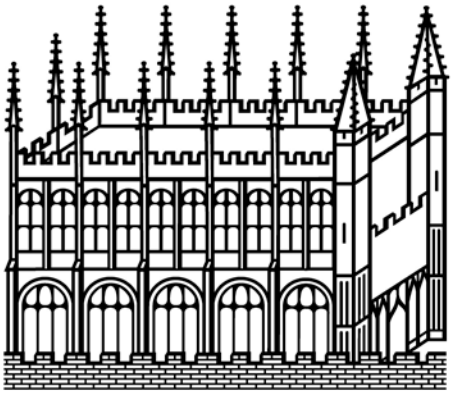


Bodleian Libraries

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

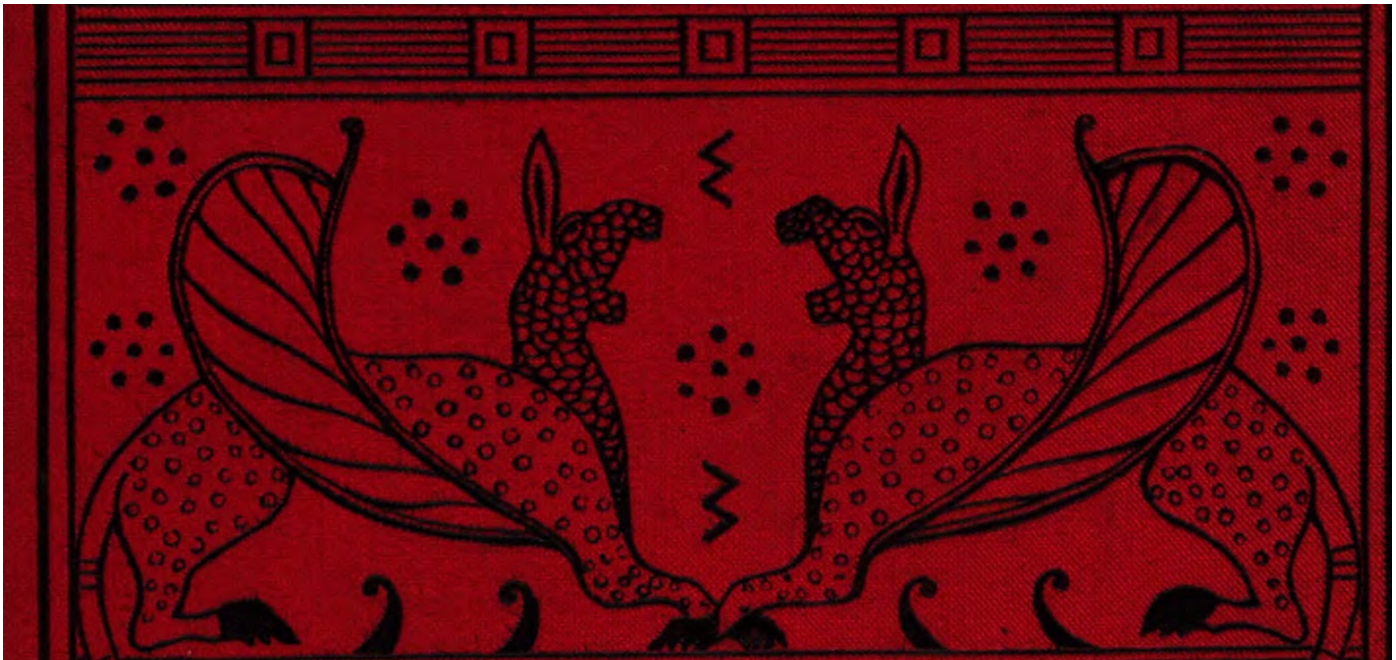
This book is part of the collection held by the Bodleian Libraries and scanned by Google, Inc. for the Google Books Library Project.

For more information see:

http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dbooks



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0) licence.



The Bird of Truth

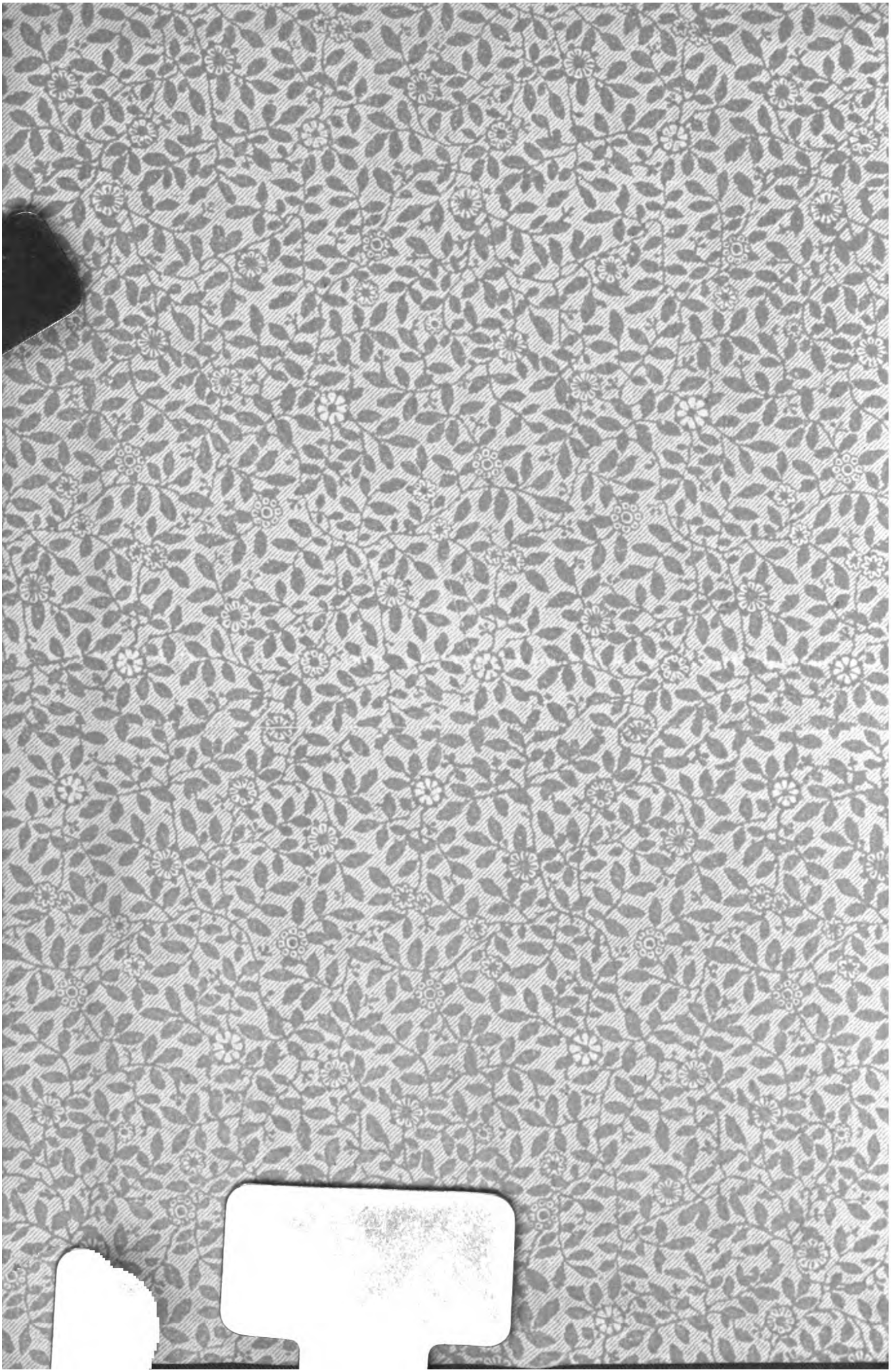
and Other Fairy Tales

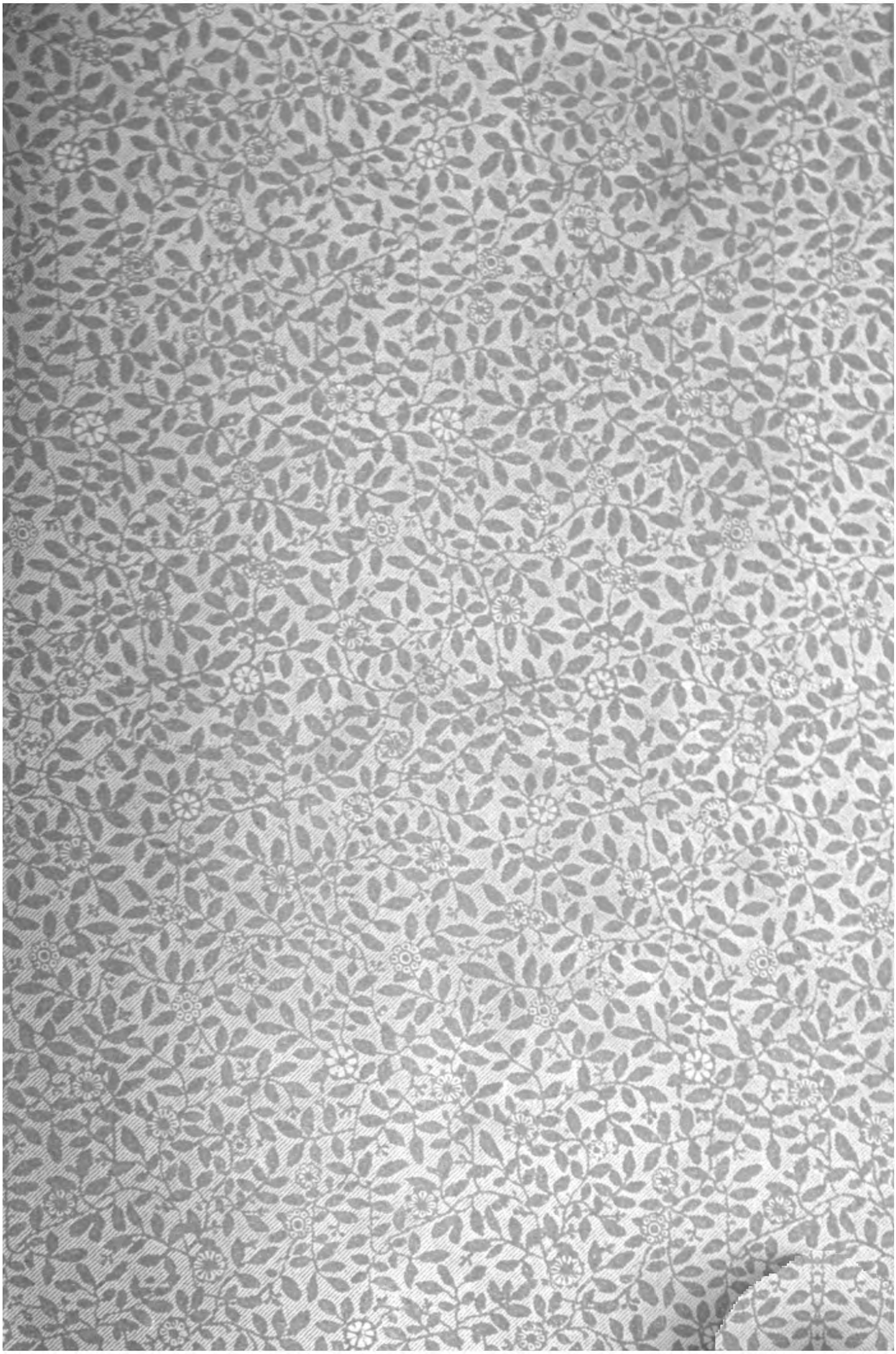
BY

Caballero.



Illustrated Library of Fairy Tales






600058639.

CABALLERO'S FAIRY TALES.

ILLUSTRATED LIBRARY

OF THE

FAIRY TALES OF ALL NATIONS.

UNDER this general title the Publishers intend to bring out a collection of volumes of Fairy Tales, which shall eventually embrace all the more important peoples of the world. Each nation will, in most cases, have two volumes devoted to its Fairy literature, the one dealing with the most esteemed and representative Fairy Tales arising wholly or in part from the fancy of native writers of more recent times, and the other containing a selection of genuine Folk-Tales, that is, the tales of the people derived from their own mouth, tales which have been handed down from father to son for generation after generation, until their very origin has been lost in myth. In a large number of cases one nation has comparatively so recently broken away from its parent or brother-nation—though now forming distinct countries—that the popular tales of the two bear only a superficial variance: in these cases selections will be made of the most characteristic tales of each in such manner that repetitions in the series are as far as possible avoided.

