the cask would be open. When they heard this, the animals entered dexterously into the newly wedded couple's chamber, awaiting for the evening, and as soon as the banquet was ended, when the moon cometh forth to feed the chickens with the dew, the pair retired to rest. The bridegroom had loaded his gun, and bent the bow, and taken too much paper, so that as soon as he lay within the sheets, he fell asleep, as one dead. The crab-louse, hearing the snoring of the bridegroom, gently and slowly crept up the bedpost, and slid under the blanket, and quickly crawled to the bridegroom's arse, serving him as a support in such guise, that he opened the body in such wise that he could have said with Petrarca,

‘From love it extracted thence a subtle liquid.’

The bride hearing the grumbling of the bowels, and the running dysentery, the zephyr, the odour, the comfort, and the shade, awakened her husband, who, beholding with what a perfume he had incensed his idol, was ready to die with shame and to burst with wrath. Rising from bed, and washing all his body, he sent for the doctors, and they said that the cause of this mishap was due to the disorder of the past banquet.

When the following evening came, again taking counsel with the valets, they one and all advised him to cover himself well, to remedy some other inconvenient; which thing being done, he went to bed, but again falling asleep, the crab-louse returned to its duties, but found the way stopped. For which reason it returned unsatisfied to its

companions, saying how the bridegroom had put on repairs of bindings, a bank of ribbons, and a trench of rags. The mouse hearing this, said: ‘Come with me, and thou shalt see if a good sapper can cut the way;’ and reaching the place, he began to gnaw at the rags and clothes, and to make a hole in level with that other hole. Again the crab-louse entered, and gave him another medicinal dose, in such a guise that a topaz sea came forth, and the Arabian perfumes infected the whole palace. The bride being tainted with such odour awoke, and sighting the orange deluge which had coloured the white Holland sheets to Venetian tabby, holding her nose, flew to the chamber of her handmaidens. The wretched bridegroom, calling the valets, loudly and at length lamented his misfortune, that through a lax foundation the greatness of his house would be closed. His followers and servants comforted him, and advised him to be careful the third night, and related to him the story of the farting sick man, and of the mordacious doctors, the former allowing a fart to escape him, the doctors speaking to him in a learned language, said, ‘Sanitatibus,’ and the other letting out another, replied, ‘Ventositatibus,’ but a third following, he opened his mouth widely, and said, ‘Asinitatibus.’ ‘Therefore,’ continued they, ‘if thy first mosaic work made in the nuptial bed was blamed upon the disorders of the banquet, the second upon the bad condition of the stomach, and this had caused the motion, the third will be imputed to natural looseness, and thou wilt be expelled, in a disgraceful and shameful manner.’ Said the bridegroom, ‘Doubt not, as to-night, were I even to burst, I will keep watch, not allowing sleep to overcome me; and besides this, we will think of what remedy

we can use to stop the master conduct, so that no one should say,

‘Three times he fell, and at the third lay still.’

Having agreed thus, when the following night came, he changed room and bed, and calling his comrades, he sought their advice so as to stop up the third relaxation of the body, so that he should not be tricked for the third time. As for his remaining awake, not all the poppies in the world would make him fall asleep. Amongst his servants there was a youth whose craft was to make bombards; and as every one speaketh of his craft, he advised the bridegroom to have a wooden stopper made, as it is done for the mortars, which thing was at once done, and put in place as it should be, and he went to bed, not touching the bride, being afraid of doing some mischief and of disarranging the new invention; closing not his eyes, so as to be ready, at every move of the body, to jump out of bed. The crab-louse, who saw that the bridegroom fell not asleep, said to its companions, ‘Alas, this time we will fail, and our ability will be for naught; as the bridegroom sleepeth not, and giveth me no time to follow my enterprise.’ Said the cricket, ‘Wait a moment, and I will serve thee;’ and he began to sing sweetly, and after a little while the bridegroom fell asleep; and the crab-louse perceiving it, crept at once to its duty as a syringe. But finding the door bolted, and the way stopped, it returned in despair, and confusion to his companions, relating what had happened.

The mouse, which had no other end in view but to serve Nardiello and please him, at once fared to the pantry, and sniffing about from place to place, it came at last to a pot of mustard, wherein dipping its tail, it returned to the bridegroom’s bed, and anointed the

nostrils of the unhappy Englishman, and he began to sneeze so loudly and strongly, that the stopper came forth in a fury, and as he lay with his back turned to the bride, it struck her mid-breast with such a blow that it nearly slew her. And she screamed and screeched, and at her screams the king ran in, and enquired of her what ailed her. She told him that a petard had been shot at her breast. And the king marvelled with excessive marvel at such a folly, and wondered how with a petard on her chest she could speak; and lifting the bed-clothes, he found the bran mine, and the petard’s stopper which had hit the bride, and made a good mark in her breast; although I know not which caused her more disgust, the stink of the powder, or the blow from the ball. The king, beholding such a dirty sight, and hearing that it was the third liquidation of this instrument which he had done, expelled the bridegroom from his estates; and considering that all this evil had happened to him through the cruel treatment used to Nardiello, he struck his breast with repentance; and whilst he lamented what he had done, the crab-louse appeared before him, saying, ‘Despair not, as Nardiello liveth, and for his good qualities deserveth to be the son-in-law of thy magnificence; and if thou art pleased that he should come, we will send for him at once.’ Answered the king, ‘O thou most welcome with the happy tidings, O my beautiful animal. Thou hast saved us from a sea of trouble, as I felt a pricking at mine heart, because of the wrong I had done to that unhappy youth. Therefore bid him come, for I long to embrace him as my son and give him my daughter in marriage.’ The cricket hearing this, jumping and dancing, went to the hayloft where was Nardiello, and relating to him what had happened, led him to the royal palace, where he was met and embraced

by the king, and the king led Milla to him, and the beasts gave him a spell, and by its power he became a handsome youth, and they sent for his father from Vommaro, and they all lived happily together, proving after a thousand troubles and heart-aches that

‘More will happen in an hour than in an hundred years.’

THE WOOD OF GARLIC.

SIXTH DIVERSION

Of the Third Day.

Belluccia, daughter of Ambruso de la Varra, being obedient to her father, and acting prudently in his commands, becometh the wife of a rich youth. Narduccio hight, the first-born of Biasillo Guallecchia. Her sisters, being poor, are dowered by Biasillo, and given in marriage to his other sons.

THE company laughed heartily, not so much at the expulsion of the bridegroom, as at the trick played him by the mouse; and they would have laughed till the next morning, if the prince had not bade them be silent, and let Donna Antonella speak, who was ready, and thus she began to relate:

Obedience is a sure merchandise which bringeth gain without danger, and is such a possession that in every season it rendereth good fruit: as will be shown to you by the daughter of a poor farmer, who by being obedient to the behests of her father, not only opened a good way for herself, but also for her sisters, who married well.

Once upon a time there lived in the village of la Varra a rustic, Ambruso hight, and he was blessed with seven daughters. But all that he possessed to maintain and bring them up to the honours of this world was a forest of garlic. The worthy man was bound in the strongest

bonds of friendship to another farmer, Biasillo Guallecchia of Resina hight, who possessed good funds, and who was blessed with seven sons, of whom Narduccio, the first born and his right eye, fell sick of a dangerous sickness. No remedy could be found to cure him, although his sire's purse was always open. And one day of the days Ambruoso paid him a visit, and Biasillo enquired of him how many children he had, and Ambruoso, feeling ashamed to tell him that he had brought into the world so many chatterers, said, 'I am blessed with four sons and three daughters.' Replied Biasillo, 'If it be so, send one of thy sons to converse and cheer my son, and thou wilt confer upon me a great favour.' Ambruoso, who saw himself taken at his word, knew not what answer to give, therefore he made a sign with his head accepting the invitation, and returning to la Varra was ready to die with sadness, knowing not how to present himself before his friend. At last calling his daughters one by one, from the eldest to the youngest, he asked them which of them would like to cut her hair, and array herself in male attire, and feign herself a youth, so as to converse and keep company with the son of Biasillo, who was sick. At these words the eldest daughter Annuccia, answered, 'Since when is my father dead, that I should shear myself?' Nora the second answered, 'I am not married yet and thou wouldst see me in sad plight?' Sapatina, the third, said, 'I have always heard it said that women should never wear breeches.' Rosa, the fourth, answered, 'Miaou, miaou, thou shalt not fish me to go and seek what the chemists have not, for the entertainment of a sick man.' Cianna, the fifth, said, 'Tell this sick man that he may cure himself, and endeavour to get better, for I would not give a thread of mine hair for an hundred threads of men's lives.' The

sixth, Sella, said, 'I was born a woman, I live as a woman, and I will die as a woman; and I will not disguise myself as a man, and lose the name of good woman.' The last, a shy, retired damsel, Belluccia hight, seeing that the father, at every answer of her sisters, sighed deeply, answered, 'If 'tis not enough to disguise myself in male attire, I will even take the form of a beast, and make myself small to please thee.' Said Ambruoso, 'Mayest thou be blessed, O my daughter, as thou hast given me new life for the blood that I gave thee. Now let us lose not a moment, at the lathe is the work quickly made;' and cutting her hair (the golden ropes of the bailiffs of love), and robing her in an old raiment, they fared to Resina, where they were received with the greatest of welcomes by Biasillo and his son, who was abed.

Ambruoso, taking his departure, wended home, leaving Belluccia to serve Narduccio, the sick youth, who watched her, and could see such a light shine among those rags, and such beauty as to spellbind the beholder, and gazing again and again, and observing her well, he said in his mind, 'If mine eyes deceive me not, this youth must be a woman: the sweetness and tenderness of the face betray her, and her manner of speech confirms it, and her graceful movement proves it, and my heart tells me of it, and love discovers it. It is a woman unfailingly; and perchance she came disguised as a man to lay snare to take and wound this heart.' Losing himself deeply in this thought, great sadness overcame him, and the fever strengthened, and the doctors found him in bad plight: and his mother who burned with a deep love for her son, said to him, 'O my son, light of mine eyes, prop and tongs of mine old age, what is the reason and right cause that instead of strengthening thyself thou art worse in health; and instead

of going forward thou goest backward, like skin upon the burning coals? Is it possible that thou wilt make thy mother disconsolate without telling her the cause of thy sickness, so that we may cure it? Therefore, O my jewel, ease thy mind, let thy words rush forth, speak, tell me quickly, what dost thou need? and whatever is thy want, let Cola do it for thee, and I will not fail to fulfil all thy desires, whatsoever they be.' Narduccio, encouraged by these kind words, spake in language of fire, and confessed the hot passion of his soul, explaining to his mother that he held for certain that Ambruoso's supposed son was a woman; and if they would not give her to him to wife, he had resolved to cut short the thread of his life. Said his mother, 'Softly, O my son, to quieten this fancy which hath taken hold of thy brains, we will try some device, and will discover if it be a woman or a youth, if it be a cropped country or a country well filled with trees. We will send the youth to the stable, and bid him mount the wildest pony there: if it be a woman, the women have not spirit enough, and thou shalt see her change colour and be nigh fainting, and at once we shall discover the weight of the goods.' The son was pleased with this thought, and sent Belluccia to the stable, and they handed her a devil of a pony, and saddling him, she mounted him, and with the spirit of a lion began to promenade up and down, enough to keep the gazers wonder-struck, walking the pony in manner enough to stun, and making it whirl round enough to marvel, and pushing it forward so that folk stood in ecstasy, and curvetting and careering in surprising manner: for which reason said the mother to Narduccio, 'Drive out of thine head, O my son, such frenzy; for this youth stood firm in his saddle, better than the oldest shit-in-saddle of Porta-reale.' But for all that proof Narduccio continued to

say that it was a damsel, and that not even Scannarebecca would drive it from his head. The mother, to erase from his mind this desire, said to him, 'Softly, O my blackbird, we will devise a device a second time, to clear this matter;' and calling for a gun, sent for Belluccia, bidding her to load and shoot. And she lifted the weapon, and put the powder in the cane and the powder of desire in the body of Nardiello, and set the match to the matchlock and the fire in the heart of the sick youth, and discharging the gun, loaded the breast of the wretched Narduccio with longing and desire.

The mother, who beheld the grace, and dexterity, and charming mien of the seeming youth in shooting, said to her son, 'Drive out of thy mind such thoughts, and think well that a woman cannot do so much.' But Narduccio stood firm in his belief, and could find no peace, and would have staked his life that this beauteous rose had no bud, and kept saying to his mother, 'Believe me, mother mine, that if this beautiful tree of all graces and love will give a fig to thy sick son, thy sick son will show the figs to all the doctors; therefore let us try every means to ascertain the truth: if not I shall fail daily in my strength, and because I cannot find my way to a pit, I shall fall in another and deeper pit.' The unhappy mother, who beheld his obstinacy, and having put his feet on ground, signed scissors, scissors ever, said to him, 'If thou wouldst ascertain thyself of the truth, take the youth with thee to swim and bathe, and thou shalt see if 'tis a happy arch or an imperfect bay; if 'tis a large square or a little fork; if 'tis a supreme circus, or a Trajan column.' Answered Narduccio, 'Bravo, naught can be said to that, thou hast caught in point: to-day will be seen if 'tis a spit or a frying-pan, a roller or a sieve, a spindle or a small ditch.' But Belluccia

scented the snare laid for her, and sent at once for one of her father's apprentices, who was a very sharp and clever youth, and she tutored him, and bade him that he should keep watch and as soon as he saw her near the shore undressing ready to go a-bathing, he should come forth from his hiding place, and bring her the bad tidings that her father lay a-dying, and would like to see her before his soul should take flight. And the youth did as he was bid, and no sooner did he behold Narduccio and Belluccia at the sea-side beginning to cast off their garments than, according to his agreement, he served her at the first cut; and she hearing the news took leave of Narduccio, and fared toward la Varra; and the sick youth returned to his mother with head bent downwards and rolling eyes, yellow of colour, and with white lips, and related to her that the business had failed; and for the mishap which had happened he could not do the last trial. Answered his mother, 'Despair not, we must catch the hare with the cart. Fare thou at once to the house of Ambruoso, and call thou the son, and whether he come down quickly or delay, thou shalt clear this ambush, and discover the intrigue.' At these words the cheeks of Narduccio became of a more natural hue, and the following morning, when the sun taketh up the rays and chaseth away the stars, he fared straight to the house of Ambruoso, where calling him, he said that he desired to speak on an important matter to his son, who could not be seen neither long nor short. The farmer bade him wait a while, and he would send his son to him; and Belluccia, not wishing to be found in flagrante delicto, divested her gown, and donned the breeches and the male attire; but her hurry was such that she forgot to take her earrings from her ears, which was sighted by Narduccio: as by the ears of

a donkey one can foretell bad weather, so by Belluccia's ears he ascertained his desire. Catching her in his arms like unto a Corsican dog, he said, 'Tis my will that thou shalt be my wife in despite of the envious, and in annoyance of fortune, even against death.' Ambruoso perceiving the good intention of Narduccio, said, 'Enough that thy father is satisfied, and if he will consent with one hand, I will with an hundred;' and thus they with one accord fared to Biasillo's house, where the mother and father of Narduccio, desiring to see the happiness of their son, received with great pleasure their daughter-in-law, and desiring to know why Ambruoso had played this trick, and sent her to their house arrayed in male attire, and hearing that the cause had been not to discover that he had been such an ass to give life to seven daughters, Biasillo said, 'As Heaven hath given thee so many girls, and to me so many boys, we will have one journey to seven services. Go thou and bring them all hither, for I desire to dower them, as, praise be to Heaven, I have enough and more than sufficient for all these mixtures.' Ambruoso hearing this, put his best foot forward, and went to fetch his daughters, and brought them to Biasillo's house, where there was a bridal-feast with seven weddings, and the music and the dance reached the seventh heaven, and there they are now enjoying themselves mightily, and 'tis clearly seen that

'The divine grace ne'er cometh late.'

CORVETTO.

SEVENTH DIVERSION

Of the Third Day.

Corvetto, for his virtuous qualities, is envied by all the courtiers of the king, and is sent upon several dangerous expeditions, but issuing forth with honour in despite of his foes, is married to the princess.

THE listeners marvelled so in hearing the deeds of Belluccia recounted, that when they were told of her marriage, they were as pleased, and joyous, as if she had been their own child. But the desire to hear Ciulla made them pause in their applause, and strain their ears at the motion of her lips, which spake thus :

I once heard it said that Juno to find the lie fared to Candia. But if some one enquired of me where in very sooth fraud and deceit would be taught, I could point out to them no other place than the court, where they know how to hide under the mask of levity the murmurs of malcontent, to conceal slander with comic jest, and treachery with jokes, and roguery with Punch-like tricks : where at the same time 'tis cut out and sewn, 'tis pricked and anointed, 'tis broken and plastered up again : of which matters I will show you a netful in the story that ye will listen to.

Once upon a time there lived in the service of the King

of Sciummo-largo a right worthy youth, Corvetto hight, who through good conduct and excellent behaviour was held dear in his royal master's heart, and therefore hated and held in dislike by the courtiers; who were very bats of ignorance, and could not endure to gaze upon the light of Corvetto's virtue, since with ready money and with a good end in view he had gained his master's good graces. The zephyr of the king's favour to Corvetto was as a sickening easterly wind to the envious courtiers, and they did naught else at the corners of the palace but murmur, and chatter, and whisper, and cut, and slice, and backbite the poor youth, saying, 'What spell hath this good-for-naught cast upon the king, that he loves him so well? What great fortune is his, that not a day passeth without some favour is shown to him? We are always stepping backward like unto ropemakers and we lose our connections, though we work like dogs, and sweat like diggers, and run like deer, so as to divine the king's pleasure. Truly one must be born lucky in this world; and whoso is unlucky, 'tis best for him to cast himself into the sea: at the last must we look on and burst.' These and other words came forth like poisoned darts from the bow of their lips to be shot at the target of Corvetto's ruin. O wretched is he who is condemned to the hell of a court, where fawning flattery is sold by the dozen, and malignity and bad actions are measured to the grave, and deceit and treachery are weighed by the ton. But who can say what machinery of melon's parings is laid under the feet to cause one to fall? Who can tell what a quantity of the soap of falsehood was anointed in the ladder of the king's ears, to cause Corvetto to slip down and break his neck? Who can relate what pits of deceit were dug within the brains of the master, and the cover laid over the snares of good zeal, to make him

fall? But Corvetto was charmed, and perceived the snares set for him, and discovered the traps, and knew the skeins, and could understand the intrigues, and the ambush, and the conspiracies, and the troubles of his adversaries. He kept his ears open, and his eyes on watch, so as not to mistake the thread, knowing that fortune is inconstant to all courtiers. The higher the youth stepped, the louder became the slander and the discoveries of his foes, till at last, knowing not how to drive him from their feet, because their evil speaking was not listened to, they thought to upset him by praising him very highly, so as to make him fall into a deeper chasm (this art was invented in the hot-house, Hell, and refined at court), which matter they attempted in the manner which follows.

There lived about ten miles distance from Scotland, where this king's realm was, a ghul, the most savage and brutal that ever lived in Ghul-land. As he was persecuted by the king, he had strengthened himself within a desert-forest on the top of a high mountain, where not even the birds would fly: and it was such a wild and intricate place, that a sight of the sun was never seen there. The ghul had a beautiful steed, which seemed painted, and among other beauties it had the gift of speech, because by a charm it spake like ourselves.

Now the courtiers knew how wicked was the ghul, and how wild was the forest, and how high was the mountain, and how wonderful was this horse, so they went to the king, and descanting minutely upon this steed's perfections, they said that it was worthy of so great a king, and that some means must be found to take it from out of the clutches of the ghul, and that Corvetto would be the very one to take hold of it, as he was a youth of great spirit and firm courage, and good to come forth from burning

fire. The king, who knew not that under the flowers of these words the snake lay hid, called Corvetto to him, and said, 'An thou lovest me, leave no means untried to get for me the steed of my foe the ghul, and thou wilt be happy and satisfied of having rendered me this service.' Corvetto understood at once that this drum had been beaten by those who wished him evil; but in obedience to the command of the king, he fared mountain-wards, and entering softly the stable, he saddled the ghul's horse, and mounted, and firmly setting his feet on the stirrups, spurred the steed homewards. The horse feeling the spur, and perceiving that it was leaving the palace, cried out, 'Be on guard, for Corvetto is taking me away.' The ghul hearing the cry rushed out with all the animals which served him, on this side ye could see a monkey, on the other side a bear, on this side a lion, and on that side a wolf, ready to make mince-meat of him. But the youth spurred on, and galloped down the mountain, and fared city-ward, and safely arrived at court, where presenting the steed to the king, he stood before him, and the king embraced him like a son and drawing out a purse, he filled Corvetto's breeches with gold pieces, thus increasing the envy and hatred of the courtiers, whose flame of ire, like unto a candle before, now burned like a conflagration, beholding that the way they had chosen to throw down Corvetto's good fortune only served to pave the way to higher good.

But they knew that not at the first attack in war is the fortress taken. They desired to try a second time, and they said to the king, 'It hath come in good time the beautiful steed, which will in sooth be an honour to the royal stable, but if thou hadst the bed-cover of the ghul, which is a wonderful thing, thy fame would spread

all over the country, and in all the fairs, and no one could boast of greater riches or greater treasure than thine, and no other than Corvetto, who is a clever hand at these matters, could help thee to it.' The king who danced at every sound, and of these bitter fruits sugared over ate only the paring, called Corvetto, and begged him to get him the ghul's bed-cover. Corvetto answered not a word, but fared to the mountain, and entering the ghul's chamber unseen, and looking, where he slept, he hid himself under the bed, and awaited there till the night, to make the stars laugh, maketh a carnival book of the heavens, when the ghul having gone to bed with his wife, Corvetto came forth quite quietly, and desiring to pull off the bed-cover from the bed, began to draw it down very gently. But the ghul awoke, and bade his wife not to pull so much, because she would leave him naked, and he would catch a pain in his bowels. 'Tis thou who uncoverest me,' answered the ghula, 'I have not even a rag left on.' Replied the ghul, 'Where the devil is the blanket?' and putting down his hand it touched Corvetto's face; and the ghul cried out, 'The little monk, the little monk, folk, candles, run;' and at these cries all the house turned topsy-turvy. But Corvetto, who had thrown everything out of window, jumped down upon them, and making them up into a parcel, fared city-wards; where the king met him, and entreated him with the highest favour, and all the courtiers were nigh to burst with rage and envy. But nathless they made up their minds to fall upon Corvetto with the rearguard of roguery, finding the king in high glee for the gift of the bed-cover, which was of silk purflewed with gold, whereon were chronicled a thousand feats, and whims, and thoughts. Among the rest, if I remember rightly, there was a cock in the act

of crowing at the dawn, which it beheld coming forth, saying with the old Tuscan saw, 'Tis enough to behold thee,' and also yet a faded flower, with a Tuscan proverb, 'At sun-set.' And so many and numerous were they that it would need a long memory and more time in which to relate them. They found (as I said before) the king in high glee and joyance, and said to him, 'As Corvetto hath done so much in thy service, it would not be a matter of great importance, if he would also let thee have the ghul's palace, which is fit for an emperor. It has so many apartments and chambers, inside and outside, that it can lodge an army: and thou canst not imagine how many courtyards, and supporters, and lodges, and passages, and water-closets it contains, and what chosen architecture and fine arts shine in it, and how nature joyeth there, and how marvel shaketh one there.' The king, who was endowed with a prolific brain, called Corvetto, and told him that he longed for the ghul's palace, and that after having fulfilled so many of his wants, if he would join this one to them, he would write it with the crayon of gratitude upon the tablets of his memory. Corvetto, who was all fire, and could go an hundred miles an hour, at once lifted his heels, and soon arrived at the ghul's palace, and reaching there found that the ghula had given birth to a handsome little ghul, and her husband had gone to invite their friends and relatives. The ghula, having left her bed, was busy getting ready the banquet, and Corvetto, entering with a brazen face, said, 'Well met, O worthy woman and beauteous housewife, why dost thou use ill thy life and squander thy health so? Yesterday thou wert brought to bed, and now thou workest: hast thou no pity upon thine own flesh?' Answered the ghula, 'What dost thou want that I should do,

when I have nobody to help me?' Replied Corvetto, 'Here I am to help thee for bites and kicks.' Said the ghula, 'Mayst thou be welcome, and as thou hast come to offer thyself with such deep affection, help me to chop those four blocks of wood.' Rejoined Corvetto, 'By thy grace, if four be not enough, I will chop five;' and seizing an axe newly sharpened, instead of hitting the wood, he struck off the ghula's head, which fell on the ground with a thud; and running to the entrance gate, he dug a deep pit before it, and covering it with boughs and sod, hid himself behind the door. When he beheld the ghul coming with his kith and kin, he went in the courtyard and screamed out, 'I am thy witness, half-excrement! Hurrah for the King of Sciummo-largo!' The ghul, hearing this bravado, ran toward Corvetto to seize him and make mince-meat of him, and he ran with such fury under the portal, that he put his foot in the pit, and fell headlong in it, and Corvetto cast stones at him till he had crushed him like a cake. Then locking the palace gate, he took the key to the king, who, perceiving of what priceless worth was this youth against the teeth of fortune, and despite all envy and the jealousy of the courtiers, gave him his daughter in marriage, so that the beams of envy became the phalanx whereon stood the vessel of his life launched into the sea of greatness, and his enemies remained confused and crushed, and went to bed without a candle, for

'The punishment due to a wicked man
May be delayed, but faileth not to strike.'

THE IGNORANT YOUTH

EIGHTH DIVERSION

Of the Third Day.

Moscione is sent by his father to buy some goods in Cairo, to wean him from the paternal roof, where he was exceedingly ignorant. Faring Cairo-wards, he meets in his way several virtuous folk who take him with them, and through them he returneth home loaded with silver and gold.

CCOURTIERS were not wanting, among those who surrounded the prince, who would have shown their anger, if their art had not been dissimulation, for they had been touched to the quick: nor could they have told you, if they felt more hurt at having thrust under their noses their chicanery and falsehood, or by their envy of Corvetto's happiness. But as Paola began to speak, she drew forth their souls from the deep well of their passion with the hook of these words:

An ignorant man has always been more praised by consorting with virtuous men than a sage who joineth company with folk of small worth; because as much competency and greatness as one may gain from the former, so much goods and honour one may lose through the latter: and as with the wooden peg the ham is tried, so by the tale that I am going to relate you will perceive if my proposition be true.

Once upon a time there lived a father who was as rich as the sea; but as happiness is not to be had in this world, he had a son so ignorant and stupid that he hardly knew a fritter from a cucumber. So, being unable to bear any more with his folly, his sire gave him a well-filled purse, and sent him to trade in the east, well knowing that travel wakeneth the mind, and that consorting with divers peoples sharpeneth the judgment, and maketh man expert.

Moscione (thus was the son hight), mounting steed, fared towards Venice, the arsenal of the wonders of the world, intending there to take ship for Cairo.

When he had fared one day's journey, he met a youth standing against a poplar-tree, and he said to him, 'O my youth, what is thy name? Whence comest thou? What is thy craft?' and the other answered, 'My name is Furgolo, I come from Saetta, and I can run as fast as lightning.' Replied Moscione, 'I should like to see thee run;' and Furgolo said, 'Wait a moment, and thou shalt see if it is gun-powder or corn-flour.'

And they stood still a moment, when behold a hind came bounding before them, and Furgolo, letting her pass a good way, set to run, and he was so light of foot that he might have stepped upon a field bestrewed with flour and left no footprint marked thereon, and in four jumps he came up with her. And Moscione, marvelling with exceeding marvel, said to him, 'Wilt thou stay with me, an I will pay thy wage?' and Furgolo agreeing, they fared on together. But they had not journeyed four miles when they met another youth, and Moscione said to him, 'What is thy name, comrade? Which country is thine? And what is thy craft?' and the other answered, 'My name is Hare's Ear, I come from Valle-

curiosa, and when I lay my ears on ground, without moving from the place I can hear what is done in the world, what is monopolized, what is conferred, what the craftsmen do to raise the price of things, what bad services are done by courtiers, what wicked advice is given by pimps, what appointments are made by lovers. I can hear the plots of rogues, the lamentations of servants, the reports of spies, the chit-chat of old folk, and the curses of sailors, and Luciano's cock saw not so much with the aid of the Frank's lantern, as can these ears of mine observe.' Answered Moscione, 'If thou speakest sooth, tell me, what are they talking about in mine house?' and Hare's Ear, laying his ears on ground, said, 'An old man is speaking to his wife, and saith, "May the sun in Lion be praised, that I have rid mine eyes from the sight of that Moscione, that face of an old jar, that nail of mine heart, for I hope at least that in going about the world he will become a man, and will not be such a beastly ass, such a knave, such a good-for-naught."' Cried Moscione, 'Tis enough, 'tis enough, thou speakest sooth, I believe thee; therefore come with me, for thou hast found thy good fate.' Said the youth, 'I will come;' and thus they fared together, and they had gone about ten miles, when they met another youth to whom Moscione said, 'How callest thou thyself? Where art thou born, O my worthy man? And what canst thou do in this world?' and he answered, 'My name is Hit Straight, I am from Castiello-Tira-giusto, and I can shoot with the crossbow and hit an apple in the centre.' Replied Moscione, 'I should like to see a proof of it,' and the other charged his crossbow, pulled the string, and hit a bean on the top of a stone, whereupon Moscione took him also into his company. And

they continued wayfaring another day's journey till they came to some men who were building a pier in the scorching heat of the sun, so that they could have said, with truth, 'Frying-pan, put water to the wine, for my heart is burning.' And Moscione felt pity for them, and said to them, 'O my masters, how can ye stand this burning heat, where a buffalo would be roasted?' And one of them answered, 'We are as cool and fresh as a rose, because we have behind us a youth who blows at us in such a manner, that it seems as if all the west winds were blowing.' Said Moscione, 'Let me see him, and God guard thee;' and the builder called the youth, and Moscione said to him, 'How do they name thee, thou priest of thy fellows? From which land comest thou? And what is thy profession?' and the other answered, 'I am hight Sciosciariello, I come from Terra-Ventosa, and I can imitate with my mouth all the winds which blow from Posilippo toward evening;' and turning all at once toward certain plum-trees, he blew such fury of winds that it uprooted the fruit-trees.

When Moscione saw this, he took him also for companion, and they fared as long a way again, when they were met by another youth, to whom Moscione said, 'What is thy name, and let it not be an order? Whence dost thou come, can it be known? And what is thy craft, if the question may be asked?' And the other answered, 'My name is Forte-Schiena, I come from Valentino, and I have a gift that I can carry a mountain upon my back, and it seems to me the weight of a feather.' 'If this be true,' said Moscione, 'thou deservest to be king of the custom-house, and thou wouldst win the prize on the first of May; but I should like to see the experiment.'

Then Forte-Schiena began to load himself with large stones, trunks of trees, and so many other weighty things that a thousand carts could not have borne them; which when Moscione saw, he bade the youth to stay with him. Thus they fared toward Bello-sciore, the king of which place had a daughter who could run like the wind, and if she ran upon a broccoli field she was so light of foot that she would not damage a single flower; and the king had just issued an edict, that whoso could overtake her when she ran, he would give her to him in marriage, but whoso remained behind should lose his head.

When Moscione arrived in this land, and heard of this royal mandate, he fared to the royal presence, and offered to run with the king's daughter; making the agreement, that either he would run well or lose his head. The race was appointed for the next day, but when morning dawned, he sent a message to inform the king that a bad dysentery had seized him, and as he could not run in person, he would send another youth to take his place. 'Let come who will,' answered Ciannetella, thus was the daughter hight, 'I care not one straw, and there is enough for all.'

Thus all being settled, the square was filled with people come to see the race, insomuch that the men folk swarmed like ants, and the windows and belvideres were full like eggs. Furgolo appeared, and stood at the top of the square, awaiting his fair antagonist. And behold Ciannetella appeared, arrayed in a short skirt which reached above the knee, and with small thin shoes, pretty and tight-fitting. Then setting shoulder to shoulder, they awaited for the tarantara and tu-tu of the trumpet, when they darted off running at such speed that their heels touched their shoulders. Ye may suppose that they looked like hares pursued by the greyhounds, horses escaped from the

stable, dogs with bladders tied on their tails, asses with sticks in their behinds. But Furgolo true to his name left her behind him, and reached the goal before her; and you should have heard the cries, the screams and public reports, and whistling, and hissing, and beating of hands, and stamping of feet, and the folk crying, 'Hurrah, hurrah, viva for the foreigner: ' whereat Ciannetella's face turned crimson, like the behind of a school-boy who hath just received a beating, as she felt scorned and affronted by her loss. But the race was to have a second trial, and she bethought herself how she should avenge this affront, and going to the palace, she enchanted a ring, so that whosoever wore it on his fingers his legs would fail beneath him, and he would not be able to walk, much less to run; and she sent it as a gift to Furgolo, so that he should wear it for her sake.

Hare's Ear, who heard this talk between father and daughter, kept silence, awaiting for the result of this business. And as soon as the awakener of the birds, the sun, scourged the night, riding the ass of the shadows, they returned to the field, and the usual sign being given, they lifted their heels. But Ciannetella seemed a second Atalanta, whilst Furgolo had become a heavy donkey, and a lame horse, and he could not move a step but Hit Straight, who saw his companion's danger, and hearing from Hare's Ear how stood the matter, took up cross-bow, and drew the string, and hit Furgolo on the finger, splitting the ring just where the charm lay hidden; whereupon Furgolo's legs straightened, and in four steps, like a goat, he leaped past Ciannetella, and won the race.

The king, beholding that the race was won by a slipshod, and the victory given to a clodhopper, and a triumph vouchsafed to a good-for-naught, thought deeply in his

mind of what he should do, and if he should give him his daughter in marriage; and he sent for the sages of his realm, and asked their counsel, and they answered, that Ciannetella was no morsel for a penniless beggar, an idle bird; and that without dishonour for his failing to keep his promise, he could make him a compensation in golden ducats, which would be more satisfactory to the ugly beggar than all the women in the world.

The king was pleased with this rede, and sent a message to Moscione, asking him how much gold and silver would satisfy him in exchange for the wife who had been promised him. Then Moscione taking counsel with the others, answered, 'I should like thee to give me as much silver and gold, as one of my companions can carry on his back.' The king agreed, whereupon they sent for Forte-Schiena, and they began to load him with bags full of golden ducats, and sacks of copper monies, and purses full of silver, and casks full of small coins, and caskets full of gold chains, and rings; but the more they loaded him the firmer he stood, just like a tower, and the royal treasury did not suffice, nor the banks, nor all the money-changers in town; and the king sent to all his knights and noblemen to borrow their candlesticks, and basins, and ewers, and cup-holders, and plate, and trays, and baskets, and even to the silvern chamber-pots and night vases; and yet 'twas not enough to make the weight right. At last they took leave and departed, not sufficiently loaded, but satisfied, and weary of waiting.

When the king's counsellors beheld these youths carrying off all the wealth of the realm, they said to the king, that it was a great piece of stupidity to allow them to take away all the riches of his kingdom, and therefore it would be advisable to send a company of soldiers to lighten the

load of this new Atlas, who was carrying on his shoulders a heaven of treasures. The king, bending to this rede, at once sent armed men, foot and horse, after them, but Hare's Ear, who had been listening to this rede, informed his companions, and whilst the dust arose high in the air from the footsteps of the coming host which came to unload this rich farm, Sciosciariello, who saw matters in bad plight, began to blow in such a way that not only did he overthrow all the foes, but with the strength of the southern winds which blow in that country he sent them flying more than a mile distant. And having no other impediment in their journey, they fared on and all arrived at the house of Moscione's father, where he divided his gain with his companions (because it is said: to whoso helpeth thee to gain a patty, give him in exchange a rotten leaf, and whoso helpeth thee to gain a block of wood, give him a chip), and he sent them away happy and satisfied; and he remained with his father rich in all, just like an ass loaded with gold, giving not the lie to the ancient say,

'Heaven sendeth biscuits to the toothless.'

ROSELLA.

NINTH DIVERSION

Of the Third Day.

A sultan is recommended to bathe in the blood of a great lord, and he sendeth his folk to seize a prince. His daughter falleth in love with the prisoner, and they fly together; her mother followeth them, and her hands are cut off. She dieth with grief, cursing her daughter, so that the prince forgetteth her. After various ruses and tricks played by her, her husband remembereth her once more, and they live and enjoy themselves happily together.

THE story related by Paola was heard with great gladness, and all said that the father was right in his desire to have a virtuous son, although the owl sang for him, and if the others kneaded the dough, he cut the maccaroni. But it now being Ciommetella's turn to say her say, she spake thus:

Whoso liveth badly cannot die well; and if any one escapeth from this sentence, he is a white crow, because whoso soveth oil cannot gather wheat, and whoso planteth tomatoes cannot gather broccoli. And this tale that I am going to relate will not give me the lie: pay me, I pray you, by opening well your ears and your mouths, and I will make an effort to give you satisfaction.

In days of yore there lived a sultan who was afflicted with leprosy, and no remedy could be found to cure

him. The doctors, not knowing what to do to rid themselves of the importunity of the sick man, proposed to him an impossible thing, telling him that if he desired to be cured there was no other remedy but that he should bathe in the blood of some great prince. The sultan, hearing this wild prescription, and longing to regain his health, sent off a large fleet to scour the seas, so that by means of spies, and rich gifts, and promises of higher things, they might meet with some city where they could find some famous prince ready at hand. And the vessels coasted along the Fonte-Chiaro Seas until they met a small boat, sailing slowly on. Seated therein was Paoluccio, son of the king of that country, and they took him prisoner, and carried him straightway to Constantinople. The doctors, hearing of this, made effort to lengthen the business, not so much in pity or compassion for the unhappy prince, as for their own sake, since the bath could not cure the sultan, and they would have to pay the forfeit. They therefore induced the sultan to believe that this prince was wroth at having lost his liberty, and in consequence thereof his blood was troubled, and if the sultan were to bathe therein, it would do him more harm than good; and it was necessary that the remedy should be suspended for a while, till the melancholic mood of the prince had given way to a brighter and more pleasant one. And moreover they should keep the prince in good humour, and feed him with substantial food, so that he should make good blood. The sultan hearing this, thought that he would try to make him cheerful, and he sent him into a beautiful garden where it was ever spring. Fountains played and disputed with the birds and with the cool zephyrs as to whoso could murmur best, and the sultan, sending his daughter

therein to keep the prince company, promised him that he would give her to him to wife. Rosella (thus was the daughter hight), when she saw the beauty of the prince, was strongly tied by the rope of love, and uniting her desires with those of Paoluccio, they bound themselves with one ring and in the same thought.

But the time came when the cats go in search of adventures, and the sun plays at ram-butting with the celestial ram, and this being spring-time, and the blood of the prince being now of better quality, the doctors were unable to procrastinate the bath any longer, and were about to slay Paoluccio, to please the sultan. But although her sire had kept these matters hidden from Rosella, she had discovered the treachery by means of the art of geomancy taught her by her mother, and giving her lover a sword, she said to him, 'O my beauteous muzzle, an thou desire to be free, and to save thy life which is so dear to thee, lose no time; run like an hare to the seaside, where thou shalt find a boat, enter therein and wait my coming, for by the virtue of this charmed sword thou shalt be received by the sailors like an emperor.' Paoluccio, seeing open to him such a good way to liberty, took the sword, and fared to the sea-shore, where he found the boat, and he was received therein with great respect by those a-board of it.

In the meanwhile Rosella cast a spell upon a paper, and slid it unseen into her mother's pocket, so that she fell asleep at once, and slept in such a manner that she could hear naught, neither head nor foot; and after this Rosella collected a large bundle of jewels and other valuables, and ran to the boat, and they set sail. But the sultan coming to the garden, and finding neither his daughter nor the prince, did things to frighten all

the world, and ran to find his wife, but he could not awaken her, neither by shouting, nor screaming, nor pulling her nose. And he thought that she must be in a fit, and calling the handmaidens, bade them undress her. As soon as they slid off her skirt, the spell was at an end, and she woke up, crying, 'Alas, my treacherous daughter hath played me this trick, she hath taken flight with the prince; but it matters not, I will serve her out and put her way straight.' Saying thus, she ran to the sea-side and threw a tree-leaf on the sea, which became at once a felucca, finely pointed, and it cut the waves and speedily ran behind the fugitives. Rosella, although her mother was not visible, yet with her magic art could see what betided, and turned to Paoluccio, and said to him, 'Quick, O mine heart, hend thy sword, and stand at the vessel's stern, and when thou hearest the noise of the clanging chains, and the hiss of the hooks thrown to grapple the ship, cut, and slash, and hit with eyes shut, and spare none, and who is hit, let him be hit, and let their warmth be cooled, or we are lost, and our flight is useless.' And because the prince feared to lose his own skin, he followed the advice, and when the sultana's vessel came alongside and threw the grapple-hooks, he began to cut and slash in all sides, and luckily at a single stroke he cut off the sultana's hands, and she shrieking like a damned soul, cursed her daughter, and wished that the prince, at the first step he walked in his own land, might forget her. And returning to Turkey with her stumps running blood, she presented herself before her husband, and showing him the painful spectacle, said to him, 'Behold, O my husband, we have both played at Fortune's table, I and thou, and we have lost, thou thine health, and I my life.' And when she ended speaking.

she gave up the ghost, and went to pay her wage to the teacher who had taught her the black art. And the sultan, drowned in the sea of despair, followed his wife's footsteps, and fared cold as ice to the hot-house. Such was their case.

Now Paoluccio, as soon as he arrived at Fonte-Chiaro, bade Rosella await in the vessel, whilst he went and fetched carriages and followers, so that he might lead her in triumph to his own house. But no sooner did he put his foot on ground, than he forgot Rosella, and arriving at the royal palace, was received with caresses from his father and mother. Ye cannot imagine the welcomes and festivals and illuminations done in his honour. And Rosella awaited three days in suspense for Paoluccio, when she remembered her mother's curse, and bit her lips, for she had not thought before to remedy it; therefore like a woman driven to despair she left the vessel, and fared on city-wards, and hired a palace opposite the palace of the king, wherein to contrive some scheme by which the debt of gratitude he owed her should be brought in remembrance before the prince's mind. The nobles and lords of the court, who are always desirous to put their noses everywhere, sighting this new bird come to the palace vis-à-vis, and contemplating such beauty, which ravished all hearts, and passed all bourns, and caused great marvel and exceeding wonder, began to buzz round it like mosquitoes, and not a day passed but that they were seen promenading and curvetting before the house. Sonnets flew right and left, and serenades and music enough to deafen. And the hand-kissing, and great nuisances, and behind-annoyances went on; and the one knew not of the other, and they all shot at the same target, and sought in the inebriation of love to drink out of that cask. And

Rosella, who well understood where to anchor the ship, was pleasant to all, and entertained all, and gave hopes to all. At last, desiring to tighten the strings, she agreed secretly with a cavalier of high standing at court that if he brought her a thousand ducats and a complete raiment, when night darkened and starkened, she would give unto him a proof of her affection. The wretched window-gazer, who was blinded by his passion, went and borrowed the money at high interest, and taking on trust from a merchant, whom he knew, a rich raiment, impatiently awaited the hour when the sun changed with the moon, to gather the fruit of his desires. When night came, he fared secretly to Rosella's house, and found her lying in a rich bed, and she looked like Venus in a flower-garden, and with charming grace she asked him not to come to bed without shutting the door. The cavalier thinking it but a small service to please such a beautiful jewel, turned to shut the door, but no sooner did he shut it than it opened again. Again he shut it, and again it opened, and all night he continued thus till the sun sowed with its golden rays the fields which the aurora had furrowed. Having thus seen how long was the night, and being unable to use the key of that accursed door, to make matters worse he caught a good dressing from Rosella's tongue, who called him a dark creature, not good enough to shut a door, but with presumption enough to open the casket of love's enjoyments. And the wretched man, confused and scorned, went his ways hot on head and cool on tail.

The second evening she gave appointment to another baron, and bade him bring another thousand ducats and another dress, and he pledged all his silver and gold to the jew money-lenders, to satisfy the desire which carrieth at

the end of pleasure repentance, and when the night like a shameful beggar covereth her face with her mantle and asketh for alms in silence, he came to Rosella's house, and found her in bed. And she said to him, 'Put out the candle, and come to bed.' And the baron doffed his sword and his raiment, and began to blow at the candle, but the more he blew, the more it burned, for the wind that came out of his mouth had the effect of the bellows blowing the fire of the smithy. So he spent all the night in trying to put out the candle, and to put out a light he melted himself like wax. But when night, not to behold the divers mad feats of mankind, hideth her face, the unhappy and despised baron received a volley of injurious epithets, like his predecessor, and went his ways. When the third night came, the third lover arrived with another thousand ducats taken from a jew at high percentage, and with a raiment spunged out of some one. Mounting the stairs quietly, he entered Rosella's chamber, and she said to him, 'I will not go to bed without combing my hair'; 'Let me do it for thee,' answered the nobleman, and bidding her sit down and to hold her head straight, thinking that he was going to steal French cloth, he began to comb out the knots with an ivory comb. But the more he tried to comb them out the more knotted they became; and he spent all night in knotting, and unknotting, and trying to put things right, till he spoiled and put the hair in such disorder that he was fit to knock his head against the wall, and as soon as the sun came forth to listen to the latest news sung by the birds, and with the spreading of his rays to give a good beating to the crickets infesting the school of the fields, with another double-soled scolding, frozen and cold, he fared forth out of the house. But this nobleman conversing one day in

the king's ante-room with other noblemen, where they cut, and slice, and speak of matters that sad-hearted be that mother who chanceth to have a daughter, where the bellows of flattery blow about, and the webs of deceit are woven, and the keys of murmuring are deftly touched, and the melons are cut to prove their ignorance, related what had happened to him, whereupon the second answered, 'Be silent, if Africa wept, Italy doth not smile. I have also gone through this head of a needle, and therefore be comforted, for a common trouble is half enjoyment.' And the third replied to this, 'We are all plastered with the same tar, and we can touch our hands without envying one another, this treacherous damsel hath treated us all alike, and stroked our fur the wrong way; but it is not right that we should swallow such a pill without avenging ourselves; we are not men to be despised and put in a sack; therefore we must devise a device to punish this barbarous woman, this cheat.' And they agreed together to go to the king, and relate to him what had taken place. And the king sent for Rosella, and said to her, 'Where didst thou learn to cheat and make fools of my courtiers? Dost thou not think that I will have thee written in the excise book, vile woman, strumpet, lewd piece?' And Rosella, without a change in her colour, answered, 'What I have done, O my lord, hath been to avenge a great wrong wrought upon me by one of thy court, although there is not a thing in the world which can compensate me for the injury I have suffered;' and the king commanded her to relate to him this offence. And she related to him, without naming the offender, what she had done in the behalf of the prince, and how she had freed him from slavery, and saved him from death, and made him escape the danger of the sorceress, and brought him safe and sound in his own

native land, only to be repaid by the basest ingratitude, with a back turned, and a form of cheese: a thing not due to her estate, as she was a lady of high descent, and the daughter of kings. The king, hearing this, at once entreated her with high honour and respect, and seated her under the dais, and begged that she would discover to him the name of the ungrateful knave who had done such a deed. Taking off a ring from her finger, she said, 'The one whose finger this ring fitteth is the unfaithful traitor who hath done me this deed;' and throwing the ring it went straight to the prince's finger, who was present. The virtue of the ring flying at once to his head, his memory returned, he opened his eyes, the blood coursed freely, and his spirits returned, and he ran and embraced Rosella, and he was not satisfied to hold her within his arms, but he kissed her over and over again, asking her to forgive him for the trouble he had caused her, and she answered, 'Tis needless to ask forgiveness for errors unwillingly committed. I know the reason that made thee forget thy Rosella, as my mother's curse has not escaped my mind, therefore I excuse thee and pity thee;' and a thousand loving words followed. The king, hearing under what deep obligation his son lay to the princess, desired that they should be united in marriage, and baptizing Rosella in the Christian faith, they were married, and lived highly satisfied, more than any who had worn the matrimonial yoke, and they beheld at last that

'Ever with time and straw
Thou mayst see the medlar ripen.'

THE THREE FAIRIES.

TENTH DIVERSION

Of the Third Day.

Cecella, ill-treated by her stepmother, is well entreated by three fairies. Her envious stepmother sendeth her own daughter to them, and she is scorned by them, for which reason she sendeth her stepdaughter to watch pigs. A great lord falleth in love with her, but through the craft and wickedness of the stepmother, they give him the ugly daughter in exchange, and she putteth her stepdaughter in a cask ready to pour boiling water upon her. The lord discovereth the treachery, taketh out Cecella, and putteth the hideous daughter in her place; and the mother cometh, and scaldeth her with boiling water, and finding out her error, slayeth herself.

THE story of Ciommetella was esteemed one of the prettiest which had been related, and Ghiacova perceiving that all were silent with exceeding wonder, said:

If I were not obliged to obey the command of the prince and princess, which acteth like a crane to a cart and draggeth me along, I would end here all my prattling; as it seemeth to me too much to bring aught forth out of the blunderbuss of my mouth, in comparison with the sweetness of Ciommetella's words. But, as it is the will of my lord, I will make an effort, and I will relate a story concerning the punishment given to an envious woman who, desiring to push down her stepdaughter, instead lifted her to the stars.

In the village of Marcianese lived a widow, Caradonia hight, who was the mother of envy, and she never looked with kindness on any of her neighbours. If she heard of good chancing to some acquaintances, it was gall and bitterness for her, nor did she ever see man or woman happy without being ready to burst with jealousy.

Now this woman had a daughter, Grannizia hight, and she was the quintessence of hideousness, and the first cut of a sea-ghula, and a pattern for a flattened cask. Her head was full of lice, her hair was unkempt, she had swollen eyes, a thick round nose, teeth full of slime, a mouth like a dog-fish, a chin like a wooden shoe, a neck like a magpie, and breasts like two saddle-bags. She was round-shouldered, and had thin long arms, crooked legs, and heels like a cheese farm; and in very sooth, from head to foot she was an hideous witch, a fine pest, an ugly piece, a naught, a pig's hide. But nathless all these combined graces of this crab-louse, her mother thought her a beauty worthy a painter's brush.

Now it so chanced that this widow married a certain Micco Antuono, a very rich farmer from Pane-cuocolo, who had been twice elected a bailiff and mayor of that village, and he was respected and held in high esteem by all the Pane-cuocolesi. Micco Antuono had also a daughter named Cecella, whose beauty was the most wonderful and marvellous in the world. She had eyes which drew one's heart away, a small sweet mouth, fit for kisses, which would send one into ecstacy, a sweet white throat which sent lovers into despair, and she was so graceful, caressing, playful, affable, mild, and kind, and so charming, with bewildering smiles, that she drew all hearts to her. But enough of this. My praises run short. She was a model fit for a painter's brush, and he would have found

no blemish in her. But Caradonia, beholding that her daughter suffered by the comparison with Cecella, like a kitchen duster near a velvet cushion, or like the bottom of a greasy saucepan, or the muzzle of a Venetian ass, an harpy compared to a Fairy Morgana, began to look upon her with envy and despite. And 'twas not long before the imposthume at her heart burst forth, and being unable to hang herself any longer on the rope without breaking out, she began to torment and worry the wretched child openly. She arrayed her daughter in a fine woollen skirt all purflewed around, and in a bodice of chenille, and the stepdaughter in the worst rags she owned. Her daughter ate of the whitest bread of the finest quality, and the stepdaughter of the hardest lumps of black bread. The daughter was kept like the Saviour's vial, and the stepdaughter had to run to and fro to sweep the house, wash the dishes, make the bed, do the washing, feed the pigs, tend the ass, and empty the . . . may ye well digest it. Which matters the good obedient damsel did well and quickly, sparing no fatigue to please the wicked stepmother. But as her good luck would have it, one day of the days, the unhappy damsel went at a distance from the house in a steep broken-down place to cast away the filth and dust, and the large basket she held slipped from her grasp and fell down the chasm, and she gazed after it thinking how she might more easily fish it out, and whilst she was looking, behold, an hideous sorcerer appeared, and ye could not have said whether he was the original of Æsop, or a copy of the ugly beggar. He was a ghul, and his hair stood up like an hog's bristles, black and stiff, sinking to the very marrow of the bones; the forehead was full of wrinkles, so that it seemed furrowed by the plough; he had shaggy brows, crooked eyes sunk

deeply into their orbits, and filled with what do ye call it, and they looked like shops under the eyelashes' heavy gutter; he had a crooked, frothing mouth, out of which protruded a pair of tusks, like a wild boar's; his breast was full of bumps, and covered with hair enough to stuff a mattress; and above all he was hunchbacked, round-bellied, and had thin legs, and crooked feet. His appearance was such, that it would make you twist your mouth with fear: but Cecella, although she beheld an evil spirit enough to frighten her out of all mind, heartened her heart, and said, 'O my worthy man, couldst thou hand me up that basket, which fell out of my hands? and mayst thou be married to a rich spouse;' and the ghul answered, 'Come down, O my daughter, and take it up;' and the good child, taking hold of the roots and stones, slowly went down, and when she reached the ground (a thing hardly worth belief) she found three fairies, each handsomer than the other. Their hair was threads of gold; and their faces like the moon in her fourteenth night; they had speaking eyes, and mouths that invited the most sweet kisses. What more? A slender white throat, a round breast, a delicate hand, a small foot, and an undulating grace which was like a gilded frame to this painting of perfect beauty. And Cecella was entreated kindly by them, and they kissed and caressed her; and taking her by the hand, led her to a house under the rubbish, fit for a king to dwell in. And as soon as they reached there, they sat down upon Turkish carpets, with velvet cushions thereon, and leaning their heads toward Cecella, the fairies bade her comb their hair, and whilst she, with great gentleness, did her work with a buffalo-horn comb, one of the fairies asked her, 'Beautiful child, what dost thou find on this head of

mine?' and she very gracefully replied, 'I find small nits, and little lice, and pearls, and garnets.' Her good behaviour pleased exceedingly the three fairies, and after she had plaited their hair, which was thrown about the shoulders, they led her round this enchanted palace, and she saw beautiful desks with fine chesnut-trees engraved thereon, and caskets covered with leather, with brass corners, and walnut tables so bright that ye could gaze at yourselves therein. There were cupboards with polished rests which dazzled the sight, and table-covers of green cloth adorned with flowers, and chairs of horse-leather high-backed, and many other luxuries that whoso saw them would be surprised. Cecella gazed at the splendid elegance of the house, but did not go into raptures about it, as all ill-mannered folk would have done.

At last they led her to a wardrobe full of rich raiments, and they showed her the Spanish camorra,* and long robes with wide velvet sleeves, purflewed with gold, and bed-covers of cataluffo,† and taffeta mattresses, and natural-flower pillows, and charms in half-moon shape and in the shape of the tongue of a serpent, and play-things of blue crystal and white, and gems in the shape of an ear of wheat, and lilies, and feathers to wear on the head, and garnets encrusted with enamel and silver, and necklaces, and jewelry, and a thousand other things, and they bade Cecella choose what she wanted, and take the prettiest of those things. But Cecella, who was humble as oil, leaving the most precious things, took only an old skirt of very little worth. And the fairies watched

* 'Camorra' (Sp. *chamorra*). An ancient texture highly prized, and from it the dress was called 'Gamorra.'

† 'Cataluffo.' A kind of precious stuff purflewed with bits of enamel and gems.

her, and said, 'O my love, by which gate wilt thou go forth?' And she bowing to the ground said, 'Tis enough for me to issue from the stable door.' And at those words the fairies embraced her, and kissed her, and doffing her old raiments, they arrayed her in sumptuous robes, all purflewed with gold, and they put on her head a Scotch cap, and tied her hair with ribbons, and then accompanied her to the large gate, which was of solid gold, with the frame all encrusted with carbuncles, and they said to her, 'Go Cecella, may we see thee well married; fare thy ways, and when thou art outside this gate, look up, and see what there is above.' The damsel, gracefully bending to them, took her leave and departed, and when she came under the gate, she lifted her head, and a golden star fell upon her forehead, which was a most beautiful thing to behold, and starred like a steed, and light, and gentle, she stood before her stepmother, and related all that happened to her. But this story was not a story for that envious woman, but a rope twisted round her neck, and she could not rest till she knew the place where the fairies dwelt, and she sent to them the ugly daughter, who came to the enchanted palace, and found the three beauteous fairies. Leading her in, the first thing they bade her do was to comb their hair, and enquiring of her what she found there, she answered, 'Lice as large as beans, and nits as large as spoons.' The fairies were wroth at the lack of tact and courtesy of that hideous rustic, but they dissembled, and knew the bad day from the morning, and when they led her into the sumptuous chambers and bade her take what she liked, Grannizia, seeing that a finger was offered her, took the whole hand, and she asked for the finest raiment she saw in the wardrobes. The fairies, beholding this

act, and seeing that she filled her hands with all kind of goods, yet said naught, but enquired of her, 'By which gate wouldst thou like to go forth, O handsome maiden, by the golden gate or by the garden gate?' And she with a brazen face replied, 'By the best that there is.' But the fairies, seeing the presumption of this good-for-naught, said not a word, and sent her away, saying, 'When thou comest to the stable door, lift up thy face to heaven, and see what will come to thee.' And she went forth amid the dung, and when she reached the stable door, she lifted up her face, and upon her forehead fell an ass's testicle, which sticking to the skin, looked like somewhat for which her mother longed when she bare her; and with this fine gain, softly and quietly she returned to Caradonia.

When Caradonia saw what had taken place, she became angry like a bitch watching her pups, and bidding Cecella doff her clothes, she just covered her middle and behind with a rag, and sent her to guard pigs, dressing with her garments her own daughter. And Cecella with great phlegm, and with a patience worthy of a Roland, supported this wretched life. O cruel deed, enough to move to compassion the very stones in the road. That sweet mouth worthy of love's conceptions was obliged to blow the pipe, and cry out 'Cicco, Cicco,' 'Enze, enze.' That great beauty was lost amongst pigs, and living amongst pigs, that hand worthy of drawing to her an hundred weapons, was obliged to chase with a wand an hundred sows; and a thousand times accursed be the wickedness which sent her to these forests, where under cover of the shadows stood fear and silence sheltering themselves from the sun. But Heaven, who crusheth the presumptuous, and upraiseth

the humble, sent before her an high and mighty lord, Cuosimo hight, who beholding amid the mire such a jewel, among pigs such a Phoenix, and amid the broken clouds such a beauteous sun, was caught at once in love's meshes, and he sent to enquire who she was and where she dwelt, and he spake with the stepmother, and asked her to wife, promising to endow her with an hundred thousand ducats. Caradonia opened wide her eyes, and thought of what a good thing it would be for her daughter, and bade him to return at night, for she desired to invite her kith and kin. Cuosimo, quite happy and contented, departed, and the time till the sun went to sleep in the silvern bed that the moon prepareth for him seemed to him long as a thousand years, till he could go and sleep with that sun that burned his heart.

In the meanwhile Caradonia had placed Cecella within a cask, and covered her up, designing to throw some boiling water upon her, and to scald her to death. As she had forsaken the pigs, she was going to pickle her like a pig with hot water, but dusk crept on, and the heavens became like a wolf's mouth, and Cuosimo, who had fits of impatience, and was dying with the longing to clasp that beauty within his arms, to lighten his heart from the oppressive load of his love, with great joy fared toward the house of his beloved, saying, 'This is the appointed hour, when I must go to engraft the tree that love hath planted within my breast, to suck from it the manna of amorous sweetness; this is the time to go and dig up the hidden treasure, that Fortune hath promised me; therefore lose no time, O Cuosimo: when the suckling pig is promised to thee, run with the rope. O night, O most happy night, O thou friend of the enamoured lover, O souls and bodies, O spoon

and platter, O Love, run, run quickly, because under the tent of thy shadow I can shelter myself from the heat that consumeth me.' And thus saying, he arrived at Caradonia's house, and found Grannizia instead of Cecella, an owl instead of a bullfinch, a wild herb instead of a rose: for although she had arrayed herself in Cecella's raiments, and it could be said of her 'dress thou a block of wood, and it will look like a baron,' yet withal she looked like a crab-louse within a golden net. Not all the powders, cosmetics, and pomades that her mother had used could rid her of that beauty amid the brows, the swollen eyes, the freckled face, the dirty teeth, the warts in the throat, the saddle-bags in the breast, and the flat heels; and the stink of that sink could be smelt from afar. The bridegroom, perceiving this ugly creature, could not think what had happened to him, and drawing back just as if he had seen the one that melteth, said in his mind, 'Am I awake, or have I put a blind over my eyes, or do I look the other side? Am I myself, or not myself; what dost thou perceive, O thou most wretched Cuosimo? Hast thou been shitting in the vessel? Is not this the face which yesterday morning took me by storm; is not this the image carved within mine heart? What is this, O fortune? Where is the beauty? Where is the hook which caught me, the crane which lifted me up, the dart which passed mine heart? I knew that neither women nor linen must thou buy by the light of a candle, but this one I bargained for in the light of the sun. Alas! the gold of this morning hath turned to brass, the diamond to glass, and the beard to bristles.' These and other words he muttered and grumbled between his teeth. At last, constrained by necessity, he gave a kiss to Grannizia; but just as if he were kissing an antique vase, he neared and withdrew his lips three times before

he touched the lips of the bride, and when at last he drew near, it seemed to him to be on the sea-shore at Chiaja, in the evening when those worthy dames brought the tribute to the sea of other than Arabian perfumes. But when Heaven, desiring to look young, had darkened the colour of his white beard, the estates of the lord Cuosimo being far distant, he was obliged to take her to a house near Pane-cuocolo for that night; where laying a sack upon two chests, he lay down with the bride.

But who can tell of the bad night spent by each of them? Although it was summer, and the night was not longer than eight hours, it seemed to them one of the longest winter nights. The bride, having a cold, coughed, and sneezed, and blew her nose, and kicked, and sighed, and with silent words sought for the wage of the house now let; but Cuosimo pretending to snore, withdrew himself as far as possible in the hard bed, so as not to touch Grannizia, and missing the sack and the chest, tumbled on the top of the night-chamber, and the matter ended in stink and shame. How many times the bridegroom cursed all the sun's dead, for being so slow to appear, so as to keep him longer in that plight! and how he prayed that the night might break her neck, and the stars might sink, to take away from his side, with the coming of day, that bad day! But no sooner had the dawn come forth to chase out and awaken the cocks and the fowls, than he jumped out of bed, and buttoning up well his breeches, raced to the house of Caradonia, wishing to renounce her daughter, and pay her the scant use he had made of her with the broomstick. Entering the house he found her not, for she had gone to the forest to gather a fagot of wood so as to get ready the boiling water to scald the stepdaughter, who was enclosed in that Bacchus's tomb,

whilst she was worthy to be drawn within love's gondola. And Cuosimo, seeking Caradonia, and finding her not, began to cry out, 'Ho there, where art thou?' and behold, a Persian cat cried time upon time, 'Miaou, miaou, thy wife is within the cask, miaou, miaou.' So Cuosimo went near the cask, and heard a dull lamenting, and a weeping in whispers, and taking up an axe from near the fireplace, he brake the cask, and when the pieces fell, it seemed like the lifting of the curtain when a goddess is discovered to begin the prologue. I know not how at sight of all this splendour he did not fall dead; but the bridegroom stood, and looked, and looked again, like one who hath seen the little monk, and after a while, coming to himself, he ran and embraced her, saying, 'Who hath put thee in this wretched place, O jewel of mine heart? Who had stolen thee from me, O thou hope of my life? What thing is this? The dove within this wooden cage? And the bird of prey coming to my side? How was this done? Speak, muzzle mine, comfort my spirit, let my breast be broadened.' And Cecella answered to these words by repeating all the facts, without leaving out one word, how much she had suffered in her stepmother's house since she had put her feet in it, till in order to deprive her of life Caradonia had buried her in the cask. Hearing this, Cuosimo bade her dress, and hide herself behind the door, and putting the cask together again, sent for Grannizia, and shoving her therein, said to her, 'Stay here quietly like a lamb, as I am going to have a spell made for thee, so that the evil eye may have no strength against thee.' And covering well the cask, he embraced his wife, and putting her on the back of a horse, they fared quickly to Pascarola, this being the name of the lord Cuosimo's estate. And Caradonia came home shortly after with a large fagot of

wood, and she lit a large fire, and putting on a caldron of water, as soon as it began to boil she threw it within the cask, thus scalding her own daughter, who closed her teeth, just as if she had been eating Sardinian grass. And the skin rose up, like the snake when it casteth off its skin; and when she thought that Cecella had caught the fish and straightened her feet, the old witch brake the cask, and found (O terrible sight!) her own daughter, cooked by a cruel mother. And she tore her hair, and buffeted her face, and beat her breast, and struck palm against palm, and knocked her head on the wall, and stamped with her feet, and wept, and lamented, and cried, and screamed, so that all the folk in the village ran to see what had happened. And after doing and saying things of the other world, as no pity could comfort her, nor advice soften her, she ran to a well and cast herself therein, and broke her neck: showing by this how very true is the sentence that

'Who spitteth to heaven on his face receiveth the spittle.'

The story was ended, and following the orders given by the prince, all at once there appeared before the company Giallaise and Cola Jacopo, the one the cook and the other the cellar-keeper of the court, dressed in old Neapolitan costumes, and they recited the eclogue which followeth.

ECLOGUE.

THE STOVE.

Giallaise, and Cola Jacopo.

Gial. Well met and well found, O Cola Jacopo.

Col. Well met and well come, O Giallaise :
Tell me whence comest thou?

Gial. From the stove.

Col. With this heat near the stove?

Gial. The hotter it is the better.

Col. And dost thou not burst?

Gial. I would burst, O my brother, if I went not.

Col. And what pleasure canst thou find in it?

Gial. The pleasure to moderate
The sorrows of this world
Where one must swell with rage,
As all things in these days go the wrong way.

Col. I believe thou laughest at me :
Thou thinkest me a sweet marrow,
And that I never angle to the bottom ;
What hath the stove in common with the world?

Gial. When thou thinkest thou art angling thou fishest
least ;
Dost thou think that I speak to thee
Of such a stove, where thou keepest near
Within a chamber without moving foot,
And roastest thyself and diest with heat ?
No, no, I speak of that
In which, speaking sooth,
Is ended every grief
Of this most anguished life.

And all that I behold
Filleth me with the same thought.

Col. I hear new matters,
Thou surprisest me indeed :
Thou art not an ass,
As seemed to me at first.

Gial. Thou must know, O my brother,
That this world is a stove,
Wherein floweth evil combined with good.
Hast thou joyance and pleasure in large fagots,
Hast thou greatness and honours enough to satisfy
thee,

All things will weary thee and surfeit thee ;
And that this is true, open thine ears, and hear me,
And be thou comforted,
For every human joyance and delight
Will most unfailingly come to this pass.

Col. In very sooth thou dost deserve a gift :
Speak on, that I may hear thee
In open-mouthèd wonder.

Gial. Thou shalt behold, *verbi gratia*,
A virtuous young damsel
Just suited to thy taste ;
Thou sendest a mediator
To treat about the marriage ;
Ye agree, a notary is sent for,
To draw and complete the settlements ;
Thou wendest up the stair, and kissest the bride,
Who is decked in sumptuous array, with gems and
charms.

Thou also like a prince
Arrayest thee in new garments :
A band of musicians is called,

A banquet is spread, and dancing is begun,
 And with more longing and desire
 Thou waitest for the night,
 As longeth the true sailor for fair winds,
 The writer for a rumour,
 The thief for a crowd, and the doctor for a quarrel.
 Behold here cometh the night,
 Night of bad omen,
 That bringeth darksome mourning,
 Whilst liberty (O unhappy one!) lieth in death.
 Thy wife doth clasp thee with her arms,
 And thou seest not that thou art bound
 With chains, like unto a convict's chains;
 But just three days last
 The caresses, and whims,
 And amiable acts;
 And thou hast not yet reached the fourth day,
 When already thou art wearied,
 And cursest the day when the word was spoken;
 And cursest the cause a thousand times!
 And if thy wretched wife speaketh one word,
 Thou glarest at her,
 And wearest a sulky face, and art stern, severe:
 And when thou liest with her, 'tis in the style
 Of the double-headed eagle;
 And thou turnest thy head away if she try to kiss
 thee,
 And from thine house all good and joy escape.

Col. An unfortunate gardener is the one that marrieth,
 For only one night he soweth the seed of content-
 ment,
 And after endureth a thousand days of dread
 torments.

Gial. And now a father will behold
 A beauteous child brought for him to the world:
 How happy is he, how great his joy,
 He getteth a silken cover for the cradle,
 And he loadeth his son, like unto a weigher,
 On neck and shoulders, with a wolf's tooth,
 Figs, crescents, and coral, and little pigs,
 And he looketh exactly
 Like a buyer of saffron:
 He findeth him a nurse,
 He seeth not from other eyes,
 He speaketh to him in whimpering tones,
 'How dosh zhou do, my pretty boy?
 I love zhee bery much;
 Zhou art zhy papa's heart,
 Sweet tit-bit of zhy mamma.'
 And while he standeth in wonder
 With his mouth wide open,
 Listening to 'Cacca,' and 'Ppappa,'
 He gathereth with gusto what from the other
 escapeth.
 Meanwhile he groweth like a wild nettle,
 And shooteth up like unto a broccolo,
 Papa sendeth him to school,
 And expendeth upon him his coins of gold;
 And when he hath counted upon
 Seeing him a wise doctor of law,
 Behold he escapeth from his hand,
 Taketh to evil ways,
 Gets mixed up with light women,
 Treats with knaves and rogues,
 And companies with brigands, and either giveth or
 taketh;

- Is always quarrelling with barbers and with clerks ;
 And for this cause he is stoved
 By his worthy sire, who kicketh him out,
 Or curseth him,
 Or to put straight
 The brainless youth,
 He hath him sent to prison in tower or castle.
- Col.* Imprison, as thou wilt, a wicked son,
 Yet with the change of moon,
 He is born to take the oar, or for the halter cast.
- Gial.* What more wilt thou have? The food,
 A necessary thing in life,
 Also becometh nauseous :
 Eat, swallow, munch, crush, plane and comb,
 Ruminatè, gormandize, put thy cheeks in motion,
 Put it under thy nose, stuff well thy guts
 With sweet things, and sour, and lean, and fat ;
 Give to thy jaws enough to do ;
 Give good work to thy valiant teeth ;
 For at the last
 Thou shalt be overcome by indigestion ;
 Thou causest the tomb with pride to swell ;
 Thou belchest rotten eggs,
 Thou locest appetite,
 And for this reason thou art surfeited.
 The meat stinketh for thee,
 The fish is nauseous,
 The sweetmeats tasteless, or bitter like gall ;
 Wine is thy foe,
 And what maintaineth thee alive, is what thou
 sippest up.
- Col.* Would 'twere not true
 That a bad rule

- Sendeth to more than one a dysentery,
 And every sickness beginneth with gluttony.
- Gial.* If thou playest at cards or dice, or at nine-pins,
 At oranges, or chess, or farinole,*
 One spendeth all his time there,
 Risketh his life and soul,
 Compromiseth his honour and reputation,
 Loseth his goods and monies,
 Loseth his friends and friendship ;
 His sleep is never restful,
 He eateth not a mouthful ;
 In peace, always his mind is filled
 With thoughts of this cursed vice,
 Where two agree to put him in their midst,
 And pluck him well, and then divide the spoil ;
 And when at last he can perceive
 That he loveth his loss, and cheats despoil him
 On all sides, then he is wroth ;
 But weary of all his losses,
 When he beholdeth ever any games
 He sighteth just the fire and the flames.
- Col.* Blessed is he that flieth all games,
 And far be it from me, I'll guard my legs,
 For one may lose his days, if not his monies.
- Gial.* And the entertainments
 Which are less risky, and bring more enjoyment ;
 They weary thee also :
 The farce, the comedy, and the clowns,
 The woman who jumpeth upon a rope,
 The other with a beard,
 And the other who seweth with her feet,

* 'Farinole.' Dice, small forms bearing the signs of the game on only one side.

And the marionettes, and the juggler,
 The goat which standeth upon the reels :
 But to be brief, are wearisome all pleasures,
 And jesters, and merry folk, and fools, and madmen.

Col. And therefore gossip Junno used to sing
 There is no lasting pleasure in this earth.

Gial. Then there is music, a thing which penetrates
 Within the marrow of thine every bone
 With great variety of sounds, and fashions,
 Of trills, and runs, and fast, and slow,
 And quavers, and semiquavers,
 And false treble, and counter-point,
 Solos, or duets,
 With melancholic, or cheerful voice,
 Or serious, or comic,
 Low, or high treble, or tenor,
 With stunning keys, or stunning voice,
 And with cords of metal or of catgut ;
 Still everything wearieeth,
 And if thou feelest not in the humour,
 Thou carest not to fill thy lungs with air,
 And mindest not if the trumpets all were broken.

Col. When the mind is filled with care,
 Sing, and jest, and do as thou wilt,
 Let a star sing, or a jackass,
 A symphony is worse than a lament

Gial. Of dancing I say naught to thee :
 Thou seest round-going, and jumping,
 And hopping, and capers, and slower
 Than a doe,
 And bows, and runs.
 For a little while it may please thee,
 And thou mayest enjoy it ;

But 'tis an August cure ;
 Four changes of figure weary thee,
 And thou longest for the moment,
 When beginneth the dance, with torch and fan,
 To disappear ; ended the ball,
 Thou art tired of foot, and light in thine head.

Col. In very sooth, 'tis time lost,
 And for a noisy dance
 One weareth out much, and naught gaineth.

Gial. Conversazioni and parties,
 Amusements and friendly meetings,
 Drinking and swallowing in taverns,
 Rambling in bad corners,
 Making tumults in the public places
 With old rotten rubbish and night-stool covers ;
 Never at rest,
 With the brain flying and lifting like a crane,
 And the heart like an engine going ahead,
 And past the time
 When the blood is boiling,
 Thou art weary more than ever ;
 And lowering down thine head,
 And hanging up to the smoke thy playthings,
 Thou wisely retirest from all turmoil,
 And lookest to thine affairs,
 Weary of those years,
 Which take their pleasure in shadows,
 And drink the beverage of anguish.

Col. All that which pleaseth mankind
 Is but a fire of straw,
 Which passeth, burneth, flareth up, and melteth.
Gial. There is not a sense within the head
 Which is not full of whims ;

But very soon they weary :
 The eyes, of gazing at
 Beautiful painted things,
 Splendour, beauty, pictures,
 Spectacles, gardens, statues, and fine buildings.
 The nose, of smelling
 Pinks, violets, roses, and lilies,
 Ambergris, musk, and civet,
 Ox-tail soup, and roast beef ;
 The hand, of touching
 Soft things and tender ;
 The mouth, of tasting
 Good, tasty morsels and dainties ;
 The ears, of hearing
 The latest news and gossip.
 Therefore if thou keepest account,
 All that thou dost, and seest, and hearest,
 Becometh nauseous, both joys and pain.

Col. Man would feel too much engrafted to this
 earth,

Whilst he is made alone for heavenly rest,
 If he had what he wanted,
 And was in all things satisfied ;
 But thou hast thrust within thy mouth
 Anguish and troubles without end,
 And pleasures in a limited strain.

Gial. There is only one thing
 Which never wearie thee,
 But ever cheereth thee,
 And always maketh thy days
 Happy and comforted ;
 And this is wisdom, and the ducat ;
 Therefore did the Greek poet say to Jupiter,

With warmest prayers poured forth from out his
 heart,

‘Give me, O my lord, virtue, and gold pieces.’

Col. Thou hast a ton and a half of reason,
 As one hath never enough of the one, or the other,
 Who hath sour grapes and salt ;
 For the gold is great, and the virtue immortal.

This eclogue was so full of good taste, that all the
 company, charmed and well pleased, hardly perceived that
 the sun, tired of playing the canary all day in the fields
 of heaven, having chased out the stars to the torch ball,
 had retired to change his shirt : therefore seeing the twilight
 of the skies, the prince ordering that they should return as
 usual, they retired to their own homes.

END OF THE THIRD DAY.

FOURTH DAY OF THE
DIVERSION OF THE LITTLE ONES.

A SHORT time before the dawn had come forth to seek a beverage after all the labour, and just as the sun was peeping forth, the white prince and the black princess went to the meeting-place, where were already assembled the ten women, who having filled their bellies with red mulberries, and made their mouths and hands like unto a dyer's, had taken seat together by the side of a fountain which served as basis to some orange-trees whose branches were interlaced above their heads so as to blind the sun. Now the women had taken counsel together how to pass the time in some manner until the hour came in which they had to move their jaws, so as to give pleasure to Thaddeus and Lucy; therefore they began to discuss if they should play at 'Brick-drying,' 'Head or Cross,' 'Sweet or Wind,'* 'Mallet or Switch,'† 'Mora at the

* 'Cucco o viento' = sweet or wind, childish game, in one fist is held tight a confetto (sweet) or something else, and in the other fist nothing, and then both are held to the companion in the game who must guess when asked: Is it 'cucco o viento?' = 'Is it sweet or wind?' in which of the two hands the sweet or other may be found, and if he cannot guess then, he loses the same quantity of whatever the hand may enclose.

† 'Mazza o pinzo' = mallet or switch. Game for youths in which a rod is sent backwards and forwards by blows from a switch with which the two players are provided.

Bell,' at 'Narorchie,'* 'the Castle,' 'Nearer to the ball,' or at 'Nine-pins.' But the prince, who was tired of so many games, ordered that some instruments of music should be brought, and that something should be sung. At once the attendants brought calascioni, tambourines, lyre, and harp, chinchiaro, fire-thrower and chio chio,† and zu zu, and having played a fine symphony, in the style of Abbé Zefiro, and some jocular pieces, and the ball of Florence, a handful of songs were sung of those good times which we may sooner weep for than find; and amongst others they sang :

Stop at that, thou little Margaret. Thou art over scandalous,
As for every little thing thou wilt have the gown before thee;
Stop at that, thou little Margaret.

And that other :

I would, thou cruel one, slowly return, and stay under that foot; even if I knew that I should be always ill-used would I run to thee.

And after this followed :

Come forth, come forth, thou sun, and give warmth to the emperor.

And then, 'My Little Silver Stool,' 'Worth Four Hundred, Four Hundred and Fifty,' 'All the Night it Sings,' 'Sing with Viola,' 'The Master of the School' :

O master, master, send us forth soon,
For the head-master will come down with lance and with sword.

By the handmaidens followed :

Play, play, thou little bag-pipe,
And I will buy thee a gown, a gown of scarlet;
And if thou wilt not play, I will break thine head.

* Card game.

† 'Chio chio.' Onomatopoea of the song of some birds, especially of a turkey-cock.

Not forgetting the other :

Rain not, rain not, as I desire to stir,
To stir the grain of Master Julian;
Lend me a lance, as I wish to go to France,
From France to Lombardy, where dwelleth Madame Lucy.

Now whilst they were in the midst of their best singing, the viands were brought in and laid upon the table, and all ate their sufficiency: and Thaddeus bade Zeza to head the entertainment, beginning the day with her song; so she in obedience to the prince's command, began thus :

THE COCK'S STONE.

FIRST DIVERSION

Of the Fourth Day.

Minic' Aniello, by virtue of a stone found in the head of a cock, becometh young and rich : but being cheated of it by two magicians, returneth to be old and a beggar. He goeth about the world seeking for it, till he cometh to the realm of mice, where he heareth news of the stone, and assisted by two mice, he receiveth it back again, and returneth to his pristine estate, and taketh revenge of the cheats.

THE wife of the thief does not always laugh. Who weaveth a fraud, deviseth his own ruin ; there is no deceit which is not discovered, nor treachery which cometh not to light ; the walls are spies for the rogues ; even the ground will open and speak of theft and whoredom : as ye will hear from what I am going to relate, if ye will stay with your ears at home.

Once upon a time, in the city of Grotta-negra, lived a certain man, Minic' Aniello hight, who was so persecuted by fortune that all the good he owned up and down was a little cock, which he had fed and reared upon crumbs. But one morning, finding himself in sore strait and distressed with appetite (as hunger chaseth the wolf out of the forest), he bethought him to sell the cock and take some coppers for it : and carrying it to market, he met two old magicians, with whom he came to agreement, and

sold it for half a ducat ; so they told him to carry it to their house, and they would count him out the coin. In such case the magicians fared forward, and Minic' Aniello, following them, overheard them speak softly to each other, saying, ' Who could have told us, that we would find such a good occasion, O Jennarone ? this cock unfailingly will be our good fortune, for cause of that stone, of which thou wottest, and which he holdeth in his head ; we will have it set at once in a ring, and thus we shall have all that we know how to demand.' ' Hold thy tongue, Jacovuccio,' answered Jennarone, ' I see myself rich already, and can hardly believe it ; and I wish for the hour to come in haste so that I may cut this cock's throat, and give a kick to all beggary, and stretch my stocking in the sun, because, in this world, without any tornesi * the virtues are held as feet-rags, and as thou goest, so art thou held.' When Minic' Aniello, who had travelled many countries, and eaten bread from divers bakers' shops, heard this talk, he turned his back, and took to his heels down the dusty road. And running home, he twisted the cock's neck, and cutting open his head, found the stone, which he at once had set in a brass ring. Desiring to try the power of its virtue, he said, ' I should like to become a youth eighteen years old.' Hardly had he spoken these words, when the blood coursed hotter through his veins, the nerves became stronger, the legs stood firmer, the flesh smoother, the eyes more full of fire, the silvery hair became of a golden hue, the mouth, which had been a devastated village, became peopled with pearly teeth, the beard, which had been a preserved forest, turned to newly sown ground ; in fact he was changed to a most handsome youth. Then he said, ' I should like to have a sumptuous palace, and be related to the king.' And lo !

* Neapolitan coin.

a palace of unparalleled beauty stood before him, with chambers marvellous to see, with wondrous columns, and perfect paintings to daze and amaze the beholder; silver plentifully strewn around, gold overflowing; and jewels with their sheen and shine blinding the gazer; and servants swarming around; horses and carriages were there, numberless; in brief, it was so rich and lordly a mansion, that the king opened his eyes wide with wonder at the sight of it, and willingly gave his daughter Natalizia in marriage to the owner thereof.

In the meanwhile the two magicians, as soon as they discovered the good fortune of Minic' Aniello, bethought themselves how to take out of his hands his great wealth; so they made a beautiful doll, which played and danced by means of counterpoise, and disguising themselves in merchants' gear, they fared to seek Pentella, Minic' Aniello's daughter, with the pretence of selling her the doll. When the child saw the beautiful thing, she said, 'What is the price?' and they answered that no amount of money could buy it, but that she could become the owner of it, if she would but grant them their request, which was, to let them see the setting of the ring her father possessed, so that they might take a pattern of it, and have one made like it, and they would give her the doll without any payment. Pentella, who had never heard the proverb, 'Of cheap things think before thou buyest them,' instantly accepted their bargain, saying, 'Return ye in the morning, and I will ask my sire to lend it to me.' And the sorcerers fared forth, and as soon as her father came home, she fluttered around him lovingly, and caressed him with charming and alluring flattery until he granted her her wish, and lent her the ring, finding as excuse, that she was straitened of heart, and that it

would cheer her to play with the ring. When the following day came, as soon as the sun with the small straw broom sweepeth away the dirt of the shadows in the squares of heaven, the two magicians returned; and no sooner had they the ring between their hands than they made their escape, melting like the one of whom it is said, 'that not even smoke is seen of him,' so that the wretched Pentella had like to have died with grief.

Now when the magicians came to a forest where the branches of the trees interlaced thickly overhead, forming a dense archway, and others stood playing at hot bread between themselves, they demanded of the ring that it should lay waste the doings of the old man made young. And the words were hardly spoken when Minic' Aniello, who was standing at that very moment before the king, was seen to get older, and grey-haired, the white forehead to furrow with lines, the brows and eye-brows to harden like bristles, the eyes to get blood-shot, the face to be covered with wrinkles, the mouth to become toothless, the beard to become thinner, the back to rise up to a hump, the legs to tremble, and above all things the sumptuous robes to change to the former rags. The king, beholding this hideous beggar sitting in conversation with him, ordered him to be instantly turned out, with blows and hard words; and Minic' Aniello, finding himself fallen so low, fared to his daughter, weeping sorely, and asking from her the ring, so that he might be able to remedy this evil disorder. But when he heard of the cheat practised upon him by the two false merchants, he nearly cast himself out of the window in his despair, cursing a thousand times the ignorance of his daughter, who, for a wretched doll, had caused him to become as an hideous gnome, an accursed goblin; and for a thing made out of

rags, had reduced him to doings fit for madmen, adding that he was resolved to wander through wilds and wolds, and take no rest till he had gained some information of the two false merchants. So saying he threw a fishing-net and a pair of saddle-bags across his shoulders, donned rustic attire, drew sandals on his feet, hent staff in hand, and leaving his daughter cold and frozen, he fared away in his despair, and never ceased faring until he came to the realm of Pertuso-cupo, inhabited by the mice. When the mice beheld him, they supposed him to be a spy of the cats, and they seized him, and carried him before Rosecone their king, who asked him, 'Who art and whence comest thou, and what art thou doing in these parts?' Minic' Aniello, presenting first to the king, in sign of tribute, a piece of lard, related to him all his misfortunes, concluding, that he would so long wear and tear that miserable body of his, till he gained news of those damned souls, who had deprived him of a jewel so dear, robbing him at once of the flower of youth, and the fount of all his riches, and the prop of his honour. At these words King Rosecone felt himself gnawed with pity, and desiring to console the poor man, sent for all the elder mice to hold council together, asking their rede about Minic' Aniello's disaster, and commanding them to make all diligence and speed in seeking out some news of these false merchants, if it were possible to get any.

Now amongst these, so it fortun'd, stood two of the elder mice, Rudolo and Saltariello hight, well versed and expert in the matters of the world, who had spent six years of their lives in a road-side tavern, and they said, 'Be of good cheer, O our comrade, as matters will be much better than thou thinkest. Now thou must know that we happened to be one day of the days within one of the

chambers of the Horn Tavern, where are wont to lodge and enjoy themselves the highest, and noblest, and most esteemed men in the world, when two men from Castle Rampino passed that way, and entered, and took seat, and ordered some viands to be brought, and when they had eaten their sufficiency, and seen the bottom of the pitcher, they began to converse one with the other of the good trick they had played to a certain oldster of Grotta-negra, having despited him and outraged him by taking from him a stone possessed of great virtue, 'Which (said one of the two, who was hight Jennarone) I will never draw off from my finger, as hath done the daughter of this grey-beard.' Minic' Aniello, hearing these words, said to the mice, that if they would feel confident to accompany him to these rogues' country, and be the means of his recovering the ring, he would present them with a whole cheese and a piece of salt pork, so that they might take their sufficiency, and enjoy it, together with their lord the king. The mice, hearing that their hands would be anointed, offered their services, and promised to do wonderful deeds, and cross seas and mountains to fulfil their enterprise. Thereupon they craved leave of the mousish crown to depart, and fared forth, and never ceased wending till they came after long travel and travail to Castle-Rampino, where the mice bade Minic' Aniello take rest under some trees on the bank of a river which like a leech sucked the blood of the able workers and cast it into the sea, whilst they should go and seek the dwelling-place of the two magicians. And the two mice wended forward and found the house of the sorcerers, and perceiving that Jennarone never drew the ring from his finger, thereupon they sought to gain this victory by stratagem. So awaiting till the night darkened,

clouding with its murk the face of heaven which had been burned by the sun, and the magicians had gone to their couches, Rudolo began to gnaw at the finger on which the ring was, and Jennarone feeling the pain took the ring off, and laid it on a table which stood near the bedside. As soon as Saltariello saw this, he quickly jumped upon the table and put the ring in his mouth; and both ran back to Minic' Aniello, who in gazing at it felt more joy than a man condemned to be hanged feelth when the grace reacheth him; and as soon as Minic' Aniello held it in his hand, he bade the two magicians to be turned into the shape of two asses, upon one of which he laid his cloak, jumping upon his back like a handsome noble, and loading the other with lard and cheese, fared forward Pertuso-cupo-wards, where gifting the king and his counsellors, he thanked them for all the good they had done to his cause, and for all the benefits received, praying Heaven that never trap or snare should cause them damage or hurt, and never cat should do them harm, nor arsenic cause them displeasure. Then farewelling them, he departed from that country, and wended onwards till he came to Grotta-negra, handsomer and more sumptuously arrayed than erst he had been, where he was received by the king and his daughter with the greatest caresses in the world. And bidding the two asses to be cast down a mountain, he joyed with great joyance in union with his wife, never again taking the ring from his finger, so that he might not be the cause of more ruin or destruction, for

'The dog, who is scalded by hot water,
Feareth even the sight of cold water.'

THE TWO BROTHERS.

SECOND DIVERSION

Of the Fourth Day.