Series I. will comprise the Original Tales by native authors, Series II. the Folk-Tales proper; each series will have a distinctive binding.

The following volumes are already either issued or in the press:—

Germany: HAUFF'S FAIRY TALES. [*Ready.*

„ GERMAN POPULAR TALES, collected by GRIMM and others.

Spain: CABALLERO'S FAIRY TALES. [*Ready.*

Scandinavia: GUSTAFSSON'S TEA-TIME TALES, 2 vols. in 1. [*Ready.*

„ SCANDINAVIAN AND ICELANDIC POPULAR TALES.

Brittany: A BRETON STORY-BOOK. [*Ready.*

America: NORTH AMERICAN INDIAN LEGENDS.



"Sire, the game is up, Cigarron is in your hands now!"—*Page* 76.





"Sire, the game is up, Cigarron is in your hands now!"—*Page* 76.



ILLUSTRATED LIBRARY OF FAIRY TALES.

THE BIRD OF TRUTH,

And other Fairy Tales.

BY

FERNAN CABALLERO.



London:
W. SWAN SONNENSCHEIN & CO.,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

251. g. 7/07.

TRANSLATED BY

J. H. INGRAM.



Butler & Tanner, The Selwood Printing Works, Frome, and London.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
The Bird of Truth	1
A Girl who wanted Three Husbands	22
The Knights of the Fish	29
Fair-Flower	42
The Singing Sack	53
The Foolish Wolf and the Shrewd Fox	57
The Guardian Spirits	64
John the Conjurer	72
The Blue Lily	77
A Tale of Taradiddles	80
The Knavish little Bird	85
Lucifer's Ear	88
The Three Wishes	99
The Demon's Mother-in-law	107
The Fox and the Goose	124
The Tribulations of a Cobbler	127
The Little Ant	137
The Hunchback	141
Fortune and Misfortune	147
The Fairy Friar	157
The King's Power	159
Juan Holgado and Death	162
The Cock and the Goose	172
Uncle Curro and his Cudgel	174
If Heaven will it	181
Unpalatable Advice	183
The Promise	185
The Fairy Hen	189
Dame Fortune and Don Money	190
The Carlanco	198
Benibaire	204
Moro's Ears	209
The Power of Will	230

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE
JOHN CIGARRON. *Frontispiece.*	76
A GIRL WHO WANTED THREE HUSBANDS . .	25
THE GUARDIAN SPIRITS	67
THE THREE WISHES	101
FORTUNE AND MISFORTUNE	151
DAME FORTUNE AND DON MONEY . . .	193

PREFACE.

THE Brothers Grimm, in their universally popular collection of legends and tales drawn from all parts of Europe, appeared to doubt the existence of a national fairy literature in Spain. This the lady who wrote under the name of "Fernan Caballero" could not but deem a reproach upon her country, and to remove it, proceeded to collect and publish such legendary tales as were within her reach. The chief portion of her collection was gathered in Andalusia, where the greater part of her life was spent, and to some extent may, therefore, be regarded as provincial; in order, therefore, to give a greater variety to this collection, two of De Trueba's "Popular Stories" have been added. But the two volumes of popular tales collected and edited by "Fernan

Caballero," although not unjustly designated "Spanish," must not be all considered as indigenous to the Iberian peninsula; some, such as *The Three Wishes*, *The Fairy Friar*, *etc.*, being common to many nations, whilst others, which the reader will recognise, are evidently transplanted from a foreign soil. Whatever their parentage, however, the tales which form the present collection have been so thoroughly naturalized that they may now be fairly deemed typical Spanish, and this fact has increased the difficulty of rendering them into English. In the first place, in Spain, as a French writer has already pointed out, Catholicism permeates everything, even the very flesh and blood of the people, and this all pervading spirit causes the folk to introduce into their common lore in a most familiar and, what to the people of this country would appear an irreverent manner, the most sacred names and subjects; another, and in some cases, insurmountable, difficulty the translator has had to contend with in fitting

these tales for the perusal of young English readers, is the remarkable way in which equivocal themes are treated in the original, and that in stories avowedly "Infantile." Again, in many instances, it has been found impossible to discover English equivalents to express the humour of provincial idioms or proverbs, or with which to reproduce with proper pungency that seasoning of *sal Andaluz* some of the pieces in Caballero's collection possess; hence the loss of local colouring which no quantity of foot-notes would have supplied.

But after all, the class of readers to whom this volume is chiefly addressed may not detect the deficiencies these difficulties have caused; and if our young friends are satisfied with the work, our labour need not be considered lost nor misapplied.

J. H. I.

CABALLERO'S FAIRY TALES.

THE BIRD OF TRUTH.

ONCE upon a time there was a very poor fisherman, who lived in a little hut on the banks of a river. This river, although deep, was very calm and clear, and, gliding from the sun and noise, would hide itself among the trees, reeds, and brambles, in order to listen to the birds who delighted it with their songs.

One day when the fisherman went out in his boat to cast his nets, he saw a casket of crystal slowly drifting along with the stream. He rowed towards it, but what was his horror at seeing two little babies, apparently twins, lying in it upon a bundle of cotton! The poor

fisherman pitied them, took them out, and carried them home to his wife.

"What have you got there?" she exclaimed, as he presented them to her. "We have eight children already, and as if that were not enough, you must bring me some more!"

"Wife," replied the poor fisherman, "what could I do? I found these dear little creatures floating on the river below, and they would have died of hunger, or have been drowned, if I had not rescued them. Heaven, which has sent us these two more children, will assist us to provide for them."

And so it proved; and the children, a boy and a girl, grew up healthy and robust, together with the eight other children. They were both so good, so docile, and so peaceable, that the fisherman and his wife loved them exceedingly, and always held them up as examples to the other children; but they, envious and enraged, did them a thousand injustices and injuries. To escape from these cruelties, the twins would take refuge together among the thickets and bushes on the river's banks; there they would divert themselves with the birds, and carry crumbs of bread to them; and the birds, grate-

ful to them for their kindness, would fly to meet them, and teach them the bird-language. The children learned to converse with the birds very quickly, and thus they could amuse themselves with their feathered friends, who also taught them many other very good and useful things, one of them being how to get up early in the morning, and another how to sing. One day when the fisherman's children were more annoying than they had ever been before, they said to the twins :—

" We are the true-born children of Christians, but you, with all your neatness and superiority, are but castaways, without any other father or mother than the river, and belong to the toads and frogs ! "

Upon receiving this insult, the poor children were so filled with shame and distress that they determined to go right away from home, and travel in search of their real parents. At the early dawn next day they got up and went forth without any one knowing it, and began their journey, travelling they knew not whither.

Half the day passed by, and they had not perceived as yet any abode, nor seen a single living being. They were hungry, thirsty, and

tired, when, on turning round a hill-side, they discovered a little house; on reaching it, they found it was empty and its inhabitants absent.

Thoroughly disheartened, they seated themselves on a bench in the doorway to rest. After a little while they noticed a number of swallows collected together under the eaves of the roof, and as they are such chatterboxes, they began to prattle with each other. Having learned the language of birds, the children knew what the swallows said.

"Holloa! my lady friend," said one of the birds, who had a somewhat rustic air about it, to another that was of a very elegant and distinguished mien, "my eyes are glad to see you once more! I thought you had forgotten your country friends. How do you live in the palace?"

"I possess the nest of my ancestors," replied the other, "and as yet they have not disinherited me, although, like yours, it is a century old. But tell me before all," continued she with admirable *finesse*, "how you and all your family are?"

"Well, thank Heaven! for although I have had my little Beatrice laid up with an inflam-

mation of the eyes that was within an ace of leaving her blind, when I obtained our old remedy, the *pito-real*, it cured her as if by magic."

"But what news have you to relate to me, friend Beatrice? Does the nightingale still sing well? Does the lark soar as high as of yore? Does the linnet still prune itself?"

"Sister," responded the swallow, "I have nothing but downright scandals to tell you of. Our flock, which formerly was so innocent and temperate, is utterly lost, and has quite taken to the manners of mankind. It is heartbreaking!"

"What! Simple customs and innocence not to be found in the country, nor among birds? My dear friend, what do you tell me?"

"The pure truth, and nothing more. Just figure to yourself, that on our arrival here, whom should we meet but those chattering linnets; they went off, when the spring came with longer days and bright flowers, in search of cold and storm! We tried to dissuade the crazy creatures, but they answered us with the utmost insolence."

"What did they say?"

"They said to us—

"'Whither do we go?
Whence come you, reprobates,
Who travel so little
And talk so much?'

This was their reply to us, and on hearing it we made them march to double quick time."

"What do I hear!" exclaimed the interlocutor. "That any one has dared to accuse us, the most honest and faithful of birds, of being reprobates?"

"Then what will you think when I tell you," said the first speaker, "that the lark, who was so timid and ladylike, has become an insolent pilferer, and that—

"The lady lark upon her flight,
Pilfers pulse and pilfers maize,
Before the very sower's sight,
And at his anger pertly says,
'Sower, sower, more seed sow,
As that sown can never grow'?"

"I am astounded!"

"That is only half my story. When we arrived here, and I wished to enter my nest, I found a shameless sparrow making himself quite at home in it. 'This nest is mine,' I said to him. 'Yours?' he answered rudely, and began to laugh. 'Mine and mine only.'

'Property is robbery,' piped he quite coolly. 'Sir, are you crazy?' I said to him. 'My ancestors built this nest, my parents educated me in it, and in it I mean to bring up my children.' Then at seeing me fainting, all my companions began to weep. By the time I recovered my consciousness, our husbands had put an end to the thieving rascal. But you, sister, never see such scandals in the palace."

"Don't we! . . . Ah, if you only knew!"

"Do tell us! do tell us!" exclaimed all the swallows with one voice. When silence had been re-established, thanks to a loud and prolonged *hus-s-s-sh*, uttered by an elder, the court dame began her story in these terms.—

"You must know that the king fell in love with the youngest daughter of a tailor who lived near the palace, and married her; the girl deserved his love, as she was as good as she was beautiful, and as modest as she was discreet. It so happened that the king had to go to the wars and leave his poor wife in the saddest and most perplexed position. For his ministers and courtiers, who were very indignant at having a tailor's daughter for their queen, conspired to ruin her. And they availed

themselves of the first opportunity. During the king's absence beautiful twins, a boy and a girl, were born; but the wicked conspirators sent to tell him that the queen had for children a cat and a serpent.

"When the king received this intelligence, he was very furious, and sent off a royal mandate that the queen should be entombed alive, and the children cast into the river. This was done; the beautiful queen was shut up in a stone vault, and her little darling twins were placed in a crystal coffer, and left to the mercy of the stream."

When they heard the fate of the poor queen and her innocent babes, the swallows, who are very kind and affectionate, began to lament most heartily, whilst the twins looked at one another in amazement, suspecting it to be very probable that they themselves were the cast-away children.

The city swallow continued her narrative:—

"But now hear how God frustrated the plots of these traitors. The queen was entombed; but her attendant, who was very devoted to her, contrived to make a hole in the wall, and supplied her with food through it, as we do to

our little ones through our nests, and thus the lady lives, although a life of misery. Her children were rescued by a good fisherman, who has brought them up, so a friend of mine, Martin Fisher, who lives on the banks of the river, has informed me."

The twins, who had heard the whole story, were delighted that they had learned the language of birds; which, indeed, is a proof that we should never neglect any opportunity of learning, for, when least we think it, what we have learnt may prove of great utility to us.

"So then," said the swallows joyfully, "when these children are older, they will be able to regain their place at their father's side, and liberate their mother."

"That is not so easy," said the narrator, because they will not be able to prove their identity, nor prove their mother's innocence, nor the malice of the Ministry. There is only one method by which they would be able to undeceive the king."

"And what is that? What is that?" cried all the swallows together. "And how do you know it?"