Marcuccio and Palmiero are brothers, one rich, and corrupt, and vicious, and the other poor, but virtuous. They meet after various vicissitudes, but the poor brother is driven away by the other; after a time the rich brother falleth into poverty and is driven near the gibbet, but at last, recognised to be innocent, is saved by his brother, who hath become rich and a baron, and who giveth him a share of his good.

THE case of Minic' Aniello gave great satisfaction to the prince and princess, and they blessed a thousand times the mice by whose aid the poor man regained the stone, and rejoiced that the magicians got a broken neck for the circle of a finger. Cecca, having set herself in position to begin her chattering, thus barricaded with the bar of silence the gate of their words, and in this fashion began to relate:

There is no better shield against the assaults of fortune than virtue, which is a counter-poison of all misfortunes, a prop against all ruin, a safe harbour for all travails. It chaseth thee from the fire, protecteth thee from the storms, guardeth thee from every adversity, comforteth thee in every evil betiding thee, helpeth thee in every necessity, and giveth thee peace in the hour of death: as ye will

hear from this tale which I hold in the tip of my tongue ready to relate to you.

Once upon a time there lived a father, who had two sons, Marcuccio and Palmiero hight; and he, being on the point to settle his accounts with nature, and to tear up the account-book of life, called them to his bedside, and said to them: 'O my blessed sons, but a short time may the bailiffs of time still delay to come and break down the door of my years, to make execution against the constitution of this kingdom upon the dowered good of this life for that which I owe to the earth; and therefore loving you as mine own entrails, I must not depart from you without leaving you some good remembrance, so that ye may sail with the north wind of good counsel in this gulf of travail, and thus reach good port. Then open well your ears, that if what I give you seems nothing to you, ye must know that it is a treasure that will not be stolen from you by robbers; a house that no earthquake can destroy; a possession that cannot be consumed by dissipators. Now first and foremost be fearful of Heaven, for every thing comes from Heaven: whoso mistaketh that road has fried the liver. Do not let laziness cut your throats, growing up like pigs in the sty; whoso curries his own horse cannot be called a groom; one must help oneself with kicks and bites, for whoso worketh for others eateth for himself. Be saving when ye have goods; whoso saveth gaineth; by small coins is made the ducat; whoso putteth away findeth; whoso hath from women gathereth a good leaf; put away and thou shalt eat; do naught for which thou needest be ashamed; good is the house where there are friends and relations; sad is the house which is empty; whoso hath money buildeth; whoso hath fair wind saileth; and whoso hath no money is an hob-goblin, an ass, that every moment

is caught by a spasm. And therefore, O thou my kindest friend, as thou hast the income, so do thou expend behind as large as thou mayest cover it, and grind as much as thou canst smell: as thou feelest, so do thou make use of thy teeth, for a small kitchen maketh the house large. Do not be over-talkative, as the tongue hath no bone but breaketh the bone; hear, see, and be silent; if thou desirest to live peacefully, whatso thou seest see, whatso thou hearest hear, little of meat little to speak; is there warmth of clothing, it never did hurt anything; whoso often speaketh often maketh a blunder. Be satisfied with little, for 'tis better to have beans which last than sweets which end; 'tis better to joy a little than to be for ever bewailing; whoso cannot eat the meat, let him drink the broth; whoso can do naught else lieth down with his wife; what will be will be; patch thyself up as best thou can; whoso may not eat the flesh must gnaw at the bone. Frequent and unite yourselves with your betters, and pay the expenses; tell me with whom thou goest; and I will tell thee what thou doest; whoso walketh with the lame at the end of the year will walk lame himself; whoso sleepeth with dogs will not arise without fleas; to the rogue give thou thy goods and let him go, as bad company bringeth man to the gibbet.

'Think before, and act after, as it is a bad thing to shut the stable-door when the oxen are gone; when the cask is full draw to thy will, but when it is empty there is naught to draw from it; chew well first and swallow after, for the she-cat in her hurry brought out her kittens blind; whoso fareth slowly doeth a good day's journey. Fly all disputes, and company not with licentious youths, putting not thy foot upon every stone; for whoso jumpeth over many stakes will fall on one upon

his hind parts ; a horse apt to kick receiveth more than he giveth ; whoso with hook woundeth by sword dieth ; the pitcher goeth to the well till it leaveth its handles there ; the gibbet is built for the unfortunate ; do not make an ass of thyself with pride ; there is need of something more than a white table cloth upon the table ; be humble and correct thyself ; never hath the house been good which is filled with smoke ; a good alchymist passeth whatso he distilleth through the ashes, so that it should not be smoked ; and the man o' weal must ever keep in his memory that he must return to dust all the proud thoughts, so that he should not be smoked by his own presumption. Take not the thought of the red-haired, for whoso intermingleth in the business of other folk, hindereth himself ; and it is matter for a lazzarone to put a tariff upon the cucumbers and salt within the pot. Do not mingle with the great, but rather go and cast thy net, than serve at court. Love of the great is wine of flask, which in the morning is good and in the evening hath turned sour ; from them thou canst only get good words and rotten apples ; where thy services are barren, thy designs rotten, thy hopes fruitless, thou sweatest without compassion, runnest without rest, sleepest without repose, doest a deed of nature without light, and eatest without taste. Take care of a rich man become poor, of a peasant become rich, of a beggar in despair, of a petted servant, of an ignorant prince, of a mercenary judge, of a jealous woman, of a man of to-morrow, of a court flint-stone, of a beardless man, of a woman with beard, of a quiet river, of a smoky chimney, of bad neighbours, of a child that always weepeth, and of an envious man. And constrain yourselves to understand that whoso hath a craft hath a part ; and whoso hath salt in his

head will live even in the wood, and hath grown his wisdom-tooth, and changed his first ears : for to a good horse no saddle is wanting.

'I should like to tell you a thousand other things, but the agony of death is coming near me, and my breath is failing me.' Thus ending his say, he had just the strength to lift up his hand and bless them, when, furling the sails of this life, he entered into the harbour, leaving all the vexations of this world.

As soon as the sire departed, Marcuccio, who had engraved his words deep amiddlemost his heart, gave himself up entirely to study in school, and to the academies, and to disputes with the students, and the discourse of virtuous matters ; so much so, that in a very short time he became the first wise man of that country ; but as poverty is a sticking tick upon virtue, and from the man anointed by Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, it sucketh out the water of his good fortune, this poor man was always despised, always penniless, ever clean-hearted and burning with desire. Oftentimes he found himself full on empty vessels, and greedy of licking the frying-pan, tired of studying counsels, and beggared of help, working upon indigestion, and finding himself always fasting.

Now it was the opposite with Palmiero. He gave himself up to drinking in high excess, and heedlessly gambling one way, and tavern-going the other, growing up in height, without any single virtue in the world ; and for all this, by riffe, and raffa,* and knaving, and tricking, he raised good straw under himself, and Marcuccio seeing this repented himself of having followed the advice of his sire and thus mistaking the road ; wherefore the gift naught proper had given him, but the cornucopia

* Prov. phrases, "riffe and raffa" knavery and trickery.

had reduced him to such want. And his just dealing had brought him naught within his saddle-bags, whilst Palmiero with the entertainment of bones made good flesh, and with playing with his hand had filled his guts. At the last, unable to stand firm against the importunity of need, he fared to his brother, beseeching him that, as fate and fortune had made him son of the white fowl, he should remember that he also was of his own flesh and blood, and that both had come forth from the same hole. Now Palmiero in the hey-day of his affluence had become stingy, and therefore said to him, "O thou who wouldst follow the studies and thy father's rede, and hast always cast in my face the conversations and play, go and gnaw thy books and leave me in peace with my misfortunes, as I am not able to give thee even salt, as well have I to work hard to get these few coppers that I have; thou hast age and judgment, and whoso knoweth not how to live, all the worse for him; every man for himself and God for all. If thou hast money, cast them above. An thou art hungry, bite thy legs; an thou art thirsty, bite thy fingers;" and having said these and other words, he turned his back upon him. Whereupon Marcuccio, his mind turned to the direst despair, seeing his own brother use him so badly, with a steadfast spirit and with the strong waters of a desperado resolved to separate the gold of the soul from the earth of the body; therefore he fared forth toward a very high mountain which stood as a spy from the earth to see what was doing high on air, or rather like a sultan of all the mountains, with a turban of clouds upon his forehead, raised up to heaven, ready to light up the moon. And mounting up, and climbing up, and crawling up, by a very narrow steep way Marcuccio reached the summit,

whence he beheld a great precipice. Turning the key of the eye-fountain, and weeping, and lamenting, and bewailing his lot, he was about to cast himself down, head foremost, when a beauteous damsel, arrayed in green raiment, with a laurel wreath upon her golden hair, caught him by the arm, and said, 'What art thou doing, O my poor man? where dost thou let thy evil thoughts carry thee? art thou a virtuous man, and hast thou burnt much oil, and lost much of thy sleep in studying? art thou one who, to spread abroad thy fame like unto a careened galley, hast been so long under the careen, and now lovest thyself at the best, and usest not those weapons which thou hast tempered at the forge of thy studies? Knowest thou not that virtue is a mighty remedy against the poison of poverty; a good snuff against the catarrhs of envy; a powerful prescription against the infirmities of time? knowest thou not that virtue is a compass by which to regulate ourselves to the winds of misfortune, a flambeau by which we light our way in the murk of our discontent, a strong archway able to resist all the earthquakes of travail? O thou unhappy one, be thyself once more, and turn not thy back to whoso can give thee courage in dangers, strength in disasters, phlegm in despair. Art thou aware that Heaven sent thee to this mountain so difficult to climb, where dwelleth Virtue herself, so that she, blamed wrongfully by thee, should save thee from the wicked intention which blinded thee? Therefore awake, be comforted, change thy thoughts; and so that thou mayst perceive that virtue is ever bountiful, ever worthy, ever useful, take this small packet of powder, and wend to Campo-largo, where thou wilt find the daughter of the king of that realm nearly at the last gasp, and no remedy can be found for her grievous sickness. Let her take this within a new-laid egg, and thus

thou wilt at once give a patent of dislodgment to her ailment, which, like a soldier who surrenders himself at discretion, will leave her, whilst now 'tis sapping her life; and thou wilt gain a prize for it that will chase away thy poverty, and thou shalt be able to live as besecmeth to such as thee, and thou wilt need no help from that other.'

Marcuccio at once knew the speaker by the point of her nose to be Virtue herself, and casting himself at her feet, besought her forgiveness for the error that he had designed to commit, saying, 'I lift up the veil from before mine eyes, and recognise thee by the wreath that crowns thee, that thou art Virtue, praised by all, and followed by few; Virtue, that knowest how to sharpen the intellect, strengthen the mind, refine the judgment, embrace all honourable fatigue, and put on wings so as to enable us to fly to the celestial spheres. I know thee, and I repent of having used so badly the weapons which thou hast given me; and I vow to thee from this day forth to charm myself so well with thy counter-poison, that not even a March thunder-clap will hurt or move me.' And he stooped to kiss her feet, when she disappeared from sight, leaving him comforted like a poor sick man, to whom after the accident is past is given the bitter root with cold water. Then sliding down the mountain, Marcuccio fared Campo-largo-wards, and reaching the palace of the king, sent word that he had come to heal his daughter from her sickness; and the king hearing this, entreated him with great honour, and brought him to the chamber of the princess, where he found that unhappy damsel lying in a perforated bed, so much consumed and grown so thin, that she was only skin and bones: the eyes were so deeply sunken in their orbits, that one would have needed Galileo's glasses to see the eye-balls, the nose was so sharply defined that it might have usurped the office of

the supposed form, the cheeks were so thin and drawn that she seemed like the death of Sorrento, the under-lip fell back upon her chin, the breast was flat down like unto the breast of a magpie, the arms were like the shin-bone of a lamb, bared of the flesh; in brief she was a transformed being, who with the cup of pity drank a toast to compassion. And Marcuccio, beholding her in such plight, wept, and the tears rained down his cheeks at the weakness of our nature subjected to the murdering of time, and to the revolutions of complexion, and to all the ills of life. So he asked for a new-laid egg of a young fowl, and making the princess swallow it when it was just warmed up, first putting the powder within it, he heaped up four blankets upon her, and left her. But Night had not yet entered port and set up her tent, when the sick damsel called her hand-maidens, and bade them change her bed, which was soaked in sweat, and when they had changed her, she felt refreshed, a thing that in seven years of infirmity had never happened, and she sought somewhat of food; so that they had fair hopes, and they gave her something to sip. Thus every hour she gained strength, and every day her appetite increased, and not a week went by without she recovered, and her health returned, and she left her bed. Seeing this, the king thought Marcuccio the god of leechcraft, and he endowed him with lands and fiefs, and made him a baron, and prime minister of his court, and married him to a lady the wealthiest in that country. Such was his case.

In the meanwhile Palmiero was lightened of all that he had; as gambling money comes, so it goes, and the luck of the gambler, when it is at its highest point, is sure then to turn. When he beheld himself in such a beggarly plight and so unhappy, he resolved to wander unceasingly, so that

perhaps in changing place he might change fortune ; either he would free himself of the load of his life or better his position, and he fared on through wilds and wolds, and passed cities, and crossed seas, for the full length of time of six months, till he came to Campo-largo, so weary and tired that he could hardly stand on his feet, and perceiving that he could not find a place wherein he could lay himself down and die, and hunger gnawing his vitals, and his raiment falling in rags from his back, despair seized him, and sighting an old house outside the walls of the city, he entered it, and taking off his garters which were made of cotton and thread, tying them together made a noose, which he fixed to a beam. Then mounting upon a heap of stones which he had heaped together, he placed his neck in the noose : but by decree of the Decreeer, it happened that the beam was old and rotten, so that with the weight it brake asunder, casting Palmiero alive upon the heap of stones, thereby hurting his ribs, which made him suffer for a few days. Now when the beam breaking came to the ground, some golden chains, and necklaces, and rings fell down with it ; which had been put within the cavity of the wood, and amongst other things, a leathern purse containing some golden crowns. And Palmiero with a kick in the air jumped over the pit of poverty, for if before he had hanged himself through despair, he was now uplifted with joy, so that his feet hardly touched ground, and picking up this gift of good fortune, he fared quickly to the tavern to gain the spirit which just now had failed him.

Now two days before, some thieves had stolen these things from that very same tavern keeper, to whom Palmiero had gone to take his sufficiency of viands and drink, hiding them as they thought safely within that beam, well knowing that they could take them one at a time, and dispose of

them quietly. Palmiero, having now fulfilled his belly, pulled out the leathern purse to pay, which the tavern-keeper no sooner sighted than he knew it, and calling some men who were in the tavern, he had Palmiero arrested. With fine ceremonies he was led before the judge, who commanded that he should be searched, and upon his person was found the evidence of his crime ; thereupon he was convicted and condemned to play the game of three and the handmill with his feet in the air. The wretched man who found himself in such plight, feeling that the eve of a garter was to be followed by the feast of a rope, and the trial on a rotten beam to be followed upon a new gibbet bar, began to buffet his face, and pluck his hair and beard, and weep, and wail, and cry that he was innocent, and that he appealed against his sentence. Whilst he was so crying, and looking up and down the road, and saying that there was no justice, that poor folk were never heard, and that decrees were issued and matters done in a blind sort of way, and because he had not oiled the judge's hand, spoken to the clerk, given a good handful to the magistrate, and a good measure to the attorney, he was to be sent to work in the air to the widow teacher, he accidentally met with his brother, who was a counsellor, and chief of the wheel, whereupon he tried to stop the sentence, and make the court understand his reasons, and he related all that had occurred.

Marcuccio answered him, saying, 'Be silent, for thou knowest not thy good fortune, because doubtless thou, who at the first trial hast found a chain three feet long, wilt find at the second a rope three yards in length. Fare thou joyfully onward, for the gibbet is thy very own sister ; and where the others lose their lives, thou fillest thy purse.' And Palmiero hearing him give him

a double weight of words thus answered him, 'I came hither for justice and not to be jeered at, and know thou that of this matter of which I am accused my hands are clean, as I am an honoured man, although thou beholdest in me a beggar in rags, for thou knowest that the cow^l makes not the monk. And because I would not hearken to my sire Marchionno, and my brother Marcuccio, I am passing through this trial, and I am on the point of singing a madrigal in three under the hangman's feet.' Marcuccio, hearing the name of his father and his own, felt his blood warm towards him, and glancing fixedly upon Palmiero, he seemed to know him, and at last discovering him for his brother, his feelings contended with each other, shame and affection, flesh and honour, justice and pity; and he blushed to avow himself a brother to such an impudent-faced man. It grieved him over much to see his own flesh and blood in that plight, and the flesh drew him like an hook to remedy this matter, and his honour drew him back, as he felt unwilling to dishonour himself in the sight of the king by a brother convicted of theft: justice ordered that satisfaction should be given to the offended party, but pity inclined him to seek the safety of his own brother. But whilst his brain weighed on the scales the pros and cons of the case, not knowing what best he should do, behold, there came one of the doorkeepers of the judge, with his tongue protruding one foot out of his mouth for his running in haste, who was crying with a loud voice, 'Stop, stop the work of justice; stay, stay, slowly, await.' 'What is the matter?' said the minister; and the other answered, 'Something very marvellous, by decree of the Decree, and the good fortune of this youth. Now so it chanced that two rogues fared to the old house to take therefrom some monies and gold, which they had hidden within the rotten beam, and they

found naught, and each one thought that his companion had done the cheat and taken the whole, thereupon they came to high words, and from words to blows, until they both fell wounded even unto death; and the judge was sent for, and they confessed at once their deed, by which confession the innocence of this poor youth is at once established, and I was sent to stay the hand of justice, and save the youth, who is faultless.' Palmiero, hearing this, grew a foot taller, where he had been afraid to go an arm's length. And Marcuccio, seeing his brother freed from the blot, and his good fame restored to him, lifting up the mask of disguise, discovered himself to him, saying to Palmiero, 'O my brother, if thou knowest well what is vice, and that vice and gambling is the cause of thy ruin, know thou now the worth of virtue and the enjoyment of all good. Come thou freely to my house, where thou shalt enjoy with me the fruits of that virtue, which thou didst hold in great disdain and didst abhor, whilst I, forgetting all thy former contempt, will hold thee in love and honour within these eye-balls.' And thus saying, he led him to his house, and arrayed him in sumptuous raiment from head to foot, making him understand that in all trials, everything is wind, and that

'Virtue alone maketh man blessed.'

THE THREE ANIMAL KINGS.

THIRD DIVERSION

Of the Fourth Day.

Ciancola, son of the King of Verde-colle, fareth to seek his three sisters, married one with a falcon, another with a stag, and the other with a dolphin; after long journeying he findeth them; and on his return homewards he cometh upon the daughter of a king, who is held prisoner by a dragon within a tower, and calling by signs which had been given to him by the falcon, stag, and dolphin, all three come before him ready to help him; and with their aid he slayeth the dragon, and setteth free the princess, whom he weddeth, and together they return to his realm.

MORE than four of the ladies were much affected to hear of the compassion of Marcuccio for Palmiero his brother, and all confirmed the truth that virtue giveth sure riches which neither time consumeth, nor storm carrieth away, nor tick gnaweth, whilst on the contrary the other goods of this world come and go, and that which is evilly begotten not even the third heir can enjoy. At last Meneca, to unite the related success, brought forward upon the table of trifles the story which follows:

In days of yore there lived a king of Verde-colle, who was blessed with three daughters, each of whom was a gem of rare worth. For these three damsels were

consumed with love-longing the three sons of the King of Bello-prato. But as these three princes had been ensorcelled by a fairy into the form of animals, the King of Verde-colle disdained to give his daughters in marriage to them; therefore the first, who was a beautiful falcon, by witchcraft called the birds to come to take counsel together, and behold chaffinches, wrens, bullfinches, fly-catchers, screech-owls, larks, cuckoos, magpies, and all the gender pennatorum flocked at his call, and he bade them spoil the flowers upon the trees at Verde-colle. And they did his bidding, leaving neither leaf nor flower upon them. The second, who was a stag, called to his side the rams, goats, hares, rabbits, porcupines, and the other animals of that country, and bade them destroy the seeds and the young growths, and they did his bidding, laying waste the land, and leaving not a single blade of grass. The third, who was a dolphin, taking counsel with an hundred sea-monsters, brought upon that coast such a fearful storm that not a ship nor a boat was left whole. The King of Verde-colle, seeing that matters took a bad turn, and were made worse, and that he could not remedy the damage done him by these three wild lovers, resolved to save himself from this trouble and give to them his daughters in marriage; and they, not desiring marriage-feasting, nor any other joyance, carried the daughters away from that kingdom. When the brides were ready to depart, Grazolla, the queen their mother, gave to each daughter a ring exactly alike, saying that should they be divided and after sometime meet again, or meet some one of their own blood, by means of those rings they would be able to recognize each other. And thus they took their departure and went their ways, and the falcon carried

Fabiella, the eldest sister, upon the top of a very high mountain, so high that its confines touched the clouds, reaching with dry top where rain never falleth, and there leading her to a magnificent palace, entreated her, and kept her like a queen. The stag carried Vasta, the cadette sister, into an intricate forest, in which the so-called night-shadows knew not how to come forth and pay their homage to her; where, in a sumptuous mansion, surrounded by gardens the like of which had never been seen, he kept her as was suitable for the daughter of a king. The dolphin swam with Rita, the youngest sister, sitting upon his back amid the sea, till they came to a beautiful rock upon which was built a marvellous palace, where could have dwelt three crowned kings.

In the meanwhile Queen Grazolla had given birth to a man-child, whom they named Titone, and when time passed, and he came to the age of fifteen, hearing his mother often bewail and lament the loss of three daughters married to three animals, of whom she had never heard news since they left her, he felt a longing to fare over the world until he could discover his sisters; and begging his sire to grant him leave to wend and seek for them, after a time the king granted his request, and the queen giving him a ring in the same way as she had given rings to her daughters, they farewelled him, having first equipped him with everything that was needful, and a suite to company him as a prince of his condition should possess. And he left not a hole unseen in Italy, nor a subterraneous hiding-place in France, nor was there a place throughout Spain which he left unexplored, and he passed through England, and visited Slavonia, and travelled to Poland, and in brief fared from east to west, till having parted with his retinue, some at

taverns and some at the hospitals, he at the last found himself, without even a suit of clothes, on the top of the mountain where dwelt the falcon and Fabiella. When he came before the palace, he stood gazing at it and its wonderful beauty in a transport of amazement, beholding the corners of porphyry, the walls of alabaster, the windows of pure gold, and the entrance gate of pure silver; and while thus he stood gazing, Fabiella sighted him from one of the windows, and sent for him to come to her presence, and when he came she asked, 'Who art thou, and whence comest thou, and what good fortune hath brought thee in these parts?' Titone told her the name of his country, and of his sire, and of his mother, and his own name; and Fabiella recognized him for her own brother, and after they had confronted the rings which they wore upon their fingers, she was sure of it, and she embraced him with great joy, and fearing that her husband might not be pleased to hear of his coming, she bade him hide himself. So when the falcon came home, Fabiella began to say to him that she longed with excessive longing to see her parents once more; and the falcon answered, 'Let thy longing cease, O my wife, as it may not be, until I am in an humour to carry thee there.' 'At least,' said Fabiella, 'send for some one of my relations to console me;' and the falcon replied, 'And who will come to see thee in such a distant place?' 'And if some one did come,' retorted Fabiella, 'wouldst thou be displeased?' 'And why should I be displeased,' answered the falcon, 'tis enough that he be of thine own flesh and blood for me to set him within mine eyes.' And Fabiella, hearing this, heartened her heart, and bade her brother come forth, and presented him to the falcon; and he said to Titone, 'Five and

five make ten, love showeth through a glove, and water cometh forth from the boot; mayest thou be welcome; thou art master of this house; command and thou shalt be obeyed; and do whatso thou wilt.' And thus saying the falcon gave orders to his household that they should honour Titone, and serve him as his own person.

After a fortnight of his stay upon the mountain had gone by, a longing seized him to fare forth and look for his other sisters, and he sought leave to depart, which was granted to him, the falcon giving him one of his feathers, saying, 'Take this, O Titone mine, and hold it dear, because if thou ever hast a need, thou wilt esteem it as a treasure: enough, take every care of it, and if thou desirest something very sore, throw it on the ground and say, "Come, come," and thou wilt praise me.' Titone wrapped carefully in paper the feather, and put it safely in a purse, and after a thousand ceremonies, and leave-takings, and farewellings, he departed. He fared through wilds and wolds for a length of time, till at last he came to the forest where dwelt the stag with Vasta, and being an-hungered, he entered a garden to gather some fruits, and he was perceived and recognized by his sister in the same way as he had been recognized by Fabiella. She brought him before her husband, who bade him welcome with the best of welcomes, treating him truly as a prince, and he stayed a fortnight also with them and after that time had elapsed he desired to go forth and seek the other sister. Then the stag gave him one of his hairs with the same words as had been spoken by the falcon, and with as many more from the stag as he had had from the other, and farewelling them, he wended on his journey, and he journeyed so long as to reach the extremes of the earth, and the sea stood before him, and he took

ship with the design to seek in all the islands for some news; and spreading the sails in the wind, he wandered and sailed about from place to place, till at last he came to the island whereon dwelt the dolphin with Rita. As soon as he landed, his sister saw him, and knew him in the same way as the two others had done, and he was welcomed by his brother-in-law with a thousand welcomes, and when he wished to depart after such a long time to fare to his mother and the sire, the dolphin gave him one of his scales with the same words as the others had said; and he farewelled them, and then took horse and fared homewards.

Now he had not gone half a mile from the sea-shore, when he came to a forest which was the dwelling of the shadows and the free ladder of fear, where was a continual night of murkiness and affright, and there he perceived a tower built amid a lake, that kissed the trees' feet, so that they should not allow the sun to see their hideousness; and at one of the windows he beheld a beauteous damsel sitting at the feet of an hideous dragon who was fast asleep; and when Titone sighted her and she beheld him, she broke out in a melodious plaintive voice, 'O beauteous youth mine, sent perhaps to me by Heaven to console and comfort me in my misery and wretchedness, in this place where I never sight the face of a Christian; deliver thou me from the hands of this serpent tyrant, who bare me away from the King of Chiara-Valle who was my sire, and brought me in this darksome tower, where I am in misery slowly dying of heartache, and becoming rank and rusty.' 'Alas!' answered Titone, 'what can I do to serve thee, O thou beautiful damsel mine? Who can ford this lake? Who can mount to this tower? Who can come near that hideous dragon, whose

sight terrifieth one, and soweth the seed of fear, and causeth looseness to the beholder? But softly, stay a little while, we will try to chase away this serpent with other help: step by step, said Gradasso: we shall soon see if it is sweet or wind;' and so saying, he cast on the ground the feather, the hair, and the scale that had been given to him, saying, 'Come, come,' and hardly were the words spoken, when from the earth, that like drops of water in summer giveth birth to the frogs, appeared the falcon, the stag, and the dolphin, and each and all cried, 'Here we are, what dost thou command?' Titone, seeing this, joyed with great joy, and answered, 'I do not wish for aught else, but that this unhappy damsel may be freed from the claws of that dragon, and be brought out of this tower, and that a heap of ruins may be made of this place, and this beauteous damsel be taken by me to wife and carried home.' 'Hush,' said the falcon; 'when least thou expectest it there springs up the bean; this very moment we will twist it for thee on the top of a carlino* ; and it is our will that he should have scarcity of ground.' 'Do not let us lose any time,' said the stag, 'disasters and macaroni must be eaten warm;' and thus saying, the falcon called to his side a quantity of griffins, who flew to the window of the tower, and lifted up the young lady, and carried her to the lake side, where stood Titone with his brothers-in-law, and if he thought the damsel from afar looked like the moon, when she was near he esteemed her a sun in beauty and comeliness. But whilst he clasped her to his heart, and spake sweet words to her, the dragon awoke from sleep, and casting himself out of the window, was

* A silver coin struck by Charles I. of Angio, from whom it received its name 'carlino.' Worth 43 centesimi.

swimming to where stood Titone, to devour him. When his brother-in-law the stag saw this, he called to his aid a squadron of lions, tigers, wolves, wild cats, and other animals, and they cast themselves upon the dragon, and made mince-meat of him with their claws.

When this was done, and Titone was ready to fare homewards, said the dolphin to him, 'And I also will do somewhat for thee, and in thy service;' and bade the sea cover the tower and all that surrounded it, so that not even the memory of such a murky and accursed place should remain; and Titone, having witnessed these deeds, thanked his brothers-in-law as much as he could and knew, bidding the bride to do the same, as but for their aid she had not come forth safe from the danger. And they answered, 'It is instead our duty to thank this beauteous lady, since it is she who is the cause of our returning to our pristine forms; through the curse of a fairy, because of something done to her by our mother, we were to remain in the shape of animals from our birth until we should save from great danger the daughter of a king; and behold the time hath come for which we have longed so much; behold this bunch of sorb-apple, 'tis ripe, and already we feel in our breasts a new spirit, and new blood in our veins.' When they ended their words, they became three handsome young men, and one after the other embraced with great affection their brother-in-law, and clasped the hands of their new relatives, who had fainted for joy. And Titone seeing this, sighed heavily, and was nigh a-swooning, and when he recovered said, 'O my Lord God, why have my father and mother no share in this great delight? They would have melted, to see before them such graceful, comely, and beauteous sons-in-law.' 'It is not night yet,' answered the brothers-in-law: 'twas the shame to behold

ourselves so transformed that reduced us to fly from the sight of men ; but now that we may, through the grace of Heaven, appear before folk, we will retire under the same roof with our own dear wives, and live cheerfully. Now let us fare on quickly, because before the sun to-morrow morning unpacks the merchandize of its rays from the custom-house of the east, we shall be together with you and our wives.'

And when they had ended their say, so that they should not wend a-foot, there being naught of conveyance but a small boat which had brought Titone, they bade appear a splendid carriage drawn by six lions, and the five took place within it and they fared the day, and in the evening they came to a tavern, and while they got ready the viands, they passed their time reading many of the witnesses of men's ignorance written on the walls by those who had stopped at the place. At last they ate their sufficiency, and retired to their beds, but the three youths pretending to go to bed, when the others slept, fared onwards through the night, so that in the morning, when the stars timid and shame-faced like newly made brides, do not desire to be seen by the sun, they found themselves at the same tavern with their wives, where when they met there was a great deal of embracing, and joyance, and delight, passing all bounds. After a time the eight entered the same carriage, and wended their ways, and after faring for a length of time they arrived at Verde-colle, where the king and queen gave them the warmest and fondest of welcomes, and having gained the capital of three daughters, whom they had believed lost, and the shield of three sons-in-law, and a daughter-in-law (who were the four columns of the temple of beauty), and sending messengers to the kings of Bello-prato and Chiara-valle, informing them

of their sons' success, they both came to the joyance and feasting, and there was great rejoicing, refilling all with the fatness of delight in the married pot of their enjoyment, forgetting past grief and sorrow, but remembering that

'An hour of happiness causeth forgetfulness of a thousand years of torments.'

THE SEVEN PIECES OF PORK-SKIN.

FOURTH DIVERSION

Of the Fourth Day.

An old woman, a beggar, giveth a good beating to her daughter for her gluttony, she having eaten seven pieces of pork-skin, and maketh a merchant believe that she had done this, because she had worked too much in filling seven spindles. The merchant taketh her to wife, but she worketh not; but by gift of three fairies the husband on his return from a journey findeth the piece of cloth finished, and by another ruse of the wife he resolveth not to allow her to work any more, for fear that she should fall ill.

ALL blessed Meneca's mouth for relating with so much taste her story, which put before the eyes of the hearers doings that had happened so far away in such a manner that it caused envy to glow in Tolla's breast, so that it made her wish from the marrow of her bones to excel and surpass Meneca; therefore, having first well cleared her throat, she began thus, in a clear voice:

Not a word is spoken which, if not all true, is not half true, and this is the reason that some one said, Crooked face and straight venture; and he knew the things of this world, or perhaps he had read the history of Antony and Palmiero, who had no eyebrows, and without birdlime caught Becafico. It is by experience that this world

is the true portrait of the Cuccagna, land of pleasure and felicity, where who works most gaineth least; where he hath the best who taketh things as they come, and expecteth not that macaroni will fall down his throat; as is truly known, and one touches it with hands, that plunder and the spoils of fortune are gained and won, not by the full-sailed galley, but by the darksome sailing boat, as ye shall hear from what I am going to relate.

Once upon a time there lived a beggarly old woman, who with distaff in hand, dabbing folk with her spittle on the way, used to step from door to door, begging alms, and since by craft and deceit one lives half the year round, she made some women, who were tender of lungs and easy of faith, believe that she was going to do I know not what to fatten a very thin daughter she had. By thus begging, she gained the gift of seven pieces of pig's lard with the skin, which she took home with a quantity of straw and small bits of wood she had gathered by the way. Giving them to her daughter, she bade her cook them, whilst she went and begged of some gardeners an handful of greens to cook with them, and thus to make a tasty dish of food. The daughter took the pieces of skin, and burning off the bristles, put the skins in the pot, and began to cook them. But not so much did they boil in the pot, as they boiled in her throat, because the smell which came forth therefrom was a mortal defiance to taste its flavour in the field of appetite, and an immediate summons to the bank of gluttony, so much so, that after resisting for some time the temptation, at the last provoked by the natural odour that came forth from the pot, and drawn by her natural greed, and pulled by the throat by the hunger which gnawed at her entrails, she let herself slip, and tried a little of it, and the flavour being good, she said to herself, 'Let him that

fearth become a bailiff; I am in it for this time; let us eat, and let it come of clay, or nails, or other, 'tis but a pig's skin. What will it be? Whatever may it be? I have good skin upon my shoulders to pay for these skins;' and thus saying, she put down the first, and feeling her stomach gnaw the more, took up the second; and afterwards she ate the third, and thus, one after the other, until she had eaten them all. Now having done this bad service, thinking of the error, and dreaming that the skins would stick in her throat, she bethought herself to blind her mother, and taking an old shoe, cut the sole in seven pieces, and put it in the pot.

In the meanwhile her mother returned with a bunch of greens, and cutting them up in small bits with all the suckers, so as not to lose a crumb, when she saw that the pot boiled, she put all the greens therein, together with a quantity of lard, that a coachman, who had it left from greasing a carriage, gave her in alms. Then she bade her daughter lay a coarse cloth upon an old box of poplar-wood, and bringing forth from a pair of saddle-bags two pieces of stale bread, and taking from a shelf a wooden basin, she cut up the bread within it, and threw upon it the greens with the old shoe-leather, and began to eat. But at the first mouthful she perceived that her teeth were not for shoe-leather, and that the pig's skins, by a new Ovid's transformation, had become the gizzard of a buffalo. Therefore she turned to her daughter, and said, 'Thou hast done me brown, this time, thou whore accursed, and what filthiness hast thou put in the pottage? Has my belly become an old shoe, that thou shouldst provide me with old leather? Quick, do thou confess this moment, how this was done; or say naught, and I will not leave thee a whole bone in thy body.' Saporita (thus was the girl

hight) began to deny, but the old woman's vexation increasing, she blamed the smoke which had entered the pot and came forth from it, which had blinded her and caused her to do this evil deed. And the old woman, seeing her food poisoned, and taking hold of a broomstick, began to work in good earnest, and more than seven times did she take it up and let it down, hitting anywhere as it fell. And the daughter shrieked with loud shrieks, and at her cries a merchant who was passing by entered, and seeing the dog-like treatment dealt by the old woman to her daughter, he took the stick from her hand, and said to her, 'What hath this poor child done to thee, that thou hast a will to slay her? Is this the way to chastise her, or to shorten her days? Hast thou found her running a lance or breaking money-boxes? Art thou not ashamed to treat thus a wretched child?' 'Thou knowest not what she hath done to me,' answered the old woman, 'the shameless chit, she can see that I am a beggar, and she hath no consideration, and she would like to see me ruined by doctors and druggists: because having commanded her now that it is hot weather that she should not work so much, so that she should not fall sick, as I have naught with which to feed her, the presumptuous creature, in my despite, would fill seven spindles, risking by doing this to have some bad disease of the heart, and remain some two months in a bed of sickness.' The merchant, hearing this, thought that the cleverness and industry of this damsel could make his house into a fairy's kingdom; therefore he said to the old woman, 'Leave off thine anger and cast it on one side, for I will deliver thee from this danger in thine house by taking this daughter of thine to wife, and lead her to my home, where I will entertain her as a princess, as by grace of Heaven I bring up mine own fowls, and fatten mine own

pigs, and keep pigeons, and I can hardly turn round in my house because of its fulness; may the heavens bless me, and the evil eye have no power over me, for I have my casks full of corn, my press full of flour, my pitchers full of oil, my pots and bladders full of lard, and hams and salt provisions hanging by the roof beam, and the rack full of crocks, and heaps of wood, and mounds of coal, and safes of linen, a bed fit for a bridegroom: and above all, from rents and interests, I can live like a mighty lord; and besides, I gain safely in these fairs some ten ducats, and if business always went full sail I should soon be rich.' The old woman, beholding this good fortune raining upon her when least she dreamt of it, taking Saporita by the hand (in the Neapolitan custom and fashion), consigned her to him, saying, 'Here she is, may she be thine for many happy years with health and fine heritage.' The merchant threw his arms round Saporita's neck, and carried her home, and he was very anxious for the day to come when he would fare to the market to buy some flax for his wife to spin.

When Monday came he arose early in the morning, and wending where the country-women came, he bought twenty dozens of flax, and taking it to Saporita, said to her, 'If thou hast a will to spin, be not afraid, as thou wilt not find another so madly enraged as thy mother, who used to break thy bones, if thou filledst the spindle; whilst I, for every ten spindle-full will give thee ten kisses, and for every distaff-full I will give thee mine heart; work thou then with a good will, and I will wend to the fair, where I shall tarry some twenty days, and when I return from the fair, do thou let me find these ten dozen of flax all ready spinned, and I will buy thee a fine pair of sleeves of Russian cloth trimmed with green velvet.' 'Thou mayst

go an thou art ready,' said Saporita to herself, 'thou hast filled my spindle, yes, run and light the fire. An thou expectest a shirt out of my hands, thou canst provide thyself from this moment of blotting-paper; thou hast found her, and 'twas milk of the black goat, to spin twenty dozens of flax in twenty days. May evil happen to the boat that brought thee in this country. Go, for thou hast the time, and thou shalt find the flax spun when the liver groweth hair, and the ape a tail.'

In the meanwhile her husband fared on his journey, and she, who was as greedy and gluttonous as she was lazy, did not wait long before she began to mix flour, and take the oil, and cook fritters, and make cakes, and from morning till night she did naught else, but gnaw and munch like a mouse, and eat like a pig. But now when the term arrived of her husband's return, she began to spin very fine, considering the noise and great fracas that would occur when the merchant came back and found the flax untouched, and the press and pitchers empty; and therefore, taking a long perch, wound round it a dozen of the flax with all the tow and the rest, and hanging upon a big fork an Indian vegetable marrow, and tying the perch at one side of the wall of the terrace, she began to lower this father abbot of spindles down the terrace, keeping by her side a cauldron full of macaroni broth instead of the saucer full of water, and whilst she spinned like a ship's rope, every time she dipped her fingers in water she played a carnival game with the passers-by. Now passed that way three fairies, and they enjoyed so much the sight of this ugly vision, that they laughed till they fell backwards: and for this cause they cried, 'May all the flax in that house be found spun, and made into cloth, and whitened,' which thing was done at once, and

Saporita swam in the fat of enjoyance, sighting this good venture raining upon her from heaven. But so that no more of this kind of annoyance should befall her from her husband, she let him find her in bed, having first spread on it a measure of hazel-nuts; and when the merchant arrived, she began to lament, and turning first one side then the other she cracked the nuts, which made a sound as if the bones unhinged one from the other; and her husband asking of her how it was with her, she answered him with a very melancholic voice, 'I cannot be much worse, than I am now, O my husband, I have not a whole bone in my body; and what does it seem to thee but a little grass for the sheep, to spin twenty dozen of flax in twenty days, and to weave the cloth also? Wende thy ways, O my husband, for thou hast not paid my mother, and discretion has been eaten by the ass; when I shall be dead, my mother will not give birth to another like me, and therefore thou wilt not catch me any more at these dog's works; and I do not wish to fill so many spindles that I break the spindle of my life.'

The husband made her a thousand caresses, and said to her, 'Be thou well once more, O my darling wife, as I desire much more this beauteous loving frame than all the cloths in the world; and now I know that thy mother was right in chastising thee for so much work, because thou lovest thine health. But be of good cheer I shall spend an eye of my head to get thee back to health, and wait a while, I shall go at once for the doctor;' and thus saying, he went at once to call Messer Cattupolo. Whereupon Saporita ate up all the nuts, and threw the shells out of the window, and when the doctor came, feeling her pulse, and observing her face, and looking in the chamber-pot, and smelling in the night-vase, he concluded

with Galenus and Hippocrates that her malady was superfluous blood, and from doing naught; and the merchant, thinking he heard nonsense, putting a carlino in his hand, sent him off warm and stinking; and wanting to go for another physician, Saporita told him that there was no need, because the sight of him only had cured her; and so her husband embraced her, and said that from that time forth she should enjoy herself without work, because it was impossible to have a Greek and cabbages,

'The cask full, and the slave-girl drunk.'

THE DRAGON.

FIFTH DIVERSION

Of the Fourth Day.

Miuccio passeth through many dangers, by the deeds of a queen who is a sorceress, but with the help of a charmed bird, he cometh forth with honour of them all. In the end the queen dieth, and he is discovered to be the son of the king, and maketh them deliver his imprisoned mother, who becometh the king's wife.

THE story of the seven bits of pork's skin had with so much taste been chattered out by Tolla that it seasoned well the pottage of the prince's appetite so that the fat ran out, hearing the ignorant malice and the malicious ignorance of Saporita; but Popa, unwilling to yield even a crumb to Tolla, embarked in the sea of trifles with the story which followeth:

Whoso seeketh to do harm to others findeth his own damage; and whoso layeth traps to catch the third and the fourth by treachery and deceit often falleth into the traps himself: as ye will hear of a queen, who built with her own hands the trap wherein she was caught by the foot.

It is said that once upon a time there lived a king of Alta-marina, who, for his tyranny and hard-heartedness, was dethroned from his royal seat whilst he was away with his wife at a castle far from the city, and his realm was occupied by a certain woman a sorceress. Whereat he

had prayers recited to a certain wooden statue of a serpent, which gave wise answers; and it told the king that he would recover his estate only when the sorceress lost her sight. Now this witch, besides being well guarded, knew by their noses the folk sent by him to do her hurt, and she used against them a brutal injustice, so that he being in despair to revenge himself of the sorceress, so many women that came from that place as he caught, so many he dishonoured and then slew; and he did thus to hundreds and hundreds, whom their evil destiny had sent there to be robbed of honour and deprived of life.

There arrived one day of the days a damsel, named Porziella, who was the most beauteous being that could be seen upon earth. Her hair was as the handcuffs of the bailiffs of love; her brow a table, whereupon was written the tariff of the shop of all the graces; her eyes were two signal lights, whose beams ensured the vessels from being wrecked against the port of enjoyment; her mouth a bee-hive full of honey, amid two hedges of roses. And this damsel fell into the hands of the king, and having passed the same ordeal as the others, would have been slain, but that at the same time in which the king lifted the poignard, a bird letting fall I know not what upon his arm, caused it to tremble so, that the weapon fell from his hand. Now this bird was a fairy, who a few days before had fallen asleep in a forest, where sheltering under the tent of the shadows of the trees, she played off the heat to the galley of affright, and whilst a certain satyr desired to do her some bad things, Porziella awakened her. For this service the fairy followed the steps of Porziella so as to render her back her benefice. The king seeing this, thought that the beauty of that face had seized his arm, and enchanted his poignard, so that he was unable to slay her as he had

done to so many others ; therefore he bethought himself that a madman would be quiet enough in his own house, and that it was useless to dye with blood the implement of death as he had done the instrument of life, but that he would have her die built up in a garret of his own palace. This in very deed he had done, and they built up the loved but wretched one between four walls, without any food or drink, so that she should die a slow death. The bird, seeing her in such bad plight, with kindly human words consoled her, saying that she should be of good cheer, and keep her eyes cool and clear, since to return to her the good she had erst done for her, the bird would help her even by shedding her own blood, and Porziella besought the bird to tell her who she was. But the bird would not do so, saying only that she was under an obligation to her, and that she would leave naught undone to serve her ; and seeing that the unhappy damsel was an-hungered, she flew out, and shortly returned with a sharp pointed knife in her bill which she had taken from the king's buffet. Then she told Porziella, to make a hole in a corner of the flooring, which responded in the royal kitchen, and from thence she would always be able to take something so as to maintain life. And Porziella obeyed the bird's rede, and worked with a good will till she made a hole large enough for the bird to pass through, and watching for the opportunity, the bird, beholding the cook to go with a pail for some water at the fountain, flew through the hole, and lifted up a fine pullet, and warm as it was carried it to Porziella ; and not knowing how to remedy her thirst, as the bird knew not how to carry aught to drink, she flew to the pantry, where were hung up a number of bunches of grapes, and carried up a fine bunch to Porziella ; and thus did the bird for some days.