"I know it," responded the narrator, "be-

cause one day when I was passing by the palace garden, I met and had a chat with a cuckoo, who, as you know, is a conjuror, and can foretell what will happen. As we were discoursing with one another the affairs of the palace, he said to me——"

The children and the swallows were listening with redoubled attention, and even the young swallows were thrusting their little bald heads so far out of their nests, that they were in great peril of falling; their parents did not notice the danger, or they would have given the youngsters a good smack.

"'The only one who is able to persuade the king,' said the cuckoo to me, 'is the *Bird of Truth*, who speaks the language of men, although they for the most part do not know truth, and do not wish to understand it.' 'And this bird, where is it?' I asked the cuckoo. 'This bird,' he answered, 'is in the castle of *Go and Return Not;* the castle is guarded by a ferocious giant who only sleeps one quarter of an hour in the twenty-four hours. If when he wakes up any one should be within reach of his tremendous arm, he seizes and swallows him as we should a mosquito.'"

"And where is this castle?" inquired the inquisitive Beatrice.

"That is what I don't know," responded her friend; "all that I know about it is, that not far from it is a tower in which dwells a wicked witch, who knows the way and will point it out to any one who will bring her from the fountain that flows there, the *Water of Many Colours*, which water she makes use of in her enchantments. But I should also tell you that she would like to destroy the *Bird of Truth*, though as no one is able to kill this bird, what she and her friend the giant do is to keep it a prisoner guarded by the *Birds of Falsehood*, who will not let it speak a single word."

"Then will nobody be able to inform the poor queen's son where they have hidden the *Bird of Truth?*" inquired the country swallows.

"Nobody," replied the city bird, "but a pious red owl, who lives as a hermit in the desert, but who knows no more of the language of men than the one word 'Cross,' which he learned when, at Calvary, he beheld the Crucifixion of the Redeemer, and which he has never ceased from sorrowfully repeating. And thus he will not be able to understand the prince, even sup-

posing the impossible event should ever happen of the boy finding him out. But, my dear friends, I must say 'Good-bye,' for I have spent the whole afternoon in this pleasant chat. The sun is seeking his nest in the depths of the sea, and I am going to seek mine, where my little ones will be wondering what has happened to me. Good-bye, friend Beatrice."

So saying, the swallow took to flight, and the children in their joy, feeling neither hunger nor fatigue, got up and pursued their way in the same direction that the bird had flown

At the hour of evening service the children arrived at a city which they imagined must be that in which the king, their father, dwelt. They begged a good woman to give them shelter for the night, and this, seeing they were so well-spoken and well-mannered, she kindly granted.

The following morning had scarcely dawned when the girl arose and tidied the house, and the boy drew the water and watered the garden, so that when the good woman got up she found all the house-work done. She was so pleased with this that she proposed to the children that they should remain and live with

her. The boy said that his sister might, but that it was necessary for him to arrange some business matters, for which he had come to the city. So he departed, and followed a chance road, praying to Heaven to guide his steps and bring his enterprise to a successful ending.

For three days he followed various bye-ways, but without seeing any vestige of the tower; on the fourth, sad and weary, he seated himself under the shadow of a tree. After a short time he saw a little turtle-dove arrive and rest among the branches of the tree; so he said to it, in its own language:

"Little turtle-dove, I wish you could tell me where the castle of *Go and Return Not* is?"

"Poor boy," responded the turtle-dove, "who bore you such ill-will as to send you there?"

"It is my good, or my evil fortune," replied the boy.

"Then if you wish to know it," said the bird, "follow the wind, which to-day blows towards it!"

Then the boy thanked the turtle-dove, and recommenced his journey, following the course

of the wind as it changed and chopped about to different points of the compass. The country gradually grew sadder and more arid ; and, as night approached, the path led between bare and sombre rocks, a vast black mass among them being the tower wherein dwelt the witch whom the boy was in search of. The sight of the hideous place terrified him at first ; but as he was brave—like every one whose aim is the furtherance of a good work—he advanced boldly. When he reached the tower, he picked up a big stone and struck the gate with it three times ; the hollows of the rocks reverberated with the sounds, as if sighs were uttered from their very entrails.

Then the door opened, and there appeared in the doorway an old woman carrying a candle that lit up her face, which was so wrinkled and so frightful that the poor boy recoiled in horror. Quite an army of beetles, lizards, salamanders, spiders, and other vermin surrounded the witch.

"How dare you disturb me, impudent beggar," she exclaimed, "by coming to knock at my door? What do you want? Speak quickly!"

"Madam," said the boy, "knowing that you alone know the way which leads to the castle of *Go and Return Not*, I come to ask you, if you please, to point it out to me."

The old woman made a grimace, intended for a mocking smile, and answered :

"Very well ; but now it is too late. You shall go to-morrow. Come in, and you shall sleep with these little insects."

"I am not able to stay," replied the boy ; "it is necessary that I should go at once, as I have to return by day-break to the place whence I came."

"May dogs worry you, and cats tear you, you stubborn boy," growled the old witch angrily. "If I tell you the way," she added, "it will only be upon condition that you bring me this jar full of the *Water of Many Colours*, which flows from the fountain in the courtyard of the castle ; and if you do not bring it to me, I will change you into a lizard for all eternity."

"Agreed !" cried the boy in return.

Then the old woman called a poor dog, which looked very thin and wretched, and said to it :

"Up! conduct this good-for-nought to the castle of *Go and Return Not*, and be careful that you inform my friend of his arrival."

The dog snarled, shook himself savagely, and set forth. At the end of about two hours they arrived in front of a very black, enormous, and gloomy castle, whose portals stood wide open, but where neither light nor sound gave any indication that it was inhabited; even the rays of the moon, as they were reflected upon the sombre and lifeless mass, seemed to make it still more horrible.

As he went forward, the dog began to howl; but the boy, who knew not whether this was the giant's hour for sleep, stopped and rested himself timorously against the trunk of a withered and leafless wild olive, which was the only tree to be found in that parched and naked district.

"Heaven help me!" exclaimed the boy.

"Cross! Cross!" responded a sad voice among the branches of the olive. Joyfully the boy recognised the hermit owl which the swallow had mentioned; and said to it in the language of birds:

"Poor little owl, I beg you will help and

guide me. I am come in search of the *Bird of Truth*, and I have to carry the *Water of Many Colours* to the witch of the tower."

"Do not do that," responded the owl; "but when you have filled the jar with the clear, pure water that flows from a spring at the foot of the fountain of *Water of Many Colours*, go in quickly to the aviary, which you will find in front of the doorway; do not take any notice of the various coloured birds that will come to meet you and deafen you by all shouting out together that they are the *Bird of Truth;* then seize a little white bird which the others thrust on one side and persecute ceaselessly, but they cannot kill, because it cannot die. But go quickly, for at this moment the giant is just going to sleep, and his sleep only lasts for a quarter of an hour!"

The boy began to run; he entered into the courtyard, where he found that the fountain had many spouts whence poured waters of different colours, but he did not look at them; he filled his jar at the spring of pure, clear water which flowed from the spring at the foot of the fountain, and then made his way to the aviary. Scarcely had he entered it, when he was

surrounded by a troop of birds, some plovers, some black ravens, and others gorgeous peacocks, and each one declaring itself to be the *Bird of Truth.* The boy did not linger with them, but went right forward, and finding the white bird he was in search of huddled in the corner, he took it, placed it in his bosom, and went forth, not, however, without distributing a few good blows among the enemies of the *Bird of Truth.*

The boy did not cease running until he reached the witch's tower. When he arrived, the old wretch seized the jar and flung all the contents at him, thinking that it was the water of many colours, and that he would be changed by it into a parrot; but as it was pure and clear water, the boy only became handsomer than he was before.

At the same time she had drenched all the insects, who were really people that had arrived there with the same intention as the little prince, and who were immediately changed back into their original forms,—the beetles into knights errant, the lizards into princesses, grasshoppers into dancers, crickets into musicians, flies into journalists, spiders into young

ladies, *curianas* (black flies) into students, the weevils into boys, and so forth. When the old witch saw this, she seized a broom and flew away. Then the disenchanted people, the ladies, gentlemen, girls, and boys thanked their liberator, and accompanied him on his way back to the city.

You may imagine how delighted his sister was when she saw the young prince return with the *Bird of Truth.* But a very great difficulty still remained, and that was, how the bird could be got into the presence of the king without the knowledge of the courtiers, who were interested in preventing him from discovering the great crime which they had committed. And what was more, the Court having learnt that the *Bird of Truth* had been found, the news inspired such dread that few were able to sleep tranquilly in their beds. All kinds of weapons were prepared against it; some sharpened, others envenomed; hawks were trained to pursue it; cages were prepared in which to imprison it, if it were found impossible to kill it; they slandered it, saying that its whiteness was an artificial paint, with which it coated its black plumage; they satirized and

ridiculed it in every possible manner. At last, so much was said about the *Bird of Truth*, that it reached the king's ears, who wished to see it; and the more that the courtiers intrigued to prevent it, the more he desired to view the bird. Finally, his Majesty issued a proclamation, that whoever had the *Bird of Truth* in his possession, was to present himself without delay to the king.

This was the very thing that the boy had wished for. So he hastened to the palace, carrying the *Bird of Truth* in his bosom; but, as you can imagine, the courtiers would not allow him to enter. Then the bird, taking flight, entered into the royal presence by a window, and presenting itself before the king, said:

"Lord, I am the *Bird of Truth*; the boy who brought me here in his bosom has not been allowed by the courtiers to enter."

The king commanded that the boy should be brought in at once, and he entered with his sister, who had accompanied him to the palace. When they came into the royal presence the king inquired who they were.

"That the *Bird of Truth* can tell your Majesty," said the boy.

And, questioned by the king, it answered that the children were his Majesty's own, and informed him of all that had happened. As soon as the king heard the story of the treason, with tears of joy he clasped the children in his arms, and ordered masons to open the vault in which the good queen had been so many years entombed. When the poor lady came forth, she was so white that she looked like a statue of marble; but as soon as she beheld her children, the blood rushed from her heart to her cheeks, and she became again as beautiful as she had ever been before. The king embraced her, and seated her on the throne with her children by her side. Then he ordered the good fisherman to be fetched, and created him chief of the Ministry of Fishing; and the queen's faithful attendant, who had saved her mistress's life, he pensioned off, and created her a duchess, and distributed many other gifts and benefits.



A GIRL WHO WANTED THREE HUSBANDS.

A CERTAIN man had a daughter who was not only very beautiful but also very wilful and obstinate. Three suitors, all of whom were eligible, came to woo her. Her father said all three had his good wishes, but she must make her own selection.

"I will accept the three," was her reply.

"But, daughter, that is not possible."

"I choose all three," persisted the girl.

"Be reasonable," insisted her father, "and say which it shall be." But all to no purpose, for he could not alter her determination. Then the poor father became angry, and told the three aspirants that his daughter wished to wed all three of them; but as that was not possible,

he had determined, if they would go forth into the world and seek for something unique of its kind, she should marry the one who obtained the best and rarest object.

Then all three departed on their separate ways. And after a long time they returned towards their appointed place of meeting in a distant land, but without having obtained anything very beautiful and rare. They were in great distress at this, but ceased not to inquire for what they sought. The first one met a little old man who asked him if he would like to buy a little mirror.

"No," he answered; for he could not see the use of so small and ugly a glass.

Then the vendor informed him that it had the great virtue of showing its owner any one he wished to see, never mind how far off the person might be. Having ascertained that this was a fact, the young man bought it.

And it also chanced to the second traveller, as he was passing through a street, that he met the same little old man, who asked him if he would like to buy a small phial of balsam.

"What would be the good of it to me?" he inquired.

"This balsam has the wonderful power of restoring the dead to life," said the old man. At this moment a funeral passed by, so he went up to the coffin and put a drop of the balsam into the mouth of the dead man, who rose up well and hearty, and, leaving the coffin, went home. When the second aspirant saw this, he bought the balsam from the old man for what he asked.

Meanwhile the third traveller went to stroll by the sea shore, and he beheld a large boat crossing the waves. It reached the land, and from it disembarked a large number of passengers. The last was a little old man, who approached him, and asked him if he would like to buy the boat.

"What use would it be to me," replied he, "except to make a bonfire of?"

"Sir," responded the old man, "it possesses the great virtue of being able to bear its owner, and any companions he takes with him, wheresoever he wishes to go, in a very short time. You can ask these passengers, who a little while since were in Spain." The traveller, ascertaining that this was so, bought the boat of the owner for what he demanded.



"The three suitors met, all of them very contented with their purchases."

The following day the three suitors met and, all of them very contented with their purchases, recounted their adventures, and then thought of getting home to Spain as quickly as possible. The first, who had bought the mirror in which the person one most wished to behold could be seen, showed his purchase, and to prove its virtue looked into it to see the girl for whose hand they all aspired. What was his horror when he beheld her dead, and lying in her coffin!

"I have some balsam," exclaimed he who had bought the little bottle, "which would resuscitate her; but, alas! before we can get home she will be buried, and devoured by the worms."

"But," said the third, "I have bought a boat that will soon take us to Spain."

Then they all three ran to the boat and got into it, and in a little while they reached the land, and disembarked at the town where lived the father of their lady-love. They found him in great grief for the death of his daughter, whose body was shown to them. Then he who had the balsam put a few drops on the lips of the dead girl, who got up well and smiling

from her coffin, and turning to her father said,—

"You see, father, that I must marry all three of them!"





THE KNIGHTS OF THE FISH.

ONCE upon a time there was a poor cobbler, who, being unable to live by mending shoes, determined to buy a net and turn fisherman. He went a-fishing for several days, but could draw up nothing in his net but old boots and shoes, though few enough of them could he get hold of when he was a cobbler. At last he thought :—

"This is the very last day I will go fishing. If I catch nothing I will go and hang myself."

He cast his net, and this time he found a fine fish in it. When he had taken the fish in his hand, it opened its mouth and said to him :—

"Take me home to your house; cut me in six pieces and stew me with salt and pepper, cinnamon and cloves, laurel leaves and mint.

Give two of the pieces to your wife, two to your mare, and the other two to the plant in your garden."

The cobbler did exactly what the fish had told him to do, such was the faith he had in its words. And he was duly rewarded, for several months after this his wife presented him with two fine boys, and his mare with two colts, whilst the plant in his garden grew two lances which, instead of flowers, bore two shields, on which were to be seen a silver fish on an azure ground.

Everything went on so prosperously that in course of time, one fine day, might be seen two gallant youths issuing from the cobbler's house, mounted upon two superb chargers, and bearing slender lances and brilliant shields.

These two brothers were so much alike that they were known as *The Double Knight;* and each of them wishing, as was just, to preserve his own individuality, they determined to separate and each seek his own fortune. After embracing affectionately, the one took his way towards the West, and the other towards the East.

After travelling for some days the first

arrived at Madrid, and found the royal city pouring bitter tears into the pure, sweet waters of her cherished river, the Manzanares. Everybody was weeping when our gallant youth arrived at the Spanish capital; he inquired the cause of this universal lamentation, and was informed that every year a fiery dragon came and carried off a beautiful maiden, and that this luckless year the lot had fallen upon their princess, the king's good and peerless daughter.

The knight at once inquired where the princess was to be found, and was informed, at about a quarter of a league distance, where she was expecting the fiery one to appear and carry her off to his den. Then the knight started off at once to the place indicated, and found the princess bathed in tears, and trembling from head to foot.

"Fly away!" cried the princess, when she saw the Knight of the Fish approach; "fly away, rash one! the monster is coming here, and if he see you, Heaven help you!"

"I shall not go away," responded the gallant youth, "because I have come to save you."

"To save me! Is that possible?"

"I am going to see," responded the valiant

champion. "Are there any German merchants in the city?"

"Yes," answered the princess in astonishment; "but why do you ask?"

"You will see," said the knight, and galloped off to the city of mourning.

He speedily returned with an immense mirror which he had purchased from a German dealer. This he rested against the trunk of a tree, and covered it with the princess's veil, placing her in front of it, and instructing her that when the dragon was near to her she was to pull off the veil and slip behind the glass. So saying, the knight retired behind an adjacent wall.

In a little while the fiery dragon appeared, and gradually drew near to the fair one, eyeing her with all the insolence and effrontery possible. When he was quite close, the princess, as she had been instructed by her champion, withdrew the veil, and slipping behind the mirror, disappeared from before the eyes of the fiery dragon, which remained stupefied at finding his amorous glances directed at a dragon similar to himself. He made a movement; his resemblance did the same. His eyes sparkled

red and brilliant as two rubies; whilst those of his opponent gleamed like two carbuncles. This increased his fury; he erected his scales as a porcupine would its quills, and those of his rival likewise stood up. He opened his tremendous mouth, which would have been without parallel but for that of his opponent, who, far from being intimidated, opened an identical one. The dragon dashed furiously against his intrepid adversary, giving such an awful blow with his head against the mirror that he was completely stunned; and as he had broken the glass, and in every piece saw a piece of his own body, he fancied that with one blow he had dashed his rival to atoms.

The knight availed himself of this moment of confusion and stupefaction, and dashing forth impetuously from his retreat, with his good lance deprived the dragon of its life, and would have been ready to deprive it of a hundred lives had it possessed so many.

The delight and jubilation of the Madrid people may be imagined when they beheld the Knight of the Fish bearing on his saddle the beautitul princess, quite uninjured and as lively as a cricket, and the dragon, fastened by its neck

to his sturdy charger, hanging dead and bloodless behind. It may, also, be readily guessed that after such an achievement they were unable to reward the gallant knight with anything but the princess's fair hand; and that they had wedding festivities, and banquets, and bull fights, and tilting matches, and all sorts of good things.

Some days after the marriage the Knight of the Fish said to his wife that he would like to see over the palace, which was so extensive that it covered a league of ground. They inspected the place together, and it occupied them four days in seeing over it. On the fourth day they ascended the roof, and the knight was struck with amazement at the prospect. Never had he seen anything like it, nor ever could he have seen its equal, even if he had visited all Spain and the Empire of Morocco as well.

"What castle is that?" inquired the Knight of the Fish, "which I see standing in the distance, so solitary and sombre."

"That," responded the princess, "is the castle of Albastretch; it is enchanted, and no one is able to undo the enchantment; and no

one of all those who have gone to it has ever been known to return."

The knight listened intently to this, and as he was valiant and adventurous, on the following morning, without letting any one know his intention, he mounted his horse, seized his lance, and set out for the castle.

The castle was enough to set one's hair on end with fright to look at it: it was darker than a thunder-cloud, and as silent as death. But the Knight of the Fish knew nothing of fear save by hearsay, and never turned his back on foe until he had conquered; so he took his cornet and blew it lustily. The sound startled all the slumbering echoes of the castle, so that they repeated it by heart, now nearer, and now farther, sometimes softer and then louder; but no one stirred in the castle.

"Ah, what a castle!" shouted the knight. "Is there no one to see to a knight who craves shelter? Is there no governor, nor squire, nor even a groom to take my horse away?"

"Away! away! away!" clamoured the echoes.

"Why should I go away?" said the Knight of the Fish. "I shall not go back for all you may say!"

"*Ay! ay! ay!*" ("Alas! alas! alas!") groaned the echoes.

The knight grasped his spear and struck a loud blow on the door.

Then the portcullis was raised, and in the opening appeared the tip of an enormous nose, located between the sunken eyes and fallen-in mouth of an old woman uglier than sin.

"What do you want, impudent disturber?" she inquired with a cracked voice.

"To enter," replied the knight. "Are you not able to afford me the enjoyment of some rest at this hour of the night? Yes, or no?"

"No! no! no!" said the echoes.

Here the knight lifted his vizier, because he was warm; and the old woman, seeing how handsome he was, said to him:—

"Come in, handsome youth; you shall be cared for and well looked after."

"After! after!" warned the echoes; but the knight was fearless and entered, the old woman promising that he should fare well.

"Farewell; farewell!" sighed the echoes.

"Go on, old lady," said the knight.

"I am called Lady Berberisca," interposed

the old woman, very crossly; "and I am the mistress of Albastretch."

"Wretch! wretch!" groaned the echoes.

"Won't you be silent, cursed chatterers!" exclaimed Lady Berberisca. "I am your humble servant," she continued, making a deep curtsey to the knight, "and if you like I will be your wife, and you shall live with me here as grand as a Pacha."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the echoes.

"Would you have me marry you? You who must be a hundred? You are foolish, and mad as well."

"Well, well," said the echoes.

"What I want," said the knight, "is the registry of the castle, to examine."

"Amen! amen!" sighed the echoes.

Lady Berberisca's pride was deeply wounded; she gave a hasty glance at the Knight of the Fish, and intimating to him that he should follow her, she showed him over the castle, where he beheld many strange things, but she did not afford him any opportunity of referring to them. The wicked old woman took him through an obscure corridor, where there was a trap-door into which he fell and disappeared into

an abyss where his voice was added to the echoes, that were the voices of many other gallant and accomplished knights whom the shameless old Berberisca had punished in the same manner for having despised her venerable charms.

Let us now turn to the other Knight of the Fish, who, after long travels, arrived at Madrid. As he entered the city gates the sentinels presented arms, the drums beat the royal march, and several of the palace servitors surrounded him, saying that the princess was in constant tears through his prolonged absence, fearing that some misfortune had happened to him in the enchanted castle of Albastretch.

"It is necessary that I should pass for my brother," thought the knight, "to whom, it would appear, some good fortune has occurred. I must be quiet, and we shall see what will come to pass."

They carried him almost in triumph to the palace, where he found it easy to accept all the caresses and congratulations bestowed upon him by the king and the princess. They were eager to learn about his adventures, and what he had seen at the castle; but to the princess's inquiries he answered:—

"I am not permitted to say a word about that until after I have been there once more."

"Are you thinking of revisiting that accursed castle? You are the only one who has yet returned from it."

"It is unavoidable; I am obliged to go there."

When they retired to rest, the knight placed his sword in the bed.

"Why do you do that?" inquired the princess.

"Because I have sworn not to sleep in a bed until after I have revisited Albastretch."

And on the following day he mounted his steed and took his way to the enchanted castle, much fearing that some misfortune had happened to his brother there. He arrived at the castle, and quickly saw the old woman's fiery nose appear at the portcullis.

No sooner did she see the knight than she became livid with fright, for she thought he was the dead knight come to life again. She began to invoke the object of her devotions, Beelzebub, most devoutly, and promised him all kinds of gifts if he would take from her

view that vision of flesh and blood, drawn up from the abode of the dead.

"Ancient lady!" cried the recent arrival, "I have come to ask where a knight is who has been here?"

"Here! here! here!" responded the echoes.

"And what have you done with this knight, so accomplished in all things, and so skilled?"

"Killed! killed!" groaned the echoes.

On hearing this, and seeing the old hag running off, the Knight of the Fish, beside himself with rage, ran after her, and pierced her through with his sword, which remained fast in her body, so that she jumped about at the point of it like a parched pea in a frying pan.

"Where is my brother, ugly old traitress?" demanded the knight.

"I can tell you," responded the witch, "but as I am at death's door, I will not let you know until you have resuscitated me."

"But how can I do this, perfidious witch?"

"Go to the garden," responded the old woman, "cut some evergreens, everlastings, and dragon's blood; with these plants make a decoction in a caldron, and then sprinkle some of it over me."

After saying this, the old woman died, without uttering a prayer. The knight did all the witch had instructed him to do, and effectually resuscitated her, but uglier than ever, for her nose remained deadly white, and looked like an elephant's tusk. Then she had to tell the knight where his brother was; and down in the abyss he not only found him, but many other victims of the wicked Berberisca. And he sprinkled them all with the decoction in the caldron, and they were all brought to life again, and to each person came an echo which had been his voice; and the first words they all uttered were :—

"Accursed witch! merciless Berberisca!"

Then all those gallant knights, and many beautiful ladies whom the fiery old dragon,—who was the witch's son,—had carried there, gave thanks to the Knight of the Fish; and one of the most beautiful of the ladies gave him her hand, on seeing which, the wicked Berberisca died again with envy and spite.



FAIR-FLOWER.

THERE was a father who had two sons; the elder, named Joseph, became a soldier, and went abroad for many years. When he returned home, his father was dead and his brother had gained the property and grown very rich. He went to his brother's house and met him coming down stairs.