After a time Porziella, who had conceived by the king, was brought to bed of a man-child beauteous as the moon ; and she nursed him and brought him up with the help of the bird ; but when he grew up, the fairy advised the mother to make the hole a little larger, and to lift up of the slates from the floor, enough for the child to pass through, and after she would lower down by ropes, which the bird brought, little Miuccio (so was the child hight), and this done, she would replace the slates in their former places, so that it should not be seen from whence he had come. Porziella did as the bird bade her, and commanded her son not to say whence he had come, nor whose son he was, and when the cook had gone forth on some errand, she farewelled him and lowered him down. And when the cook returned, and beheld so beauteous a child, he asked him who he was, and whence he came, and what he had come to do ; and Miuccio, remembering his mother's rede, answered that he had lost himself, and was seeking for a master. At that very moment entered the king's equerry, and seeing the pretty child, so full of life and spirit, bethought him that he would be a very graceful page for the king, and therefore he led him to the royal chambers ; and when the child stood in the presence, and the king beheld him, so comely, and graceful, and bright, a pure gem, the king was pleased with him, and he took him in his service as page, and he entered his heart as a son, and therefore he had him instructed in all manly exercise and chivalry, and educated as a true cavalier should be. As he grew in age, so he excelled in virtue, and became one of the ablest and most virtuous at court, and the king loved him with great love, and looked upon him with deeper affection than his step-son ;

because of which the queen had him in dislike and despite. And the more accomplished he became, envy and malevolence grew upon the queen and gained ground, and as Miuccio grew more in honour and favour and grace with the king, the greater became the hatred of the queen, and she took thought how she should soap well the ladder of his fortune, so that from the top he should slide down to the bottom.

One evening, whilst they had accorded their instruments together, they made a music of conversation, and the queen said to the king that Miuccio had boasted that he would build three castles in the air, and the king, since he felt rather confused, and desired to please his wife, when in the early dawn the moon, mistress of the shadows, giveth an holiday to her pupils so as to leave the place clear for the sun's festival, he sent for Miuccio, and commanded him, by every means, to build the three castles in the air as he had promised, otherwise he would cause him to kick the air. When Miuccio heard this he retired to his own chamber, and began sorely to weep and lament, and seeing by this how brittle is a prince's favour, and how short-lived are his graces, he increased his weeping and lamenting, and whilst he was in this plight, behold, the bird came and said to him, 'Hearten thine heart, O Miuccio, and doubt not, whilst thou hast this body by thy side, for I can draw thee even out of the fire,' and saying thus, the bird ordered him to take some paste-board, and glue, and making three large castles, called three big griffins, and tied a castle upon each bird, and then bade them fly; and when they flew in air, Miuccio called the king, and he came with all his court to behold this spectacle, this marvellous sight, and perceiving Miuccio's craft, held

him in firmer affection, and honoured him, and largessed him, and caressed him more than ever: for which matter, fuel was added to the queen's envy, and jealousy and ill-will to her disdain, and she resolved to make new attempts, but naught that she devised fulfilled her desire, and she took no rest, nor days nor nights, and sleep failed her, and if she slept she dreamed of some way by which she could rid herself of this eye-sore, this peg in her eyes: and, after a few days were past, she said to the king, 'O my husband, now is the time to return to thy former grandeur, and to thy sumptuousness of years gone by, because Miuccio has offered to blind that sorceress, and with the plucking of a pair of eyes make thee win back thy lost realm.' The king, feeling this touch upon what pained him most, sent for Miuccio, and said to him, 'I am surprised with great surprise, and wonder with great wonderment, that when I love thee so well, and thou canst replace me in mine own seat whence I fell, thou passest thy time unmindful, and thinkest not to save me and uplift me from so much misery, seeing me the while reduced from a kingdom to a forest, from a city to a miserable castle, and from bidding and forbidding a quantity of folk, to be served of a few bread-and-share carvers and broth-suckers; and if thou wilt not have my misfortune, run thou this moment and blind the sorceress, who keepeth from me all my goods; and thus closing her shops thou wilt reopen the bazaar of my greatness; putting out those lights thou wilt light the lamps of mine honour, which have been darkened and extinguished, and cause me great wretchedness.' Miuccio, hearing this proposal, was going to answer that the king had been misinformed and was mistaken, and that he was not a crow to

go and pull out eyes, nor a scavenger that he should cleanse dirty holes, when the king interrupted him, saying, 'No more words; this is my will and it must be done: bethink thyself that in this brain of mine I have set the scales of justice; this side is the reward if thou doest what it is thy duty to do, the other side is the punishment if thou doest not my bidding.' Miuccio, who could not knock his head against the stone, and had to deal with a man that wretched was the mother who had given him her daughter, therefore wended his ways in a dark corner, and began to weep and wail, when the bird flew to him, and said, 'Is it possible, O Miuccio, that thou always drownest thyself in a glass of water? If I had been killed, then thou mightest have done all this confusion and weeping and wailing. Knowest thou not that I have more thought for thy life than for mine own? Hearten thine heart, and follow me, and thou shalt see what Menicello can do.' And the bird began to fly and stopped in a forest, where she began to whistle, and at once a number of birds came at her call and flew around her, and she enquired which of them would be able to pluck out the witch's eyes, for to him she would give a safeguard against the claws of the vulture and the hawk, and a free pass against guns, bows, and cross-bows, and the net and the bird-lime of the fowler.

Now among these was a swallow, who had built her nest in a beam of the royal palace, and she hated the sorceress because, in doing her accursed sorcery, many a time had she driven her to fly away from her chamber with the fumigations; partly for this desire of revenge, and partly to gain the promised reward, she offered her services to the bird, and thereupon took her flight citywards, and

entering the palace, found the sorceress lying upon her couch, and two handmaidens fanning her. When the swallow arrived, she flew straight upon the witch's eyes, and thrusting in her bill and claws, plucked them out; and the witch, seeing at midday the night, and knowing that the loss of her sight was the shutting of the custom-house for the merchandise of the kingdom, cried aloud with the cries of a damned soul. Then she renounced the sceptre, and fled, and hid herself in a cavern, where beating her head against the walls, she ended her days.

When the sorceress was gone, the counsellors and grandees of the realm sent forth messengers to the king bidding him come and enjoy his own once more, since the blindness of the sorceress had been the means for him to see such a joyful day; and when these arrived, Miuccio also arrived, and the latter, being taught by the bird, said to the king, 'I have served thee with good coin: the witch is blinded, the realm is thine; therefore if I deserve any reward for this service, I desire no other than that thou wilt leave me in peace with my misfortunes, without sending me forth again to meet these dangers.' The king embraced him with great affection, and made him put on his cap and sit by his side; and Heaven may tell ye if the queen swelled with wrath, and at the rainbow which showed in her face could be supposed and could be understood the wind of all the ruin that she devised in her heart against Miuccio.

Now at no great distance from this castle dwelt a most ferocious dragon, which had been born at the same time as the queen had seen the light, and when they sent for the father of astrologers to draw his calculation and say what

it portended, he replied that the child that was born would live as long as the dragon lived, and when the one died, the other would die also; one thing only could save the queen, and that was that they should anoint the temples, and the chest bone, and the nostrils, and the wrists with the blood of that same dragon. Now the queen knew of the fury and strength of the animal, and she thought of sending Miuccio to be caught in his clutches, well sure that it would make a mouthful of him, and he would have been like a strawberry in a bear's throat, so turning towards the king she said, 'In very sooth, Miuccio is the treasure of thine house, and thou shouldst be ungrateful if thou didst not love him, and much more so, as he hath given us to understand that he will slay the dragon for which, although he is my brother, as he is thy direst foe I shall be glad, as I love an hair of an husband more than an hundred brothers.' The king hated with deadly hatred this dragon, and knew not what to do to rid himself of the sight of him, and therefore as soon as he heard her words he sent for Miuccio, and said to him, 'I know that thou puttest thy sleeve where thou desirest, and therefore, now that thou hast done so much, thou must do me yet another kindness, and thereafter thou mayest turn me as thou wilt. Do thou go forth this very moment, and slay for me the dragon, and thou wilt have done me a great service, and I shall be grateful and give thee due reward.' Miuccio, at these words, went nigh out of his senses, and when he recovered himself, and could utter his words plainly, he answered the king, 'Now, this is a bad headache, thou hast taken to wearing me out. Is my life the gift of a black goat, that thou weariest it out in this way? This is not a matter of "a peeled pear, fall down my throat," 'tis a dragon which with its claws tears you to pieces, with its

tusks pierces you through, with its tail crushes you, with its eyes transfixes, and with its breath slays. And now how wilt thou send me to death? Is this the dead place thou givest me, in exchange for having given thee a kingdom? What accursed soul hath put these dice upon the table? Who hath been the son of Satan to put thee up to this jumping, and given thee to understand these words?' The king, who was easily led, and like to a balloon, which is light to make it leap, but was headstrong and harder than a stone to move in maintaining what he had once said, put his feet down, saying, 'Thou hast done so much, and now thou lovest thyself at thy best? Therefore, no more words, go, rid my kingdom and the world of this scourge, if thou wilt not that I rid thee of life.' Thus the wretched Miuccio saw himself well favoured first and threatened after, this moment a caress upon the face, another instant a kick on the hind-parts, now warm, then cold; he could reflect how unstable and changeable are the fortunes of the court, and he wished in his heart that he had been fasting of the king's friendship; but knowing well that to reply to the behests of great men is idle, just like plucking off the beard of a lion, he retired to a darksome place, cursing his fortunes, which had reduced him to be at court so as to shorten the hours of his life; and whilst sitting upon a doorstep, leaning his head between his hands, and his elbows upon his knees, washing his shoes with his tears, and warming up with the counter-poise of sighs, behold, the bird came with a branch of some herb in his bill, which she threw to Miuccio, saying, 'Rise up Miuccio, and reassure thyself, thou shalt not play at unloading the ass with thy days, but at getting rid of the life of the dragon; therefore do thou take this herb, and when thou reachest the cave where dwelleth this hideous animal, throw it

within, and he will be caught by a deep sleep, when thou, with a fine large knife, canst cut him in twain, and at once do thou make him the feast, and return, as matters will prosper better than thou supposest. Enough, I am doing well what I carry underneath, and we have more time than money, and whoso hath time hath money and life.' And when she had ended speaking, Miuccio arose, and putting a large carter's knife underneath his vest, and taking up the herb, fared to the dragon's cave, which was under a mountain of such a great growth that the three mountains, which were used as ladders by the giants, would not have reached its waistband. When he arrived, he threw the herb within the cave, and the dragon fell asleep at once, and Miuccio went in and began to cut him in pieces. But at the same time that he sliced up the dragon, the queen felt that her heart was being cut up also, and seeing that she was coming to a bad end, understood her error, and that she had bought death for herself, in ready money; and calling her husband to her side, said to him that the astrologer had foretold that upon the dragon's life depended her life, and as she doubted not that Miuccio had slain the dragon, she therefore was slowly sliding to the end; and the king rejoined, 'If thou knewest that the dragon's life was the prop of thine own, and the root of thy days, why didst thou bid me send Miuccio to slay the dragon? Who is at fault? Thou hast done the evil and thou shalt weep for it; thou hast broken the glass and thou shalt pay for it.' And the queen answered, 'I never could have believed that a bit of a chit could be so crafty and have such strength as to cast to the ground an animal which thought slightly of a whole army, whilst I believed that he would leave there his rags; but whereas I made up the accounts without the host, and the boat of

my designs is gone wrong, do me at least a favour, an thou lovest me. As soon as I shall be dead, bid a sponge be brought full of the dragon's blood, and anoint with it all the extremities of my person before I am buried.' 'This is but small matter for the love I bear thee,' answered the king, 'and if the dragon's blood is not enough, I will give of mine own to please thee'; and the queen desiring to thank him, her spirit flew forth with her words, because at that very moment Miuccio had ended making mince-meat of the dragon.

When Miuccio stood before the king to give him proofs of the deed, the king commanded him to go back and bring some of the dragon's blood. But the king being curious to see the deed done by Miuccio's hand, followed him, and whilst Miuccio came forth from the palace gate, the bird met him and asked him, 'Where art thou going?' and Miuccio answered, 'I am going to do the king's bidding, for he is pleased to make me go to and fro like a weaver's shuttle, he does not let me rest an hour.' 'To do what?' enquired the bird; and Miuccio replied, 'To take some of the dragon's blood;' and replied the bird, 'O thou wretched one, this dragon's blood will be an ox's blood for thee, which will burst within thee; and with this blood will be strengthened that wicked woman, who hath been the cause of thy passing so many dangers and travails, because it was she that sent thee ever to new perils, hoping that thou shouldst leave thy life therein; and the king who alloweth such an hideous witch to blind him, sendeth thee about like a thrower to risk thy person, which is of his own pure flesh and blood; it is a true sprig of that shrub; but the unhappy man knoweth thee not; although he should have understood that a strong intrinsic affection is a spy to the relationship, so that the real services thou hast rendered to

this thy lord, and the gain he hath in such a beauteous heir, should have strength to make that unhappy Porziella thy mother enter into grace, as now 'tis fourteen years that she lives buried alive within a garret, wherein is seen a temple of beauty built within a small chamber.' And whilst the fairy spake thus, the king, hearing every word that was spoken, came forward so that he could understand the matter better; and hearing that Porziella had conceived Miuccio by him, and that she yet lived within that garret-chamber, the king summoned the workmen and bade them immediately knock down the wall which had been built, and bring Porziella before him; and they obeyed his bidding, and she came and stood before him, and he gazed at her and found her handsomer than erst she had been, because of the good treatment she had received from the bird, and he embraced her with great love, and he never tired of embracing first the mother and then the son, and he begged her to forgive him for the ill-treatment she had received at his hands, and his son for the dangers he had passed through his commands. Then bidding the handmaidens array her in the richest raiments of the dead queen, he took her to wife; and knowing that she lived, and his son had been saved from so many perils and travails, because the bird had provided the one with provant, and the other with wise rede, he offered the bird his goods and his life; but the fairy answered that she would not have any other reward for her services than Miuccio for her husband; and thus saying, she became a beautiful young damsel, and she, with great pleasure from the king and Porziella, was given in marriage to Miuccio. So, whilst the dead queen was cast in the grave, the two couples of brides and bridegrooms gathered enjoyment and content by tons; and to have the festivities greater, they

fares to their realm, where they were expected by the nobles, and grandees, and all the lieges, with great desire, recognizing that this good fortune had come to them from the fairy, for the good deed done to her by Porziella, because after all

'The doing of a good deed is never lost.'

THE THREE CROWNS.

SIXTH DIVERSION

Of the Fourth Day.

Marchetta is stolen by the wind, and carried to the house of a ghula, whence, after various accidents, receiving a buffet, she goeth forth disguised in man's clothing. She wendeth to the palace of a king, where the queen becometh enamoured of her, and because her love meeteth with no corresponding feelings, accuseth her to her husband of having tempted her to a deed of shame. Thereupon Marchetta is condemned to be hanged, but by the virtue of a charm that had been given to her by the ghula, she is saved, and at last becometh queen.

THE story of Popa well satisfied the hearers, who rejoiced to hear of the good fortune of Porziella. Yet not one envied her this fate, which was bought at the price of so many travails, since, to arrive at the royal estate, she had nearly lost her personal real estate. But Tolla, perceiving that the misfortunes of Porziella had troubled the souls of the prince and princess, desired to raise their spirits, and thus began speaking :

The truth, O my lord, and ladies, is like oil which always swimmeth on the top, and the lamp is a fire that cannot be hidden, but rather is it a modern gun, which slayeth whoso fires it, nor is it above calling him a liar whoso is not faithful in words ; it burneth and consumeth not only the virtues and the good that are carried within

the breast, but even the very purse which containeth them : as I will cause you to confess by this story that ye will hear.

In days of yore there lived a king of Valle-tescosse, who was not blessed with children ; and at all hours, wherever he found himself, he would say, ' O Heaven, send me an heir of the estate, that I may not leave desolate mine house.' And one time of the times, when, finding himself within a garden, he cried aloud the same words, he heard a voice coming out of the bushes, which said :—

' O king, what dost thou want before thee ?
Daughter, that will fly thee ?
Or son, that will destroy thee ?'

The king was confused at this proposal, and knew not what answer to make, and he bethought him to take counsel with the sages of his court. Returning at once to the palace, and retiring within his apartments, he summoned his counsellors, and when they stood before him, he commanded them to discourse upon this matter. Some answered that honour should be thought more of than life and others that life should be thought more of than honour as an intrinsic matter of real good, whilst honour was but an exterior matter and therefore to be held of less worth ; one said that life being but water which passeth away, it mattered little the expense to lose it ; and thus all things are the columns of life laid upon the unstable wheel of fortune ; but honour being a durable matter, which leaveth the footsteps of fame, and is a signal of glory, must be guarded jealously, and kept with love ; another argued that life, by which the race is preserved, and wealth, by which is maintained the greatness of the house, are to be held dearer than honour, because honour is but an opinion, by reason of virtue, and to lose a

daughter through ill-fortune does not prejudice the father's virtue, nor carry filthiness to the honour of the house; but above all there were some who concluded that honour did not consist in a woman's petticoat, in other way than as a just prince ought to look more readily to the common weal than to his own particular interests; and that a woman given to lewdness would cause but little scorn in the sire's house, whilst a wicked son would set fire to his own house, as well as to the realm. Therefore as the king longed for a child, and to him had been proposed these two divided courses, let him ask for the female, who could not endanger the life and the estate.

This rede pleased the king, and he returned to the garden, and again crying out his complaints as before, and hearing the same voice, he answered, 'Woman, woman. And returning home in the evening, when the sun invites' the hours of the day to take a view of the small ill-made folk of the Antipodes, he lay with his wife, and at the end of nine months she was brought to bed of a beauteous female child. As soon as the child was born, he bade them take her and shut her up in a palace with wet-nurses, and nurses, and good guards, using all possible diligence, so as not to leave for his own part anything undone which could remedy the bad influence under which she was born; and he had her brought up with care, and taught all virtues which sit well in a race of kings. When she had grown up, he treated to marry her to King Pierdisenno, and having concluded the compact, he brought her forth from that palace, which she had never before left, to send her to her husband. But a strong wind arose, and she was lifted up, and swept away, and no more seen. The wind, carrying her in air for a space of time, at last set her down before the house of a ghula, within a forest

which had banished the sun, as one struck down by plague because he had slain Pitone the infected; here she found an old woman, whom the ghula had left to guard her goods, and the old woman said to her, 'Oh! bitter be thy life, and where hast thou set thy foot? O unhappy thou, if the ghula, mistress of this house, should come, I would not pledge thy skin for three coppers, for she feedeth on naught else but human flesh, and my life is sure only because the need of my services detains her, or because this wretched shellful of syncope, heart-disease, flatulency, and sand is declined by her tusks. But knowest thou, what is best to do? here is the key of the house, do thou enter within, set to rights the chambers and clean everything, and when the ghula shall come, hide thyself that she see thee not, and I will not let thee want in food; meanwhile who knows? Heaven helpeth; time may bring to pass great things; enough, be wise and patient, and thou shalt pass every gulf, and overcome the storm.'

Marchetta, thus was the girl hight, making a virtue of necessity, took the key, and entering the chamber of the ghula, and seizing a broom, swept the house so clean that one could have eaten maccaroni from off the flooring; with a piece of lard she rubbed so well the walnut presses and chests, and made them so bright, that one could have looked in them as in a looking-glass; and afterwards she made the bed; and when she heard the ghula come in, she entered a cask, which had been full of corn. The ghula finding such unusual event, was pleased and calling the old woman, said to her, 'Who hath put things in order so well?' and the old woman answered that it had been herself; and rejoined the ghula, 'Whoso doeth for thee whatso he doeth not usually, hath either cheated thee or

will deceive thee. In very sooth thou mayest put the stopper in the hole, seeing that thou hast done a most unusual thing, and therefore thou deservest a fat pottage.' And saying thus, she ate, and after she had taken her sufficiency, she fared forth, and when she returned, she found the beams swept clean of spiders' webs, and the copper utensils made bright and hanging symmetrically upon the walls, and the dirty linen put in soak ; and the ghula was pleased with exceeding pleasure, and she blessed a thousand times the old woman, saying to her, ' May Heaven prosper thee always, Madam Pentatola mine, mayest thou ever reign and go forward, for thou dost fill me with joy, and my heart overjoyeth to behold this fine putting in order, so that I see a house fit for a doll, and a bed fit for a bride.' And the old woman was glad with exceeding gladness to have won the good opinion of the ghula, and repaid Marchetta for her pleasure with good mouthfuls, feeding her and stuffing her like a young capon. And when the ghula fared out again, the old woman said to Marchetta, ' Be silent, and we will try to reach this lame matter and tempt thy fortune ; therefore make something nice with thine own hand, which should suit the ghula's taste, and if she take an oath by the seven celestial matters, believe her not, but if she should swear by her three crowns, then thou mayest come forth and let her see thee, for the matter will succeed, and then thou wilt acknowledge that my rede hath been the rede of a mother.' Marchetta, hearing this, slew a fine fat goose, and from the giblets she made a stew, and then stuffing the goose well with cut-up lard, and onions, and garlic, put it on the spit, and providing a few priest-chokers * on the bottom of a basket, she laid

* Strangola-preti : ' gnocchi,' a kind of home-made macaroni, to be eaten with gravy or butter and cheese.

the cloth upon the table and then filled it full with roses and orange leaves.

Now when the ghula came home and found these preparations, she nearly went out of her clothes with joy, and calling the old woman, said to her, ' Who hath done this good service?' ' Do thou eat,' answered the old woman, ' and do not seek for other ; 'tis enough that thou hast one who serveth thee and giveth thee satisfaction.' The ghula, whilst eating, felt the good morsels going down to the marrows of her bones, and began saying, ' I swear by the three words of Naples, that if I knew who hath been the cook of this good repast, I would give him my eye-balls ;' and she added, ' I swear by the three bows and arrows, that if I knew him, I would enshrine him within my heart ; I swear it by the three candles, which are lit when a deed or a will is written by night ; by the three witnesses, who cause a man to be hanged ; by the three feet of rope that twist the man that is hanged ; by the three things that chase a man from his house, stink, smoke, and a wicked woman ; by the three things which wear out a house, fritters, warm bread, and macaroni ; by the three women and a goose which make up a market ; by the three F's of fried fish, cold fish, and stewed fish ; by the three first singers of Naples, John de la Carrejola, Gossip Junno, and the king of music ; by the three S's which are needful to a lover, solitude, solicitude, and secrecy ; by the three things which are needful to a merchant, credit, spirit, and fair fortune ; by the three sort of folk to whom the whore holds, the boasters, the beauteous youths, and the spiteful ; by the three things most important to the thief, eyes to lighten well, claws to grapple well, and feet to disappear well ; by the three things which are the ruin of youths, gambling, women, and taverns ; by the three

virtues necessary to a bailiff, sight, speed, and success ; by the three things useful to a courtier, deceit, phlegm, and fortune ; by the three things needful to a pimp, large heart, great prattling, and small shame ; by the three things which are observed by a doctor, the pulse, the face, and the night-vase.' But the ghula might have spoken from to-day till to-morrow, for Marchetta would not have moved from her hiding place. But hearing her say at last, 'By my three crowns, if I ever know the industrious good housewife who hath done me such good service, I will do her more caresses and kindnesses than she can imagine,' she came forth, and said, "Here am I ;" and when the ghula beheld her, she answered, 'Thou shouldst give me a kick, for thou hast known more than I ; thou hast done a masterly matter, and hast safely guarded thyself from being baked in this my body ; but as thou hast known to do so much, and hast pleased me, I will keep thee by me as my own daughter ; therefore here are the keys of all the chambers, and be thou mistress, and faculty, and most arbitrary power ; only one thing I reserve for myself, and that is, that on no account must thou open the door of the last chamber, which this key fitteth, because then thou wouldst make the mustard rise to my nose ; therefore mind thy housework, and blessed be thou, and I promise thee by my three crowns to marry thee to a rich mate.' Marchetta kissed her hand, and thanked her gratefully, and promised to serve her more than a slave.

Now when the ghula went forth, great curiosity got hold of Marchetta to see what was within that forbidden chamber, and she opened the door, and found therein three damsels arrayed in golden raiments, seated upon three imperial seats, and seemingly fast asleep. And these damsels were the daughters of the ghula, and had been ensorcelled

by their mother, because it had been foretold them that they should have to pass a great danger if a king's daughter did not come to awaken them ; and therefore she had ensorcelled them and shut them up in that room, to save them from the risk they ran, which was threatened by the stars. Now when Marchetta entered therein, the noise she made with her feet roused them, and they awoke and asked for food, and Marchetta took three eggs for each, and laid them to cook under the ashes, and when they were done she gave them each three, and they ate, and their spirit returned to them. Then they wished to go forth and breathe the fresh air, and they entered the saloon. But when the ghula came back and found them there, she was so much distressed and wroth, that raising her hand she dealt Marchetta a buffet, and the damsel felt such shame for such treatment, that there and then she begged leave of the ghula to depart, and to go forth a wanderer through the world, seeking her fate and fortune. So the ghula sought to pacify her with kind words and kinder deeds, saying that she was but trifling, and that she would not touch her again ; but all was in vain, she could not be persuaded to stay ; and therefore the ghula was obliged to allow her to depart, but before leaving, she gave her a ring, and told her to wear it always but to turn the stone, which was set in it, within the hand, and think of it only when she found herself in some great strait, and heard her name repeated by the echo ; moreover she gifted her with a sumptuous suit of man's clothes that Marchetta had asked of her ; and arraying herself in it, the damsel fared forth, and she wended onwards till she came to a forest, where the night was going to gather wood to warm herself from the frozen time past ; and there Marchetta met a king who had

gone an-hunting, and he, seeing this handsome youth (for thus she seemed), enquired whence he came, and whither he was going, and what he was doing in those parts; and she answered that she was a merchant's son, whose mother had died, and that, because of his step-mother's ill-treatment, he had run away from home. The king was pleased with the readiness and fluency of speech of Marchetta, and took her with him as page, and he led her to his palace, and when the queen sighted him, she felt taken by the grace and beauty of the stranger, and all her desires were sent high in air. And although for a few days, partly from fear and partly from pride, which have always been encased with beauty, the queen sought to subdue her flame and to constrain the pricking of love under the tail of desire; nathless, being short in the heels, she could not stand firm against the meetings of the unbridled and licentious desires; and therefore she called Marchetta aside, one day of the days, and began to discover to her all her suffering and longing; and to tell her what a weight of care and care she bare upon her since the day that she had beholden his beauty, grace, and comeliness; so that if he would not resolve to give water to the grounds of her desires, she would dry up without any other hope of life. And she praised the manifold beauties of his face, putting before his eyes that ill would it suit a scholar in the school of love to make a daub and a mistake of cruelty within a book of so much grace, and that he would afterwards have the horse* of

* In the Neapolitan schools the 'horse' means that when a boy is disobedient or fails to do his lessons, the teacher calls two of the elder boys and the culprit out, and then one of the boys makes the culprit get upon his shoulders, horse guise, but with his face lying upon the shoulders and his behind up, and the other boy canes him well till the teacher bids him stop; and this is called a 'horse.'

repentance; to the praise she added prayers, beseeching him by all the celestial spheres not to be so hardened as to behold within a furnace of sighs, and amid a mire of tears, one who held as ensign at the shop of her thoughts his beauteous vision; thereafter followed offers, promising him for every finger's depth of enjoyment a foot of benefits, and for ever to keep open for him the bazaar of her gratitude to every pleasure of so fine account. At last she bade him remember that she was a queen, and when she had entered the ship he must not leave her amid the gulf without some help, because she would surely wreck upon the rocks with his damage. Marchetta, hearing these tender and loving words, these promises and threats, these face-washings and takings-off of hoods, would have answered, that to open the door of her pleasures and joys the key was wanting; she would have revealed that to give her the peace she desired she was not Mercury, and she carried not his caduceus; but not wishing to unmask herself she answered that she could not believe that the queen would have wrought crooked spindles to a king of such great merit, like unto her husband; but even if she was ready to put aside the reputation of her house, she could not and would not do this wrong to a master that loved his page so well.

The queen, hearing this first reply to the intimation of her desires, said to her, 'Now without delay walk straight, and think well that my peers, when they beseech, then they command, and when they kneel, then they kick thee down the throat; therefore do thou make well thine accounts, and see how may succeed for thee this merchandise; enough and sufficient, as I will tell thee clearly one thing more, and then I will depart, and 'tis this, that when a woman of my degree remaineth scorned, she taketh care to

wash with the blood of the offender the smear from upon her face.' And thus saying, with a wrathful face, she turned her shoulders, leaving poor Marchetta confused and frozen. But for a few days more the queen continued to assault this beautiful fortress, and seeing at last that her work was useless, and was scattered to the winds, and that she sweated in vain, and cast her words to the wind, and the sighs in emptiness, she changed her register, dissolving love in hatred, and the desire to joy with the beloved object in a desire for revenge. And with this thought, feigning the tears filling the eyes, she fared to her husband, and said to him, 'Who would have told us, O my husband, that we should cherish a serpent in our sleeve? Who could ever have imagined it, that a little, wretched, idle bit of goods could have such daring? But the fault lies in all the kindness and caresses which thou hast dealt to him; to the peasant if one holds out a finger, he will take all the hand; in conclusion, we all desire to piddle in the urinal; but, an thou punish him not as he deserveth, I will return to my sire's house, and will never see thee again, nor hear thee named.' 'What has he done to thee?' answered the king; and the queen replied, 'A mere nothing. The little rogue wished to exact from me the matrimonial debt that I have with thee; and without any respect, and with no fear, and shameless, he had the face to come before me, and tongue to seek from me the free pass to the territory, where thou hast sowed in honour.' The king hearing this fact, without seeking any further witnesses, not to prejudice the faith and the authority of his wife, had Marchetta caught and pinioned by the country folk, and there and then, without giving her time for defence, condemned her to see how much the hangman statue could carry around

the neck; and she was carried to the place of punishment, knowing not what had happened to her, nor what crime nor evil deed she had committed, and she began to cry aloud, 'O Heaven, what have I done, to deserve the funeral of this wretched neck, and the obsequies of this miserable body? Who could have told me that, without absenting myself from the place, under the standard of rogues and highwaymen, I should enter on guard in this palace of death, with three paces of rope round my throat? Alas! who will console me at this my extreme pass? who will help me in this great danger? who will save me from this gibbet?' 'Ibbet,' answered Echo, and Marchetta, hearing that she was answered in this manner, remembered the ring which she wore upon her finger, and the words of the ghula when she departed; and glancing at the stone, at which she had never glanced before, behold, a voice was heard three times in the air repeating, 'Let her go, she is a woman'; and it was so terrible that neither policemen, nor soldiers, nor shopkeepers remained in the place of justice; and the king hearing these words, which made the palace tremble from the foundation, bade them bring Marchetta before him; and when she stood in his presence, he bade her tell the truth, and relate who she was, and how she had come in that country. And she, forced by necessity, related to him all that had occurred in her life, how she was born, how she had been kept shut up in that palace, how the wind had carried her away, how she was deposited before the gate of the ghula's house, how she departed and what the ghula had told her, and she related also what had passed between her and the queen, and how, not knowing in what she had erred, she beheld herself in danger to row with her feet in the three-beamed galley. The king, hearing this story, and

comparing it with one that in past times had happened to the King of Valletescosse, his friend, recognised Marchetta for who she was in reality; and knew also the malignity of his wife, who had cast such an infamous calumny upon the innocent; for which matter he commanded that she should directly have a weight tied to her feet, and be cast into the sea; and he sent messengers to invite the sire and the mother of Marchetta, and he took her to wife, which made clear the problem that

‘For a ship in distress
God findeth safe harbour.’

THE TWO CAKES.

SEVENTH DIVERSION

Of the Fourth Day.

Marziella, by showing kindness to an old woman, is endowed with a charm; but her aunt, envious of her good fortune, casteth her into the sea, where she is kept prisoner by a mermaid; she is delivered by her brother, and becometh a queen, and the aunt beareth the punishment due for her error.

SURELY the prince and princess would have said that this story of Antonella won the battle of all those which had been related, if it had not been for disheartening Ciulla, who had already set the lance of her tongue in rest, and entered the ring of Thaddeus' and his wife's pleasure in the manner which followeth:

I have always heard it said that whoso doeth a pleasure himself findeth pleasure; the bell of Manfredonia saith, 'Give me, and I will give to thee'; whoso putteth not the bait of kindness in the hook of affection, will never catch the fish of favour: and if ye will see the truth of this, listen to this story, and after ye will say if the miser does not lose more than the man who is generous.

It is related that once upon a time there lived two sisters, Lucetta and Troccola hight, who had two

daughters, named Marziella and Puccia. Marziella was as charming and beautiful of face as she was beautiful of heart; whilst on the contrary Puccia, by the same rule, had a face of ugliness and an heart of pestilence; and the damsel resembled her parent, for Troccola, her mother, was an harpy within and a bawd without.

Now one day of the days so it fortuneed that Lucetta had a few carrots to warm up in order to fry them with some green sauce, so she said to her daughter, 'Marziella mine, go, my dearling, to the fountain, and bring me a pitcher of water.' 'With good will, O my mother,' answered the daughter, 'but, an thou lovest me, do thou give me a cake, that I may eat it near the fountain, and drink some fresh water after it.' 'Willingly,' said the mother; and from a basket which depended upon a hook from the roof beam she took a fine cake, which she had baked the day before with the bread, and gave it to Marziella, who put the pitcher on a pad upon her head, and fared to the fountain, which, like unto a charlatan, upon a stone or marble bench, to the music of the falling waters, was selling secrets to drown thirst. And whilst her pitcher was filling, up came an old woman, who upon the scaffold of a great hump represented the tragedy of time, and she, beholding the nice cake, which Marziella was just putting to her mouth for a bite, said 'O my beautiful child, may Heaven send thee a good lot and fortune, give me a morsel of that cake.' Marziella, who was in her ways a queen, answered 'Take it all, and eat it, my good woman; and I regret, that it is not made of sugar and almonds, for I would even so give it to thee with all my heart.'

The old woman seeing the loving kindness of Marziella, said to her 'Go, and may Heaven always prosper thee

for this thy goodness which thou hast shown to me, and I pray all the stars that thou mayst be ever happy and content; that when thou breathest, from thy lips may come forth roses and jasmynes; when thou combest thine hair, may ever from thine head drop pearls and garnets; and when thou settest thy foot upon the ground, may there spring up under thy step lilies and violets.' The damsel thanked the old woman for her good wishes, and went her way home, where after the mother had cooked the dinner, and given satisfaction to the natural debt of the body, they spent that day in their usual way. When the next morning came, and at the market of the celestial fields the sun made show of his merchandise of light which he brought from the east, Marziella began to comb her hair, when she saw a rain of pearls and garnets fall around her, whereupon calling her mother, with great joy they put the gems into a large basket, and Lucetta fared forth to a banker friend of hers to sell him some.

In the meanwhile arrived Troccola to visit her sister, and finding Marziella busy gathering those pearls, she asked her how, when, and where she had gotten them? But the damsel, who knew not how to trouble water, and perhaps had not heard that proverb, 'Do not all thou canst do, eat not all thou canst eat, spend not all thou hast to spend, and tell not all thou knowest,' related the whole affair to her aunt, who no longer cared to await for her sister, for the time till she reached home again seemed to her a thousand years. Then giving a cake to her daughter, she sent her to the fountain, where Puccia found the same old woman. And when the old woman begged of her a small piece of cake, the damsel, who was greedy and selfish, answered,

'Have I naught else to do than give the cake to thee? dost thou take me for an ass, that I should give thee whatso belongeth to me? Go thy ways, for our teeth are nearer than our relatives.' And thus saying, she ate up the cake in four mouthfuls, playing for spite of the old woman, who, when she saw the last piece disappear, and her hopes of a bite buried with it, exclaimed with great wrath, 'Go thy ways, and when thou breathest, mayst thou send forth froth, like a doctor's mule; when thou combest thine hair, may the lice fall from thine head in heaps; and wherever thou steppest may there spring forth wild herbs and prickly ferns.'

Puccia took her pitcher, and returned homewards, where her mother impatiently waited for the hour to comb her hair; and putting a fine towel upon her knees, she laid her daughter's head upon it, and began to comb her hair, when, behold, there fell a flood of alchymist animals, which stopped even quicksilver; at the sight of which her mother to the snow of her envy added the fire of her wrath, casting forth flames and smoke from mouth and nostrils.

Now it chanced after a time that the brother of Marziella, Ciommo hight, was at the court of the King of Chiunzo, and the discourse turning on the beauties of several damsels, he stood before the king unasked, and said that all the beauties mentioned and unmentioned could go fare and pick up bones at the bridge, if his sister appeared, for beside the grace, and beauty, and comeliness which were a counterpart of her soul she possessed a great virtue in her hair, in her mouth, and in her feet given to her by a fairy. The king, hearing these praises, told Ciommo to bring his sister before him, and if he found her to be as he had boasted, he would take her to wife. Now Ciommo thought that this was an opportunity too good to be lost;

so he forthwith sent a messenger to his mother, relating to her what had occurred, and beseeching her to come at once, in order ot to let her daughter lose such good fortune. But Lucetta, who was lying ill at the time, recommended the sheep to the wolf, and begged her sister to accompany Marziella to the court of Chiunzo, whereupon Troccola, seeing that the matter fell nicely into her hands, promised her sister to carry Marziella safe and well to the hands of her brother, and embarking on board a ship with Marziella and with Puccia, sailed away. When they were amidmost the main, and the sailors were asleep, Troccola threw Marziella into the sea, and just as she was drowning there came a beautiful mermaid, who held her up by an arm, and carried her away. Such was her case.

Now when Troccola arrived at Chiunzo, Puccia was received by Ciommo, who had not seen his sister for so long a time, and thus could not recognise her, as if she had been Marziella; and instantly he led her before the king. But no sooner did she stand before the king, than he bade the handmaidens to comb her hair, and when they obeyed him, behold there rained a shower of those animals which are such great foes to truth, that they for ever offend their witnesses; and when the king looked at her face, he saw that as she breathed hard from the fatigues of her wayfaring she made quite a lather at her mouth which seemed a boat of soapy clothes; and lowering his glance to the ground, he beheld a field of stinking herbs, the sight of which turned the stomach sick. Thereupon he drove away Puccia and her mother, and to punish Ciommo for his boast, sent him to guard the geese of the court.

And Ciommo was in despair for this business, not knowing what had happened to him; and he followed the geese in the fields, and allowed them to feed as they liked

and to go their way along the shore, whilst he entered a hayloft, and wept, and wailed, and lamented therein his bad lot and fortune. Now whilst the geese ran about the shore, the mermaid and Marziella came forth from the waters, and fed them with sweet pastry, and gave them rose-water to drink, so that the geese after a time grew as large as rams, each one, and they could hardly see out of their eyes, and when at night they came to a small orchard which was under the king's window, they began to sing,

Pire, pire, pire,
 Very beautiful are the sun and the moon,
 But much more beautiful is she who feedeth us.

The king, hearing this goose-music every evening, sent for Ciommo, and asked him the meaning of this song, and where, and how, and of what food he fed his geese. And Ciommo answered, 'I do not let them eat aught but the fresh grass from the fields.' But the king, who did not like the answer, sent a faithful servant behind him, to watch where he drove the geese. Then the man followed his footsteps and saw him enter the hayloft, and leave the geese alone to go their way; and when they arrived at the shore, Marziella came forth from the sea (and I do not believe that so beauteous a being came forth of the waves in the mother of that blind god, who, as a poet said, will take no other alms than tears). The king's servant, beholding this sight, was out of himself with wonder and surprise, and ran to his master, and related to him the wonderful sight he had witnessed upon the sea-shore.

The curiosity of the king was aroused by what the man told him, and a great longing and desire seized him to go himself and behold this enchanting view, so in the morning, when the cock, chief of the bird-folk, awakens them all

to arm the living against the night, Ciommo having gone with the geese to the usual place, the king followed him, never for a moment losing sight of him, and when the geese reached the sea-shore without Ciommo, who had remained in the same place as usual, the king beheld Marziella come forth from the water. And after giving the geese a quantity of pastry to eat, and a kettle full of rose water to drink, she seated herself upon a stone and began to comb her hair, from which fell pearls and garnets in handfuls; and at the same time from her mouth came forth clouds of flowers; and under her feet was formed a Syrian carpet of lilies and violets. When the king beheld this sight, he sent for Ciommo, and showing Marziella to him, said, 'Dost thou know this beauteous damsel?' And Ciommo recognized her, and ran to embrace her, and in the presence of the king she explained the treachery done by Troccola, that hideous pestilent creature, who had caused this beautiful fire of love to inhabit the waters of the sea. The joy felt by the king in having become the owner of such a rare gem is not to be told; and turning to her brother, he said that he had right to praise her, and indeed that he found her two-thirds more beautiful than he had described; he thought her, therefore, the more worthy to become his wife, if she would be content to accept the sceptre of his kingdom.

'Oh, if the sun in Lion would let me,' answered Marziella, 'and I could come and serve thee even as thy slave, and servant of thy crown. But seest thou not this golden chain which holdeth me by the foot, by which I am kept a prisoner by the mermaid; and when I tarry too long to breathe the fresh air, or to sit by the sea-side, she draweth me within the main, keeping me in rich captivity chained with a golden

chain.' 'What remedy can there be,' enquired the king, 'to enable us to withdraw thee from the grasp of this mermaid?' 'The remedy would be,' answered Marziella, 'to file with a soft file this chain, and thus could I make my escape.' 'Expect thou me to-morrow morning,' replied the king, 'and I will come with all the matter ready, and I will lead thee to my house, where thou shalt be my right eye, and the eye-babe of mine heart, and the entrails of my soul.' And thus, plighting their love with a clasping of hands, she withdrew within the main, and he within the fire, into such a fire indeed that he found no rest all that day, and when the murk of night came forth to play and dance Tubba Catubba,* with the stars, he never closed his eyes, but kept ruminating with the jaws of memory the beauty, grace, and comeliness of Marziella, discoursing within his mind of the marvellous hair, of the wonderful mouth, of the astounding feet, and applying the gold of her graces to the touchstone of judgment, he found them of twenty-four carat gold. And he disliked the night for tarrying so long at her embroidery of stars, and cursed the sun for his slowness, which arrived not soon with his coach full of light to enrich his house with the longed-for good; to enable him to carry in his chambers the mint of gold, which casteth pearls, a quail of pearls, which casteth flowers. But as he was lost in a sea of thoughts of the one that lived in the sea, behold, the sappers of the sun straightened the road whereon he should pass with the army of his rays. Then the king arose, and arrayed himself, and with Ciommo wended towards the sea-shore, where they found Marziella, and with the file they had brought the king filed with his own hand the chains from the foot of his beloved; all the

* A Moorish dance, introduced by the Spaniards.

while forging another and a stronger chain within his heart; and at last lifting on his horse's crupper the one who rode upon his heart, he fared towards the royal palace, where Marziella found all the handsomest women of that country assembled to receive her as their mistress by order of the king. And with great joyance, and feasting, and burning of casks for illumination, the king ordered that the person of Troccola should be included amid the fire, so that she should pay for the deceit which she had practised upon Marziella; and sending for Lucetta, he gave her and Ciommo enough to live upon as rich folk; whilst Puccia, sent forth from that kingdom, went about as a beggar; and because she would not sow a small piece of cake had now to suffer a famine of bread, for it is the will of Heaven, that

'Whoso hath no pity, findeth none.'

THE SEVEN PIGEONS.

EIGHTH DIVERSION

Of the Fourth Day.