"Do you know me?" inquired Joseph.

And the brother replied, with a very bad manner, that he did not. Then Joseph made himself known, and his brother told him to go to the granary, and there find a boat, which was all the inheritance his father had left him: so saying, he went on his way without taking any further notice of him.

Then the elder brother went up into the

granary and found a very old boat, and said to himself: "What ever use will this broken old boat be to me? God's will be done!" he added, "it will do to make a fire of to warm me, for it is very cold."

He lifted it up and carried it to his inn, where he borrowed a hatchet, and began to hack it to pieces. Suddenly, a paper fell out of a secret place. He snatched it up and found that it was the acknowledgment of a very large amount due to his father. He recovered this money and became very rich.

One day Joseph met a woman in the street weeping bitterly. He asked her what was the matter with her, and she replied that her husband was very ill, and that she had nothing to give him, and that a creditor wanted to put him in prison, because he could not pay what he owed him.

"Do not worry yourself," said the good Joseph, "they shall not put your husband in prison, nor sell your goods, let it cost me what it may." Then he paid their debts, and provided for the illness and funeral of her husband,—for he died. But it came to pass that, when he had done all this, Joseph

had not a penny left, having expended the whole of his inheritance in this good work. "And now, what is to be done?" he asked himself; "now that I have nothing left even for food! I will go to the palace and ask for some employment." He did so, and became a servitor in the king's palace. And he behaved himself so well that the king took a fancy to him, and promoted him frequently, until at last he made him his chief servitor.

Meanwhile the unnatural brother had become poor, whereupon he wrote to Joseph, begging to be taken under his protection; and Joseph was so good-hearted that he aided him, and asked the king to give his brother employment in the palace; and the king consented. He was employed, but instead of feeling gratitude towards his good brother, he envied him his power with the king, and conspired to ruin him. To effect this bad purpose he set to work to discover some State secret, and learnt that the king was enamoured of Princess Fair-Flower; but as he was old and ugly she did not like him, and had hidden herself away, no one knew where. Then the false brother went to the

king and told him that Joseph knew where Fair-Flower was, and corresponded with her. The king was very angry, and had Joseph brought before him, and then commanded him to go instantly and find the Princess Fair-Flower, saying that if he returned without her he should be hanged.

The poor fellow, quite disconsolate, went to seek for a horse for his journey, but did not know what direction to go in search of Fair-Flower. He saw a great white horse, very old and lanky, which said to him :—

"Take me with you, and have no heed of aught."

Joseph was astounded at hearing a horse speak, but mounted upon it and began his journey, taking with him three rolls of bread which the horse told him to take.

After they had journeyed a long while they met an ant, and the horse said to him :—

"Throw those three rolls, for the little ants to eat."

"But," said Joseph, "what shall we do, if we want bread ?"

"Throw them," replied the horse, "and never weary of doing good."

They proceeded on their journey, and encountered an eagle entangled in the nets of a hunter.

"Halt," said the horse to him; "get down and cut the threads of the net, and free the poor creature."

"But we shall lose time in doing that," responded Joseph.

"Do what I tell you, and never weary of doing good."

When they had journeyed for some time longer they arrived at the banks of a river, and saw a little fish that had been left high and dry on the bank, and, notwithstanding all its efforts and struggles, was unable to regain the stream.

"Get down," said the white horse to Joseph, "catch that poor little fish and put it back into the water."

"But we have no time for these delays," contested Joseph.

"There is always time for a good action," responded the horse; "never weary of doing good."

In a little while they arrived at a castle situated in the midst of a dense forest, and

beheld the Princess Fair-Flower, feeding her chickens.

"Now attend to me," said the white steed to Joseph. "I shall amble and pirouette in order to amuse Fair-Flower. You ask her if she would like to mount a little while, and permit her to do so; then I will jump and neigh, and that will frighten her. Then you must tell her that that is because I am not accustomed to be ridden by females, but that you will mount and tame me; then you will mount and gallop off until you arrive at the king's palace."

And everything happened just as the horse had foreseen; and only when they were galloping away did Fair-Flower divine the scheme which the horse had concocted of running away with her. Then she let the bran she was carrying fall to the ground; and as it was scattered about, she told her companion that her bran was spilt, and that she wished to gather it up.

"Where we are going," responded Joseph, "there is plenty of bran."

After that, as they were passing under a tree, the princess cast her handkerchief up as

far as she could, where it was left, hanging upon one of the highest branches. She asked Joseph to stop and climb the tree for it; but he replied, "Where we are going there are plenty of handkerchiefs."

They had to pass by a river, and the princess contrived to drop a ring into it, and then begged Joseph to get down and get it for her; but he only answered, "Where we are going there are plenty of rings."

Finally, they arrived at the king's palace, where the king was highly delighted at seeing his beloved Fair-Flower once more; but the princess went to a room, and locked herself in, and would not open the door to anybody. The king begged her to open the door; but she replied that she would never open it until they found for her the three things she had lost on the way to the palace.

"There is no help for it, Joseph," said the king, "but that you, who know the way, should go and find these things; and if you do not bring them back with you, I will have you hanged."

Poor Joseph was sorely troubled by this, and went to tell the great white horse of his

new misfortune. The horse, however, said to him :—

"Do not afflict yourself; mount upon me, and we will go and seek the lost articles."

Then they started off and journeyed until they met the ant.

"Do you want to have the bran?" said the horse.

"Would I not like to have it!" exclaimed Joseph.

"Then call the little ants, and tell them to bring you as much as has been spilt, and they will bring you what they have extracted from the three rolls, which will be as much as you need."

And so it came to pass. Out of gratitude the little ants worked with a good will, and soon put before Joseph a pile of bran.

"You will see," said the horse, "whether, early or late, a good deed does not bring its reward."

They now speedily arrived at the tree into which Fair-Flower had flung her handkerchief, which was streaming like a pennon from one of the highest branches.

"How am I to get that handkerchief down?"

exclaimed Joseph. "I should want Jacob's ladder to reach it!"

"Don't perplex yourself about that," responded the horse; "call the eagle which you freed from the hunter's net, and it will get it for you."

And thus it happened. The eagle came, seized the handkerchief in its beak, and brought it to Joseph.

They next arrived at the river, which was very turbid.

"How ever am I to get the ring from the bottom of that deep river," said Joseph, "where I can neither see it nor know in what spot Fair-Flower dropped it?"

"Don't worry yourself on that score," said the white horse, "but call the little fish which you saved, and it will bring it to you."

And so it happened, and the little fish dived down and came up again, waving its tail with pleasure, and bringing the ring in its mouth.

Then Joseph returned, very well satisfied with his success, to the palace; but when they carried the things to Fair-Flower, she said she would not open the door nor come out of the

room, unless they fried in oil the robber who had carried her off from her palace.

The king was so cruel that he promised to have this done, and told Joseph that there was no help for it, but that he must be fried in oil.

Full of dismay, Joseph went to tell the white horse what had taken place.

"Do not be frightened," said the horse to him; "mount upon me, I will gallop about and perspire; anoint your body with my sweat, and rest contented that no harm will happen to you in the caldron."

And it came to pass as the horse said; and when Joseph emerged from the caldron, he had become such a handsome and gallant youth, that everybody admired him; no one more than Fair-Flower, however, who fell in love with him instantly.

Then the king, who was old and ugly, on seeing what had happened to Joseph, thought that a similar thing would happen to himself; and being so deeply in love with Fair-Flower, he jumped into the caldron, and was turned into a bladder of lard.

Then by universal acclamation Joseph was proclaimed king, and married Fair-Flower.

When our hero went to give thanks to the great white horse for all the good services it had rendered to him, the horse said :—

"I am the spirit of that unfortunate man whose debts, illness, and interment cost you so much; and who, beholding you poor and in danger, prayed to God to be allowed power to help you and repay your benefits. This was permitted, and I have again to say to you, Never weary of doing good."

THE SINGING SACK.

THERE was once a mother who had an only daughter whom she loved very dearly; and because the girl was very good she had given her a pretty coral necklace. One day the child went to fill her pitcher with water at a fountain near the cottage. When she reached the fountain, she took off her coral necklace and put it down, so that it should not fall into the water as she filled her pitcher. A very hideous old beggar-man with a sack was seated at the fountain, and he gave the child such a terrible look that she was afraid, and scarcely stayed to fill her pitcher before she ran away, quite forgetting the necklace in her fright.

When she reached home the girl remembered her necklace, and ran back to the fountain to seek it; but when she arrived the old beggar who was still seated there, seized her and thrust

her into his sack. He then went on his way begging alms from door to door, saying that he carried a wonderful thing with him, *a sack that could sing.* The folks wished to hear it, so the old rogue cried out with a voice of thunder :—

"Sing, sack, sing ;
Or your neck I will wring!"

The poor girl, half dead with fear, had no help but to sing, which she weepingly did, as follows :—

"I went to the well for water—
The well near by my home,
And I lost my coral necklace,
That came from far off Rome.
Alas ! my darling mother,
How troubled you will be !

"I went to the well to seek it—
But could not find it there :
I have lost my coral necklace ;
My necklace rich and rare !
Alas ! my darling mother,
How saddened you will be !

"Oh, I could not find my necklace—
My mother's gift to me !
Oh, I could not find my necklace—
And I lost my liberty !
Alas ! my darling mother,
How wretched you will be !"

The poor child sang this so well, that the people were very glad to listen to her; and everywhere much money was given to the old man to hear the sack sing.

Going thus from house to house, at last he arrived at the home of the girl's mother, who at once recognised her daughter's voice, and therefore said to the beggar :—

"Father, the weather is very bad; the wind increases and the rain falls; shelter yourself here to-night, and I will give you some supper."

The old rascal was very willing; and the girl's mother gave him so much to eat and drink that he became stupid, and after his supper went to sleep, and slept as sound as a top. Then the mother drew her little darling out of the sack, where she was nearly frozen, and gave her many kisses and a good warm supper, and put her to bed. She then put a dog and a cat into the sack.

The following morning the old beggar thanked her, and went away. On arriving at the next house, he said his usual say of :—

"Sing, sack, sing,
Or your neck I will wring;"

when the dog answered,—

"Old rogue, bow-wow;"

and the cat added,—

"Old thief, mieau-mieau."

In a rage, the beggar, thinking it was the girl who said this, opened the sack to punish her, when the dog and cat sprang out furiously; and the cat jumped at his face and clawed out his eyes, whilst the dog bit a piece out of his nose.

THE FOOLISH WOLF AND THE SHREWD FOX.

ONCE upon a time there was a certain fox that had two very young cubs. Near its abode, which was a little hut, lived its friend, a wolf. One day when passing, the fox saw that great preparations were being made in the wolf's house, and that it was being decorated in quite a palatial style. The wolf asked her friend to come in and see the place, and she went in, and saw over the hall, bedroom, kitchen, and even the larder, which was very well furnished.

"Friend," said the fox, "I see that what you lack is a little pot of honey."

"That is true," the wolf responded; and as she at that moment heard a man passing through the street, crying:—

"Honey from bees,
Syrup of flowers,"

the wolf bought some and filled a little pot with it, telling her friend, that when the work was quite finished in her house she would invite her to a banquet at which the honey should be eaten.

But the work never seemed to come to an end, and the fox, whose paws itched for the honey, was burning to eat it up

One day she said to the wolf:—

"Friend, I have been invited to be godmother at a christening, and I wish that you would do me the kindness to come to my house, and take care of my cubs whilst I am away." The wolf consented; and the fox, instead of going to a christening, went to the wolf's house, devoured a good share of the honey, and took nuts, raisins, figs, pears, almonds, and whatever she could purloin, and then went off into the fields to eat them comfortably with some shepherds, who in exchange gave her some milk and cheese.

When she returned, the wolf said:—

"Well, friend, how did the christening go off?"

"Very well," said the fox.

"And what was the child named?"

"*Commencement,*" responded the supposed godmother.

"Goodness gracious, what a name!" said her friend.

"It is not mentioned in the Calendar. It is the name of a saint of but slight reputation," replied the fox.

"And the sweets?" inquired her friend.

"Not a single sweet was had."

"Good heavens, what a christening!" said the wolf, "I have never seen one like that. Here, I have been the whole day like a nurse with your cubs, and nothing to eat, and now you come in with empty hands. That is a nice way to be treated!"

And she went away in a passion.

After a while the fox had great longings to eat honey once more, and she tried the same trick on the wolf again in order to draw her from her house, promising that she would bring her some sweetmeats from the christening. With such fine words she persuaded the wolf, and when she returned at night, after having spent a pleasant day in the country, and having eaten half the honey, the friend asked her what the child had been named.

"*Moiety*," answered the fox.

"What a name!" said the wolf, who one can see was rather silly, "in all my life I have never heard of such a name."

"It is a Moorish saint's," responded her friend.

And the wolf was quite convinced, and asked for the sweetmeats.

"I went to sleep for a little while under an olive tree, and some starlings came and carried them off in their claws and beaks," responded the fox.

The wolf went off in a passion, muttering imprecations against the starlings.

After a certain interval the fox went again with the same deceitful tale to her neighbour.

"I shan't go again!" said the wolf; "I don't want to have to sing your cubs to sleep, and gain nothing more, after all my years of domestic experience, than to have the trouble of looking after your youngsters, whilst you go to as many christenings as you please!"

But the fox used so many kind words and made so many promises of the sweetmeats that she would bring back, that at last she persuaded the wolf to stay in her hut.

When the fox returned, after having eaten the whole of the honey that was left, the wolf asked what the child had been named, and was answered :—

"*Finis.*"

"What a name! never have I heard the like," said the wolf.

"It is a saint's who does not like to hear the sound of it himself," said the fox.

"But how about the sweetmeats?" inquired the neighbour.

"The tray was broken in the oven, and they were all burnt," responded the fox.

The wolf flew into a great rage, saying :—

"Neighbour, I wish that all the sweets your so-called godchildren, *Commencement*, *Moiety*, and *Finis*, put into their mouths may change to stones."

Some time passed by, when the fox said to the wolf :—

"Neighbour, a promise is a debt; your house is now finished, and you have to give me the banquet which you promised."

The wolf, who was still angry, did not want to do so, but finally was persuaded and gave the fox the invitation.

When the time for dessert arrived, she brought in, as promised, the pot of honey, and as she lifted it said :—

"How light this jar is! Honey weighs very little!"

But when she opened it she was astounded to see it empty.

"What is this?" she exclaimed.

"What can it be," responded the fox, "but that you have eaten it all yourself without giving me a part?"

"I have not tasted it yet though," said the wolf.

"What! you must have done so, but you do not remember."

"I tell you that I have not, rogue! It is you who have robbed me; and your three godchildren, *Commencement*, *Moiety*, and *Finis*, have been the beginning, half, and end of my honey!"

"Besides having eaten the honey without giving me any share, you now wish to bring a false charge against me! Greedy wretch, why don't you hide your face with shame?" said the fox.

"I have not eaten it; it is you, you rogue

and thief! And now I am going to the lion to make my complaint," replied the wolf.

"Listen to me, neighbour, and do not be in such a hurry," said the fox. "Any one who has eaten honey, if he goes to sleep in the sun, will be covered with honey when he wakes, don't you know that?"

"No," said the wolf.

"It is quite true," said the fox; "we will take our afternoon nap in the sun, and when we wake up, then we shall see which of us is really the culprit."

The wolf agreed at last, and they went to sleep in the sun. Scarcely had the fox heard her hostess snoring, than she got up, scraped out the pot, and rubbed the honey that was left over the wolf. She then licked her paws and went to sleep. When the wolf awoke and saw that she was covered with honey, she said:—

"Oh! it is true, then, that I have eaten it; but I can swear to you, my friend, that I did not recollect it. Pardon me! Let us make it up again!"



THE GUARDIAN SPIRITS.

ONCE upon a time there was a poor old woman who had a niece she had brought up very strictly; the girl was very good and devout, but a timid little thing. The poor old woman knew this, and thinking how badly off the girl would be when she died, fancied the best thing would be to find a good husband for her.

One day she visited the house of a friend of hers, and among the guests there was a wealthy Indian, who took an opportunity of saying that he would marry if he could find a skilful, domestic, modest girl for a wife. The old woman listened to this, and when she had a chance told him that he would find what he sought in her niece, who was a prize, a grain of gold, and so skilful that she could do anything.

The gentleman said that he should like to

know her, and that he would call the following day. The old woman ran home and told her niece to tidy the house, and that the following day she should dress herself in her best, because they were going to have a visitor.

When the gentleman came, on the following day, he asked the girl if she could spin.

"What cannot she do?" said the aunt, "the skeins fly through her fingers like water."

"What have you done, madam?" said the niece, when the gentleman had departed, leaving with her three spools of flax to be spun. "What have you done? For I don't know how to spin."

"Nonsense, girl," said the aunt, "you will do very well. Don't trouble yourself, but see what Heaven will do for you."

"But in what a predicament you have put me," said the niece, crying.

"You must see what you can devise," replied the aunt; "but you have to spin those three skeins, for on that depends your fate."

At night the girl retired to her room in great grief, and placed herself in the protecting hands of the blessed spirits, for she was very devout. Whilst she was praying there ap-

peared to her three very beautiful spirits, clothed in white. They told her not to grieve, and they would help her in return for her many fervent prayers. Each one then took a skein of the flax and wound it off into a thread as fine as a hair.

On the following day, when the Indian came, he was astounded at seeing such dexterity united with so much diligence.

"Did I not tell you so, sir?" said the old woman, almost beside herself with delight.

The gentleman inquired if the girl knew how to sew.

"What cannot she do?" said the aunt with ardour, "pieces of needlework go through her hands as quickly as cherries through a greedy mouth."

Then the gentleman left linen for three shirts to be made, and the same thing happened as on the previous night; and again on the following, when the Indian left a satin waistcoat to be embroidered. Only on the third night, when the girl was praying with much fervour and many tears, the guardian spirits appeared, and one of them said to her :—



"There appeared to her three very beautiful spirits, clothed in white."

"Do not fret yourself, we are come to embroider this waistcoat for you, but it must be on one condition."

"What is that?" inquired the girl anxiously.

"That you invite us to your wedding."

"But am I going to be married?" asked the girl.

"Yes," answered the spirits, "to that wealthy Indian."

And so it came to pass; for on the following day, when the gentleman saw the waistcoat so delicately embroidered that it looked as if hands had never touched it, and so beautiful that it ravished the eyesight, he told the aunt that he would like to marry her niece.

The aunt could have danced for joy, but not so the niece, who said:—

"But, madam, what will become of me when my husband discovers that I can do nothing?"

"Nonsense," replied the aunt, "the guardian spirits, who have rescued you from such difficulties, will not cease from assisting you."

The marriage then was arranged, and on the evening previous to the wedding the bride went to the altar of her guardian spirits and invited them to the ceremony.

On the wedding day, when the feasting was at its height, three old women entered the room; they were so fearfully ugly that the bridegroom was dumbfounded, and could only stare at them. One of them had one arm very short and the other so long that it trailed on the ground; the second was humpbacked and had her body all crooked, whilst the third had goggle eyes more inflamed than a tomato.

"Good heavens!" said the gentleman at last to his perturbed bride, "who are these three hobgoblins?"

"They are my father's aunts," responded the bride, "whom I have invited to the wedding."

The gentleman, who was well mannered, went to speak to them and offer them seats.

"Tell me," he said to the one that entered first, "how it is that you have one arm so short and one so long."

"My son," said the old woman, "it is because I have done so much spinning."

The Indian got up and went to his bride, and said to her:—

"Break your spindle and distaff, and mind that you never spin any more."

Afterwards he asked the second old woman

how it was that she was so humpbacked and crooked.

"My son," she responded, "I am so because I have done so much embroidery."

In three steps the Indian reached his bride and said to her :—

"My own one! break your embroidery frame, and beware of ever again attempting to embroider!"

Then he went to the third old woman, and asked her how it was that her eyes were so projecting and inflamed.

"My son," replied she as she goggled them about, "it is through so much sewing and bending my head over the needlework."

No sooner had she uttered the words than the Indian was at his wife's side, saying to her :—

"Seize your needles and thread and fling them into the well; and, understand me thoroughly, the day on which I see you sew I will apply for a divorce! A wise head profits by other folk's experience!"



JOHN THE CONJURER.

FORMERLY there was a man named John Cigarron (or the Great Cigar), who gained money by pretending to be a magician. He played his part to perfection; gave himself such airs and graces that he quite deceived everybody; for you must know, fair readers, that people have an unfortunate propensity for believing what they should not believe, and doubting what they ought not to doubt. Thus it was that John Cigarron at that time acquired a fame similar to what in our days is acquired by other impostors of his style.

It so happened that a great quantity of plate was stolen from the king's palace, and notwithstanding the most diligent search it was impossible to find out who were the perpetrators of the robbery. As a last resource the king was

counselled to order the famous magician to be brought to him, as nothing could be hidden from this man, although, it was remarked, he would not always display his power save only when he was in the humour to do so.

The king ordered the magician to be brought into his presence; and the man, as may be imagined, when he came before his Majesty, was nearly dead from fright. The king informed him that he was to be shut up in prison for three days, and that if at the end of those three days he had not discovered the authors of the robbery, he would have him hanged as a liar and an impostor.

"I may as well prepare myself for death," thought John Cigarron, when he found himself in prison. "Never would I have held myself forth as a magician if I had known what it would cost me. Only three days of life left to me; not one more nor one less! A nice scrape you've got into, John Cigarron!"

The truth was, that the plate had been stolen by three of the king's pages, who were the very youths charged to take the prisoner his food. When the first of them took his evening meal to the cell, John Cigarron, alluding to the three

days to which his existence was limited by the king, exclaimed :—

"Ah, my lord Saint Bruno,
Of the three there goes *uno*" (one).

As the page's conscience was bad, and as he had heard it reported that nothing could be concealed from this magician, he was startled, and said to his companions :—

"We are lost! the magician knows that we are the thieves."

The others would not believe it; but on the second day, when another of the three pages entered the cell with the food, and heard John Cigarron exclaiming sadly :—

"Ah lord Saint John de Diös,
Of the three I have seen *dos!*" (two),

he went out more alarmed than the first.

"You are right," he said to his companions, "he knows, and we are lost!"

So when it came to pass on the following day that the third had to take the food in, and heard John Cigarron saying in despair :—

"Ah, Saint Andrés,
Now I've seen the *tres!*" (three)

he fell on his knees, confessed the crime, and offered to restore all the stolen plate, and give

John Cigarron a great present, if he would not betray them.

The three days having passed, the king commanded the magician to be brought into his presence, and the man entered with much pomposity.

"Well," said the king, "do you bring me news of my lost property?"

"Sire," responded John Cigarron, with great bombast, "I am too noble and too philanthropic to betray any one, but I confide in your Majesty being contented with my skill and power if the stolen plate be restored."

"Yes, yes," replied the king, "I shall be satisfied if the plate be given up. Where is it?"

John Cigarron drew himself up and responded, as he made a majestic gesture:—

"Let some one go to the cell in which I was confined, and it will be found there."

This was done, and the plate, which had been carried there by the pages, was found.

The king was struck with admiration, and took such interest in John Cigarron's fate, that he appointed him chief Magician, royal Diviner, and Soothsayer in ordinary. But all this was

far from gratifying to the office-bearer, who trembled with dread at the thought of what might present itself upon the next occasion when his Majesty should require his scientific services, and when, he feared, he might not emerge with such flying colours. And his fears were not quite groundless; for one day when the king was walking in his gardens he thought he would like another proof of his chief magician's skill, so he presented himself to him suddenly, with his hand closed, and asked him what he had in it. On hearing this unexpected question, the poor fellow was quite stupefied, and exclaimed :—

"Sire, the game is up, Cigarron is in your hands now!"

A cry of admiration escaped from the king, who opened his hand and displayed what was in it; it was a large cigar! (*cigarron*). In his enthusiasm the king told the lucky conjurer to ask whatever he wished for; and whatever it should be, he gave him his royal word that he would grant it. In reply, John Cigarron said,—

"Then, sire, I beg that you will never again put my powers of divination to the test!"



THE BLUE LILY.

Valencian Version.