Seven brothers fare forth from their home, because to their mother was not vouchsafed a daughter; after a time she bringeth one to the world, and the brothers, who were expecting the news, receive the signal; but the midwife maketh a mistake in the signs, by which reason they go forth as wanderers through the earth. The sister groweth up, and goeth to seek them; she findeth them, and after many adventures they return home wealthy.

THE story of the two cakes was truly a full cake which pleased the taste of every one, and they are still licking their fingers of it. Paola having donned the corselet in readiness to relate her story, all tongues were silenced by command of the prince, and thus she began to say:

Whoso doeth a kindness always findeth kindness; and a benefit is the hook with which friendship is drawn, and love is caught; whoso soweth not reapeth not; and as Ciulla hath given you the first-course of examples, I will bring forth to you the dessert, if ye will remember what Caro said, 'Speak but little, when at a banquet.' And therefore be ye kind enough to lend me an ear; and may Heaven lengthen your ears, to enable you to listen to matters satisfactory to your taste.

There was once in the country of Arzano a good woman, who every year brought into the world a man-child, until the number of them had reached seven, and ye beheld in them the siphon of the god Pan with seven tubes, one larger than the other. And when the sons had cast their first ears, they said to Jannetella their mother, who was full with child, 'Know, O our mother, that an thou, after having so many sons, have not a daughter, we have resolved to leave this house, and wander through the world like sons of exile wandering on ruthlessly.' The mother, hearing this their decision, prayed Heaven to drive out of their minds such desire, and to save her from the anguish of losing seven such precious jewels as were her sons. The time drew nigh when she expected to be delivered, and the sons said to Jannetella, 'We will withdraw, and fare to that height which faces us; if thou givest birth to a man-child, put an ink-case and pen upon the window-sill; and an thou givest birth to a female-child, put a spoon and a distaff in the same place; so that if we behold a sign that a female is born to us, we will return home to spend the rest of our lives between thine hands; but an we perceive the sign that a male-child is born to thee, thou mayst forget us, and thou canst name him Pen.' When her sons had departed, the hour came in which, by the will of Heaven, Jannetella was delivered of a beauteous daughter, and she bade the midwife give the signal to the brothers, but the woman was so stupefied and out of her wits, that she put the ink-case upon the window-sill instead of the distaff. As soon as the brothers beheld the sign, they departed in haste, and fared on, and wandered over wilds and wolds until, after journeying three years, one day of the days they

arrived at the opening of a forest, where the trees danced to the music of a rivulet which played its counter-points upon the pebbly shore. Within this forest stood the house of a ghul, whose eyes had been poked out by a woman while he was fast asleep, and therefore he felt a deep hatred for the whole sex, and was their foe, and as many as he could meet or find he made a meal of.

Now when the seven youths arrived at the ghul's house, weary of their journey and an hungered, they besought him if he would in compassion give them a bittock of bread: and the ghul answered them that he would keep them, and give them wherewith to maintain themselves, if they would serve him, and they would have naught else to do but to watch him and tend him each in turn, as if he were a small pet dog. The youths upon hearing this were pleased, for it seemed to them as if they had found mother and father; so they agreed and remained in the ghul's service, who having learned their names by heart, one moment called Gian-grazio, and another Cecchitello, now Pascale, and then Nuccio, this time Pone, and after Pezzillo, and Carcavecchia, for thus were the brothers hight; and appointing for their use part of the ground-floor of his house, and giving them of food and provaunts till they were satisfied, they passed pleasantly their days. Such was their case.

In the meanwhile their sister, having passed a length of years, had grown up, and hearing that she had seven brothers who, by forgetfulness of the midwife, were wandering through the world, and that no news of them had reached their mother's ear, she longed with sore longing to fare on to seek them; and she prayed, and besought, and supplicated her mother, and said and did many things to her, that at last, being tired of listening

to her lamentations, she gave her leave to depart, making her don the attire of a pilgrim. Then the maiden fared on her journey, enquiring from place to place whoso had seen seven brothers pass that way, and she wandered through many countries, and cities, and villages, till at last, coming to a tavern, she heard some news of them. And bidding the folk show her the way to that forest, where one morning the sun with the pen-knife of his rays was scraping away the mistakes made by the night upon the paper of heaven, she found herself in that place, where with great joy she was recognized by the brothers, who cursed that ink-case and that pen for writing falsely so many misfortunes for them. Loading her with caresses, they warned her to remain hidden within that chamber, so that the ghul might not scent her; bidding her besides, that whatsoever dainty or any other food should be brought to her, she should give a share of it to a cat, which was within the chamber, otherwise the animal would do her some harm. Cianna, thus was the sister hight, wrote these redes in the writing-book of the heart, and of everything she had she shared in good fellowship with the cat, making share and share alike, saying, 'This for me, this for thee, and this for the daughter of the king,' giving the cat her equal share, even to a caraway-seed and small fennel.

Now it so fortun'd that one day of the days the brothers had gone forth to chase and hunt in the service of the ghul, and they left their sister a small basket full of beans that she might cook them, and while she was picking and cleansing them she found, unfortunately for her, amongst them a hazel-nut, which became the stone of scandal whereupon her peace was shattered, because on

seeing it she cracked it, and putting the kernel in her mouth, ate it without giving the cat her share, and that brute in spite went and piddled upon the fire, thus putting it out. Cianna, perceiving this, and knowing not what to do, fared forth from the chamber against the commands of her brothers, and entered the ghul's apartment to seek somewhat to light the fire. The ghul, hearing a woman's voice, said, 'Well come, and fair welcome, my master, wait a while and thou shalt find the thing thou art looking for.' And so speaking, he seized a genoa stone, and anointing it well with oil, he fell to sharpening his tusks upon it. And Cianna perceiving which way the cart would drive, caught hold of a fire-brand, and ran back to her own chamber, and shutting the door, pushed behind it bars, chairs, tables, chests, and bedsteads, and everything that the chamber contained.

As soon as the ghul had ended sharpening his tusks, he ran to the chamber, and finding the door fastened, began to kick and beat at it, trying to break it down. And while this turmoil was taking place, the seven brothers returned, and the ghul hearing them began to reproach them as traitors, seeing that their chamber had become the asylum of his foes; but Giangrazio, the elder brother, who had more sense than the others, seeing the matter taking a bad course, said to the ghul, 'We know naught of this, and it might be that this accursed woman did enter this chamber while we had gone forth to the chase; but as she hath entrenched herself within, come with us, and we will lead thee by a way whence we will fall upon her, and she will be unable to defend herself.' And hending the ghul by hand, they led him to a deep pit, and giving him a push they made him fall within it; and picking up a mattock, which they found lying on the

ground, they filled up the pit with earth. Then they bade the sister to open the door, and reproached her severely for her error, and for the danger in which she had fallen, saying that for the future she should be careful, and beware of gathering the grass from around the place where the ghul was buried, because if she did so, they would become pigeons. 'Heaven guard me of this,' answered Cianna, 'and that I should cause you such damage and foul wrong.' After this they took possession of the ghul's goods, and of all which the house contained, and so they spent their days in enjoyment, awaiting until the winter should be past, when the sun would offer in gift to the earth for having taken possession of the Bull's house, a green skirt, purflewed with many coloured flowers; then they would fare on their journey homewards.

Now one day of the days it so fortunated that the brothers had gone forth to the mountain side to gather some wood, wherewith to make a fire to shield themselves from the cold, which became greater from day to day, when there arrived in those wilds a pilgrim who, in his way, had beheld a monkey sitting upon a tree, and he had made mock at him, and the beast had cast a nut upon the pilgrim's head, which had caused it to swell in a large bump, and the wretched man was in great pain, and cried with loud cries, like unto a damned soul. Cianna hearing those cries came forth, and her heart softened with pity at his suffering, and she ran at once to gather some rosemary which had grown on the top of the ghul's grave, and with bread-crumbs and salt made up a poultice which she applied to the wound; then she got ready some food, and gave him his breakfast, and he departed. Now when

Cianna was preparing the midday meal, and laying the cloth, awaiting for her brothers, behold, seven pigeons flew upon the table, and they said to her, 'O thou the cause of all our woe, it would have been far better if thine hands had been palsied, than that thou hadst gone to gather that cursed rosemary, which causeth us to wander restlessly by the shore. Hast thou eaten cat's brains, O our sister, that thou hast not called to mind our rede to thee? Behold, we have become birds, subjected to the claws of the eagle, the hawk, and the vulture; behold, we have become the companions of sea-gulls, bull-finches, screech-owls, gold-finches, magpies, crows, white-tails, wild cocks and wild fowls, chaffinches, larks, sparrows, swallows, turtle-doves, fly-catchers, robins, blackhoods, red-breasts, blackbirds, nightingales, and thrushes. Thou hast done a good deed; we have now gone back to our country, so that we may behold nets and bird-lime spread for us; to heal the head of a pilgrim unknown thou hast broken the head of thy seven brothers, and there is no remedy to our evil if thou findest not the mother of Time, who will teach thee the way by which to pull us out from this dire sorrow.'

Cianna turned towards her brothers like a plucked quail, and besought them to forgive her for the error she had committed, and promised to wander through the world until she found the dwelling of the old woman. And begging them not to stir from home till she returned, for fear that some misfortune should happen to them, she fared forth, and wandered on her journey without ever tiring; and although she fared on foot, the desire to help her brothers served to push her on like a racing mule, faring at the rate of three miles an hour. And she never ceased faring until one day of the days she reached the shore, where the

sea with its waves beat the rocks because they answered not to the Latin it had taught them, and there she beheld a large whale, who spake to her thus, 'O beauteous young lady, what mayest thou be doing?' and she, 'I am seeking for the house of the mother of Time.' 'Dost thou know what is best for thee to do?' replied the whale. 'Fare thou ever in a straight direction along this shore, and the first river thou reachest, walk thou on the heights above it, and there thou shalt find one who will lead thee on thy way; but when thou shalt meet this good old woman, do me a kindness, ask her a boon in my name, and that is, that she should devise me a device, and find me a remedy, so that I may tread securely in my way, and not alway get caught amongst rocks and buried in sand.' 'Let this body do thy bidding,' said Cianna, and thanking her for her kindness in showing her the way, she fared onwards along the shore, and after journeying for a length of time, she arrived at that river side, which, like a fiscal's commissary, disbursed silvern monies in the bank of the sea. She made her way to the heights, and reached a beautiful meadow, which aped the heavens, in showing its green mantle purflewed with starry flowers, and there she was met by a mouse, who said to her, 'Where art thou going thus, alone, O beauteous damsel?' and she replied, 'I seek the mother of Time.' 'Thou must fare yet a long way,' rejoined the mouse, 'but do not be disheartened; every matter hath an ending; do thou fare on towards those mountains, which, like the owners and lords of these fields, entitle themselves highnesses, and there thou shalt find better news of that which thou seekest; but do thou oblige me with a favour: when thou shalt reach the house thou art looking for, do thou ask of this good old woman what remedy we could

use to deliver ourselves from the tyranny of the cats, and after do thou ever command me, and I shall be thy slave.' Cianna, after promising to do his bidding and farewelling him, fared on towards the mountains, which, although they appeared near, seemed never to be reached. But having at length come to the end of her journey, and being excessively fatigued, she sat upon a stone; and whilst thus sitting, she beheld an army of ants, which were carrying their corn provisions into their granaries; and one of them, perceiving Cianna, said, 'Who art thou, and whither art thou going?' and Cianna who was kind to all, answered, 'I am a most unfortunate damsel that, for a matter which concerneth me much, have wandered through wilds and wolds, seeking the house of the mother of Time.' 'Fare on,' answered the ant, 'and in one of the outlets of those mountains thou shalt perceive a wide space, and there thou wilt hear some more news; but do me a great kindness, try to find out from this old woman what we ants should do to live some time longer, because it seems to me a great madness of the earthly matters to work and toil so much, to gather together such a quantity of provant for a life so short, which, like a magician's candle, when at the best offer of years, goes out.' 'Be at rest,' said Cianna, 'and I will return thee thy courtesy.' Then she fared on and passed those mountains, and arrived at the wide plain, and she wayfared for a time until she sighted a large mulberry-tree, a witness of antiquity, sweetmeats of that bride who found happiness, and mouthfuls given by the time, in this bitter age of all lost sweetness; and he, forming lips of the bark and tongue of the sap, said to Cianna, 'Whither, oh whither, art thou hurrying, O my daughter? Come and rest under my shadow;' and she thanked him, but excused

herself from staying, because she hurried to find the mother of Time. And when the mulberry-tree heard her words, he answered, 'Thou art not far from her, and thou shalt not fare more than a day's journey, when thou shalt sight a house on a mountain-top where thou shalt find what thou seekest; but an thou art as kind as thou art beauteous, try to learn for me what I could do to gain back my lost honour; as from the post of a great man I am become food for pigs.' 'Leave the thought of it to me,' answered she, 'and I will see how best to serve thee;' and she journeyed on, and taking no rest, ceased not faring till she reached the foot of the mountain, spoiler of rejoicing, which with its head annoyed the clouds, and there she found an old man, who had cast himself upon some hay, for great weariness. When he looked upon Cianna, he knew her at once for the damsel who had poulticed the bump on his head, and on hearing whom she sought, he said to her, that he was taking the rent to Time for the letting of the ground which he had sown, and that Time was a tyrant who had usurped all the goods of the world, and exacted a tribute from all, but particularly from a man of his age, and as he had received a benefit from the hands of Cianna, he would return it to her an hundred-fold, giving her good rede on her coming to this mountain, where he could not accompany her, because his age condemned him to descend, and not to ascend, and obliged him to remain at the foot of those mountains to settle accounts with the clerks of Time for the labours and travails, the disgusts, and grievances, and infirmities of life, and to pay the debt to nature.

And thereupon he continued, 'Now, O my beauteous daughter, do thou hearken well to my say. Thou must know that on the top of that mountain thou shalt find

an old broken-down house, which remembereth not the days when it was built; the walls are cracked, the foundations are rotten, the doors are worm-eaten, the furniture ancient, and everything therein is timeworn, and consumed, and destroyed; here thou shalt see broken columns, there broken statues, nothing being entirely whole, but only the coat of arms upon the gate, where thou shalt behold a snake biting its tail, a stag, a crow, and a phoenix; and when thou shalt enter within, thou shalt perceive lying about the floor soft files, saws, scythes, and mattocks, and hundreds on hundreds of kettles full of ashes, and thereupon labels as on chemists' jars, with names written upon them, where one can read the names of Corinth, Troy, Carthage, and a thousand other cities which have turned sour; and these are kept in remembrance of their grandeur, magnificence, and enterprise. Now when thou art near this house, hide thyself till Time goes forth, and when he is gone, do thou enter within, and there thou shalt find a very old, old woman, with a long, a very long, beard reaching the ground, and with an hump which reacheth to the heavens, and hair to her heels like the tail of a horse; the face is like unto curly greens, for furrows and lines, with the wrinkles of many long ages; and she is always sitting upon a clock which hangeth on the wall; and because of her eyelashes, which are so long, she will be unable to see thee. When thou enterest, at once withdraw the weights from the clock, and after this is done call the old woman, and beseech her to give thee satisfaction in that which thou desirest; and she will cry a loud cry, and call her son, and bid him eat thee; but because the weights are wanting to the clock upon which sitteth his mother, he will be unable to walk, and therefore she will be obliged to give thee whatso thou

wantest. But believe not any oath that she may swear to thee, unless she nameth and sweareth by her son's wings; then mayest thou believe her, and do thou whatsoever she biddeth thee, for thou shalt be satisfied.' And so saying the poor man fell in a heap quite undone, and like unto a dead body, enclosed in the tomb, when the light and air fall upon it, crumbled into dust. Cianna gathered up those ashes, and shedding a small measure of tears upon them, delved a pit, and buried them within it, and prayed upon them to Heaven to give peace and rest unto them.

Then she fared up the mountain, and the way wearied her exceedingly, and when she came to the house, she waited till Time went forth, and he was a very old man, with a very long beard, and he wore a very old mantle covered with small cards, upon which were inscribed the names of numberless people; he had large wings, and ran so swiftly that he was soon lost to sight. Cianna thereupon entered the house of the mother, and smiled in beholding that wretched being; and snatching off at once the weights from the clock, related to the old woman what she desired, and the old woman cried with a loud cry, and called her son, but Cianna said to her, 'Thou mayest knock thy head against the wall, for thou shalt certainly not see thy son, while I hold these weights within mine hands'; and the old woman, perceiving that her way was stopped, began to coax her and flatter her, saying, 'Let them go, O my love, do not hinder my son in his race, a thing which no man living in the world ever did; let them go, and may God guard thee. I promise thee and swear to thee by the strong water with which my son destroyeth all things, that I will do thee no harm'; 'Thou art losing time,' answered Cianna, 'far better say, if 'tis thy desire that I let them go.' 'I swear to thee, by those

teeth that gnaw all mortal things, that I will tell thee all that which thou desirest to know.' 'Thou wilt do naught of it,' replied Cianna, 'and I wot well thou mockest me and deceivest me;' and the old woman, 'Now I will speak to sooth, I swear to thee by those wings which fly everywhere, that I will give thee more pleasure than thou canst imagine;' and Cianna, hearing this, let go the weights, and kissed the hand of the old woman, which smelt strongly of mildew and mustiness, and she, beholding the good behaviour of the damsel, said, 'Hide thyself behind that door, and when Time cometh, I will enquire of him whatso thou desirest to know. And when he goeth forth once more, because he never remaineth long in one place, thou mayest wend thy ways; but do not let him see thee or hear thee, because he is a great glutton, and eateth even his own children, and if all fails, he eateth even himself, and after springeth up again.'

Cianna did as the old woman bade her; and behold, Time appeared, tall and light, and he gnawed all that came to his hand, even to the plaster on the walls, and when he was ready to depart, his mother told him everything she had heard from Cianna, and besought him by the milk he had sucked from her to answer and tell her clearly of each thing she asked; and the son, after a thousand prayers, answered, 'Let it be told to the tree, that he will never be dear to the folk, whilst he holds treasures buried under his roots. And to the mice, that they will never be safe from the cat, unless they tie her a little bell on the leg, to hear when she is coming. And to the ants, that they will live an hundred years if they can do without flying, because when the ant desireth to die she groweth wings. And to the whale, that she should be cheerful and friendly with the sea-mouse, and he will guide her, and she will never

go astray again. And to the pigeons, that when they fly and rest upon the column of riches, they will return to their pristine forms.' And having ended his say, Time began to run his usual race, and Cianna, taking leave of the old woman, came down the mountain, at the same time that the seven pigeons, following her footsteps, had reached their sister, and being very tired of flying for so long, they rested upon the horns of a dead ox. But no sooner had their feet rested thereon, than they became beauteous youths, as erst they were, and wondering with exceeding wonder for this marvellous deed, they understood and comprehended, that the horn, being a symbol of the cornucopia, was the column of riches mentioned by Time, and joying with exceeding joyance with their sister, they fared onwards behind Cianna by the same road they came. And after a time they came to the mulberry-tree, and relating to it what they had heard from Time, the tree besought them to withdraw from beneath it the treasure that was the cause of his fruit's dishonour: and the seven brothers found a mattock amid an orchard, and they dug so deep, until they found a large vase full of golden coins, and they divided it in eight parts between them and their sister, so that they could carry it with them with more easiness. But being very tired of their journey, and of the weight they carried, they lay themselves down near a hedge, and a company of marauders came to that place, and seeing the wretched brothers and sister sleeping with their heads upon the money parcels, they bound them hand and foot to some trees, and taking the gold from them, went their ways; leaving them weeping sorely and lamenting not only the loss of their wealth, but the danger to their lives, that without hope of help were

threatened by death from hunger, or else to satisfy the hunger of some wild beast.

Whilst they thus bemoaned their fate, arrived before them the mouse, who after hearing the message they had brought from Time, in gratitude for the service they had rendered him gnawed all the ropes which bound them, and gave them their freedom. And they fared on, and after wending for some length of time they met the ant, and when she heard Time's advice, sighting Cianna, who stood sad and silent, whilst her colour had faded and yellowed, she asked her the cause, and the damsel related to her what had passed between them and the thieves; and the ant answered her, 'Be silent, I think I have in my hands the means by which thou mayest be quits with them, and thus enable me to show thee my gratitude for the service received; thou must know that whilst I was carrying a load of provant to my granary underground, I sighted a place wherein these dogs and assassins had hidden their hoards; and they have made under an old building some cavities where they put out of sight the stolen goods, and now that they have gone forth to another expedition of plunder and foray, I will lead thee to the place, so that ye may recover all that ye have lost.' And thus saying she wended on, and led the seven brothers to some old broken-down houses, where she pointed out to them a pit, and Giangrazio, being the bravest of them, went down into it, and therein he found the monies which had been taken from them, and calling his brothers, they took them, and farewelling and thanking the ant, went their ways. And they fared on towards the shore where they were met by the whale, to whom they related the good rede given

for her by Time, who is the father of redes, and whilst they were conversing together, the brothers relating to her their adventures, behold, the marauders, who had followed in the wake of their footsteps, appeared armed to the teeth; and when the brothers sighted them, they cried, 'Alas! this is the time that not even a fragment will be left of us, because now the thieves are coming with armed hand, and they will flay us alive.' 'Be not afraid, and doubt not,' said the whale, 'I am able to save you from the fire, besides I desire to give back to you, the good deed of love that ye rendered me, and therefore mount ye upon my back, and I will immediately carry you to a secure place.' The unhappy youths, who beheld the foe at the back and the waters in front, mounted upon the back of the whale, who, distancing the rocks, carried them in sight of Naples, where, not trusting to disembark the youths where the sea was rough, she enquired of them, 'Where wish ye that I should leave you, on the coast of Amalfi?' and Giangrazio answered, 'See if thou canst do without it, O my beauteous fish, because in no place can I disembark content, because of Massa 'tis said "salute it, and pass on"; of Sorrento, "tighten thy teeth"; of Vico, "carry all with thee," and of Castellamare, "neither friend nor gossip."' And the whale, to please the brothers and sister, turned her back, and swam towards the Salt Rock, where she left them, and they hailed the first fishing smack that passed, and bade the fishermen set them ashore, and returning to their country healthy, beautiful, and rich, thus consoling their mother and father, they joyed a happy life through Cianna's goodness, which showed the truth of that ancient say,—

'Always, when thou mayest, do good and forget it.'

THE CROW.

NINTH DIVERSION

Of the Fourth Day.

Jennariello, desiring to please his brother Milluccio, King of Fratta-ombrosa, goeth for a long journey, and bringeth back what his brother longed for, to save him from death. Upon his return, Jennariello is condemned to death; and desirous to prove his innocence, becometh by a strange adventure a marble statue; at length he returneth to his pristine shape, and endeth his days in happiness.

IF I had an hundred throats of cane, and a bronze breast, and a thousand steel tongues, I should fail to explain how much the story of Paola entertained the hearers; they were pleased that none of the good deeds remained unrewarded; and the dose of prayers had to be doubled to persuade Ciommetella to relate her story, since she felt almost unable to draw the cart at the prince's command; but as she could do naught but obey, so as not to spoil the game, she began as follows:

It is a truly great proverb which saith, 'We see wrongly, but we judge rightly;' but it is a saying difficult to make use of, because few men in their judgment hit the nail on the head; rather is it within the sea of human matters, that most are fishermen of sweet waters who catch crabs; and whoso thinketh of taking, the just measure is surest to be mistaken; for which

reason it ensueth that all run in the dark, and work blindly, and think in a way to choke themselves, and act foolishly, and judge unwisely, and most times, by an ill decision, resolve to do some foolish act, and thus they purchase for themselves an everlasting repentance of good sense: as it happened to the King of Fratta-ombrosa, whose adventures you will know, if within the wheel of modesty ye will call me with the bell of courtesy, to give me a kindly hearing.

Now it is related that there lived a king of Fratta-ombrosa, Milluccio hight, who loved hunting so much, that he would leave the matters of the state and the most necessary things of his house undone to run after the trail of a hare or the flight of a wild fowl; and he followed this way so oft, that one day of the days fate and fortune led him in a forest, where was formed a thick squadron of the trees, which the sun's horses were unable to break. Here, upon a marble slab, he found a crow that had just been killed; and the king, beholding the blood so vividly with its bright red upon the white marble slab, fetching a deep sigh, cried, 'O heavens grant me that I might have a wife so white and red like unto that marble slab, and with hair and eyebrows as black as the feathers of this crow?' and he fell so deeply in this thought, and compared the two similes so much, that it seemed as if a marble statue was making love to another piece of marble. Having thrust this wretched caprice within his brains, and sought it with the longing of desire, in four pinches it grew from a toothpick to a bar, from a bow to an Indian vegetable marrow, from a barber's small fire-place to a glass-worker's furnace, and from a pigmy to a giant, so that he thought of naught else but the image of that thing

which he had instilled in his mind and engraved in his heart, like stone to stone. Wherever his eyes turned, that form which he held within his breast stood before him, and forgetting every other matter, he thought and dreamt of naught but that piece of marble; so that his colour yellowed, and his figure lost its roundness, and he was fading slowly away; for this stone was a mill-stone which ground away his life; a gun which fired the match of his soul; a calamity which drew him to his end; a load-stone which firmly attracted him to itself; and lastly a stone which could never be set at rest.

His brother, Jennariello hight, seeing him fade slowly away, said to him, 'O my brother, what is the matter with thee, and what has taken thee that thou carriest grief in thine eyes, and the signs of despair in thy face? What has happened to thee? Speak, confide in thy brother; the stink of burning coals closed within a chamber killeth folk; powder mined under a mountain scattereth the pieces up in air; the itch closed within the veins putrieth the blood; the fart kept within the body engenders wind and colic; therefore open that mouth, and tell me what is the matter with thee; and at last thou mayst be certain, that where I may and can, I will lay a thousand lives down to serve thee.' And Milluccio in half broken words and sighs thanked him for his affection, saying that he doubted not of his love, but that his sickness was without remedy, because it was born from a stone, where he had sowed his desires without hope of plucking any fruit; from a stone, whence he never thought to gather even a mushroom of happiness; a stone of Sisyphus, which carried to the mountain all his designs, and when it had reached the top rolled down again. At last after many sayings, he

related to him all which passed of his love. Jennariello, hearing this matter, consoled him the best way he could, and bade him be of good cheer, and not to give way to a melancholy love, for he would wander over the world till he found a woman who would be the original of that stone. Then commanding that a large vessel should be loaded with merchandise, and disguising himself in the attire of a merchant, the prince sailed towards Venice, the mirror of Italy, the receptacle of books of worth, the city greatest in marvels of art and nature; where getting himself a pass for the East, he sailed towards Cairo, and entering the city, he beheld a man carrying a falcon. And he bought it so as to carry it to his brother, who was so fond of hawking and hunting; and wandering on about the city, he met another man selling a handsome steed, and he purchased that also; but feeling tired, he entered a caravanserai, therein to rest from the troubles and travails of the sea.

Now the next morning, when the army of stars, by the order of the general of light, lifted up the tents from the palisado of heavens, and abandoned the place, Jennariello arose, and fared forth to gaze and wander about the city, looking around him like a lynx in quest of the damsel he sought, and he gazed first at one woman, and then at the other, seeking a damsel like unto the stone; and whilst he kept journeying from place to place, here and there, turning and glaring at all sides, like a thief pursued by bailiffs, and fearing the detectives; at last he was met by a beggar, who was covered with an hospital of plasters and a jew's rag-shop of rags; and he said to him, 'O my lord, what is the matter with thee, that I see thee so affrighted?' 'Must I tell thee my business?'

answered the prince. 'Yes indeed, so would I knead my bread; and tell my reasons to the bailiffs?' 'Softly, O my handsome youth,' replied the beggar, 'the flesh of man is not sold by weight; if Darius had not related to his stable groom his disasters and vexations, he would never have become the master of Persia; therefore it would not be great matter, an thou wouldst relate to a poor beggar all thy trouble, as there is ever found a small piece of wood which may be used as a toothpick.' Jennariello, hearing the beggar speaking with so much sense, told him the cause which had brought him to that country, and the beggar, having heard him to the end, answered him, 'Now thou shalt perceive, O my son, how we must consider and keep in good account every one; that although I am but dirt, yet will I be able to manure the orchard of thine hopes. Now, lend me thine ear with great attention, and I, with the excuse of seeking alms, will rap at the door of a house where dwelleth a damsel, daughter of a magician; open well thine eyes, look at her well, consider her, contemplate her countenance, measure her and take particular notice of her, and thou shalt find the image of the one so much longed for by thy brother.' And thus saying, he went and rapped at the door of a house not very far off; and hearing the rap, the damsel, Liviella hight, looked out of the balcony, and threw a piece of bread to the beggar; and when the prince beheld her, it seemed to him that she was the very model of what King Milluccio desired; and giving a largesse to the beggar, he thanked and farewelled him. Then he returned to his caravanserai, where he donned a disguise, and taking two small boxes, he filled them with all kinds of laces, pins, gems, and jewels, and returning under the damsel's windows, he cried out

his ware again and again, until at last Liviella heard him, and called him, to have sight of the fine nets, laces, ribbons, pocket-handkerchiefs, pins, rings and earrings, and at last she bade him to show her something better, and he answered, 'O my lady, in these cases I only carry some trifles and things of little worth, but an thou wouldst deign to come to my vessel, I would show thee somewhat of great worth in this world; as I have treasures of fine things, and worthy only to be worn by great lords and ladies.' Liviella, who was not wanting in curiosity (not to go against women's nature), said, 'By my faith, if my sire had not been out, I would have come to see them.' 'So much the better,' replied Jennariello, 'couldst thou come; because if he had been at home, perhaps he would not have let thee come and take thy pleasure; and I promise to let thee behold sumptuous stuffs, and jewels rare, and necklaces, and earrings, and bodices purflewed with gems and gold, and lace of great worth; in fact I desire that thou shouldst be struck with wonder.' Liviella, hearing of these wonders, called one of her gossips, and asked her to accompany her to the vessel, and they both went forth with Jennariello, and fared to the ship's sides, and mounted thereon, and the prince kept her marvelling and wondering over the sumptuous stuffs and wondrous gems, fit only for kings; and he dexterously signed to the captain to weigh the anchor and make sail, and before Liviella lifted her eyes from the goods, and perceived that they had sailed and distanced the land, they had gone a few miles; and when she discovered the deceit, she did the reverse of what did Olympia, because if the latter wept and lamented at being left upon the rocks, Liviella wept because she was carried

from the rocks. But Jennariello related to her who he was, and where he was leading her, and the good fortune that was to be hers, and he drew in vivid lines the beauty of King Milluccio, and his valour, and his many virtues, and lastly the fond love with which he would receive her, and he did and said so much that she ceased her weeping and lamenting, and prayed the winds to send the vessel quickly to her goal, so that she might gaze upon the painting which the prince had painted with such lively colours.

And thus they sailed cheerfully on, until one day of the days they felt the waves under the vessel become troubled, and although the ship's master spake in whispers, for he was a man of great intelligence, every man cried out, 'Be on guard, because now we will have a storm, and may God watch over us.' At these words there bare witness a strong gust of wind; and behold, the sky was suddenly covered with clouds, and the sea-pigs came forth upon the sea. And the waves, curious to know the business of other folk, having not been invited to the bridal, would yet spring upon the vessel's deck. Some of the sailors were working at the pumps, and others were casting the water into the sea in tubs; and whilst all hands were at work, one man at the wheel, another at the sails, because each worked in his own cause, Jennariello mounted the mizzen-top-sail with a very powerful spy-glass, so as to discover if any land was near where they could shelter.

Now whilst he was engaged measuring the distance of an hundred miles with a pipe two feet long, he beheld two pigeons, male and female, who rested upon the mizzen-mast, and the male said, 'Rucche, rucche;' and the female inquired, 'What is the matter, O mine

husband, and why art thou lamenting?' and the male answered, 'This unhappy prince hath bought a falcon, which will no sooner be in his brother's hands than he will pluck out his eyes; and whoso will not bring the bird to him, or will warn him of the evil, will become a marble statue.' And after saying this say the bird rested a short time, and then again cried, 'Rucche, rucche;' and his mate said to him, 'And yet art thou lamenting! is there somewhat else new?' and the pigeon answered, 'There is something else, the prince hath bought also a steed, and the first time his brother shall ride him, he will break his neck, and whoso shall not lead him to him, or shall warn him of the danger, will become a marble statue.' And the bird rested again, and then cried, 'Rucche, rucche.' 'Alas! why so many times rucche, rucche?' rejoined the female pigeon. 'What other misfortune is in the way?' And the male answered, 'The prince is leading a fair bride to his brother, but the first night that they lie together, both the one and the other will be eaten by an hideous dragon; but whoso shall not lead her to him, or shall warn him of the danger, will become a marble statue;' and when the pigeon ended his say, he and his mate flew away, and the tempest ceased to sway, and the sea calmed down, and the wind fell from wrath. But a wilder storm arose in Jennariello's breast, from the words he had heard from the bird, and more than four times he was on the point of casting into the sea the cause of the forthcoming ruin of his brother. But he was restrained by thoughts of himself, and the first cause was that he feared in himself that if he brought not to his brother these things, or if he warned him of danger, he would become a marble statue; therefore he resolved to look

rather at his own than at his brother's weal, because the shirt was tighter upon him than the gaberdine.

When they reached Fratta-ombrosa, he found his brother on the shore, as he had been apprized of the arrival of the vessel, and the king awaited for the coming ashore of Jennariello with great joy. And when he met him, and beheld with him the one being whose image was engraved within his heart, and confronted the one face with the other, and perceived that not the difference of an hair was to be seen between the twain, his happiness knew no bounds, and he was nearly dying with the fulness of joyance; and embracing his brother, said to him, 'What falcon is this which thou hendeest in hand?' and Jennariello replied, 'I bought it for thee.' And Milluccio said, 'It can well be seen that thou lovest me, because thou soughtest to please me; and surely an thou hadst brought me a treasure, thou couldst not have pleased me more than with the gift of this falcon;' and he stretched forth his hand to seize it, when Jennariello ready with a knife which he wore at his waistband, cut off the bird's head. At this deed the king marvelled with great marvel, and thought his brother had lost his senses, but desiring not to trouble the joy of the meeting, spake not a word. After a time he beheld the steed, and enquiring whose steed it was, he was told it was his own; and when he heard this, a longing seized him to mount it, and he bade his brother hold the stirrup, and Jennariello did so, but when his brother was going to mount him, he drew his knife and cut the steed's legs off; and the king was wroth with exceeding wrath, for it seemed to him that his brother did it in despite of him, and his entrails burnt with anger. But he did not think it time to

show his resentment, desiring not to poison the first happy moments of his bride, whom he never tired of gazing upon and hending by the hand; and when they arrived at the royal palace he sent invitations to all the lords and notables of the land to a great festival, where in the saloon could be seen steeds of finest blood curvetting and prancing by the side of young colts in the shape of women. And when the ball was ended, a wondrous banquet followed, and thereafter they retired to rest, and the bride and bridegroom retired to their chamber. The young prince had no other thought in his mind but to save the life of the king, his brother, and of his bride, therefore he hid himself behind the newly wedded couple's bed, watching for the coming of the dragon; and behold, at the midnight hour, an hideous dragon entered that chamber: fire came forth of his eyes and smoke of his mouth and nostrils, and the sight of him would have caused the direst affright to the bravest heart, and a looseness that all the drugs of the druggists could not have cured. And Jennariello arose and drew his Damascene blade, and began to cut and slash right and left, and between others he drew a fendent with such power and strength, that at one blow he cut through one of the pillars of the bed; and at the noise the king awoke, and the dragon disappeared.

Milluccio, sighting his brother brand in hand, and the bed pillar cut through and through, cried with a very loud cry, 'Ho there, ye folk! help, against this traitor my brother, who hath come to slaughter me.' At his cries hastened to his aid some of his officers, who slept in the ante-room, and the king bade them seize his brother and bind him. And the king forthwith sent Jennariello to gaol, and as soon as the morning dawned,

and the sun opened his bank to return the deposit of light to the creditors of the day, he summoned a great council, and related that which had happened; and since the deed in the night seemed to agree with the wrathful spirit shown in the killing of the falcon in his despite, and the cutting the legs of the steed, by unanimous voices Jennariello was condemned to die. And all the prayers of Liviella to soften the king's heart were powerless, and he said to her, 'Thou lovest me not, O my wife, since thou esteemest thy brother-in-law more than my life; thou hast seen him with thine own eyes, this dog of an assassin, hending brand in hand, which could have cut an hair's breadth through the air, come to make mince-meat of me; and if that pillar had not sheltered me (for me a pillar of life), at this very moment thou wouldst be widowed of me.' And thus saying, he ordered that justice should be executed.

Jennariello, hearing this sentence, and being reduced to such an evil strait for having done a good deed, knew not what to think of his painful position, because, an he spake not, it was wrong; and an he spake, it was worse; it is bad to have the itch, but it is worse to have the scab; for he would but fall from a tree into the clutch of the wolf; if he held his tongue, he would lose his head under the sword, and an he spake out, he would end his day within a marble prison. At last, after counselling in himself and thinking what was best, he decided to discover all to his brother, and whilst in any way he was doomed to die, he esteemed it better by far to make resolution to avow the truth to the king, and end his days innocent of the guilt laid upon his head, than to retain the true cause hidden within his breast, and thus be sent out of the world

like a traitor. Therefore he sent word to the king, that he desired to speak on a matter important to the state; and the king sent for him to his presence, where he began by speaking of his great love to the king, shown on several occasions; and after, of the deceit he had been guilty of with Liviella for his sake; and what he had heard from the pigeons about the falcon, and how he had brought the bird and so as not to become a marble statue had said naught of the secret, but had slain the bird rather than see his brother sightless. And when he had ended this part of the story, he felt his legs harden into stone, but he continued to relate about the steed, and when he had ended his say, he had become marble to his waist, hardening matters for which at other times his heart would have wept, and which he would have paid in ready money. At last he came to speak of the dragon, and when he had ended he became a marble statue, and remained amid the saloon. When the king perceived this, he fell to weeping and lamenting, and buffeted his face, and rent his garments, blaming his error and the false judgment he had passed upon the best and most loving of brothers; and he mourned with excessive mourning for more than a year, and whenever he thought of him his eyes rained a flood of tears.

In the meanwhile Queen Liviella gave birth to twin men-children, beautiful as a full moon in her fourteenth night, and the like of them had never been seen in the world; and after a few months were past, the queen had gone forth one day of the days into the country for a few hours, leaving the babies in the saloon with their sire, who gazing at the statue amid it, his eyes rained tears, remembering the foolishness which had made him lose

the flower of mankind ; and behold, as he was thus lost in thought, a very old man appeared, with long hair covering his shoulders, and with a beard which covered his chest ; and he bowed low before the king, and said to him, 'What wouldst thou give, O king, so that this handsome brother thine should return to life again?' and answered the king, 'I would give my kingdom.' 'This is not the thing required,' replied the old man, 'the price must not be wealth ; but a life must with a life be paid.' The king, partly for love of Jennariello, partly because he knew himself guilty of injustice to his own loss answered, 'Believe me, O my lord, that I would give my life for his, and so that he would come forth from this stone, I would be content to be put within a stone.' The oldster, hearing these words, rejoined, 'There is no need to risk thy life in such a venture, because it is not easy work to grow up a man, but the blood of these thy children, anointing this marble, would bring him to life again.' The king replied, 'Children are easily brought into the world, witness the form of these my heart's core that we may have some more, but I would have back a brother like unto whom I can never hope to have another.' And thus saying, he made before a stone idol the miserable sacrifice of these two innocent lambs, and anointed with their blood the statue, and the prince returned to life and embraced the king with great joyance ; and the king commanded that the two poor little creatures should be put in their coffins, and laid out in honour for their burial, as was fit and due to young princes.

In the meanwhile the queen returned from her outing, and the king bade his brother hide himself, and then said to his wife, 'What wouldst thou give, O my heart, that my brother should return to life?' 'I would give

my kingdom,' answered Liviella, and the king replied, 'Wouldst thou give the blood of thy children?' 'That I would not,' answered the queen, 'I would not be so cruel as to pluck forth mine eyes with mine own hands.' 'Alas!' cried the king, 'to behold my brother in life again, I have murdered mine own children, and this is the price I paid for Jennariello's life.' And thus saying, he showed her the children within the coffin, and when she beheld the woeful spectacle she cried with bitter cries, and buffeted her face like one gone mad, and said, 'O my children, O props of my life, O core of my heart, O fountains of my blood ! Who hath done this evil at the sun's windows ? Who hath bled me from the principal vein of my life without a doctor's leave ? Alas ! my children, my hopes, my babes ; O darkened light, O poisoned sweetness, O lost crutch of mine old age ! Ye are pierced through and through by a sword, and I am pierced by my grief ! Ye are drowned in your blood, and I am drowned in tears ! Alas, to give life to an uncle, ye have slain your mother, because I can no more weave the web of my days without ye, O weights of the loom of this darkened life ; needs must the organ fill its bellows with the wind of my cries, now that ye are taken from me ! O my children, O my children, why do ye not answer to your darling mother, who gave you her own blood within your bodies ? Now she will give it to you out of her eyes ! But as my sad lot and fortune alloweth me to see the fountain of my joy and pastime dried up, I do not wish to live in sadness and fear in this world ! Now step by step I will come to find you.' And when she ended her words she ran to a window to throw herself out therefrom, but when she was near it, her father entered within a cloud, and

he cried, 'Stay, Liviella, for I, after having fared a journey, have done three services, revenged myself of Jennariello, who came into my house to rob me of my daughter, by changing him for a few months into a marble statue; and thee of the dishonour and evil thou broughtest upon me, in flying from me aboard a ship, by letting thee behold thy sons, two gems, cruelly murdered by their sire; and I have punished the king for this caprice of a woman with child which had come upon him, of constituting himself judge criminal of his brother, and headsman of his own children. But it was my will to shave and not to flay ye, and therefore it is my desire that the poison ye have drained should turn to sweet pastry. So do thou go and take thy children, and my grandchildren, more beauteous than ever; and thou, Milluccio, embrace me, I accept thee as my son-in-law and mine own son, and I forgive Jennariello his offence, because he did this in service of a worthy brother.' And when he ended his say, the children came, and the father was never weary to kiss them and embrace them, and to join the general enjoyance came also Jennariello, who, having passed the crucible of trial, now felt himself in macaroni broth, although with the pleasures reserved for him in his life he never forgot the dangers past, and thinking of the error of his brother, he perceived how careful mankind must be not to fall into the pit, as true is the say that

'Human judgment is ever false and wrong.'

PRIDE PUNISHED.

TENTH DIVERSION

Of the Fourth Day.

The King of Bello-paese, despised by Cintiella, daughter of the King of Surcolungo, wreaketh vengeance upon her, reducing her to bad plight, but afterwards taketh her to wife.

IT was well that Ciometella had quickly brought the magician upon the scene, and thus thrown water upon the fire which burned the spirits of all hearers, and left them breathless in pity for Liviella. In the happiness of the poor child each felt happy, and the mind of each awoke up to a lively expectation that Jacova would enter the field of contest, and she, in the livery of her story, setting lance in rest, entered the lists of their desire.

Whoso draweth the rope too tight will break it; whoso seeketh misfortunes will reap disasters and trouble; whoso desireth to go upon the mountain-top, if he falleth down, the damage is his own: as ye will hear in what occurred to a damsel who, despising crowns and sceptres, descended through necessity to the stables; but with the head-breaking which cometh from Heaven come also the plasters; never came punishment without caresses, nor blows without sweetmeats.

There lived in days of yore a king of Surco-lungo, who had a daughter, Cintiella high, beautiful as a moon; but she possessed not a drachm of beauty that was not overweighted with a dose of pride; and so great was her pride, that she thought no other person in the world of any account; therefore it was impossible for the poor father to find a suitable mate for her; no matter how good, or how great, or how brave he was, none pleased her. Amid the many princes who flocked to ask her in marriage was the King of Bello-paese, and he left naught undone to gain the affection of Cintiella; but the more he tried to please her, the more she turned from him in disdain; and the more cheaply he gave her his love, the more niggardly she dealt with his desires; the more liberal he was with his adoration, the more wanting was she of heart; and not a day passed in which the unhappy king did not say to her, 'When, O thou cruel one, to whom so many melons of hopes have turned to so many vegetable marrows, will I find in proof a red one? When, O thou barbarous and cruel woman, will the storms of thy cruelty end, and I be able, with a fair wind, to stand at the wheel of my designs to guide my vessel to thy beauteous port? When shall I plant the standard of my love-longing and desire upon the walls of that fortress, after spending such a time in beseeching and praying at thy foot-stool?' But all these words were thrown to the winds; she had eyes of such sheen to pierce a stone, but had no ears to hearken unto the lamentations of whoso, wounded and stricken, wept with sore weeping; rather she looked upon him with contempt and wrath, as though he had done her some evil action, or gathered up the grapes from her vineyard. At last the king, perceiving the

hard-heartedness and lack of sweetness of Cintiella, and feeling that she cared not in the least for him, retired with his followers and his goods to his own domains, saying, 'For ever will I retire from love's play.' But he swore a strong oath to be revenged of this damsel, who in hardness of heart was not a damsel but a Saracen Moor, saying that he would cause her to repent with bitter sorrow of having ill-treated and mocked him.