Once upon a time there was a king who had three sons, to whom he said that he would bequeath his crown to the one that brought him the Blue Lily. Then each of the three princes started off a different way in search of it. The youngest son found the flower, and hid it in his bosom, so that if he met his brothers they should not see it. But they met him in the bed of a dried-up stream, and knowing that he had the flower with him, one said to the other :

" What shall we do to get the Lily from him, and so gain the crown ? "

And the other replied :—

" Let us kill him."

And they did so, burying him in the sand.

As they were two, and there was only one flower, they cast lots for it, and the elder gained

it. So he went home very delighted, and when he arrived, gave the Lily to his father the king, who proclaimed him heir to the crown.

But it happened that a shepherd passed by the spot where the youngest prince had been buried, and he saw a white reed projecting from the ground, so he cut it off and made a flute with it. When he played it, it sang—

"Play, play, good shepherd;
'For the Blue Lily's blossom
They took my life away, and
Hid me in the river's bosom.'"

Then the shepherd went on playing this until he passed before the palace; and the king, hearing the flute, went forth and called the shepherd, and said to him :—

"Play thy flute before me; I should like to hear it."

Then the shepherd entered the palace, and played the flute, and it repeated its song. So the king commanded his sons to be called, and said to the shepherd that he must show them where he had obtained that flute. And the shepherd took them to the place where he had found the white reed, and the king said to his sons :—

" Have you murdered your brother ? "

But they declared they had not. Then the king, their father, commanded them to dig at that spot, and they found the lad alive and well, but wanting a finger that he had had when buried, but which had served to make the flute. Then the king punished his two wicked sons, and left the crown to the youngest, who lived and reigned many years, but always without one of his fingers.





A TALE OF TARADIDDLES.

ONCE upon a time there was a certain Princess who was very fond of "drawing the long bow," and who, to all her father's requests that she would select a husband, declared she never would marry any one who could not fabricate falsehoods better than herself; and she was such a clever hand at fibbing that no one could be found who was able to surpass her.

All these things came to the ears of a clever young shepherd, as he was travelling. "I will present myself," he murmured to himself, "for I am sure I can gain the hand of the Princess, if telling stories will do it, for to tell fibs as I can, one must have studied under a descendant of the old Serpent himself." So he went to the palace.

"What have you for me?" asked the Princess, when he arrived before her.

"I beg to inform your Royal Highness," said the young shepherd, "that I have travelled a great deal, and that I have come to relate my travels to you."

"That is all very well," said the Princess; only I assure you that if you speak a single word of truth, you will be turned into the street in a very summary manner."

"My first journey was a very lengthy one," said the young shepherd, "because when I planted a palm-tree it grew so quickly that it carried me with it to heaven. I arrived there just in time to witness the bridal of the Eleven Thousand Virgins; and because I made love to one of them, St. Peter kicked me out. In falling I met with the moon, and on entering it by one of its eyes, I found that it had silver brains and hairs of gold; I attempted to descend by one of these, when the moon turned her head, and seeing me, with her mouth bit off the hair that suspended me. I fell into a pumpkin, where I passed the time pretty comfortably until my abode was carried to the market-place, where it was sold to the nuns of a convent.

The nuns thought that I was an insect, and carried me out with the convent refuse to the kitchen garden. A shower of rain falling, I began to grow there, but cutting away the roots with my knife, I again set forth upon my travels. After a time I arrived at a river, where I made some nets, and fished up an ass; I mounted it and continued my journey. After travelling for two days, I saw that the animal had a wound; I showed this to a veterinary surgeon and he directed me to sow a bean in it. I did so, and quite a forest of beans grew up. I took a gun and hunted through them until I saw and shot a wild sow, which then changed into an old woman, whom I baptised and named "Nightmare." Goody Nightmare fell in love with me, and in order to escape from her I mounted upon a tortoise that ran faster than the wind, and in a trice bore me to the uttermost depths of the ocean. There I found a convent of anchovies, the prior of which was a whale, who on seeing me opened his huge mouth and swallowed me, and with me a quantity of water, which he spouted out through his nostrils, casting me with it on to the sea-shore. There I met some sailors, and as I was en-

crusted with the sea salt, and was all white and stiff, they sold me to some pedlars, who in their turn disposed of me to a native of Seville, who placed me in the courtyard of his house, surrounding me with shrubs. The first night it rained, so the salt began to melt, and I was able to run. I knew that your Royal Highness sought for a greater liar than yourself in order to reward him, and I said, 'I will go to her and prove that I am he.'"

"As in saying that you have already told one truth," said the Princess, "I shall not be able to marry you; but as you have lied so well, and better than any one else, it is but just that you should be rewarded. I will, therefore, provide you with a suitable situation. What post is there vacant?" inquired her Royal Highness of the Minister in attendance.

"Madam," responded the Minister, "there is nothing but the editorship of the *Gazette*, the editor of which died to-day."

"Then the post shall be given at once to this shepherd for the talent he has displayed," said the Princess.

And so it came to pass, and the young shepherd continued lying in the *Gazette*, whence it

became the custom for people to say, "He lies like the *Gazette*." The saying grew into a proverb that has lasted until our days.





THE KNAVISH LITTLE BIRD.

A CERTAIN little bird went to a tailor and ordered him to make it a little woollen coat. The tailor took his measure, and agreed to have it ready for him in three days. Then he went to a hatter and ordered a little hat, and the hatter promised as the tailor had done; finally, the little bird went to a shoemaker, and the shoemaker took his measure, and like the others told him they should be ready on the third day. When the appointed time arrived, the bird went to the tailor, who had the little woollen coat ready, and said to him :—

"Put it upon my little bill, and I will pay you."

And the tailor did so, but instead of paying him, the little rogue flew away. And the same trick was played with the hatter, and with the shoemaker.

Then the little bird dressed itself in the new things and went to the king's garden, and placed itself upon a tree before the banqueting room. Whilst the king was dining, it sang :—

"In my little woollen coat I am as fine
As the king in his mantle of scarlet."

And it sang and re-sang its song so many times, that his Majesty got angry and ordered it to be caught and cooked, and brought before him. This was done; and after it had been plucked of its feathers and cooked, it was so small that the king swallowed it whole, in a single mouthful.

When the little bird found itself in the king's inside, which seemed to it to be a cavern darker than midnight, it began to kick about right and left with all its might. Then the king began to complain, and to say that his food had not agreed with him, but had made him ill. The doctors came and ordered the king to take a draught, and this made the little bird so uncomfortable that he flew out of the king's mouth like a flash of lightning.

In the first place, the bird now dived into a fountain; and then it went to a carpenter's

shop and rubbed itself all over with glue. Afterwards, it went to the other birds, and told them what had happened to it, and begged each of them to give it a feather; and each of them did so, and as it was covered with glue, the feathers all stuck to it; and each feather being of a different colour, the little bird at last became more beautiful than it had been before, with plumage as many-coloured as the rainbow. Then it went and fluttered about the tree that was before the king's balcony, singing lustily :—

"To whom has happened what has chanced to me?
Into the king to enter, and from the king come free."

The king said :—

"Catch that little rascal of a bird!"

But the little bird was now forewarned, so it flew like the wind, and did not stop until it perched upon the nose of the man in the moon!

LUCIFER'S EAR.

ONCE upon a time there was a very rich merchant who had an only son. He had the boy educated as if he had been the king's son; had him instructed in all things suitable for one who had to command, and had him made proficient in all knightly exercises, so that the lad became a youth of parts, unequalled for elegance and dexterity.

One day he said to his father that the place was too small for him, and that he should like to go away.

"And where do you want to go?" asked his father.

"To see the world," replied the son.

"You are like the grasshoppers," said his father, "which leap they know not whither.

How will you fare abroad without experience?"

"Father, 'he who knows the arts, can travel in parts,'" responded the youth. And as the father had already taught his son too much to keep him quiet at home, he was obliged to let him go. He took his arms and a splendid horse, and went forth into the world.

At the end of three days' journey he overtook a man bearing on his shoulders a load twice as heavy as a two-ton waggon could carry.

"Why, my man," said the knight to him, "you carry more than a strong mule could. What is your name?"

"I am known as Carguin the Carrier," replied the man.

"Would you like to go with me?"

"If you would like to have me, sir," said Carguin.

So he took him as his follower, and they pursued their way together.

In about two hours they found a man who was sighing like Vulcan's bellows.

"What are you doing there?" asked the knight.

"Please be quiet, sir," responded the man, "that I may be able to sigh; because with my sighs I am making the wind which turns one hundred and fifty mills."

"What is your name?"

"Soplin the Sigher," replied the man.

"Would you like to go with me?"

"I should be only too glad," said Soplin.

On going a little further they met a man who was in ambush.

"What are you doing there?" inquired the knight.

"I am waiting here to hear when a troop of mosquitoes comes out of the sea."

"Why, man, the sea is a hundred leagues away!"

"What is that, if I hear them?"

"And what is your name?"

"Oidin the Hearer."

"Would you like to go with me?"

"That I should, sir, if it please you."

Then the four journeyed on in company, until they arrived in sight of a castle so gloomy and solitary that it looked more like a sepulchre of the dead than a dwelling of the living.

As they approached it the heavens became overcast, and when they arrived a tempest of thunder and lightning commenced, with a storm of rain, each drop of which made a noise like the sound of a drum.

"If you will just allow me, sir," said Soplin, "I will soon see what can be done with this tempest;" and beginning to sigh, he made the clouds fly away, and the thunder and lightning look so foolish, that the sun fairly blinked at them and the moon stood with her mouth wide open with amazement.

But worse had to come, for when they arrived at the castle, they found that it had neither gate, nor entrance, nor even a bell.

"Surely," said Oidin, "this ill-visaged castle is only a nest for magpies and a refuge for owls."

"But I am tired, and I want to rest," said the knight.

"Permit me, sir," said Carguin, as he seized a huge rock and flung it against the castle wall, and made a hole large enough for them all to enter by.

In the hall they found tables spread with the best victuals, with wines, goblets of water, oils,

and a loaf as large as a table. After they had eaten as much as they could, the knight wished to inspect the castle.

"Sir," said Oidin, who had more fear than shame, "in order to trust oneself about such castles as these it is necessary to have some knowledge of them. So that one should not have to say, 'Where does that staircase lead?'"

"What!" exclaimed Carguin, "we have no bad object in view; and who shall make him go backwards who goes right?"

"He who comes here, my friend," said Oidin, "does not know whether he will have a shirt left to his back; this castle is not in Heaven's care, and beneath the earth I hear noises which sound like lamentations."

But the knight did not stay to listen to Oidin, but, followed by his attendants, began to examine the apartments, corridors, and passages, which were all as intricate as if they had been drawn by a conveyancer, until they came upon a courtyard as large as an arena for bull-fights. Scarcely had they entered this place than there sallied forth to meet them a serpent with seven fiery heads, seven tongues

like lances, and fourteen eyes that gleamed like fiery darts. Carguin, Soplin, and Oidin took to their heels; but our hero, who was as valiant as the Cid and as strong as a Bernardo, drew his sword, and with four strokes on one side and four on the other, cut off the seven heads in a trice; the chief of the seven, after glaring at its conqueror with fiery eyes that darted forth flames and blood, bounded into the centre of the courtyard, where a gap opened, into which it descended and disappeared.

The three men who had fled now returned at the knight's call, and were astonished at the gallantry of their master. After he had inspected the gap where the serpent's head had gone down, and of which he could not see the bottom, he said :—

"We will go into the fields for palm leaves and strong feather-grass in order to make a rope long enough to reach the end of this well."

They did so, and it took the four of them four years making a rope long enough. At the end of this time the rope touched the bottom, and the knight told Oidin to slip

down it and let them know what there was below. But Oidin planted himself firmly on his pins, like a braggart whom nobody threatens, and answered that he would not break his neck by going down. Then the knight told Soplin to descend, so he fastened the rope to his body, and he descended night and day until he arrived below. There he found a most magnificent palace, and in a chamber of it the Princess of Naples, weeping tears as large as peas. She informed him that Lucifer was in love with her, and that he had taken and imprisoned her there until such time as some one should present himself, and wish to rescue her; but that that person would have to fight with Lucifer and conquer him. "Then I see that this enterprise will fall upon me," said Soplin, taking breath; and scarcely had he said so, when Lucifer appeared in person. On seeing him, such was Soplin's horror, that he ran away and climbed upon a gate. In a great rage Lucifer gave the gate such a blow that it smashed and fell to the ground with Soplin, breaking one of his legs.