And the king departed from that country, and let his beard grow long, and dyed his face and hands with a dark tint, and after a few months donned the disguise of a peasant, and returned to Surco-lungo, where by dint of largessing he got into the post of the king's gardener. And he attended to his work and new duties as best he could, until one day of the days he laid under the windows of Cintiella a tray with an imperial robe within it all purflewed with gold and diamonds; and the handmaidens of the princess sighted it, and ran in haste to their mistress, telling her what they had seen; and she sent word to the gardener, asking him if he would like to sell it; and he replied, that he was not a merchant nor an old-clothes seller, but that he would most willingly give it as a gift if they would allow him to sleep one night in the saloon of the princess; and the handmaidens, hearing this, returned to Cintiella, and said to her, 'O our lady, thou shalt lose naught by it, thou mayest safely give this satisfaction to the gardener, and we shall have this sumptuous robe, fit for a queen to wear.' Cintiella was caught by that man who fisheth wiser folk than she, and took the robe, and allowed him to have his desire.

The next morning, at the same place, he laid another robe of the same workmanship, which was no sooner seen

by the princess, than she sent to ask him if he would sell it, for she would give him whatever he might ask. The gardener replied that he would not sell it, but would give it freely as a gift and they would allow him to sleep in the anteroom of the princess; and Cintiella, desirous to have the robe, let herself be drawn to give him this satisfaction. When the third morning dawned, before the sun came to strike the gun upon the tinder of the fields, the king laid on the same spot a sumptuous under-waistcoat of the same texture as the two former robes, and when Cintiella beheld it, she said as she said of the others, 'If I have not this under vest, I shall not be content;' and sending for the gardener said to him, 'It is needful, O my good man, that thou shouldst sell me that under-vest which I beheld in the garden, and take thou my heart for it.' 'I do not sell it, O my lady, but an thou please, I will give it to thee as a free gift, and also a chain of diamonds, if thou wilt allow me to sleep one night in thy chamber.' 'Now thou art a most villainous fellow,' said Cintiella, 'it is not enough for thee to have slept in the saloon, and in the anteroom, but now thou must sleep in my chamber, and after a while thou wilt think of sleeping even in my bed!' The gardener rejoined, 'O my lady, I will keep my under-vest and thou thy chamber; if thou desirest otherwise, thou knowest the way. I am content to sleep on the ground, a thing that would be vouchsafed even to a Turk; and an thou beheld the chain which I would give to thee, perhaps thou wouldst give me a better weight.' The princess, partly for profit and partly by the rede of her handmaidens, who had helped the dog in his climbing, allowed him to persuade her to satisfy his want, and when evening came, and night darkened

and starkened, the gardener, taking the chain and the under-vest, fared to the apartment of the princess, and presented the things to her. Then she bade him enter her chamber and sit in a corner, and said to him, 'Now stay there as if paralyzed, and move not, an thou carest for my favour,' and making a sign on the floor with a charcoal, added, 'An thou passest this mark, thou shalt leave thy hindparts behind thee.' Then bidding the handmaidens draw the curtains around the bed, she retired to rest.

The king-gardener awaited till she was asleep, and thinking it was high time to work in the territory of love, he arose from his seat, and laid himself down by her side, and before the mistress of the place was well awake, he gathered the fruits of his love; and when she awoke, and saw what had occurred, not desiring to make of one evil two, and in order to punish the gardener ruin the garden, made a vice of necessity, and contented herself of the disorder, and felt pleasure in the error; and where she had disdained crowned heads, was subdued by a hairy foot, for such seemed the king, and such believed him to be Cintiella. So the practice continued and the play, and she conceived, and saw her belly grow rounder day by day, and she said to the gardener that she was ruined if her sire perceived how the case stood; and therefore they must think how best to remedy and eschew the danger. The king answered that he could not think of any other remedy to this evil than to leave the country, and he would lead her to an old mistress of his, who would give them a place where she could be brought to bed of her child. Cintiella, seeing in what plight she was reduced by the sin of her pride sans peer, which had carried her from rock to rock, allowed the words of the king to move

her, and leaving her own home, she put herself in the hands of fate and fortune.

Now the king, faring with her for a time, at length led her to his own home, and relating the whole story to his mother, besought her to dissimulate for a while, because it was his wish to repay himself for the slight which Cintiella with her pride had put upon him in time past. And therefore, setting a small stable in order within the palace, he made her live very miserably, letting her see bread at the length of a cross-bow.

One day of the days the king bade his handmaidens, when they kneaded the bread, call Cintiella in to help them; and meanwhile told her to see if she could get of it a cake for themselves to abate their hunger. The unhappy Cintiella, making ready the bread for the oven, before their very eyes was able to get from the whole a scone, and taking it when it was baked, put it in one of her pockets; but at the same time in came the king arrayed in his own raiments, and said to the handmaidens, 'Who bade ye allow this woman within the palace? Can ye not see that she favoureth rogues, and if my saying be true, and ye put your hands in her pocket, there will ye find the proof of her crime;' and they did his bidding, and found the scone, and at the sight they cried together to her shame, and the raillery and derision lasted all day. When night came, the king disguised himself once more, and went in to her, and finding her sad, and feeling scorned of the affront received, bade her not to mind what had happened, for necessity was the tyrant of mankind, as justly said that Tuscan poet that

'The an-hungered beggar
Cometh to do an act, which done by others,
In better state he would himself have blamed.'

Therefore, whilst hunger chaseth the wolf out of the forest, she could be excused if she did a thing which would not sit well in others. And she must arise and fare up to the lady of the house, who was cutting divers pieces of cloth for clothing, and offer her services to her, and try to take one piece, knowing that she was nearly on the point of child-birth, and she needed a thousand things. Cintiella, who could not disobey her husband, for as such she held him, fared up to the lady, and joining the handmaidens in cutting, she hid some napkins, and binders, and caps, and shirts, and put them under her clothes; but the king came once more, arrayed in his own raiments, and reproaching them again, as he had done for the bread, bade the handmaidens search her, and they finding the stolen things upon her person, she was again loaded with injurious epithets, and she returned weeping to the stable. Then the king donned his disguise, and ran after her, and found her in deep despair and told her not to allow melancholy and sadness to win upon her, that the matters of this world were of opinion only, and therefore she should try for a third time if she could gain some trifle for the babe she would bring to the light, and she would have a ready and good occasion so to do, because the lady had wedded her son to a foreign lady, and was going to send to the bride some robes of brocade, and cloth of gold, and other goods, and he added 'They say that the bride is just thy stature, and that it is her desire to have them cut upon her figure. Now the thing will be easy to thee, to try to get in hand some nice cuttings, so that we may sell them, and live in ease all our life.' Cintiella did as her husband bade her, and had even taken one foot of rich gold brocade,

when the king again came, and making a great to-do with the handmaidens, ordered them to search Cintiella, and finding upon her the booty, they chased her out of the house in great shame. Donning at once his disguise as gardener, the king ran down to comfort and console her, because if he punished her in one way, in the other the love he bore her made him anoint her wounds, so as not to drive her to despair; but the wretched Cintiella, with the anguish of what occurred to her, thought that all was a punishment from Heaven for her arrogance and pride, and that for holding princes and kings of renown as her foot-cloths, she was now treated as a low-born chit, and because she had hardened her heart to her sire's rede, her face now reddened with shame at the servants' leers and sneers; and the wrath, and grief, and pain caused her to be brought to bed with child-birth pains, and the queen-mother was informed of the case, and she sent for her, and had her brought to her apartment, showing compassion of her sad state. And Cintiella was laid in a bed purflewed with gold and pearls, in a chamber covered with hangings of cloth of gold, and she wondered with excessive wonder and marvelled with greatest marvel, seeing the stable changed to a royal chamber, and the straw whereupon she lay turned to such a precious bed, and she knew not what had happened to her; and strengthening cordials and sweetmeats were given to her so that she could be brought to bed easier. But by the will of Heaven, without much labour-pains she gave birth to two beauteous men-children, the like of which had never been seen. As soon as she had been delivered, the king entered, saying, 'And where is gone your sense and judgment to lay a cloth upon an ass? is this a bed for a low woman? quick let her arise

and be gone and give her a bastinado, and perfume with rosemary this chamber, that this pest may not be smelt.'

The queen, hearing this, said 'Enough, say no more, O my son; enough and sufficient are the anguish and torments which thou hast made this poor child endure, thou shouldst be filled to satiety, thou hast reduced her to rags, and hast made her suffer so many trials, which ought to satisfy thee for the contempt she showed to thee when at her sire's court; but let the debt be paid by these two beauteous gems of great price which she presenteth to thee.' And sending for the children, who were the most beautiful ever seen in the world, she held them up to his embrace. The king, beholding such beauteous babes, felt his heart soften, and kissed them, and embraced Cintiella. And she recognised him for whom he was in reality, and he told her that whatso he had done was because of the disdain with which she had treated him, a king of such puissance and renown; but that from that moment he would hold her as the crown of his head ever dear. Then the queen also embraced her as her daughter, and her joy was the greatest of joyances, beholding her two boys, and she drank deep draughts of happiness and content, forgetting past anguish and regret; but ever after she remembered to keep her sails down, thinking that

'The daughter of pride is ruin.'

The stories having ended for that day, the prince, desiring to rid himself of the sadness of soul which Cintiella's story had brought, called Cicco Antuono and Narduccio, and bade them do their part, and they with flat caps on, and black tight-fitting breeches, and doublets well cut and trimmed with lace, came forth from a corner of the garden to recite the eclogue which followeth.

ECLOGUE.

THE HOOK.

Narduccio and Cicc' Antuono.

- Nar.* Lend me an half ducat, O Cicc' Antuono,
And take this pledge.
- Cic.* In faith, I would most gladly lend it to thee,
If I had not this very morning made
An excellent purchase.
- Nar.* It is mine evil fate: but what didst purchase?
- Cic.* I found a good occasion
To buy an hook quite new:
An he had asked of me a thousand crowns,
As many would I willingly have spent on't.
- Nar.* Thou art most prodigal in thy disbursements:
An hook, the most that it may cost,
Should be no more than two carlini.
- Cic.* Indeed thou understandest not, Narduccio.
These things are like 'my love returned to me':
Know'st not that fishing-hooks are risen in price,
Because they catch no longer fish, but crowns?
- Nar.* How can they fish up crowns? I understand not.
- Cic.* Thou art an ass, forgive me:
Hast just come into the world?
Knowest thou not that there is not a man
Who holds not in his hand a fishing-hook?
By its means he liveth in the midst of plenty;
By it he dresseth richly, and groweth fat;
It putteth a good paillasse underneath him;
By means of it he can shut up the pigs;

- With it he shineth, becometh full at bottom;
With it, in fact, he ruleth all the world.
- Nar.* Thou strikest me with wonder and great marvel:
What shall we bet,
That thou hast fixed in thy head to make me believe
The moon is in a well?
And I must swallow, that it is a rare thing,
A bee philosophorum, this hook of thine?
- Cic.* Exactly, this is the bee,
Come forth from the efforts of genius.
- Nar.* O my brother, I have eaten
Bread from most bakehouses,
Nor have I ever heard it named;
Then either I am a fool, or thou'rt befooling me.
- Cic.* Open thine ears, and hearken,
For thou art a great simpleton.
Few people name it a fishing-hook,
Because from its first infancy
It bears a bad appearance.
Therefore great wits
Have changed its name;
Therefore in this age
All things wear masks.
The prince gives unto them
The title of presents or gifts:
The judge hath namèd them
A happy gage, a softening,
An honouring of the hand, or of the mouth.
The clerk is right; and Heaven knoweth
If it is more crooked than a dog's leg;
The merchant names it gain;
The craftsman, business;
The shopman, industry;

The rogue, craft, cunning device ;
 The watchman and bailiff, head-covering ;
 The bandit, preserved fruit ;
 The soldier, ransom ;
 The spy, a deed ;
 The whore, a present ;
 The pimp, gain or glove-covering ;
 The broker, *pour boire*, for a drink ;
 The commissary calls it provision ;
 And in fact every one gives to it his own colouring,
 The corsair, of sponge,
 The captain, of quiet life,
 (And if he is not quiet, return to him,
 For he carries matters beyond truth and ruin,
 And I assure thee that he doth more war
 With his hook than with the sword).
 Dost thou want more? the poet,
 Who despoileth of conception and of words
 As many books as they put in his hands,
 Of Horace, Ovid, Mafaro, and Nasone,
 And giveth them the name of imitation.

Nar. I understand thee ; by Jove, thou shouldst succeed
 As a professor ; thou art a clever servant
 Of the four masters of the crucible ;
 Thou art an handsome boaster greedy of gain ;
 The pink of wile and guile, an thou wilt say
 That all their knowledge in these days is hooked.

Cic. Hook and fishing-hook
 Are one and the same thing ;
 'Tis enough that every man
 Wears it at his waist-band,
 Some of gold, some of silver, or copper,
 Some of steel, and some of wood,

According to the person's rank and quality.
 For instance, we will say of that great man
 Who conquered the world :
 To fish up all his kingdoms
 He had it made of gold,
 Set with diamonds and carbuncles.

And he who made Cicero
 Salt so much of pork bacon,
 He carried it of silver.

The others, in due order,
 Following judgment or power,
 Have it made as they can :
 Enough that each may fish.

And therefore to this fishing
 Various names are given :
 Gathering, ravishing, wrapping up,
 Lightening, lifting, scratching,
 Shortening, setting things straight,
 Blowing, cutting, switching up,
 Picking, cleaning, catching up,
 Hands-filling, helping oneself,
 Playing at 'Wrap up Cuosimo,'
 Or at emptying pockets,
 Playing the part of prior, or playing the harp,
 Shaking purses, or playing the spider's game.

Nar. Thou mayest say all this
 With only a simple word :

Playing at triumphing in the way of murdering,
 That depredations you may commit, and robbery.

Cic. Thy memory is bad, have I not told thee
 That the world in these sad days of ours
 Giveth to evil things the name of good?
 And for naught else doth genius work and strive

But to set at work this fishing-hook,
Which catcheth, and is not seen,
Which pulleth, and is not felt,
Which grappleth, and is not touched,
And is always taking, picking, and hooking?

Nar. O my brother, I envy it not,
All these things go afterwards down with the tide ;
And goods that are ill acquired
Are never handed down to the third heir :
Rich folk go to the bottom,
And they behold their houses fall into ruin,
The chimneys destroyed, themselves reduced to
beggary :
They wander through the world finding no mercy ;
And he spake well, a schoolmaster, who said
That if all things go wrong, 'tis the fault of the
mill-stone.

Cic. In these days the bigoted hypocrite
Hangs by the neck with hunger ;
Whoso stealeth not hath no goods ;
Whoso taketh not hath no straw ;
Whoso gaineth not hath his soul in grief ;
And whoso never fisheth never feasteth.

Nar. And in restoring it
Thou may'st give me three horses ;
Besides, very oft it happeneth
That a gallows-tree is found,
For some foolish simpleton who is fond of gain :
A decree comes forth, that he be straightway led
Astride an ass, as if he were a monkey ;
The court presents him with a paper mitre ;
At the market-place he seeth himself marked,
And not to suffer hunger becometh infamous.

He loseth his honour to enjoy an hour ;
For a few copper coins
He gaineth a seat at the oars ;
The juice of the grape
Becometh salt sea-water ;
To catch with his nails
He gaineth three blocks of wood ;
The feathers become for him a pennon.
What use to have so many coins
Of copper, silver, and red gold,
Ducats, and crowns and smaller pieces ?
If, *par exemple*, after much search we find
That more monies we have, we are never content
in mind.

Cic. If once thou triest this our hook,
Thou'lt never do without it ; 'tis as the itch :
The more thou scratchest it, the more it itcheth.
Let us look round
At the arts and offices of this our world,
And thou'lt perceive that every man makes use of it.
Begin at the beginning, 'tis antinomy
Of whoso hath vassals on his fiefs :
Behold he sighteth a worthy farmer
Who hath a flock of growing pigs—
Today he cometh and asketh the loan
Of so many crowns, which he will soon return,
When it shall rain so much dried figs and raisins ;
Tomorrow he sendeth for some barley
Which he will return at harvest-time ;
Now he will borrow his ass, or oxen,
With plea that 'tis needful for the court.
This nuisance will last for such a time,
This bitter siege such a time will last,

That the poor farmer in despair
 Useth hard language upon his lord,
 Or dealeth him a cuff: O wretched man,
 Far better had his mother never shitted him,
 Better, far better had he broken his neck!
 Behold, he is taken,
 And cast quick into a pit;
 Chains are put on his feet,
 An iron band round his neck,
 Handcuffs on his hands,
 And a large bill upon the prison gates,
 Saying, 'Ban and command, ho there, depart, ye
 folk!

For whoso speaketh to this man
 Will pay six ducats penalty!
 In fact, thou mayest cry out whatever thou wilt,
 Petitions send, beg friends to interpose,
 He is never set free
 Of so many draughts of vinegar,
 Of anguish and of torments,
 Expenses, and travail,
 Unless he sendeth some agreement sweet.
 At last when he hath realized the wants
 Of a greedy wolf and him to surfeit filled,
 Whilst this wolf murdereth him, 'tis said he hath
 graced him.

Nar. O accursed fishing-hook!

May evil reach the shameless forge
 Where thou wert cast and riveted and tempered.

Cic. Hark to what doth the captain and master of arts:
 Because from the full-grown ox
 The calf doth learn how to plough.
 He bringeth forth witnesses, embroileth papers,

Lengtheneth sentences,
 Occupieth deeds and writings,
 Sendeth to jail without cause;
 And there the fishing-hook worketh for seven,
 And where he should be dragged
 And punished, he gains the name,
 Of being skilled in his office,
 Industrious, and of good sense.

Nar. This is more than true,
 And if a man of weal returneth
 With a clean purse, and clean of conscience
 (A matter which hath happened
 To me about twelve times),
 Then every one doth say,
 It is better he should withdraw,
 Because 'tis not his art:
 'Tis a pity to give him a patent,
 For he is an ass, and cannot get provaunt.

Cic. The doctor, if he be a rogue,
 Lengtheneth his patient's sickness,
 And with the apothecary holdeth share:
 If he is upright, he showeth too
 That amid all his prescriptions
 He also knoweth this secret,
 When he holdeth out his hand behind his back.

Nar. Thou canst not speak against this fishing-hook,
 For it is honoured and full of modesty;
 Thus 'tis and may be called a fatal price,
 For thou payest behind thee whoso helpeth thee shit.

Cic. The merchant never loseth
 His cap to the crowd;
 Giveth old goods to buyers;
 Linen full of starch

To make it thick and weighty ;
 He sweareth, affirmeth, and voweth
 That the rotten goods are new,
 That the crushed and undone are the best,
 And with fine words, and evil deeds,
 He beguileth thee, and showeth to thee
 The white for the black, and thou findest ever
 In the goods thou buyest something wrong,
 And when he measureth
 With gallant ostentation,
 He stretcheth the cloth, so that thou mayst find it
 scarce.

Nar. Therefore 'tis not a marvel
 When Heaven turneth its face against it,
 And for an error forgiveth the chase.

Cic. The butcher selleth to thee
 An old and sickly ram
 For mutton or young lamb ;
 A bullock for a calf,
 And ornaments it all
 With flowers and golden paper,
 To stir thine appetite.
 He selleth bones for flesh, and against thy will
 The weight is always greater than the joint :
 In weighing the meat, may God and Heaven save
 thee,
 He forceth down the balance with his fingers.

Nar. 'Tis matter enough to swell thy lungs with wrath ;
 'Tis this the reason that upon each feast-day
 They dress with elegance as a baron might.

Cic. The oilman also cheateth at the measure :
 To show thee that he filleth to the brim,
 And that the oil doth reach the topmost mark,

He dents the bottom of the measure in,
 Raising a hump in the bottom.
 He mixeth bran with the oil
 To give it body and colour :
 Thou beholdest a golden froth,
 And fillest thy finest pots,
 And after thou shalt find the dregs,
 Or rather a mixture of water and filth,
 Which, put to burn, blackens thy lamp, is bitter,
 And giveth a mournful light, and farteth, and then
 Shoots a shot and dies out.

Nar. There is not a foot of clean ground,
 All good is past :
 O thou corrupted world, how art thou changed !

Cic. The tavern-keeper hath decanters scarce ;
 All night he is in traffic,
 And if he finds the cask
 A little sour in taste, or not so thick,
 He beateth up the whites of eggs in it :
 But most of all he openeth
 Good wine and bad wine,
 Maketh of vinegar asprinio,*
 Rather of water wine,
 And with the fingers covereth the spout
 So that it shooteth forth by slow degrees,
 And the decanter's neck hendeth in hand
 So that, deceived by the sight,
 They never would perceive the lack in measure.

Nar. O wretched he, who falleth in their trap :
 He needeth an iron stomach and a full purse.

* Vineyard cultivated near Naples in Terra di Lavoro from which are gathered rather sour grapes from which wine is made called 'asprino,' *asprinio*.

Cic. The tailor keepeth for himself a banner,
 From every cut, he seeth if there are some shreds :
 He putteth the cotton on account as silk :
 If thou with him go forth to buy some goods,
 He will come with needles pinned on at his breast,
 He'll bargain in thy favour,
 And then return to the merchant for the pact ;
 But this is the least of salt :
 In the list he tricketh thee,
 And thou, in reading the account,
 Wilt curse the point that bringeth such amount.

Nar. O blessed, and most happy are the animals,
 Who can stay naked
 In forests, vales, and plains, and appenines :
 They are not ever subject to these ruins.

Cic. Listen, the old-clothes vendors in the Ghetto :
 If thy caprice will push thee
 To sell somewhat to them,
 Thou shalt meet with a crowd
 Agreeing in all matters,
 Which taketh thee by the throat ;
 If thou buyest a suit of clothes,
 Thou'lt don it now, and tomorrow
 It will be nothing worth, thou'lt find it torn,
 'Twill last thee only from Christmas to Saint Stephen's,
 And with damages and scorn
 Thou goest pricked and painted.
 But of what use to touch so many strings ?
 I should require a ream of writing-paper
 In which to explain the gifts and all the arts,
 Which do most honour to our fishing-hook,
 Relating how many half-starved beggarly beings
 By help of this waxed fat and rich became.

Nar. Accursed invention,
 Honour's poison,
 By which is ever seen
 Dark the truth, and black all faith.

Cic. Thou mayest say whatever pleaseth thee ;
 But every one doth use it constantly,
 And may I die enstrangled by a rope
 If this same day I do not buy me one.

Nar. 'Twere better thou shouldst die of heart-disease,
 For an thou use the fishing-hook in this world,
 The fishing-hook will draw it out of the world.

I could not say if the head or the tail of the fine entertainment of the day pleased most, because if one was tasteful, the other sank deep into the bones' marrow, and the enjoyment of the prince was so great that, to demonstrate himself courteous and truly liberal, as a great lord should be, he sent for the lord of the wardrobe, and ordered that there should be given to the reciters a number of old hats, which had been his sire's, as a free gift from him to them ; and now the sun had been called in haste to appear at the other pole, to help and lighten his estates, occupied by the shadows, wherefore the prince arose, and dismissed the company, and each one fared to his own hayloft, with injunctions to return the next morning at the time appointed and at the same place.

END OF THE FOURTH DAY.

FIFTH DAY OF THE
DIVERSION OF THE LITTLE ONES.

THE birds had already referred the rogueries and traps which had been laid and done that night to the ambadress of the sun, when Prince Thaddeus and Princess Lucy repaired thus early in the morning to the usual place of meeting, where with the cool morning breeze had come nine of the ten women. And the prince, seeing this, asked wherefore Jacova had not come, and they replied that she had been taken ill with looseness whilst in full health, and Thaddeus commanded that another woman should be found in her place, to supply and act instead of the missing one. And thus, unwilling to fare far to seek one, they sent for *Zoza*, who lived vis-a-vis the royal palace, and she was received by Prince Thaddeus with many compliments, because he felt indebted to her, and for the inclination and affection he had laid upon her; and she with her companions gathered some flowers, one some blooming cat-mint, another some sweet lavender, another some five-leaved rue, and one one thing and another another; this one made a wreath, as if she would recite a farce; and another, a sweet posy; one would lay a full-blown rose upon her breast; and another hold a

pink between her lips ; and because it wanted about four hours for the midday hour, when the time would be ripe to begin their story-telling once more, the prince ordered that they should begin some games to entertain and amuse his wife. He bethought himself of Cola Jacopo the farrier, a man of great wit, so he sent for him, and when he stood in the presence, and the prince told him his want, Cola Jacopo, just as if he kept all kinds of inventions in his pocket, straightway found what Thaddeus required, and said, 'My lord and ladies, that enjoyment which hath not a bough of usefulness combined with delight in it is ever insipid, and therefore the entertainments and the wakes bring not a useless pleasure but rather a tasteful gain, because not only pass we the time pleasantly in this kind of games, but we excite and awaken our wits to the knowledge of giving ready and witty replies to whatso may be asked of us, as it happeneth in the game of games which I think of playing, and which is done in this manner. I will propose to one of these ladies one kind of game, and she, without taking thought about it, must answer that she does not like it, and the cause of her dislike to it, and whoso answer not readily, or answer out of purpose, shall pay a fine, and shall do the penalty commanded by the princess. To begin the game, I should like to play with the Lady Zeza a quarter of a ducat at small triumph ;' and Zeza replied, 'I will not play this game, because I am not a rogue.' 'Bravo,' said Thaddeus, 'here the rogue and the assassin triumpheth.' 'If it be so,' rejoined Jacopo, 'then, as I have been expelled, I shall play my quarter ducat with Lady Cecca at the failed bank.' 'I care not for it,' answered Cecca, 'I am not a merchant.' 'She is right,' said Thaddeus, 'this game is for them.' 'At least, Lady Meneca,' continued Cola Jacopo,

'let us spend a couple of hours at the game of discontented.' 'Forgive me, but that is a game only fit for courtiers,' answered Meneca. 'Thou hast hit the nail on the head,' said Thaddeus, 'as that race of folk are never in good humour.' 'I will,' rejoined Cola Jacopo, 'ask the Lady Tolla to play with me a forest of copper coins against four golden moutons.' 'Heaven forefend,' answered Tolla, 'this is a game of husbands who have a wicked wife.' 'Thou couldst not have spoken better,' replied Thaddeus, 'this game is just fit for them, for often and very often their game ends in ram-butting.' 'At least, Lady Popa,' replied Cola Jacopo, 'let us play at twenty figures, and I will give you mine hand.' 'Say naught and let it be as if unspoken, for that is a flatterer's game.' 'She hath spoken as a Roland,' said Thaddeus, 'as this game hath twenty and thirty figures, transforming themselves ever so well, to put a poor prince within a sack ;' and continued Cola Jacopo, 'Then, O Lady Antonella, let us not lose this time, by your life ; but let us play for a large platter of fritters at the excise.' 'Thou hast found me in sooth,' answered Antonella, 'that is not bad, to treat me as a mercenary woman.' 'She speaketh sooth,' said Thaddeus, 'because this enigma called woman is very often wont to make thee pay tribute.' 'The devil, when shall we come to it?' continued Cola Jacopo. 'Am I dreaming? In this way the hour will pass, and we shall have no enjoyment, unless the lady Ciulla would play with me for a measure of lupine, the game of calling.' 'Am I a constable or a bailiff?' answered Ciulla ; and Thaddeus answered at once, 'She hath spoken sooth ; because it is an office worthy of a bailiff and a clown to call at court.' 'Then do come, O Lady Paola,' again said Cola Jacopo, 'and let us play at three of five and piquet.' 'Thou art

mistaken,' answered Paola, 'I am not a court grumbler.' 'This one is a doctress,' answered the prince, 'because there is no place where honour is more besmeared and backbiting goes on against the notables than in our own palace.' 'Without fail,' said Cola Jacopo once more, 'the lady Ciommetella will be pleased to play with me at Carretuso Merregnao,' and Ciommetella, 'Fine game hast thou chosen for me, only fit for a schoolmaster; in sooth thou hast found thy mate.' 'She must pay forfeit,' said Cola Jacopo, 'the proposal has naught to do with the answer.' 'Go,' answered the prince, 'bid thy teacher give thee back thy money for the answer from the strong-box of Seville, because the pedagogues play so well at Carretuso that, although they lose five, they still mark the game.' But Cola Jacopo turning to the last of the ladies said, 'I cannot believe that the lady Zoza would be so unkind as, like the others, to refuse my invitation, therefore she will do me a favour an she would play with me one ducat at outstripping.' 'Look at thy leg, for that is a game for little children.' 'Now 'tis she who must pay the forfeit,' concluded Thaddeus, 'because at this game even the old men can play, and therefore, Lady Lucy, it is your duty to condemn her to the penalty you think fit to adjudge to her.' And Zoza arose and knelt before the princess, and she ordered her as penalty the song 'The Neapolitan country-maid,' and the lady Zoza sent for a tambourine, whilst the coachman to the prince played a lyre, and she sang the following song :

THE NEAPOLITAN COUNTRY-MAID.

AN thou dreamst that the wound was deep,
That I am grieved and heavy-hearted,
That thy unkindness haunts my sleep,
Daughter, thou with thy wits hast parted.

Gone is the day when Bertha spun,
Mingling my heartstrings with her threading;
The fight against folly and love I've won,
My amorous tears no longer shedding.

Since the young cat hath oped its eyes,
Now that the cricket hath tuned its singing,
Thy faulty beauty no more I prize,
And my soul from thy glamour its flight is winging.

Now that the babe from the breast is weaned
And the plate of his choice is with surfeit laden,
Whatever thy fanciful pride hath deemed,
He yearneth no longer for thee, O maiden.

The song was ended, and all were pleased it had suited their taste, when they found that the hour of the midday meal had arrived, and the tables were spread, and they sat around them, and if they found tasteful viands, they also had better beverage; but when the wants of the belly were sealed up, and the table-cloth was removed, the command was given to Zeza to uncover the rim of the stories, and although the unlucky lady had her tongue rather thick, and her ears rather small, she did her duty beginning thus :

THE GOOSE.

FIRST DIVERSION

Of the Fifth Day.

Lilla and Lolla buy a goose at the market, and the bird shitteth golden coins ; a neighbour beggeth them to lend it to her, and finding the contrary, attempteth to slay it, and casts it out of the window. The bird, not being dead, taketh hold of the hindparts of a prince who is doing a thing of need to nature. He crieth aloud for aid, but none of the realm can pull her off from him but Lolla, for which reason he taketh her to wife.

TRUE was the saying of that great man of weal, that 'The craftsman to the locksmith, the musician to the musician, the neighbour to the neighbour, the beggar to the beggar'—there is not an hole in the great building of the world whereupon that accursed spider called envy doth not weave his net, which feedeth on naught else but the ruin of his neighbour : as ye particularly shall hear from the tale, that I am going to relate.

Once upon a time there lived in very reduced circumstances two sisters, and it was as much as they could do to gain a livelihood by spinning flax from morn till night, which they sold ; but they dragged on their wretched life, and it was impossible but that some day the ball of necessity would touch that of honour, and send it out ; for which matter Heaven, who is so great to recompense good deeds, and so thin and slow in

punishing the evil, put into the minds of these two poor children that they should go to the market, and sell some skeins of thread, so that with what they received from it they should buy a goose. The women did so, and carried the goose home, and they loved her so well that they fed her, and let her sleep in their own bed, as if she had been their own sister. But sweep to-day and look to-morrow, the good day came, and the goose began to shit golden crowns, in such manner that one by one they filled a large chest, and the shitting was such that the sisters began to lift their heads, and to look well fed and happy. Such was the show of their prosperity that the gossips began to take notice of it, and one day meeting together, they spake thus amongst themselves, 'Hast thou seen, O gossip Vasta, Lilla with Lolla, who but a few days ago might have dropped down dead with hunger, but who now have become so well-fed and well-dressed that they live in luxury like great ladies? Hast thou seen their windows always ornamented with fowls and barons of beef, which stare thee in the face? What can it be? Either they have laid hands on their honour, or they have found an hoard.' 'I am astonished and am become a mummy with exceeding marvel,' answered Vasta, 'O gossip Pearl mine, when they were ready to sink, I see them in parvenus' splendours, which seem to me a dream.' They said these things and others, stimulated by their surging envy, and they bored a hole in the wall of the house of one of the gossips that corresponded with one of the chambers occupied by the two damsels, so that it might enable them to espy their doings, and to gratify their curiosity ; and they played the spy for so long that one evening, when the sun whippeth with its rays the banks of the Indian sea to give rest to the hours of

the day, they beheld Lilla and Lolla spreading sheets upon the ground ; then they made the goose walk thereon, and as soon as she was on the sheets, the goose began shitting crowns until the very balls of her eyes stood out.

When morning came, and Apollo with his golden wand exorciseth the shadows to withdraw, came Vasta to visit the two damsels, and after twisting and lengthening the conversation, she came to the point, and begged they would kindly lend her the goose for two hours, to make a few young ducklings she had bought take affection for the house ; and she begged, prayed, and besought so much, that the simpletons, partly because they knew not how to deny, and partly not to cause suspicion on the part of the gossips, lent the bird to her upon the understanding that she should return her at the time appointed. Then Vasta went home where the other gossips were waiting for her, and they laid clean sheets upon the floor, and made the goose walk thereon, but instead of showing a mint and a coining of crowns, out of her fundament there came forth a sewer of dirt, which covered the bed-linen with a dark yellowish matter, the stink of which filled the whole house like the flavour that cometh forth from the pot of stew on the holydays. When they beheld that sight, they thought to feed her well, so that she would make the substance for the *lapis-lazuli philosophorum*, to satisfy their desire. And thus they fed her so well and so much, that she was full up to her throat, and they then placed her upon a clean sheet ; but if the goose had been rather loose before, she now discovered a new dysentery, indigestion playing a part. For which reason the gossips were wroth with exceeding wrath, and twisting the neck of the goose, threw her out of the

window into a narrow street with no outlet, into which ordure and filth were cast. But as fate and fortune had decreed, that where least thou thinkest the bean will grow, passed that way a son of a king, hunting and birding, and on the road he was taken by a colic, and bidding his groom hold the reins of his steed and his sword, he entered that narrow street, and emptied his belly, and completing this service, having no paper in his pocket to wipe himself with, he beheld the dead goose, whereupon he used it for that purpose.

Now the goose was not dead ; so, turning her head, she caught hold with her bill of the fleshy part of the prince and would not let it go, and he cried with loud cries, and his suite ran to his assistance, and tried to pull off the bird from him, but it was of no avail ; she held firmly at her booty like a feathery weight or an hairy hermaphrodite. And the prince, unable to resist the suffering, and beholding the fruitless efforts made by his suite, bade them lift him up, and carry him in their arms to the royal palace, where he sent for all the doctors and sages of his realm to deliver him. They tried all kinds of ointment, and made use of pinchers, and used and sprinkled powders, but to no purpose. And perceiving that the goose was like a tick, and would not let go for quicksilver, a leech that would not drop for all the vinegar used, the prince ordered a ban to be proclaimed, that whoso would deliver him from this annoyance at his bottom, if it should be a man, he would gift him with half of his realm, if a woman, he would take her to wife. And folk, having put their noses to the reward, swarmed to the palace-gate ; but the more remedies they tried, the more the goose tightened her hold, and pinched the wretched prince's back parts, and it seemed as if all the prescriptions of Galen had been

gathered together, and all the aphorisms of Hippocrates, and the remedies of Mesoc against the posterior of Aristotiles, to torment that unhappy prince. But by decree of the Decreeer, amid so many who came and went to try this trial, came also Lolla, the youngest of the two sisters, and when she beheld the goose she knew her, and cried, 'O Niofatella mine, Niofatella;' and the goose, hearing the voice of her beloved mistress, at once left her prey, and ran to meet her, caressing her and kissing her, well pleased to change the back parts of a prince for the mouth of a country-maid. The prince, seeing this marvel, desired to know how it had occurred, and Lolla related the story from beginning to end, and when she came to the trick played on the gossips, the prince laughed till he fell backwards; and he bade them be taken, and whipped well with switches, and sent into exile; and thereafter amid joyance and feasting he took Lolla to wife, with the goose that could shit so many treasures for her dowry. And he married Lilla to a rich husband, and they lived happily together the most mirthful in the world, in spite of the gossips who tried to shut the road of the two sisters to the riches which Heaven had sent them, and they opened another way so that one should become a queen, knowing in the end that

'An impediment is often an assistance.'

THE MONTHS.

SECOND DIVERSION

Of the Fifth Day.

Gianni and Lisi are brothers, the one rich and the other poor. Lisi, never being succoured by his rich brother, departeth from his country, and on his way meeteth real fortune, and becometh immensely rich; his brother being very envious seeketh his fortune in the same way, but things go wrong with him, and he saveth himself from a great misfortune only by his brother's help.

THE fits of laughter enjoyed by the company at the misfortune which happened to the prince were so long and frequent that it was needful to make them come down from their high horse, else they would have continued their laughter till the rose bloomed. But Cecca signed with her finger that she was ready to relate her story, and having sequestered all mouths, she began to say thus:

It is a true phrase 'to write in silent letters'; because to be silent never brought evil or hurt to any one. The tongues of some backbiters can never say a good word, and they cut, and sew, and use the scissors, and prick thee; but do thou not care for them, because they are always in question, and at the shaking of the bags it has been seen, and is seen now, that where a kind word gaineth love and usefulness, speaking evil begetteth

enmity and ruin : and ye will now hear in what manner, and will give me my just due in saying that I speak sooth.

It is said that once upon a time there lived two brothers, Gianni who was in easy circumstances, and lived sumptuously as a lord, and Lisi, who had not even life ; but as much as the one was poor of fortune, the other was mean of soul, and would not have risen from the night-vase to refresh the spirit of any one. His meanness was such that it caused Lisi to leave his country in despair, and wander about the world ; and he fared on and on until one night of the nights he reached a mean-looking tavern, after a day that had been an extremely bad day, cold and wet. When he entered that tavern, he beheld twelve youths sitting around the fire, and when they saw the unhappy Lisi black and blue, and stiff with the cold, first because of the advanced cold season, and second because of the threadbare garments which he wore, they had pity for him, and they invited him to come and sit near the fire. Lisi accepted the invitation, for he stood greatly in need of it, and warmed himself at the fire, and while employed thus, one of the youths, who had an angry and sulky face, enough to cause his interlocutor to smile, addressed him thus, ' O thou my countryman, what dost thou think of the weather ? ' ' What should I think of it ? ' said Lisi. ' It seems to me that all the months of the year do their duty ; but we know not what we ask, we desire to lay down the law even to the heavens, and would wish to have things to our liking. We did not fish too deeply if it is well or bad, useful or loss ; and of our very caprice and instability, in winter when it raineth, we should like to have the sun in Lion, and in the month of August, heavy rains and the discharging of the clouds ; we do not think that if it should

be so, the seasons would go from head to backside, the seed would be lost, the harvest never be gathered, our bodies sicken, and nature itself have to carry its own legs. Therefore let us be satisfied, and let Heaven run its course ; it is for this that it hath provided us with trees to remedy the severity of winter by giving us wood for fuel, and to shade us from the heat in summer with the leaves.' ' Thou speakest as a Solomon,' said the youth, ' but thou canst not deny that this month of March, in which we are now, is too impertinent with so much of ice, and rain, and snow, and hail, and wind, and storms, and fogs, and tempests, and continual change, that it causeth one to be weary even of life.' ' Thou speakest evilly of this poor month,' answered Lisi, ' but thou speakest not of what is good and useful that its coming bringeth : because it is March that beginneth to set forth the spring, and the generation and procreation of things, and if naught else, it is the cause that the sun proveth the felicity of the present weather, by making it enter into the house of the Ram.' The youth was very pleased with Lisi's words, because he was the month of March himself, who had arrived in company of his eleven brothers at that tavern, and desiring for his goodness to recompense Lisi, who had not spoken a word against a month so unpleasant that not even the shepherds like to name him, presented him with a fine little casket, saying, ' Take this, look for all that is needful to thee, and try also, when thou openest this casket, to keep it always before thee.' Lisi thanked the youth in submissive and grateful words, and putting the casket under his head as a pillow, lay down to sleep.

As soon as the sun with the brushes of his rays came to retouch with light the shadows of the night, he farewelled the youths and journeyed on in his wayfare, but he had

not gone fifty steps from the tavern, when he opened the casket and said, 'O thou my good, could I not have a litter lined with frisa,* with a little fire within, so that I could fare in warmth amid this snow?' He had hardly ended speaking these words, when a litter stood before him with two men attending beside it, who lifted him up and laid him within. And he bade them to fare towards his home; and when the hour for the midday meal came, he opened the casket, and said, 'Let somewhat of viands appear,' and at once the best things that could be desired seemed to drop from heaven, and the banquet was such that ten crowned kings could have dined of it.

One evening they arrived at the beginning of a forest, which allowed not even the sun to enter, because he came from suspicious places; and Lisi opened the casket, and said 'In this beautiful site, where this river playeth counterpoints against the stones and pebbles on the shore to accompany the song of the cool zephyrs, I should like to rest for the night;' and at once, behold, a tent was pitched of fine scarlet under a cover of tarpaulin, with feather beds, and a Spanish blanket, and web-like bed-linen; and asking for food, at once a table was laid under another tent, covered with silver fit for a prince, and viands appeared whose flavour could be detected from the distance of an hundred miles. And when Lisi had eaten his sufficiency, he took his rest, and when the cock, the sun's spy, informed his master that the shadows had fled, being tired, and that now it was time to follow them and crush them, he opened the casket, and asked for sumptuous raiments, and said, 'I should like to have a rich robe, because to-day my brother will see me, and I should like to make him feel covetous;'

* 'Frisa'—a kind of woollen and thread texture, used by very poor folk until the eighteenth century.

and the words were hardly spoken, when he beheld before him a robe of black velvet, with ermine trimmings and yellow linings, with a long end falling from one shoulder, and Lisi apparelled himself in it, and entering the litter, after a time arrived home.

Now when Gianni beheld him come so sumptuously arrayed and at his ease, he desired to know what fortune had betided him; and Lisi related to him what had passed with the youths he met at the tavern, and of the present he had received from them, but kept silence upon the conversation they had held together. Then Gianni sighed for the moment when he could take leave of his brother, and say that he was going to rest because he was tired. And when he left his brother, he straightway wended his way towards the tavern, and reaching there, he found the twelve youths, and he began to converse with them; and that same youth putting to him the question anent the month of March, he opened his mouth and throat, and began to say, 'Oh may God confound this accursed month of March, enemy of those infected with the French disease; hateful to shepherds; troubling the good humour; and ruin to the body: a month that an thou desirest to announce to some one his ruin, thou sayest, "Wend thy ways, March hath shaved thee;" a month that an thou desirest to give any one the highest title of presumptuous, thou sayest, "What cureth March?" In brief it is a month that would make the fortune of the earth, and the happiness of the world, and the prosperity of mankind, if the place were cleared of it by the squadron of its brothers.' The month of March, hearing this very complimentary address from Gianni, spent his time pompously in the house till morning, thinking the while how to serve him out for his fine speech, and Gianni being desirous to depart, he gave him a good leave-taking,

saying to him, 'Always, when thou desirest somewhat, say, "Switch, give me an hundred;" and thou shalt see union pearls threaded in a rush.' Gianni thanked the youth, and began to touch of spur, faring onwards without stay or delay, nor would he make trial of the 'Switch' until he arrived at his own house.

As soon as he laid foot upon his threshold, he went to a secret chamber, so as to be able to hide the monies which he hoped to get from the switching, and he said, 'Switch, give me an hundred,' and the switch laid it down upon his shoulders, and bade him come back for the rest, doing the part of a composer of music on the legs and face in such a manner that, at his brother's cries, Lisi ran to see what had happened, and beholding that the switching would not cease, but went on like an untethered horse, he opened his casket, and by its aid caused it to stop. Then he asked Gianni what was the matter, and what had happened to him, and Gianni related to him the whole story, and when he ended, Lisi said to him that he had no one to blame but himself, since he had been the cause of his own hurt through his cross temper: he had done like the camel that, wishing to have horns, had lost his ears; and that he should learn another time to keep a bridle on his tongue, which had been the key that opened the warehouse of this misfortune, because an he had spoken well of the youth, perhaps he would have gathered the same fortune as himself, so much more that speaking well is a merchandise that costeth nothing, and bringeth gain usually more than one thinketh of. At last he consoled him by saying that he had better not seek more ease than that which Heaven had accorded to him, that his casket sufficed to fill up to crushing thirty misers' houses, and that he would be master of all his goods, because to a liberal man Heaven is treasurer,

and that if it had been another brother he would have disliked him for the cruelties he had used towards him in times gone by, when he was in misery, but on the other hand he believed that his poverty had been the cause of his riches which had sent him fair wind, and carried him into good port, and therefore he would be merciful unto him, and he felt in his soul spirit to recognise the favour. Gianni, hearing his brother's words, begged him to forgive him for his past behaviour, and together in unison they enjoyed the good fortune sent them from heaven, and from that hour Gianni spake well of all things, no matter how bad they were, because

'A dog scalded by hot water,
Is ever after afraid of cold water too.'

PINTO - SMAUTO.

THIRD DIVERSION

Of the Fifth Day.

Bertha refuseth to take a husband ; at last she kneadeth one with her own hands, and he is stolen from her by a queen ; after troubles and travails she findeth him, and with great art winning him back, fareth with him to her own home.

THE tale related by Cecca pleased well all hearers, and Meneca, who was ready on her horse to begin her own story, seeing that everybody had open ears to listen, spake as follows :

It hath always been more difficult for man to save whatso he hath acquired than to acquire again whatso he hath lost, because in the latter event Fortune co-operates, and she oftentimes helpeth unjustly, whilst in the former there is need of sound judgment. It is often seen of a person who cannot discourse at ease, that not knowing how, he will rise and mount where all good is found, but for lack of wit to keep the position, he unfailingly slideth down : as ye will clearly see and will learn from the story that I am going to relate, if ye are intelligent enough to understand.

There once lived a merchant, who was blessed with an only daughter, whom he greatly desired to see settled in life ; but whenever he touched the strings of the lute on

the subject, he found her a thousand miles distant in thought from his intention, because the empty-headed damsel, like an ape, hated the tail, and like territory sold, or preserved game, she refused to have any intercourse with men, and wished that it was always fair-day at her tribunal, always holiday at her school, always court-feast for her bank, so that her sire became sorrowful and filled with disappointment.

One day of the days he must needs go to a fair, so before departing he asked his daughter Bertha, thus was she hight, what she desired that he should bring her upon his return, and she replied, ' O my father, an thou lovest me, bring me half an hundredweight of sugar from Palermo, and half of ambrosian almonds,* with four or six bottles of scented waters, and some musk and ambergris, and some amber ; and bring me also about forty pearls, two sapphires, and a few garnets and rubies, with some gold thread, and above all a kneading-trough and a silver scraper.' The sire marvelled with exceeding marvel to hear these extravagant requisitions of his daughter, but unwilling to contradict her, he fared on his journey, and on his return he punctually brought the things whereof she had commissioned him, and when she saw them, she took them, and shut herself up in a chamber. Then she began to knead a quantity of almond paste, mixed with sugar, and rose-water, and perfume ; and when it was ready she shaped an handsome youth, with hair of the threads of gold, and eyes of the two sapphires, and teeth of the pearls, and lips of the rubies. She shaped him so comely and graceful that he needed only the power of speech to be perfect.

* 'Mandorle ambrosine' = ambrosian almonds ; the best kind of almonds in Naples.

Now Bertha, having heard it said that at the prayers and supplications of a certain king of Cyprus a statue became a living being, began to beseech, and pray, and supplicate the goddess of love that her statue should be imbued with life; and so much did she pray that at last the statue began to open its eyes. When she beheld this, she redoubled her prayers and supplications, and soon the statue began to breathe, and after the breath came the word, and at last the members of the body commenced to act in their usual way, and the youth to walk. Bertha, with greater joy than if she had gained a kingdom, embraced him and kissed him, and taking him by the hand, led him before her sire, and said to him, 'O my father and my lord, thou hast always said thou wast desirous to see me wed, and I, to please thee, have kneaded myself a husband according to my heart's desire.' The father, beholding this handsome youth, whom he had not seen go in, come forth of his daughter's chamber, wondered with exceeding wonder, and perceiving so much beauty, grace, and comeliness (folk might have paid a copper coin each to sight his shapely form), was pleased that the marriage feast should take place forthwith. And folk came from all the parts of the world, and amongst them was a great queen in disguise, and when she beheld the perfect beauty of Pinto-Smauto (Bertha had named him thus), she took it into her head to have him for herself. Pinto-Smauto, having only opened his eyes to the malice and craft of the world about three hours before, knew not how to trouble water. His bride having bidden him do so, he accompanied to the head of the staircase all the foreigners who had come to honour the bridal feast with their presence; and he did likewise with the queen, who, hending him by the hand, led him slowly to her carriage, drawn by six horses, which was waiting in the

courtyard, wherein she drew him, and bade the coachman depart for her own realm, where Pinto-Smauto, not knowing what had happened to him, became her husband. Such was his case.

Now Bertha awaited and awaited for Pinto-Smauto until, perceiving that he came not, she sent down to the courtyard, to see if he was talking with any one, and to the terrace-roof to see if he had gone to breathe the fresh air: she looked in the closet of ease to see if he were gone to pay the first tribute to the need of life, but not finding him, she directly imagined that some one had stolen him for his great beauty. Then she bade a proclamation be published, but no one appeared to give any news of him; and at last she decided to fare on a journey around the world to seek him. Donning a disguise as a beggar, she wended her way, and after having fared a month's wayfaring, she came to the house of a good old woman, who received her with love and kindness, and hearing of her misfortune, and seeing moreover that Bertha was with child, felt so much compassion of her, that she taught her to say these three words: the first was, 'Tricche Varlacche,* in the house is raining,' the second, 'Anola Tranola,* fritters at the fountain,' the third, 'Backsides and drums, fritters and beans, and caraway-seed.' And she bade her say these words whenever her greatest need came, for she would gain somewhat of benefit. Bertha marvelled to hear of this bran present, but said in her mind, 'Whoso spitteth down thy throat desireth not to see thee dead, and whoso taketh what is given never drieth up; every atom is useful; who knoweth what good fortune may be contained in these

* 'Tricche Varlacche' and 'Anola Tranola' childish words without any meaning, used in children's games.

words?' and saying thus, she thanked the ancient dame, and farwelling her, continued on her wayfare.

After faring on for a length of time, she came to a beautiful city, Monte-retunno hight, and making her way to the royal palace, sought for the love of Heaven a resting-place even in the stable, for she was nigh to be brought to bed with child. When the young damsels of the court heard this, they bade the servants give her a small chamber on the staircase, where the unhappy Bertha rested, and whilst gazing out, she beheld Pinto-Smauto pass that way, whereupon she was ready to slide down the tree of life. Finding herself in such need, she thought it was time to make trial of the first word told her by the ancient dame, and so said 'Tricche Varlacche, in the house it raineth,' and lo and behold, a small gold cart encrusted with jewels stood before her, which went round the room alone, a thing most marvellous to behold; and the young ladies saw it, and related the wondrous sight to the queen, who without loss of time hastened to Bertha's chamber, and seeing the thing, enquired if she would sell it to her, as she would give her whatever she desired. The other answered that although she was but a beggar, she liked her joyance more than all the gold in the world; and therefore, an she longed to have the cart, she must allow her to sleep one night with her husband. The queen marvelled with exceeding marvel to hear this madness of the beggar-woman, who was in rags, and for a caprice would give her so much wealth; but she decreed to win this good mouthful, and thought by giving some sleeping draught to Pinto-Smauto, she would make happy the beggar-woman, and well pay herself. And when night darkened, and the stars showed themselves upon the heavens and the glow-worms upon the earth, the queen

having given the draught to Pinto-Smauto, who always did whatever he was bid, she let him go and lay by Bertha's side. But no sooner had he laid himself down upon the bed, than he fell asleep, like a dormouse, whereupon the wretched Bertha, who thought that that night would suffice to pay her for all the past anguish, perceiving that no audience was vouchsafed to her, began to weep, and wail, and lament exceedingly, reproaching him with that which she had done for him; and she never closed the grieving mouth, whilst the sleeper never opened eyes till the sun came forth, dividing the waters, and separating the shadows from the light, when the queen came down, and taking Pinto-Smauto by the hand, said to Bertha, 'Thou art already satisfied,' and went her ways.

Bertha said in her mind, 'Such happiness mayst thou have all the days of thy life, for I have passed such a bad night that I will remember it for some days.' But unable to resist the longing and anguish, the unhappy damsel tried the second word, saying, 'Anola Tranola, fritters at the fountain,' and lo and behold, a golden cage appeared, with a beautiful bird within it, singing like a nightingale, and made of gold and precious stones; and when the young damsels observed the bird, they referred it to the queen, and she hastened to see him, and asked her the question she had done for the cart, and Bertha answered the same as before, and the queen, having lighted upon and smelt the wrath which burned within her, promised to let her sleep with her husband; and taking the cage with the bird, when night came, she gave the usual draught to Pinto-Smauto, and sent him to sleep with Bertha in the same chamber, where she had laid for them a sumptuous bed. And Pinto-Smauto slept heavily like one dead, and Bertha wailed, and wept, and lamented

with the same lament as hitherto she had done, saying things which would have moved a stone to compassion, and weeping, and lamenting, and buffeting her face, she passed another night full of anguish. When the day arose, the queen came down to fetch away her husband, and left the wretched Bertha cold and frozen, whilst she bit her hands for the trick which had been played upon her.

In the morning Pinto-Smauto went down to the garden to gather some figs, and out of the city-gates he met a cobbler, whose room was next to Bertha's, and all the live-long night he had heard her bemoan herself, and he had not lost a single word of what she said, and so he referred to the king the weeping and lamenting of the unhappy beggar-woman; and the king, who was beginning to grow wise, when he heard this, imagined how this thing might be, and thought in himself that, an it should be vouchsafed to him to sleep once more with the poor woman, he would not drink the potion that the queen had prepared for him. Now Bertha longed to essay the third experiment, and therefore said the third words: 'Backsides and drums, fritters and beans, and caraway-seed.' And behold, some napkins of silk and swathing bands, all purflewed with gold, appeared, and a cradle of gold stood before her; which things being seen by the young damsels, they reported it to their mistress, who bargained to have them as she had done with the others, and receiving the same answer from Bertha, that an she wanted them, she must allow her husband to sleep with her, the queen said to herself, 'I lose naught in satisfying this country-woman, and taking from her such beautiful things.' So she accepted the rich gifts from Bertha, and when night appeared, and settled the instrument for

the debt contracted with sleep and rest, she gave the draught to Pinto-Smauto, but he, instead of drinking it, kept it in his mouth, and pretending to go and empty his bladder, he spat it out in the next chamber, and after went and laid himself down by Bertha's side; and she began the same song as the other nights, telling him how she had kneaded him of sugar and almonds with her own hands, how she had made his hair of threads of gold, and his eyes and mouth of pearls and precious stones, and how he owed the life given to him by the gods to her prayers and supplications, and lastly how he had been stolen from her, and how, full with child, she had wandered through the world in search of him with much labour and travail (may kind Heaven guard from such trial any baptised being), and how she had slept two nights with him, and given in exchange two treasures, yet could not get a single word out of him, and that this was the last night of her hopes and the end of her life. Pinto-Smauto, who was awake, hearing these words, and remembering as in a dream what had befallen him, embraced her, and because the night had come forth in her black mask to open the stars' ball, he arose very softly, and entering within the chamber of the queen, who was drowned in deep slumber, he seized the gifts she had taken from Bertha, and the jewels and monies which he found in her desk, to repay himself for past travail, and returning to his wife, they departed at the self-same hour. And they never ceased faring till they issued from the confines of that realm; and they rested in a comfortable lodging, where Bertha brought to the light a beauteous man-child; and when she was able to leave her bed, she arose, and they departed, and wended their ways to the palace of her father, where

they found him in good health. And his joy and gladness upon beholding his daughter once more were so great, that he became boisterous and cheerful as a boy fifteen years old, and they lived happily together.

The queen found neither her husband, nor the beggar-girl, nor the jewels; and she rent her garments, and pulled her hair, and buffeted her face; and folk were not wanting who said,

‘Whoso deceiveth must not complain if he be himself deceived!’

THE GOLDEN ROOT.

FOURTH DIVERSION

Of the Fifth Day.

Parmetella, daughter of a poor countryman, meeteth good fortune; but in punishment of her too great curiosity, it escapeth her hands. Having passed many dangers, she at length findeth her husband at the house of his mother, who is a ghula, and with his aid at length becometh free of travail and trouble.

MORE than one in that company would have given a finger to have the ability and power to make for themselves a husband or a wife at will, and especially was this so with the prince, who would then have seen by his side a sugar paste instead of a rock of poison; but the game having come round to Tolla's turn, she waited not for the summons to pay her debt, but spake what follows:

To be excessively curious, and to desire to know too much, is like carrying the match in hand in order to set fire to the ammunition of our own fortunes; and whoso seeketh to know the business of other folk, is often deceived in his own; and most times, whoso diggeth in some strange place in search of an hoard findeth in its stead a common sewer, wherein he falleth on his face: as happened to the daughter of a gardener in the manner which followeth.

In ages long gone before, there lived a gardener, who was so exceedingly poor that, however he sweated upon his labour, he could hardly keep himself in bread. But he had three daughters, and he gave them three pigs so that, when the young sucklings grew, he could sell them, and thus save the amount as a small dowry. Pasquzza and Cicca, who were the two elder sisters, took their young pigs to pasture, but would not allow Parmetella, who was the youngest, to go with them, but sending her off, bade her take her little pig to feed elsewhere. So Parmetella carried him into a forest, where the shadows strengthened themselves against the assaults of the sun, and reaching a pasture-ground, amidmost of which stood a fountain of fresh water, which like the hostess of a tavern stood inviting with a silver tongue the wanderers to drink half a measure, she found a tree with golden leaves. Plucking one leaf she brought it to her sire, who with great joy took it, and sold it for twenty ducats, which served to stop some of the holes in his home; and he enquired of her where she had found it, and she answered him 'Take it, O my father, and seek to know no more, an thou desirest not to waste thy fortune;' and returning the next day she did the same; and she continued plucking the leaves until the tree was left as bare as if it had been plundered by the autumn winds. Then she perceived that the tree had a great golden root, which could not be drawn forth by the hand; so she wended home, returning shortly after with an axe, and straightway began to cut at the root of the tree; and pulling it up the best way she could, she beheld underneath it a beautiful staircase of porphyry. So great was Parmetella's curiosity that she descended the stairs, and came to a very large and dark cave, at the end of which she perceived a light.

and walking straight to it, she found an opening leading into a fine plain, amidst of which stood a splendid palace, where one trod upon gold and silver, and looked upon naught but pearls and jewels. And Parmetella wondered with great wonder, and marvelled with exceeding marvel at the sight of so much splendour, and perceiving no living being within this magnificent abode, she entered a saloon, where were hung many pictures, whereon were painted beautiful subjects, and particularly the ignorance of a man believed to be wise, the injustice of him who held the scales, and the wrongs avenged by Heaven, matters truly to cause wonder, so living they seemed; and amid the saloon she found a table laid with things to eat and drink.

Parmetella, who felt her bowels ring, seeing no one near, took her seat at the table like a handsome count at a masked party; but whilst at the best of her enjoyment, behold, a beautiful slave entered, and he said to her, 'Stay, do not go away, as I want thee for my wife, and I shall make thee the happiest woman in the world.' Parmetella, although she felt small with fright, hearing this fair promise, heartened her heart, and contented herself in doing whatsoever the slave desired, and suddenly a diamond carriage was presented to her drawn by four golden horses, with wings of emeralds and rubies, which carried her high in air so that she might enjoy herself; and to attend upon her and do her service were appointed a number of apes clad in cloth-of-gold, and they forthwith changed her from head to foot and arrayed her as a spider in his web, so that she looked indeed as a queen.

When night darkened, when the sun, desirous to sleep on the banks of the Indian rivers without gnats infesting him, put out the light, the slave said, 'O my love, an

thou art willing to sleep, lay thee down upon this bed ; but when thou art well wrapped up in the bed-linen, put out the light, and be careful to do what I bid thee do, an thou desirest not to be deceived in thy spinning.' And Parmetella did as he bade her, and was falling asleep, when no sooner had her eyes begun to feel heavy, than the black slave became a handsome youth, and he laid himself down by her side, and she awaking, and feeling that her wool was carded without being combed, nearly died with affright, but seeing that the matter was reduced to civil war, stood firm at the blows. But the next morning, ere the dawn came forth to seek some new-laid eggs to comfort her old lover, the slave jumped out of bed, and returned in his own dark form, leaving Parmetella curious to know which glutton had sucked up the first new-laid egg of so beautiful a chicken. And again the following night, when she lay down to rest and put out the light, behold, as in the night before, the youth came and lay with her, and when he was tired of playing at that game, he fell asleep. But no sooner had he shut his eyes, than she took up a gun which she had put near the bed, and applying the tinder, lighted a candle, and raising the coverlet, she beheld ebony changed to ivory, caviare into milk, and coals into cream and virgin lime. And whilst she stood open-mouthed, gazing at and contemplating this beautiful pencil-stroke, the best ever given by nature upon this canvas of the marvellous, the youth awoke, and began to curse and swear, and he turned to her, and said, 'Alas, Parmetella, through thy curiosity I shall be obliged to stay another seven years in this accursed chastisement: thou wouldst put thy nose within my secrets, but now begone, break thy neck an thou wilt, and never mayest thou come before me, return to thy ragged skirts, as thou

hast not known thy fortune.' So speaking, he disappeared like quicksilver.

The unhappy damsel remained awhile stiff and frozen with affright ; and bowing her head groundwards, went forth from the palace, and when she came outside the cave, she met a fairy, who said to her, 'O my daughter, my soul weepeth for thee, and for the misfortune which hath befallen thee ; thou art faring to the slaughter-house, where thou wilt pass thy wretched person upon a hair-breadth bridge ; therefore do thou remedy to this thy peril, and take these seven spindles, and these seven figs, this small juglet of honey, and these seven pairs of iron shoes, and wend thy way, and never cease thy wending until these shoes are worn out, and then thou shalt perceive seven women on a terrace-roof spinning with a spindle formed of a dagger and the bones of dead folk, and the thread is wound round the bones ; and knowest thou what to do ? Hide thyself most carefully, and when the thread cometh down, do thou draw off the bone, and put in its stead a fig, anointing the spindle with honey ; because when they will draw it up, and taste the sweet, they will say, "Who hath sweetened my small mouth, may her small chance of fortune be sweetened ;" and after these words, one after the other will say, "O thou who hast brought me these sweet things, let me see thee ;" and thou shalt answer, "I will not, because thou wilt eat me ;" and they will answer, "I will not eat thee, an God take care of my spoon ;" and do thou stand firm on thy feet, and be stubborn ; and they will continue, "I will not eat thee, an God watch over my spit ;" and be thou firm and budge not ; and they will reply, "I will not eat thee, an God watch over my broom ;" and do thou believe them not at all ; and if they say, "I will not eat thee, an the heavens

watch upon my night-vase," do thou shut thy mouth, and let not issue forth from it a single sound, otherwise they will cause thee to leave thy life. At last they will say, "An God guard me from thunder and lightning, I will not eat thee:" then thou mayest go up, for they will not harm thee.' Parmetella, hearing this, thanked and farewelled the fairy, and fared on through wilds and wolds, mountains and plains, until after seven years' journeying her iron shoes were worn out. And she reached a big house with a terrace upon its roof, and there she beheld the seven women spinning. So she did whatso the fairy had advised her to do, and after a thousand games, and signs, and raillery, they swore by thunder and lightning, whereupon she showed herself, and then went up to them, where the seven said to her 'O thou traitress, thou art the cause that our brother hath been imprisoned in that dark grotto for seven years in the shape of a blackamoor slave, but never mind, an thou hast known how to stop our just revenge with the oath we have taken, with the first opportunity thou wilt discount the new and the old fault. Now thou must do as we bid thee: go and hide thyself behind that kneading-trough, and when our mother, who would eat thee without fail an she saw thee, cometh home, arise and come forth, and get hold firmly of her breasts, which she carrieth like saddle-bags, thrown over her shoulders, and pull as hard as thou canst, and let not go thy hold until she swcareth the oath by thunder and lightning not to harm thee.'

And Parmetella did their bidding, and the ghula swore by the fire-shovel, by the small vine, by the pegasus, by the reel, by the rack, and at last swore by the thunder and lightning, whereupon Parmetella let go the breasts, and showed herself to the ghula, who said,

'Alas, thou deservest a kick and a straight gibbet, thou traitress: with the first rain I will make thee carry the wash.' And the ghula sought with a toothpick every chance to devour Parmetella, and one day she took twelve sacks of pulse, as peas, beans, and other kinds, and said to her, 'Traitor, take thou this pulse, and choose and pick it, so that each sort be separate from the other: and if this evening the picking be not finished, I shall swallow thee like three coppers' worth of fritters.' The unhappy Parmetella seated herself near the sacks, and said, weeping, 'O my beauteous mother, when the golden stump shall fall upon me, that will be the time when the disputes shall cease, and my weeping; to behold a black face return to white, this wretched heart hath become a thing of naught. Alas! woe is me, I am lost, I am dispatched, I am going, there is no more remedy for me; every moment I expect to fill the guts of the ghula; there is no one to help me, there is no one to advise me, there is no one to console me.'

Now whilst Parmetella was thus lamenting and weeping, behold Thunder-and-Lightning appeared (thus was the ghula's son hight), for the time of his exile had ended and the curse which had been cast upon him had ceased. Although he was angry with Parmetella, yet still his blood could not turn into water, and seeing her weeping and wailing, he said to her, 'O thou traitress, what causeth thee to weep?' Then she related to him all which had befallen her with his mother, and how his mother meant to eat her; to which he answered, 'Arise, and hearten thine heart, as never shall what she saith take place.' And scattering the pulse upon the ground, he made a deluge of ants come forth, and they at once

began to carry the pulse away to separate heaps, so that Parmetella had no difficulty in gathering them up, and putting them in their separate sacks. When the ghula came, and found the service done, she was in despair, and said, "That dog of Thunder-and-Lightning hath played me this trick; but thou shalt pay for it; take this fustian, it is for twelve mattresses, and let them be filled with feathers by this evening, otherwise I will do quick work of thee." The unhappy damsel, taking the stuff, and seating herself upon the ground, began to weep, and wail, and buffet her face, making two fountains of her eyes, when Thunder-and-Lightning appeared, and said, 'Weep not, thou traitress, leave it to me, I will send thee safely in port: therefore scatter thine hair about thy face, and lay thou the mattresses on the ground, and cry with loud cries, and weep, and lament, and say, "The king of the birds is dead;" and thou shalt see what will occur.' And Parmetella did as she was told, and behold, a cloud of birds darkened the air, and beating their wings, they shook off their feathers by basketfuls, so that by the end of an hour the mattresses were filled.

When the ghula came, and saw what had fortune'd, she was wroth with exceeding wrath, and said in herself, 'Thunder-and-Lightning hath taken to do me mischief, but may I be dragged tied to the tail of a monkey, if I do not catch her at somewhat amiss, whence she will be unable to escape.' So, turning to Parmetella, she said, 'Haste thou, and run to the house of my sister, and bid her send me instruments of music, because I have given Thunder-and-Lightning in marriage, and we will hold a bridal festival fit for a king.' On the other side she sent word to her sister that the traitress was coming to

fetch the instruments, and to bid her, when she came, to slay her, and cook her, and she would come and partake of the feast. Parmetella, hearing that lighter services were commanded of her, felt more cheerful, believing that time had sweetened her bitterness. O how crooked are human judgments! On the way she was met by Thunder-and-Lightning, who, seeing her go at a sharp pace, said to her, 'Where art thou going, O thou unhappy one? Dost thou not see that thou art going to the slaughter-house, and art building the gibbet for thyself, and art sharpening the knife? that thou art mixing the poisonous potion for thyself? that thou art sent by the ghula to be slain and eaten? But hearken to me, and doubt not; take thou this small loaf, and this bundle of hay, and this stone, and when thou shalt come to the house of my aunt, thou shalt find a dog, which will come barking to meet thee, and to bite thee, and do thou cast this small loaf at him, thus thou wilt shut his mouth; after passing the dog, thou shalt find a horse loose, which will come up to thee to kick thee, and to crush thee under foot, but do thou give him some fodder, so that it will stop his feet. At last thou shalt come to a door, which is banging continually, and do thou prop it with this stone, so that thou wilt ease its fury; then mount thou up above, and thou shalt find the ghula with a child in her arms. And she hath heated the oven ready to roast thee in it, and she will say to thee, "Hold this child; and await until I go up above to get the instruments of music;" but know thou that she goeth only to sharpen her tusks to pluck thee to pieces, and do thou cast the child, without any pity, within the oven, because it is ghula's flesh; take the instruments which are behind the door, and slide before the ghula

cometh back: otherwise thou art lost. But beware, an thou wishest not to have any trouble, not to open the box containing the sounds.'

Parmetella did as her lover bade her, but as she was coming back with the music, she opened the box, and behold the things all flew out and about, here a flute and there a bagpipe, here a reed and there a spoon, and they made a thousand different noises in the air; whilst Parmetella ran after them, crying with loud cries, and buffeting her face.

Meanwhile the ghula came forth, and not finding Parmetella, looked out of the window, and called out to the door, 'Crush thou this traitress,' and the door answered, 'I will not harm that unfortunate who hath propped me up.' Then cried the ghula to the horse, 'Trample thou down this rogue;' and the horse replied, 'I will not trample upon her, because she gave me some fodder to munch.' Lastly the ghula called to the dog saying, 'Bite thou this coward,' and the dog answered, 'Let the poor thing go in peace, for she hath given me a little loaf.'

Now Parmetella, who meanwhile was crying aloud, and hastening after the instruments of music, was met in the way by Thunder-and-Lightning, who gave her a good scolding, saying, 'O thou traitress, wilt thou never learn, even at thine own expense? Knowest thou not that for this accursed curiosity of thine thou art in the strait in which thou findest thyself?' And having thus spoken, he called back the instruments of music, and they came, and he shut them up again, bidding Parmetella to carry the box to his mother. But when the ghula saw her, she cried aloud, saying, 'O thou cruel fate and fortune, even my own sister worketh against me, and refuseth to give me this satisfaction.'

In the meanwhile the young lady who had been destined as a bride for Thunder-and-Lightning arrived; and she was as hideous as a pestilence, a glandule in the flesh, an harpy, an evil spirit, a gibbet, an owl, a rotten cask, a consumption; and she was decked with a thousand flowers and sprays, which made her look like a newly opened tavern. Then the ghula prepared a sumptuous banquet; and because she smothered her ill-feeling under the mask of pleasantness, she bade them lay the table near a well, where she set her seven daughters, each hending a torch in hand, but she bade Parmetella hold two torches, and made her sit on the edge of the well, with the design that when she fell asleep she might tumble to the bottom.

Now whilst the viands came and went, and wine was drunk, and their blood began to feel heated, Thunder-and-Lightning, who was sitting between the bride (may evil befall her) and Parmetella, said to the latter, 'O traitress, lovest thou me?' and she replied, 'I love thee up to the terrace-roof;' and he rejoined 'An thou love me, give me a kiss;' and she, 'God forefend it, avaunt from me, keep thy sweet goods for whoso singeth after thee; may Heaven maintain her for thee for another hundred years, with health and men-children.' Then answered the new bride, 'An I even lived for an hundred years, I would always think of thee as a most wretched being, for refusing to kiss such an handsome youth; whilst I for two chesnuds allowed a shepherd to kiss me, pinching my cheeks.' At these words in proof of the prowess of the bride, the bridegroom swelled with rage like a toad, and the viands stuck in his throat; but with all he heartened his heart, and swallowed this pill, thinking in his mind that he would square up accounts after-

wards, and settle the reckoning. But when the tables were cleared, he bade his mother and sisters go, and leave him with the bride and Parmetella, to wend to their rest; and he bade Parmetella pull off his boots, and whilst she was thus employed, he said to the bride; 'O my wife, hast thou seen how this lump of filthiness hath denied me a kiss?' and the bride answered, 'She was wrong, to draw back and not kiss thee, thou being an handsome youth; whilst I for two chesnuts allowed a shepherd to kiss me.'

Thunder-and-Lightning could not contain himself any longer, but with the lightning of disdain, and the thunder of deeds, and the mustard mounting to his nose, he caught up a knife, and cut the bride's throat, and digging a pit in the cellar, buried her there; and embracing Parmetella, he said to her, 'Thou art my joy, thou art the flower of womankind, the very ass of honour, and therefore turn thou those eyes to me, and give me thine hand, and uphold thy mouth, and let thine heart be near to mine, and I will be thine whilst the world is world;' and so saying, he led her to the bed, and both lay together, and played and joyed together till the sun led forth from the stables of water the horses of fire, and chased them forth to pasture in the fields sown by the dawn. When the ghula came in the morning with new-laid eggs to comfort the bride and bridegroom, so that she might say, blessed is he who gets tied with the marriage knot and goeth in bondage, she found Parmetella in the arms of her son, and hearing how the matter had ended, left them, and hastened to the house of her sister to concoct a plan, and devise a device, by which she could rid herself of this chip in her eyes, her son being unable to help

her. But she found on her arrival there, that her sister, full of grief at the sight of her child baked in the oven, had cast herself therein and been baked; and the stink of the burnt flesh infected the neighbourhood, and the ghula, when she beheld this fearful scene, was distracted, and she wailed, and wept, and lamented, and so great was her despair that, ghula as she was, she became a ram, and ran around the house hitting her head against the walls until her brains were scattered about; and thus Thunder-and-Lightning lived with Parmetella, and made her and his sisters happy and contented, and they all lived peacefully together in joyance and delight, finding the truth of the saying that

'Whoso is firm of purpose ever winneth.'

SUN, MOON, AND TALIA.

FIFTH DIVERSION

Of the Fifth Day.

Talia, through a chip of flax, is left by her sire in a palace, where a king findeth her, and has by her two children; his wife, being jealous of him, getteth them in her power, and commandeth that the children be slain, and cooked, and given as food to their sire, and Talia be burnt; the cook saveth the children, and Talia is rescued by the king, who biddeth his wife be cast in the same fire which she had prepared for Talia.

THE fate of the ghula, instead of causing an atom of compassion, only excited pleasure, and every one rejoiced that affairs had fallen out with Parmetella better than was expected. As it was now the turn of Popa to reason and relate a story, she, who was ready with her foot upon the stirrup, spake thus:

It is a matter known by experience, that cruelty becometh the hangman of him that exerciseth it; and whoso spitteth up to heaven, upon his own face the spittle falleth. And the reverse of the medal is that innocence is like a sprout of the fig-tree, easily broken; and where the point of the sword of malignity remaineth in such a way and manner that a poor man believeth himself dead and buried, behold, he riseth again in his own flesh and bones: as ye will hear in the story that I,

from the cask of my memory, and with the point of my tongue, will pierce and spin.

There once lived a great lord, who was blessed with the birth of a daughter, whom he named Talia, and he sent for the sages and astrologers in his estates, to foretell him what lot and fortune would befall her; and they met, and counselled together, and cast the horoscope over her, and at length they came to the conclusion that she would incur great danger from a chip of flax. Her father therefore forbade that any flax, or hemp, or any other matter of the kind should be brought within his house, so that she should escape the predestined danger.

One day of the days, when Talia had grown into a young and beauteous damsel, she was looking out of a window, when she beheld passing that way an ancient dame, who was spinning, and Talia, never having seen a distaff or a spindle, was pleased to see the twistings of the spindle, and she felt so much curiosity as to what thing it was, that she bade the old dame come to her, and taking the distaff from her hand, she began to stretch the flax. Unfortunately one of the chips of the flax entered her nail, and Talia fell dead upon the ground. When the affrighted old woman beheld this, she hastened down the stairs, and is hastening still.

As soon as the wretched father heard of the disaster which had taken place, he bade them, after having paid for this tub full of sour wine with casks full of tears, lay her out in the palace (it was one of his country mansions), and put her seated on a velvet throne under a dais of brocade; and closing the doors, being desirous to forget all and to drive from his memory his great misfortune, he abandoned for ever the house wherein he had suffered so great a loss. Such was his case.

After a time, a king went forth to the chase, and by decree of the Decreeer he passed that way, and one of his falcons, escaping from his hand, flew within that house by way of one of the windows, and not returning at the call, the king bade one of his suite knock at the door, believing the palace to be inhabited; but though he knocked for a length of time, nobody came to answer the summons, so the king bade them bring a vintager's ladder, for he himself would clamber up and search the house, to discover what was within it. Thereupon he mounted and entered, and sought in all the chambers, and nooks, and corners, and marvelled with exceeding marvel to find no living person within it. At last he came to the saloon, and when the king beheld Talia, who seemed as one ensorcelled, he believed that she slept, and he called her, but she remained insensible, and crying aloud, he felt his blood course hotly through his veins in contemplation of so many charms; and he lifted her in his arms, and carried her to a bed, whereon he gathered the first fruits of love, and leaving her upon the bed, returned to his own kingdom, where, in the pressing business of his realm, he for a time thought no more of this incident. Now Talia was delivered after nine months of a couple of beautiful creatures, one a boy and the other a girl; in them could be seen two rare jewels; and they were attended by two fairies, who came to that palace, and put them at their mother's breasts; and once they sought the nipple, and not finding it, they began to suck at the fingers, and they sucked so much that the chip of the flax came forth; and Talia awoke as if from a long sleep, and beholding beside her the two priceless gems, she held them to her breast, and gave them the nipple to suck, and the babes were dearer to her than her own life. Finding herself

alone in that palace with two children by her side, she knew not what had happened to her; but she noticed that the table was laid, and refreshments and viands brought in to her, without seeing any attendants.

In the meanwhile the king remembered Talia, and saying that he would go a-birding and a-hunting, he fared to the palace, and found her awake, and with two cupids of beauty, and he was glad with exceeding gladness, and he related to Talia who he was, and how he had seen her, and what had taken place; and when she heard this, their friendship was knitted with tighter bonds, and he remained with her for a few days. After that time he bade her farewell, and promised to return soon, and take her with him to his kingdom. And he fared to his realm, but he could not find any rest, and at all hours he had in his mouth the names of Talia, and of Sun and Moon (thus were the two children hight), and when he took his rest, he called either one or other of them. Now the king's wife began to suspect that something was wrong from the delay of her husband in the chase, and hearing him name continually Talia, Sun, and Moon, she waxed hot with another kind of heat than the sun's, and therefore sending for the secretary, she said to him, 'Hearken to me, O my son, thou art abiding between two rocks, between the post and the door, between the poker and the grate. An thou wilt tell me with whom the king thy master, and my husband, is in love, I will gift thee and largesse thee with treasures untold; and an thou hidest from me the truth, I will not let them find thee neither dead nor alive.' Our gossip was frightened with sore affright, and his greed of gain being strong above fear, blinding his eyes to all honour, and to all sense of justice, a pointless sword of faith, he related to her all things, like

bread and bread, and wine and wine. And the queen, hearing how matters stood, despatched the secretary to Talia, in the name of the king, bidding her send the children, for he wished to see them; and Talia with great joy did as she was commanded. Then the queen (that heart of Medea) told the cook to slay them, and prepare several tasteful dishes for her wretched husband; but the cook, who was tender-hearted, seeing these two beautiful golden apples, felt pity and compassion of them, and he carried them home to his wife, and bade her hide them; and he made ready two lambs in their stead in a thousand different ways, and when the king came, the queen, with great pleasure, bade the viands be served up, and whilst the king ate with delight, saying, 'O how good is this priest of Lanfusa, O how tasteful is this other dish, by the soul of mine ancestors;' she ever replied, 'Eat, eat, that of thine own thou eatest.' The king heeded not for twice or three times this repetition; but at last seeing that the music continued, answered, 'I know perfectly well that I am eating of mine own, because thou hast brought naught into this house;' and waxing wroth with exceeding wrath, he arose and went forth to a villa at some distance of his palace, to solace his soul and alleviate his anger.

In the meanwhile the queen, not being satisfied of the evil already done, sent for the secretary and bade him fare to the palace and bring Talia thither, saying that the king longed for her presence and was expecting her. As soon as she heard these words, Talia forthwith departed, believing that she obeyed the commands of her lord, for she longed with excessive longing to behold her light and joy, knowing not what was preparing for her. And she arrived in the presence of the queen, whose face changed by the fierce fire which burned within, and looked like

the face of Nero; and she addressed her thus, saying, 'Well come, and fair welcome, O thou Madam Rattle, thou art a fine piece of goods, thou ill weed, who art enjoying my husband; is it thou who art the lump of filth, the cruel bitch, that hath caused me such a turning of head? Wend thy ways, for in sooth thou art welcome in purgatory, where I will compensate thee for all the damage thou hast done to me.' Talia, hearing these words, began to excuse herself, saying that it was not her fault, because the king her husband had taken possession of her territory when she was drowned in sleep; but the queen would not listen to her excuses, and bade a large fire to be lit in the courtyard of the palace, and commanded that Talia should be cast therein. The damsel, perceiving that matters had taken a bad turn, knelt before the queen, and besought her to allow her at least to doff the garments she wore. And the queen, not for pity of the unhappy damsel, but to gain also those robes, which were purflewed with gold and pearls, bade her undress, saying, 'Thou canst doff thy raiment, I am satisfied;' and Talia began to take them off, and at every piece of garment she drew off she uttered a loud scream, and having doffed the robe, the skirt, the body, and the under-bodice, she was on the point of withdrawing her last garment, when she uttered a last scream louder than the rest; and they dragged her towards the pile, to make cinders of her to warm Carontes' breeches; but the king suddenly appeared, and finding this spectacle, wished to know the matter, and asking for his children, heard that the wife who reproached him for his treachery had caused them to be slaughtered and served as meat for him. Now when the wretched king heard this, he gave himself up to despair, and said 'Alas! then I, myself, am the wolf of my own sweet lambs; alas! and why did these

my veins know not the fountains of their own blood ; ah, thou renegade bitch, what evil deed is this which thou hast done ? Begone, thou shalt get thy desert as the stumps and I will not send that tyrant-faced one to the Colosseum to do her penance ;' and thus saying, he commanded that the queen should be cast into the fire which she had prepared for Talia, and the secretary with her, because he had been the handle for this bitter play, and weaver of this wicked plot, and he was going to do the same with the cook, whom he believed to be the slaughterer of his children, when the man cast himself at his feet, saying, 'In very sooth, O my lord, for the service I have done to thee, there should be naught else than a pile of living fire, and no other help than a pole from behind, and no other entertainment than stretching and shrinking within the blazing fire would be needful, and no other advantage should I seek than to have my ashes, the ashes of a cook, mixed up with the queen's. But this is not the reward that I expect for having saved thy children, in spite of the gall of that bitch, who desired to slay them, to return within thy body that part which was thine own body.' The king hearing these words, his senses forsook him, and his wits were bewildered, and he seemed to be dreaming, and he could not believe what his own ears had heard ; therefore turning to the cook, he said, 'If it be true that thou hast saved my children, be sure that I will take thee away from turning the spit, and I will put thee in the kitchen of this breast, to turn and twist as thou likest all my desires, giving thee such a reward as shall enable thee to call thyself a happy man in this world.' Whilst the king spake these words, the wife of the cook, seeing her husband's need, brought forth the two children, Sun and Moon before their sire. And he never tired at playing the game of three with his wife and children.

making a mill-wheel of kisses, now with one and then with other ; and giving a rich gift and largesse to the cook, he made him a gentleman of his chamber, and took Talia to wife ; and she enjoyed a long life with her husband and her children, thus knowing full well that at all times

'He whom fortune favoureth
Even in sleep good raineth for him.'

THE WISE WOMAN.

SIXTH DIVERSION

Of the Fifth Day.

Sapia, daughter of a baroness, teacheth Cenzullo, the son of a king, who will not understand or keep in mind the alphabetical letters, to be prudent; but receiving a buffet from her, and willing to be revenged, he taketh her to wife, and after a thousand outrages, she having presented him, without his knowledge, with three children, they become reconciled and united.

THE prince and princess were pleased that Talia, despite her travails, came to a good ending, for they hardly thought that amid all this storm she would come safe into good port; but bidding Antonella to do her duty, and uncover her story from its hidden depths, she put forth her speech thus:

Three kinds of ignoramuses are to be found in this world, who deserve, more than any others, to be put in an oven: the first, whoso knoweth naught; the second, whoso is unwilling to know aught; and the third, whoso pretendeth to know all. Of the second species is he of whom I am going to speak to you: for, unwilling to allow any knowledge to enter his head, he hateth whoso trieth to teach him, and like a new Nero seeketh to withdraw the means of getting bread.

There once lived a king of Castiello-chiuso, and he

had an only son, who was a blockhead, nor could he in any way be made to learn the A.B.C., for if anybody spake of letters or of learning, he became wild, and acted madly, and neither blows, nor words, nor threatening had any effect upon him. Now the unhappy father had swollen like a toad with rage, nor knew how to wake up the wit of this son of his so as not to leave his kingdom in the hands of a mamcluke, fearing it to be an impossible thing that ignorance and dominion could go together. At this time there was a daughter of the Baroness Cenza who, for the knowledge which she had gained, at thirteen years of age had acquired for herself the name of Sapia, or the wise woman; and her good qualities having been reported to the king, he bethought himself to send his son to the baroness, so that she should bring him up with her daughter, believing that with the company and example of the damsel the prince might learn to do some good. Therefore he sent him to the palace of the baroness. Arriving there, Sapia began to teach him first the sign of the cross; but perceiving that he was casting behind him kind treatment and kind words, and that good rede entered one ear and came forth from the other, she one day lifted her hand and dealt him a buffet, whereupon Carluccio (thus was the prince hight) felt hurt and slighted, and what he had not done for kindness he did for shame and despite, so that in a few months he had learned to read; moreover, he soon passed the grammar, and knew all the rules, so that his sire was pleased indeed, and taking Carluccio away from the house of the baroness, sent him to study other things. In time he became one of the wisest men in his kingdom; but the blow he received from Sapia was so much impressed in his

mind that it stood ever before him, and when asleep he dreamt of it, and he resolved to avenge himself or die.

In the meanwhile Sapia had reached a marriageable age, and the prince, who stood ready, match in hand, to set fire to the mine, took advantage of the occasion to be revenged, and said to his sire, 'O my lord, I confess that I have received my being from you, and therefore I am under very deep obligation to you; but to Sapia, from whom I have received my well-being and my ability, I feel more than obliged; and therefore finding no way sufficient to repay her the debt, an it please you, I would take her to wife, assuring you that you would put a careful guardian over my person.' The king, hearing this decision, answered, 'O my son, although Sapia is not of a position equal to thine own, yet with her virtue set in the balance of our blood, it falleth down so much, that she can be well fit for this marriage; therefore, if thou art content, I am pleased and repaid.' Thereupon, sending for the baroness, the marriage settlements were drawn out, and a marriage-feast spread as befitted a great lord. Then the prince asked the king to grant him the boon that he might have a separate apartment, where he might dwell alone with his wife. The king, to please him, bade a beautiful palace be prepared, separated from his own, wherein the prince led Sapia. And he shut her in a chamber, and gave her little to eat, and worst to live upon, doing the while whatsoever he could to annoy her, so much so that the unhappy lady became the most desperate woman in the world, not knowing the cause of this bad treatment which was meted out to her as soon as she had entered that house. One day a longing seized her lord to behold Sapia, so he entered her chamber, and enquired how she was.

'Pass thine hand upon my stomach,' answered Sapia, 'and thou shalt see how I can stay so; what have I done to thee, and why dost thou treat me worse than a dog? Why didst thou ask me to be thy wife, if it was thy desire to treat me like a slave?' At these words the prince answered, 'Dost thou not know that whoso doeth an offence writeth it in sand, but whoso receiveth it writeth it on marble? Remember well what thou didst to me when thou wast wont to teach me reading, and know that I have taken thee to wife for no other reason but that thy life may be ever a sauce of revenge for the injury thou didst to me.' 'Then,' replied Sapia, 'I gather evil because I have sown good. If I gave thee a blow, it was because thou wast an ass, and to make thee become wise. Thou knowest that whoso loveth thee maketh thee weep, and whoso hateth thee maketh thee laugh.' If the prince was wroth before because of the blow received, he was now still more angry because he was reproached with his own ignorance; and so much the more, since he thought that Sapia should give herself the blame for the error; instead he saw that she, brave as a game-cock, replied to each of his peckings, and therefore turning his back upon her, he went his ways, leaving her in a worse plight than before. Returning a few days after, and finding her in the same mood, he again went forth from her more ill-pleased than at the last time, resolving in his mind to let her cook in her own water like a many-feet.

In the meanwhile the king had renounced the goods of this life upon the column of a martyr's bed, and the prince was left lord and master of the realm, and he desired to go in person to take possession, and commanding a suite of knights, and noblemen, and soldiers to

be got ready to accompany him, worthy of his person, he departed with them. Hereupon the baroness, who knowing the hard life led by her daughter, and wishful to remedy the evil, commanded a cave to be built beneath the palace of the prince, and passing through it, she was thus able to bring some refreshment to her daughter. And knowing of the king's intended journey, a few days before he departed she ordered some new carriages and sumptuous liveries, and arraying her daughter in rich garments, and sending with her a company of lords and ladies, bade her depart by a short cut, so that she should arrive one day before at the place where her husband was going ; and she engaged the palace vis-a-vis the one where the prince would dwell. And Sapia, arrayed in fine array, stood at the window, and when the king arrived, and beheld this flower out of the pot of the graces, he fell in love with her at first sight, and did all things in his hand to obtain possession of her, and he enjoyed her, and left her with child, and gave her a necklace to wear in remembrance of his love. Then the king having departed to fare to other cities of his kingdom, she went back to her own home, and at the end of nine months brought forth into the world a son. And the king returned to the capital of his kingdom, and hoping to find Sapia dead, came to see her, but he found her more fresh and beautiful than before, and more obstinate than she had ever been, and she again told him that it was to make him wise, when he was an ass, that she had signed five fingers on his face. The king, in high disdain and wrath, departed, and intending to visit another part of his estates, bade his suite accompany him ; and Sapia advised by her mother, did as she had done the first time, and once more she enjoyed her husband, who gifted her with a rare gem

to wear upon her head ; and she conceived of him, and when the time of bearing was come, she gave birth to another son, and returned to her own home. And the same matter occurred a third time, and the king gifted her with a thick gold chain, set with precious jewels ; and she conceived and bare him a daughter, who came into port in due time : and the king returned from his journey, and heard that (the baroness having administered a sleeping draught to her daughter, and having given out that she was dead) they were going to bury his wife ; and after she was duly buried, her mother had her brought forth from the grave, and hid her in her own palace. Then the king after a short time held a festival, and treated for a new marriage with a great lady, and she came to the palace, and many feasts and entertainments took place, and at one of these banquets appeared Sapia in the saloon, with the three children, who were three jewels, and casting herself at the king's feet, she begged him to do her justice and not rob these children of their rightful position, as they were of his own flesh and blood ; and the king was struck dumb with amazement, and was like a man in a dream. At last, seeing that Sapia's knowledge was great and reached unto the stars, and beholding before him three beauteous props for his old age, he softened his heart ; and giving that great lady in marriage to his brother, and presenting them with a large estate, he took Sapia to his breast, letting the folk of the world know that

'A wise man ruleth the stars.'

THE FIVE SONS.

SEVENTH DIVERSION

Of the Fifth Day.

Pacione sendeth forth five of his sons into the world to learn a craft, and each returneth with some experience; they go to save the daughter of a king stolen by a ghul, and returning with her, dispute as to who did the greatest deed of prowess so as to be worthy of her and make her his wife; but the king giveth her to the father, as the parent stem of all these branches.

AS soon as the story of Antonella was ended, Ciulla, sitting erect upon her chair, and glancing around to see that all listened with attention, with graceful mien spake thus:

Whoso sitteth upon ashes possesseth a stupid and forgetful mind; whoso walketh not seeth not, and whoso seeth not knoweth not; whoso wandereth through the world becometh expert; and practice maketh the skilful doctor; and the faring forth of his own hayloft maketh man brisk: as I will explain to you in the tale which followeth.

There once lived a man of weal, Pacione hight, who had five good-for-nothing sons, and the poor father, unable any longer to expend without gain, resolved one day to get rid of them, saying, 'My sons, God knoweth if I love ye; for at the best ye have come forth from my loins; but if I am old, and work little, ye are young and eat much,

and I cannot maintain ye any longer as I have before; every man for himself, and Heaven for all; therefore go ye to gain yourselves masters, and learn some craft or service; but be careful not to make any agreement for more than a year and when the time is ended, I shall expect you at home knowing some craft or virtue.' The sons, hearing this resolution, farewelled him, and taking with them only a change of clothes, each went his way. At the end of the year, they met at their father's house, where they were received with caresses, and as they were tired and hungry, the table was laid, and they sat down. When they were at the best of their eating, they heard a bird singing, and the youngest of the five sons arose and went forth a-birding; and when he returned, the cloth had been removed; and Pacione began to ask of his sons, 'Now do ye gladden my heart, and let me know what fine virtues ye have learnt in this time.' Luccio the eldest replied, 'I have learnt the craft of a rogue, where I became the chief of rogues, and the head-master of thieves, and the fourth in the art of marauding, and thou wilt not find a peer to this body, that can with more dexterity cut off knots, or steal cloaks, or wrap up and cut up washing, catch and lighten pockets, clean and put to rights shops, shake and empty purses, sweep and empty boxes; and wherever I can reach, I can show the miracles of hooking.' 'Bravo, in very sooth,' said the father, 'thou hast learnt the craft of a merchant, to make exchange and counterpoints of fingers, with receipts on shoulders, turning of keys, and casting of oar, and scaling of windows, and lengthening of rope; O unhappy me, it had been better that I should have taught thee to work in the spinning-wheel, than feel my body go round like a spinning-wheel, thinking that every hour I may see thee dragged within a court of law, covered

with a paper hat, discovered false, and consigned to work an oar, or an thou escapest this, see thee twist round one day at the end of a rope.' Then turning to Titillo, the second son, he said to him, 'And thou, what fine craft hast thou learnt?' 'To build boats,' answered the son. 'That is better,' replied his sire, 'that is a good and known craft, and thou mayest live all thy life with it. And thou Renzone, what hast thou learnt after such length of time?' 'I can draw the cross-bow so straight that I can even blind a cock,' said the third son. 'It is also something, at least,' replied his father, 'thou canst live by hunting and birding;' and turning to the fourth son he asked him the same question, and Ghiacuccio replied, 'I know an herb that will cause a dead man to rise.' 'Bravo, O thou priest of Lanfusa,' answered Pacione, 'this should be the time when we should be saved from want, and cause folk to live longer than the Verlascio of Capua.' And lastly asking of his younger son, who was named Menecuccio, what craft he knew, the son said, 'I understand the language of birds.' And the father replied, 'Whilst we were at table, thou didst arise to listen to the chirping of the sparrow; and as thou boastest of understanding what they say, do thou tell me what thou didst hear that bird that was upon the tree bough say.' 'It said,' said Menecuccio, 'that a ghul had stolen the daughter of the King of Autogolfo, and carried her on the top of a rock, where no news of her can be heard, and the father had published a ban that whoso findeth his daughter, and bringeth her to him, shall have her as wife.' 'If it be as thou sayest, we are rich,' cried Luccio, 'because I alone am enough to withdraw her from the arms of the ghul.' 'An thou trust to do the deed,' replied the old man, 'let us wend at once to the

presence of the king, and if he give us his word that, an we save her, he will give us his daughter in marriage, let us offer him to find his daughter.'

So all being of one accord, Titillo in a short time built a beautiful boat, wherein they entered, and sailed, and arrived at Autogolfo, where they begged an audience of the king, and when they stood in his presence, they offered to win back his daughter, whereupon the king confirmed the promise. Being thus assured, they at once set out for the rock, where, as good luck would have it, they found the ghul, lying in the sun fast asleep, with his head resting on the breast of Cianna (thus was the damsel hight); and when she beheld the boat coming through the waters, she arose with the pleasure of the sight, but Pacione made a sign to her to be still and silent. Then landing and laying a heavy stone under the ghul's head, they bade Cianna arise, and fare with them to the boat, and as soon as they entered it, they took up the oars and rowed fast onward. But they had not gone far when the ghul awoke, and not finding Cianna by his side, he looked round the shore, and beheld the boat carrying her away, whereupon changing himself into the shape of a black cloud, he flew through the air to reach the boat. Cianna, who knew the ghul's art, recognised him at once in the cloud, and she feared with sore affright, so that she had barely courage enough to warn Pacione and his sons, when she fell in a dead faint. Then Renzone, who beheld the cloud coming nearer, taking hold of his cross-bow, pulled the string and hit the ghul in the eyes, thus blinding him, and the pain was such that he fell straight down like hail into the sea. And they stood watching the cloud, and when the ghul fell, they turned round to see to Cianna, and she was stretched at their feet, white

and cold, and to all appearance gone out of all life. Thereupon Pacione buffeted his face, and plucked his beard, exclaiming, 'Behold, the sleep and the oil are lost; behold our trouble and travail cast to the winds, and our hopes into the sea; she hath already gone to feed in the heavenly pastures, so that we may die from hunger; she hath said good night, so that we might have an evil day; she hath broken the thread of life, so that we may break the thread of all our hopes. It is well seen that the design of a poor man never succeedeth; it is well proven that whoso is born unfortunate dieth unhappy; behold, the daughter of the king is freed, behold us returned to Autogolfo, behold the wife won, behold the festivals of the folk, behold the sceptre won, behold us fallen upon our backsides on the ground!'

Ghiacuccio hearkened to all this moaning, but at last perceiving that the music lasted too long, and the song accompanied by the lute of grief and pain counterpointing even to the rose, said, 'Slowly, O my sire, we will go to Autogolfo to live more happily and consoled than thou thinkest.' 'May the sultan have such consolation,' answered Pacione; 'when we shall present this corpse to the expecting father, he will make his suite count to us, but not count to us monies; and where others with a light sail quickly and happily have passed this gulf, we will instead be engulfed in it.' 'Be silent,' replied Ghiacuccio, 'where hast thou sent thy brains to pasture? Dost thou not remember the craft that I have learnt? Let us get ashore, and let me search for the herb that I hold firmly in my brains, and thou shalt behold somewhat else than annoyance.' The father, hearing these words, embraced him, and heartened his heart, and as

he was torn and dragged by his desire, so did he tear and cast the oar, so that in a short space of time they reached the shore of Autogolfo, where Ghiacuccio disembarked and sought for the herb, and running back to the boat when he had found it, and squeezing the juice in Cianna's mouth, she suddenly, like a frog who hath been within the grotto of the dog, and is afterwards cast into the lake of Aguano, returned to life. Then they fared to the presence of the king, who received them with great gladness; and he was never satisfied of kissing and embracing his daughter, and of thanking these folk that had recovered her for him. But being asked to maintain his promise, the king said, 'To which of you am I to give Cianna in marriage? This is not a millet-pudding, that I can give a piece to each. Therefore it is needful that only one take the bean from its shell; the others must be content with the toothpick.' Answered the eldest who was very cunning, 'O my lord, the reward must be according to the labour, therefore take thou notice of which is the one that hath done the most to gain this beauteous and tasteful mouthful, and after do thou justice, so that we may be pleased.' 'Thou speakest sooth like a very Roland,' answered the king, 'therefore relate ye what each hath done so that I shall not see wrongly, and be able to judge rightly.' And so they related each their exploits, and at last spake the king to Pacione, and said, 'And thou, what hast thou done in this service?' 'I think I have done a great deal in the matter,' replied Pacione, 'having made men of these my sons, and having by the strength of first teachings obliged them to learn the craft they know, otherwise they would be senseless fools, where now they have brought forth such pleasant fruits.' The king, having heard both sides, and

ruminated and digested the rights of this and the other, adjudged Cianna to Pacione, as the source of the life and health of his daughter. And thus it was done, and the sons had a gift of monies, to use to their profit and gain, whilst the father for his great joy became sprightly and lively like a youth of sixteen, and thus came in his mind the true proverb that

'Amid two disputants the third rejoiceth.'

NENNILLO AND NENNELLA.

EIGHTH DIVERSION

Of the Fifth Day.

Jannuccio hath two children by his first wife ; he weddeth a second time, and the children are so hated by their stepmother that she leadeth them one day into a forest, where they lose each other. Nennillo by chance becometh a favoured courtier of a prince, and Nennella casteth herself into the sea, and is swallowed by an ensorcelled fish, and cast upon a rock. Her brother discovereth and recogniseth her, and at last she is married by a wealthy prince.

CIULLA having come to an end of her career, Paola got ready to run the race ; clearing her voice with a good hem, and wiping her mouth with a fine cambric pocket-handkerchief, she thus began :

Unhappy is he who, having children, hopeth to find them a good teacher by giving them a stepmother ; for he instead carrieth home a machine for the undoing of their fortunes. There never yet has been seen a stepmother who could gaze with love and affection upon the offspring of another ; and if unhappily one have been found, we can stop the hole whence she came forth with a wooden stopper, and we may safely call her a white crow. But amid so many that ye may have heard named, I will mention one to you, to be added in the list of wicked, conscienceless stepmothers, whom you will think worthy of

the punishment, which she purchased for herself with ready money.

There once lived a man, Jannuccio hight, who had two children, Nennillo and Nennella, whom he loved as the babes of his eyes. But death having with the soft file of time broken the iron bars of the imprisoned soul of his wife, he took to himself an hideous witch, an accursed bitch, who no sooner set foot in his abode than she began to be horse of one stable, and say, 'What! have I come hither to clean the louse from other people's children? I wanted just this to take upon myself the annoyance of others, and behold ever near me these tiresome weeping children; it had been better an I had broken my neck than come in this hell to eat badly, and spend my days in bad plight, and sleep worse; and for the nuisance of these two shifts-in-breeches, this life cannot be tolerated; I came here as a wife and not as a servant; I must think of some expedient, and find some place where these exacting creatures may go, or else I shall find a lodging for myself. It is better to blush once than to grow pale an hundred times, and I shall break the relationship for ever; I am resolved to see in very fact the construction of all, and break asunder all in all.' The wretched husband, who loved his wife, said to her, 'Be not angry, O my wife, for the sugar is very dear; to-morrow morning before the crowing of the cock I will rid thee of this incubus, and thou shalt be happy.' So the next morning, before the dawn shook the fleas from the Spanish red coverlet out of the easterly window, Jannuccio filled a large basket with viands, and carrying it on his arm, led the children to a forest, where an army of poplars and beech-trees besieged the shadows. And when they came to that place, Jannuccio said, 'O my children, stay

here, and eat and drink merrily, there is naught wanting: do ye see this track of ashes, that I let fall as I go? This will be the thread that will bring ye out of this labyrinth, and lead ye to your own house.' Then giving to each a kiss, he returned weeping to his home.

Now like unto all animals summoned by the bailiffs of the night to pay the tax of necessary rest to nature, the children either wanting their natural rest, or fearing to stay in that steep desert place, where the waters of a river beat the impertinent stones which stood before its feet, in such manner that Rodomonte would have smiled, they fared slowly by the track of ashes, and it was midnight when they reached the house. When Pascozza, their step-mother, saw them, she acted not as a woman but as a fiend, lifting her cries to the heavens, beating her hands and feet, and snorting like a frightened steed, saying, 'A fine thing is this! Whence did these children shoot forth? Is it possible that there is no quicksilver, to destroy them out of the house? Is it possible, that thou wilt keep them here, to be the distress of my heart? Begone, take thyself off from before mine eyes, I will not tarry to listen to the music of cocks or the weeping of fowls; if not, thou mayest clean thy teeth if I sleep with thee, and to-morrow morning I shall fare to the house of my parents, for thou art not worthy of me, and truly I have brought thee too many fine things and house-furniture to see them soiled, and for the stink of the behinds of others to be left to me; neither have I brought thee such a good dowry as to be the slave of children not mine own.' The wretched Jannuccio, who beheld the boat in a bad storm, and the matter becoming too warm, immediately took the little ones, and returned to the forest, where giving them another basket-full of things to

cat, he said to them, 'O my darlings, ye can see how that bitch of my wife holdeth you in hatred and distaste; she came to my house for your ruin and to be a nail in this heart of mine; therefore stay ye here within this forest, where the pitiful trees will shelter ye against the hot rays of the sun, where the river, more charitable, will give ye unpoisoned food, and the earth, more kind, will give ye a bellyful of grass without danger; and I will make you a track of bran, which ye may follow when the food faileth you, and thus ye will be able to come and seek help and provaunt.' So saying he turned his face aside, so as not to dishearten the poor little things by letting them see him weep.

When the children had eaten all the provaunt in the basket, they desired to return home; but an ass, son of evil fortune, had eaten up the bran that had been scattered on the ground; and they lost their way, and for two days wandered through the forest, eating the acorns and chesnuts which had fallen to the ground. But as Heaven ever holds the merciful hand over the innocent, a prince who was hunting passed within that forest, and Nennillo, hearing the barking of dogs, was affrighted with sore affright, so that he hid himself within the hollow of a tree. And Nennella set off running so swiftly that she came forth of the forest, and reached the sea-shore. Now some corsairs, who had chanced to land to get some wood, saw Nennella and took her; and their chief carried her to his own house, where his wife having died a short time before, he kept her as his own daughter. In the meanwhile Nennillo, who had hidden himself within the hollow of the tree, was surrounded by dogs, which barked so furiously that the prince bade some of his followers go and discover the cause; and when they

found this beautiful boy, who knew not how to tell them who his father and mother were, being so very young, the prince bade a huntsman put him upon a load, and carry him to the royal palace. And the prince had him brought up with great diligence, and instructed in virtue, and amongst other things he had him taught to be the court-farrier, so that before three or four years had passed he became so clever in his art that none could equal him. Such was his case.

But let us see how it fared with Nennella. It had been discovered that the corsair with whom she dwelt was a sea-marauder, and the people came to make him prisoner; but he being on friendly terms with the court clerks, they advised him in time, so that he was able to escape with his family. Perhaps it was the justice of Heaven, that whoso had done evil upon the sea upon that sea should pay the penalty, and therefore embarking upon a slender vessel, they sailed, and when they reached amiddlemost the main, a storm of wind capsized the boat, and they were drowned: all save Nennella, who was not guilty of their thefts, and escaped this danger; because near the vessel stood a charmed fish, which, opening wide his big jaws, swallowed her. The child now believed that she had ended her days, when instead she found marvellous matter within the belly of that fish, beautiful valleys and plains, splendid gardens, and a fine palace with all its commodities, wherein she dwelt like a princess. And this fish carried her upon a rock, where a prince, it being then the greatest heat of summer, had come to breathe the sea air. Meanwhile a great banquet was being prepared; and Nennillo from one of the palace terraces was sharpening the knives upon this rock, delighting much in his office and desiring to gain

therein some honour, when Nennella beheld him from the fish's throat, and cried in a choked voice, 'O my brother, O my brother, the knives are sharpened, the tables are spread, and to me my life is tiresome without thee, within this fish.' Nennillo at first heeded not the voice, but the prince, who was standing on another terrace, turned, and hearing this music, beheld the fish. And when he again heard the same words, he was wellnigh out of his senses with amazement, and sending some of his servants to the shore, bade them see if they could find some means to cheat the fish and draw him ashore, and continually hearing the words, "O my brother, O my brother," he asked of each of his followers if they had lost any sister. And Nennillo replied that he remembered as a dream that when the prince had found him in the forest, he had a sister, of whom he had never since heard any news. Then the prince told him to draw nearer to the fish, and see what was the matter, for perhaps this fortune had been saved for him. And as soon as Nennillo neared the fish, the fish laid his head upon the rock, and opened wide his mouth, and out of it sprang Nennella, so beautiful that she seemed a mermaid in the interlude of the coming forth of a nymph by the exorcism of a magician from the jaws of an hideous animal. And when the king enquired of the matter, she related to him part of their trouble and travail, and their stepmother's hatred, but was unable to remember the name of their father and their home; and the king caused a ban to be published that whoso had lost two children answering to the names of Nennillo and Nennella within the depths of a forest should come to the royal palace, where he would hear some good news of them.

Jannuccio, who all this time had a sorrowful heart, and was disconsolate, believing that his children had been

devoured by wolves, ran with great joy to the presence of the prince, saying that he had lost these children. And when he had related the story, how he had been obliged to carry them to the forest, and so on to the end, the prince reproached him severely, calling him a worthless man, who had allowed a woman of naught to put her foot in his throat, reducing himself to the wretched plight of sending two gems of great price like his children to wander through the world. But after breaking Jannuccio's head with these bitter words, he laid upon it the plaster of consolation, sending for the children, whom the father never ceased caressing, and embracing, and kissing. Then the prince made him doff his garment, and ordered that he should be arrayed as a gentleman; and sending for Jannuccio's wife, he let her see those two golden shrubs, saying to her, 'What would he deserve who should harm these two gems, and put them in danger of death?' And she answered, 'I would put them in a closed cask and roll them down a mountain.' 'Begone, and thou shalt have it,' said the prince; 'the ram hath used the horns against itself; now as thou hast pronounced the sentence against thyself, thou must pay it, for the hatred thou hast shown to these thy beauteous stepchildren.' And therefore he commanded that the sentence pronounced by herself should at once be executed. Then, choosing a very wealthy nobleman, he gave him Nennella to wife, and he gave the daughter of another nobleman as wealthy to Nennillo, presenting them with wealth sufficient to live upon; and their sire also; so that they needed the help of no one in the world for the future; and the stepmother, put within a cask, ended her life, crying out of the bung-hole whilst she had life,

'He who mischief seeks shall mischief find;
There comes the time when he shall be repaid.'

THE THREE CITRONS.

NINTH DIVERSION

Of the Fifth Day.

Cenzullo objecteth to take a wife, but cutting one of his fingers upon some curdled milk, he desireth to have one, red and white like unto that which he hath just made of curdled milk and blood; and for this reason he wandereth like a pilgrim through the world. Coming upon the Island of the Three Ghulas, he receiveth three citrons, and in cutting one of them he gaineth a beauteous damsel as he desired. She is slain by a black slave, and he taketh in change the black for the white, but discovering the treachery, he commandeth the slave to be slain, and the fairy, returning to life, becometh queen.

IT is impossible to say how much the story of Paola pleased the company; but it being now Ciommella's turn to speak, the prince having given her the signal, she spake thus:

Spake sooth that sage who said, 'Say not what thou knowest, and do not what thou canst do; for both the one and the other carry unknown danger and unexpected ruin;' as ye will hear of a certain slave (speaking with respect of our lady the princess) who, attempting to do all the evil in her power to a damsel, caused so much wrong in the question that she became the judge of her own error, and sentenced herself to the punishment she well deserved.

The King of Torre-longa had a son who was his right eye, and upon whom he had laid the foundations of his hopes; and he longed for the time when he could choose his son a fair and wealthy bride, and have the joy of being himself called grandsire. But this young prince was so wild and cold an exotic that, whenever they spake of his taking unto himself a wife, he shook his head, and was distant an hundred miles from that purpose, so much so that the poor father, who beheld his son headstrong and obstinate, fearing that his race might be lost, became wroth, and spiteful, and ill-humoured like a whore who hath lost her account, or a merchant whose partner hath failed, or a farmer whose donkey is dead. Neither could the tears of his father move the prince, nor the prayers of his lieges soften him, nor the rede of men of weal take him off his feet; it was idle to put before his eyes the wishes of him who had begotten him, the need of the people, his own interest as he was the last and the full stop of his race; for with the perfidiousness, and obstinacy, and ostentation of an old mule that hath a skin four fingers thick, he stuck down his feet, stopped his ears, and hardened his heart so that no one could sound the alarm, try as they might. But because as much is sure to happen in an hour as in an hundred years, thou mayst not say, 'I shall not pass this way.' It so fortun'd that one day of the days, the table being spread, and as all were sitting to their midday meal, the prince, wishing to cut some curdled milk in the middle, and chattering the while, and hearkening to the gossip that went round, accidentally cut his finger; and two drops of blood fell upon the curdled milk, thus causing such beauteous and such graceful blending of colours, that, either it was a punishment of love, that waited

for him at every step, or the will of Heaven, to console that man of weal his sire, for, though he had never been molested by the domestic colt, he was molested and tormented by this wild colt of finding a damsel so white and red like that curdled milk and his own blood; so one day he said to his sire, 'O my lord, an I do not win my wish I am lost. Never had I any longing for womankind, but now I long with sore longing for a damsel like unto mine own blood. Therefore do thou resolve to allow me to fare around the world, and lend me thine aid, and provide me with the needful, that I may go and seek this beauty like unto this curdled milk, an thou desirest to see me in health and in life, otherwise I shall end the course of my existence, and go to rack and ruin.' And the king, hearing this beastly resolution, felt as if the palace had fallen upon him, and he was stunned and amazed, and his colour yellowed, and when he came to himself and could speak, he said, 'O my son, core of my soul, eye-babe of my heart, crutch of my old age, what hath turned thine head? Hast thou lost thy wits? Hast thou lost thy brains? Either ace or six; thou wouldst not take unto thee a wife to give me an heir, and now thou longest for her, to drive me out of this world. Where, O where dost thou wish to wander in exile, consuming thy life, and leaving thine home: thine home, thy fireside, thy resting-place? Dost thou not know to how many travails, and troubles, and dangers thou exposest thyself in travelling? Chase away from thee this whim; be thou corrected; do not wish to see this life struck to the ground, this house fallen, this realm ruined.' But these and other words which he said entered in at one ear and came forth from the other, and they were all cast into the sea; and the unhappy king, seeing

that his son was a church-steeple owl, gave him leave to depart, presenting him with a bagful of golden crowns, and two or three servants to serve him, and feeling his soul departing from his body, he looked out of one of the terraces of his palace, and followed him with his eyes till he was lost to sight

The prince, having left his sire wretched, and in despair, and embittered, wandered on through wilds and wolds, hills and valleys, forests, and plains, and declivities, seeing various countries, treating divers peoples, and always keeping his eyes open to see if he could find the target of his desires. At the end of four months he came to a port in France, where he left his servants at the hospital with a pain in their feet, and embarking alone aboard a Genoese ship, and passing the strait of Gibraltar, thence he took place in a larger vessel, and sailed towards the Indies, seeking from realm to realm, and from province to province, and from land to land, and from street to street, and from house to house, and from den to den, if he could meet with the original of the beautiful image he cherished in his heart. And he wandered, and twisted his legs, and moved his feet so long that he arrived at the Island of the Ghulas, where casting anchor, he went ashore. There he met an old dame, very thin, and with an hideous face, to whom he related the cause that had brought him in those countries. The old woman was struck with amazement, when she heard the fine caprice and the capricious chimera of this prince, and the travails and the risks he had passed to gain his end, so she said to him, 'O my son, do thou swiftly disappear, for an thou wert seen by my three daughters, who are the slaughter-house of all human flesh, thou wouldst not be worth three coppers; because half living and half roasted, a pot will be thy bier, and a belly will be thy grave; but let

thy feet be an hare's, and thou wilt not have to fare far to find thy fortune.' When the prince heard this, he was affrighted with sore affright, and wondered with excessive wonder, and therefore he hastened in his way, without even saying by your leave, and he well rubbed his shoes till he came to another country, where he found a second old woman more hideous than the other, to whom he related the affair, and she said to him, 'Melt, depart from here, an thou wilt not serve as breakfast for my children, but hasten thee on, for night is near, and a little further on thy way thou shalt find thy fortune.' When the prince heard this, he wended on his way without tarrying a single moment, just as if he had a couple of bladders tied to his tail, and he fared so long that he met a third old dame, who was sitting by the side of a wheel, with a basket full of sweetmeats and comfits, and she was feeding some asses who, after eating, capered and jumped by the shore of a river, kicking at some swans that were there. The prince, coming to the old woman's presence and saluting her, related to her the story once more, and the cause of his pilgrimage, and the ancient dame with fair words consoled him, and gave him a good breakfast, so that he licked his fingers, and arising from the table, she consigned to him three citrons, which seemed to have just been gathered from the tree, and gave him also a fine knife, saying, 'Thou mayest return at once to Italy for thy spindle is full, and thou hast found what thou seekest; wend thy ways therefore, and as thou art not far from thy realm, at the first fountain thou comest to cut one of the citrons, from out of which will come forth a fairy, saying, "Give me a drink;" and do thou quickly supply her with some water; otherwise she will melt like quicksilver; and be solicitous with the second, and quick with the third so that she escape thee not, giving her to

drink at once, and thou shalt have a wife according to the desire of thy heart.' The prince, overpleased, kissed that hairy hand, which seemed like a porcupine's back, an hundred times. Then, taking leave of her, he departed from that country, and fared to the sea-shore, and there he took ship for the Pillars of Hercules, and arrived at our sea: and after a thousand storms and tempests he entered port one day's journey from his own kingdom. And he arrived at a charming grove, where the shadows formed a palace for those prairies which desired not to be seen by the sun; and he dismounted at a fountain, which with its silvery tongue called the folk to drink the cool, crystalline water, and sitting on the grassy carpet purflewed with flowers, and drawing forth the knife, he began to cut the first citron, when behold, a beauteous damsel sprang forth white like milk and cream, and red like a strawberry, who said, 'Give me a drink.' And the prince was so amazed that he gazed open-mouthed at the beauty of the fairy, and was not dexterous enough to give her the water, so that she appeared and disappeared at one and the same time. Whether this was a staff laid upon the prince's head and back may be considered by him who, longing for somewhat, hath it in his hands and loseth it.

Then the prince cutting the second citron, the same thing happened, and this was the second blow he received; so making two rivulets of his eyes, the tears rained down his face and kept time with the fountain, yielding in naught to its flowing, and thus weeping and lamenting, he said, 'Alas, how wretched am I, whenever shall I gain some good? twice have I let her escape, just as if I had the rope round mine hands; let the devil take me, for I move like a rock, when I should run like a greyhound. In sooth I have done it finely. Wake, thou wretched man,

there is only one more left ; and at the third winneth the king ; and this knife must give me the fairy, or do a deed which slayeth.' And thus saying, he cut the third citron, and the third fairy came forth, and said like the others, 'Give me a drink,' and the prince at once gave her some water, and behold she remained in his hands, a fair, tender damsel, white like curdled milk, mixed with red that seemed an ham from the Abruzzi, or a sausage from Nola, a beauty without compare and without peer, a whiteness and fairness beyond measure ; and upon her hair had rained the golden rain of Jupiter, from which love pointed his arrows to wound the hearts. In that face love had painted all his wiles, so that some innocent soul should be hanged in the gibbet of desire ; in those eyes the sun had lighted two luminous bodies, so that in the breast of whoso saw them fire should be set, and lightning and fireworks of sighs should be drawn ; Venus had passed near those lips, giving them the colour of the rose to prick with its thorns a thousand enamoured souls ; in those breasts Juno had squeezed her own, to feed with their beauty all human desires. In very sooth she was so beauteous from head to foot that ye could not behold a more comely and graceful being. The prince's wits forsook him, and he knew not what had happened to him, and he gazed in wondering ecstasy upon this charming child of a citron, this beautiful damsel, fair in form and of stature symmetrical, this tasteful fruit, and said to himself, 'Dost thou sleep, or art thou awake, O Cenzullo ? Is thy sight charmed, or have thine eyes been turned, that thou gazest upon a white thing, that came forth of a yellow ? What a sweetmeat is this out of the sour juice of a citron ?' At last finding that it was no dream, and that the game was true, he embraced the fairy, giving her hundreds and

hundreds of kisses and pinches, and after a thousand loving words interchanged between them, that like a song were counterpointed by sweet kisses, the prince said, 'O my soul, I will not take thee to my father's country without that pomp and luxury worthy of thy beauty and worthy of a queen ; therefore do thou climb this oak, where it seemeth that for our need nature hath formed it in the shape of a chamber, and await for my return. I will fare with all speed as if I had wings, and before this my spittle shall have dried, I will be back to carry thee, arrayed in sumptuous raiment, and accompanied as it needs should, to my own kingdom ;' and kissing her fondly, he took leave, and departed.

In the meanwhile a black slave-girl had been sent by her mistress to that fountain with a juglet, to fetch some water, and she by chance beholding in the waters the reflection of the face and form of the fairy, and believing that it was herself, wondered with extreme wonder, and began saying, 'What is this, O wretched Lucy ; thou be made so beautifully, and thy mistress sendeth thee to fetch water, and me must support this thing ?' And thus saying, she brake the juglet, and returned home, and the mistress asked of her why she had done this bad service, and she answered, 'Me gone to little fountain and knocked the juglet against a stone.' The mistress believed this tale and swallowed this lie, and the next day gave her a fine cask, to take to be filled with water ; and she returning to the fountain, and again beholding the same beautiful image in the water, sighed deeply, and said, 'Me is not an hideous slave, me is not a good for naught, me is nice and genteel, and yet must carry to fountain barrel ?' and saying thus, she brake open the cask, and made a thousand pieces of it, and returned home to her mistress grumbling, and saying,

'An ass knocked against the barrel, and it fell and brake to pieces.' When the mistress heard this, she lost her patience, and taking up a broomstick, laid it on the slave's back with a good will, so that she felt the effects for many days. The next day the mistress took up a leathern pipe, and said to the slave, 'Haste thee, run, thou beggarly slave, cricket-legged, broken-behind, haste thee and tarry not, and do not pick and choose, and bring me this full of water, if not I will weigh thee and slice thee like a many-feet; and I will give thee such an hiding that thou shalt for ever remember it.' And the slave ran in haste, carrying her legs like lightning that is afraid of thunder, and filling the pipe, saw again the beauteous image, and said, 'Me should be silly, if me carried this water; 'tis better to marry than to be a slave; and this is not a beauty to make me die a wrathful death, and to serve a coloured mistress.' And when she ended speaking, she took a large pin, and began to prick the leather pipe, which seemed a garden with a fountain that opened so that the water poured out in an hundred smaller fountains. And the fairy, seeing this, laughed loudly and heartily, and the slave-girl, hearing this laugh, turned her gaze upwards, and perceiving the ambush, and speaking to herself, said, 'Thou art the cause that me got a flogging, but never mind,' and she said aloud to the fairy, 'What art thou doing there, O beauteous child?' and the other, who was the mother of politeness, related all that she had within, without leaving out one iota of what had fortuneed her with the prince, whom she expected from day to day, and from hour to hour, and from moment to moment, with raiment and suite to company her on her journey to his sire's kingdom, where she would enjoy her life with him. When the wicked slave-girl heard this, she bethought herself to

gain this prize, and replied to the fairy, 'As thou expectest thy husband, let me come up and comb thine hair, and make thee fairer;' and the fairy answered 'Thou art welcome, like the first of May;' and the slave climbed up, and she held out the small white hand to her, which, caught between those black paws, seemed a crystal mirror within an ebony frame, and thus she rose up by her side, and beginning to unfold her hair, the blackamoor stuck a large pin in her head in the site of memory. The fairy, feeling the pin, cried, 'O pigeon, O pigeon;' and forthwith became a pigeon, and flew away, whereupon the slave undressed herself, and remained mother-naked, and making a little bundle of her apparel of rags which she had been wearing, cast it far from her; and there she remained upon that tree, and she seemed a statue of black stone within an house of emerald.

In a short time the prince returned with a large cavalcade, and finding a cask of caviare where he had left a tub full of milk, for a time his wits forsook him. But when he came to his senses, he said, 'Who hath made this blot of ink upon our royal papers, whereon I believed I should write the happiest of my days? Who hath covered with mournful hangings the newly painted white dwelling, wherein I believed I should have enjoyed my pleasure? Who causeth me to find this black touchstone, when I had left a silver mine which would have made me rich and blessed?' But the cunning slave, perceiving the wonder and exceeding surprise of the prince, said, 'Do not wonder, O my prince, that I am ensorcelled, and made white by bindings but of black behind.' The unhappy prince, seeing that the evil had no remedy, like an ox growing horns, swallowed this pill, and bidding the blackamoor come down, dressed her from head to foot, beginning

with her anew. Then swelling and choking with rage, and with face distorted by wrath, he returned to his own country, and when six miles distant from the capital he was met by the king and queen, who had come forth to him, ye may suppose that they were received with that pleasure with which the prisoner receiveth the intimation of his sentence. And they were saddened to behold the fine proof of madness in their son, who had wandered the world over to seek a white dove, and had brought back instead a black crow; but as they could not do otherwise, they renounced the crown in favour of the bride and bridegroom, and put the golden circlet upon that hideous black coal face.

Now whilst bridal feast and banquets the most magnificent were preparing in all pomp and sumptuousness, and the cooks were plucking geese, slaying young suckling pigs, flaying lambs, making mince-meats, roasting capons, and preparing many other tasteful viands, a beautiful pigeon came to one of the kitchen windows, saying,

' O thou cook of the kitchen,
What doth the king with that Saracen-woman?'

And the cook took no heed of it; but the pigeon returned a second time and a third time, repeating the same words, when the cook, marvelling with excessive marvel, hastened to his mistress to relate the matter as somewhat wonderful; and his lady, hearing this music, ordered that the pigeon should be caught, and slain, and made a stew of. And when the pigeon again returned, the cook did all in his power to catch it, and when he caught it, he obeyed the command of the blackamoor, and having scalded the bird to pluck it, quickly threw that water and the feathers into a flower-box on a terrace, where three days had not

passed before a beautiful citron-tree sprang forth and grew in four pinches' time, and so it fortun'd that the king looking out of his window from the terrace, and perceived this which he had not seen before, called the cook, and enquired whence it came, and who had nurtured it. And hearing from Master Ladle all the matter, suspicion entered his mind; and therefore he ordered that the penalty of death should be adjudged to whoso should damage that tree, so that no one should touch it, and that it should be tended carefully. And at the end of a few days three beautiful citrons began to grow, the same as those given to him by the ghula, and when they were ready to be gathered, he gathered them, and shutting himself within a chamber with a large cup of water, and with the same knife that he always carried hung at his waistband, he began to cut. And it happened to him with the first and second citron as it had occurred before; lastly he cut the third citron, when the third fairy came forth, and he gave her to drink, and as he had sought, the same damsel that he had left upon the tree remained with him, and he heard from her the tale of the evil and treachery of the slave.

Who can explain the joy felt by the king at this good turn of fortune? Who can describe the fond embrace, the kissing, the sweet epithets, the proud content, the exhilaration, the trembling of ecstasical bliss? Ye may think that he was swimming in sweetness, and could not stay in his skin, and his senses left him; and supporting her in his arms, he made her array herself sumptuously, and taking her by the hand, led her into the saloon, where the courtiers, and the grandees, and the nabobs of the land were gathered together to honour the bridal feast of their lord; and he called them to him one by one, and said,

'Tell me, O my lords, what chastisement would deserve whoso would do any hurt to this beauteous lady?' And the reply was, from one, that such a person would deserve a rope necklace; another, that he should be cast into the sea; another, that he should be hooted and stoned by a mob of ragamuffins; and one said one thing and one another. At last he sent for the black queen, and putting to her the same question, she answered, 'They deserve burning, and their ashes scattered from the top of the castle-walls.' The king, hearing this, rejoined, 'Thou hast spoken thine own sentence, and hast thrown the axe at thy feet, and thou hast built thine own gibbet, and sharpened the knife, and mixed the poison, because no one hath done her harm but thyself, thou ungrateful, wicked woman. Knowest thou that this lady is the damsel in whose head thou stuckest the large pin? Knowest thou that this is the beauteous pigeon that thou badest be slain and cooked in the baking-pan? What dost thou think of this? Shake thyself free an thou canst. Thou hast done a fine filthiness, and whoso doeth evil deeds evil expecteth, and whoso cooketh shrubs eateth smoke.' And thus saying, he bade his followers take her and cast her alive upon a pile of burning wood, and when she was burnt to ashes, they scattered them to the winds from the castle-walls, making the old saying true in the end, that

'Whosoever soweth thorns, let him not walk bare-footed.'

END OF THE TALE OF TALES.

TENTH DIVERSION

Of the Fifth Day.

Zoza relateth the history of her troubles. The slave, feeling herself touched at all points, doeth scissors, scissors, so that she may not end her story. But the prince, in spite of her, desireth to hear it, and discovering the treachery of his wife, condemneth her to death, full with child as she is, and taketh *Zoza* to wife.

ALL ears had been opened, listening to *Ciommetella's* tale, and some praised the knowledge and taste with which it had been related, and some of the company blamed her for the lack of discretion and judgment she displayed in relating it in the presence of the slave princess, and publishing the dishonour and infamy of one like herself: and they said that she had run a risk to spoil the game. But *Lucy* acted truly as *Lucy* should, shaking herself the while the story was related, and by the trembling of the body could be seen the strength of the storm which was within her heart, for she saw portrayed within a story of another blackamoor slave the fac-simile of her own treachery and evil doing, insomuch that an she could she would have caused the conversation to cease: but partly because she could not do without the stories, like the spider who cannot do without sounds, the doll having caused such fire to enter in her soul, and partly not to give *Thaddeus* cause

for suspicion, she swallowed this pill, thinking in her mind to show her resentment, and to revenge herself in fitting time and place. But Thaddeus, who was very pleased with this pastime, signed to Zoza to relate her story, and she, bowing gracefully, said,

'O my lord, truth hath always been mother to hatred, and therefore I should not like, in obeying thy commands, to offend some one of this company which surrounds me; because I am not used to feign inventions, and to weave fables. I am constrained, therefore, by nature and by accident to speak the truth: and although the proverb doth say, "Piddle clear and show figs to the doctor," knowing that the truth is not at all times well received in the presence of princes, I tremble to say somewhat which may cause thee to be wroth.' 'Say what pleaseth thee,' answered Thaddeus, 'for from that charming mouth naught can come forth but honey and sugar.' These words were like so many knife-thrusts in the heart of the slave, and tokens of it could have been seen upon her face, an the black face like the white had been index of the soul: and she would have paid with a finger of her hand to have been fasting of these stories, for her heart had become blacker than her face, fearing that the former story might have been the prognostic of the coming disaster, as from the morning beginneth the evil day.

In the meanwhile Zoza began to charm her hearers with the sweetness of her words, relating her troubles and travails from the beginning to the end, first telling of her natural melancholy, the unhappy ill-omened presage of what destiny had decreed for her, carrying from the cradle the bitter root of all her misfortunes, that with the key of a forced smile constrained her to weep a rivulet of tears. She continued to the curse of the old woman

her pilgrimage whereon she suffered untold anguish, her arrival at the fountain, her ceaseless weeping, and the treacherous sleep which caused her ruin. The slave perceiving the vessel take to high seas, and that it was ready to founder, cried, 'Be silent, dry thy throat: if not, I will beat my belly and slay little George.' But Thaddeus, who had discovered a new country, had no more phlegm: so lifting up his mask and casting it to the ground, he said, 'Let her end her tale, and do not go into heroics about little George or big George: at last thou hast not found me alone; and an the mustard mounteth to my nose, it would be better that thou shouldst go under a cart-wheel.' And commanding Zoza to continue in spite of the wife, she, who desired for naught better than to obey the behest, continued to relate the finding of the broken pitcher, and the deceit practised by the slave to rob her of her good fortunes. And whilst speaking, she wept with sore weeping, and there was no one present who did not weep in sympathy.

And Thaddeus, who from Zoza's words and tears, and the silence of the slave, understood and fished the truth of the affair, gave Lucy a good talking-to, more than one would do to an ass, and obliging her to confess with her own mouth this treachery, ordered at once that she should be buried alive, with only the head out, so that her death should be delayed. And embracing Zoza, he bid all folk honour her as his wife and princess, and sent messengers to the King of Valle-pelosa, bidding him come to the wedding-feast. And with this new bridal-feast ended the greatness of the slave, and the entertainment of the stories. And let us congratulate them, and may they have health, whilst I have come on foot, treading softly, with a spoonful of honey in my mouth.

SONNET.

TO WHOMSO HATH READ THIS BOOK CORRECTLY.

BY M.R.S.D.

AN in these pages ye did find
Aught error, as ye whilom read,
Then to these faults be always blind,
For art must guile e'en Argus' head.

And if ye have found good in these,
And will their petty slips defend,
Then shut your eyes, and trust, like Mars,
That what was wrong will rightly end.

Ride not cock-proud on pack-ass' loin,
Go simply with the beggar's coin,
And ye shall with true wisdom join.

But peace to barking, currish pen!
When ye have read—then read again:
Read backwards, sideways. So godden!