We must leave Soplin with his misfortune, and return to the knight, who, seeing that his

man did not return, asked Oidin what had happened down in the bowels of the earth; and Oidin listened and heard all that took place, so he told his master that Soplin had had one of his legs broken. Then the knight sent down Carguin, who assured him that he would engage with Lucifer, and carry him off although he should weigh more than all the lead in Sierra Almagrera; but exactly the same thing happened to Carguin as had occurred to Soplin, only that in falling it was his arm that was broken.

"Then I must go myself," said the knight, when Oidin related to him what he had heard; and on arriving at the palace and seeing the Princess of Naples, he became so deeply enamoured of her that he prepared with redoubled ardour for the combat with Lucifer.

Never before was such a duel seen in this world as that between that good knight and his dreadful opponent. But the knight crossed himself; and, as every one who puts his trust in Heaven conquers Lucifer, he gained the victory and cut off his antagonist's ear.

The state that Lucifer was in at seeing his ear in the hands of a Christian, must be left

to your imagination. The shouts which he gave, and the jumps which he made, let Oidin know what had happened.

"Give me my ear!" shouted Lucifer with a voice like a clap of thunder.

"Certainly, if you want it," said his victor; "but you will have to give me a good ransom for it. Powerful as you are, friend Lucifer, I have gained it in fair fight, and will only return it to you upon the performance of three conditions."

"You insolent rascal!" said Lucifer.

"You may talk in that way if you please," responded the knight; "but I warn you that I shall put your ear in pickle and exhibit it for money."

Lucifer stamped his foot with rage. "Well then, what do you want, badly-born, badly-bred, and badly-grown one?" he demanded.

"That you should place this princess in her father's kingdom and in her palace at once," responded the knight.

Lucifer had no help for it, so he placed her in her royal palace, and then said to his victor:—

"Give me my ear."

"Now it is necessary," was the response, "for you to transport me to the royal court of Naples with my three followers, and that you provide me with a residence there, and a stately retinue, as befits your conqueror."

"You won't readily," said Lucifer, "triumph at my expense, you braggart."

"Then, with the sound of a trumpet I will go and proclaim that you have lost an ear," said the hero; "and we shall see then how you will conceal the truth from all the lawyers, notaries, usurers, agents, and lovers who know you."

"Give me my ear!" shouted the quaking Lucifer, after he had performed what his conqueror desired, by placing him in Naples, attended by a large retinue, and provided with plenty of money.

"Here it is," he responded, "I do not wish to keep it; but it is requisite that the last of the three conditions I imposed on you should be performed."

"And what is that, you great boaster?"

"I don't care to say, just now. Have patience!"

Lucifer flew into a passion. "You are seven

times worse than I am," he said to his conqueror; "but you shall give it to me, I swear by my tail and horns!"

To return to the Princess of Naples. When she beheld her rescuer so well provided with retinue and possessions, she recognised him, and informed her father that he was her preserver, and that she should like to marry him. And they were married. But when the honeymoon was over the Princess and her husband led a dog-and-cat sort of life, because the woman had been so long in the power of Lucifer that she had acquired a bad temper, and grew so vicious that only a demon could bear with her. So it came to pass that when, at the end of a certain space of time, Lucifer again presented himself to demand his ear, the knight said to him:—

"Well, I will give it to you, but you know that the third condition remains to be performed before you can reclaim it."

"Rascally juggler," said Lucifer, "what is this condition?"

"That you should take my wife with you," replied the knight, "then we shall be tit for tat, Roland for an Oliver!"

THE THREE WISHES.

MANY years ago there was an old married man who, although poor, had worked very diligently all his life on his little piece of ground. One winter's night, as this old man was seated with his wife in front of their comfortable hearth in social chat, instead of giving thanks to God for the benefits they enjoyed, they spent the time in enumerating the good things possessed by their neighbours, and in wishing that they belonged to them.

"Instead of my little hut, which is on bad soil, and only fit to house a donkey in, I would like to have the farm of old Polainas!" exclaimed the old man.

"And I," added his wife, who was annoyed that he did not aspire higher, "instead of that, would like to have our neighbour's house, which is nearly new."

"And I," continued her husband, "instead of our old donkey, which can scarcely carry an empty sack, would like to have Polainas's mule!"

"And I," exclaimed the wife, "would like to have such a fat porker as our neighbour has to kill! Some people seem only to wish for a thing in order to get it. How I should like to see my wishes accomplished!"

Scarcely had she uttered these words than they beheld a most beautiful little woman standing in front of the fire. She was so small that her height could not have been more than eighteen inches, whilst she wore a crown like a queen's upon her head. Her tunic and veil were almost transparent, and seemed made of white smoke, whilst the sparks from the fire crackled and jumped like fireworks about her, and sparkled around her as glittering spangles. In her hand she bore a little golden sceptre, the end of which was formed by a gleaming ruby.

"I am the Fairy Fortunata," she said to them. "I was passing by here, and I have heard your complaints. I have so much anxiety to accomplish your desires that I come to promise



"They beheld a most beautiful little woman standing in front of the fire."

you the realization of three wishes: one to you," she said to the wife; "the other to you," to the husband, "and the third has to be mutual, and agreeable to the desire of you both. This last I will agree to in person to-morrow, when I will return at this time; and until then I leave you to think of what it shall be."

When she had said these words, the beautiful fairy sprang through the flames and disappeared in a cloud of smoke.

I leave to the imagination of our fair readers the delight of the worthy couple, and the number of wishes, numerous as suitors at the door of a Minister, which presented themselves to their minds. Their desires were so many that, not knowing which to select, they determined to defer the definite selection to the following day. After having had all the night to think the matter over, they began to discuss entirely different things. In a little while their conversation recurred to their wealthy neighbours.

"I was at their house to-day," said the husband; "they were making black puddings. Ah, such black puddings! It would have done you good to see them!"

"I would like to have one of them here." replied the wife, "to roast on the ashes for supper."

Scarcely had she uttered the words than there appeared upon the ashes the most delicious-looking black pudding that could possibly be imagined.

The woman remained staring at it with open mouth and eyes starting out of her head. But her husband jumped up in despair, and after striding up and down the room, tearing his hair in desperation, said :—"Through your gluttony, you greedy woman, we have lost one of the wishes! Good heavens, what a woman this is! More stupid than a goose! It makes me desperate; I detest you and the black pudding too, and I wish it were stuck on to your nose!"

No sooner had he spoken than there was the black pudding hanging from the place indicated!

Then was the old man struck with horror and his wife with desperation.

"You see what you have done, evil tongue!" exclaimed she, as she made useless exertions to tear the appendage from her nose; "if I em-

ployed my wish badly, at least it was to my own disadvantage and not to the disadvantage of any one else; but the sin carries its punishment with it, for I will not have any other wish, nor desire anything else than that the black pudding be taken off my nose."

"Wife, for heaven's sake! What of the new house?"

"Nothing!"

"Wife, for heaven's sake, think of the farm!"

"It does not matter."

"My dear, let us wish for a fortune, and then we will have a golden case for the black pudding."

"I will not hear of it."

"Then you would have us left just as we were before?"

"That is all that I wish for."

And for all that the man could say, nothing could alter his wife's determination, who grew more and more enraged with her double nose, and could scarcely keep off the dog and the cat, who both wished to make free with it.

When, on the following night, the fairy appeared and asked them what was their last wish, they said to her: "We see how blind

and foolish it is of men to fancy that the realization of their wishes will make them happy."

Nor is happiness in the accomplishment of our wishes, but in the not having any. He is rich who possesses what he wants; but happy is he who wishes for nothing.



THE DEMON'S MOTHER-IN-LAW.

In a town, named Villagañanes, there was once an old widow uglier than the sergeant of Utrera, who was considered as ugly as ugly could be; drier than hay; older than foot-walking, and more yellow than the jaundice. Moreover, she had so crossgrained a disposition that Job himself could not have tolerated her. She had been nicknamed "Mother Holofernes," and she had only to put her head out of doors to put all the lads to flight. Mother Holofernes was as clean as a new pin, and as industrious as an ant, and in these respects suffered no little vexation on account of her daughter Panfila, who was, on the contrary, so lazy, and such an admirer of the Quietists, that an earthquake would not move her. So it came to pass that Mother Holo-

fernes began quarrelling with her daughter almost from the day that the girl was born.

"You are," she said, "as flaccid as Dutch tobacco, and it would take a couple of oxen to draw you out of your room. You fly work as you would the pest, and nothing pleases you but the window, you shameless girl. You are more amorous than Cupid himself, but, if I have any power, you shall live as close as a nun."

On hearing all this, Panfila got up, yawned, stretched herself, and turning her back on her mother, went to the street door. Mother Holofernes, without paying attention to this, began to sweep with most tremendous energy, accompanying the noise of the broom with a monologue of this tenour :—

"In my time girls had to work like men."

The broom gave the accompaniment of *shis, shis, shis.*

"And lived as secluded as nuns."

And the broom went *shis, shis, shis.*

"Now they are a pack of fools."—*Shis, shis.*

"Of idlers."—*Shis, shis.*

"And think of nothing but husbands."—*Shis, shis.*

"And are a lot of good-for-nothings." The broom following with its chorus.

By this time she had nearly reached the street door, when she saw her daughter making signs to a youth; and the handle of the broom, as the handiest implement, descended upon the shoulders of Panfila, and effected the miracle of making her run. Next, Mother Holofernes, grasping the broom, made for the door; but scarcely had the shadow of her head appeared, than it produced the customary effect, and the aspirant disappeared so swiftly that it seemed as if he must have had wings on his feet.

"Drat that fellow!" shouted the mother; "I should like to break all the bones in his body."

"What for? Why should I not think of getting married?"

"What are you saying? You get married, you fool! not while I live!"

"Why were you married, madam? and my grandmother? and my great grandmother?"

"Nicely I have been repaid for it, by you, you sauce box! And, understand me, that if I chose to get married, and your grandmother

also, and your great grandmother also, I do not intend that you shall marry; nor my granddaughter, nor my great granddaughter! Do you hear me?"

In these gentle disputes the mother and daughter passed their lives, without any other result than that the mother grumbled more and more every day, and the daughter became daily more and more desirous of getting a husband.

Upon one occasion, when Mother Holofernes was doing the washing, and as the lye was on the point of boiling, she had to call her daughter to help her lift the caldron, in order to pour its contents on to the tub of clothes. The girl heard her with one ear, but with the other was listening to a well-known voice which sang in the street:—

"I would like to love thee,
Did thy mother let me woo!
May the demon meddle
In all she tries to do!"

The sound outside being more attractive for Panfila than the caldron within, she did not hasten to her mother, but went to the window.

Mother Holofernes, meanwhile, seeing that her daughter did not come, and that time was passing, attempted to lift the caldron by herself, in order to pour the water upon the linen; and as the good woman was small, and not very strong, it turned over, and burnt her foot. On hearing the horrible groans Mother Holofernes made, her daughter went to her.

"Wretch, wretch!" cried the enraged Mother Holofernes to her daughter, "may you love Barabbas! And as for marrying—may Heaven grant you may marry the Evil One himself!"

Some time after this accident an aspirant presented himself: he was a little man, young, fair, red-haired, well-mannered, and had well-furnished pockets. He had not a single fault, and Mother Holofernes was not able to find any in all her arsenal of negatives. As for Panfila, it wanted little to send her out of her senses with delight. So the preparations for the wedding were made, with the usual grumbling accompaniment on the part of the bridegroom's future mother-in-law. Everything went on smoothly straightforward, and without a break—like a railroad—when, without knowing why, the popular voice,—a voice which is

as the personification of conscience,—began to rise in a murmur against the stranger, despite the fact that he was affable, humane, and liberal; that he spoke well and sang better; and freely took the black and horny hands of the labourers between his own white and beringed fingers. They began to feel neither honoured nor overpowered by so much courtesy; his reasoning was always so coarse, although forcible and logical.

"By my faith!" said Uncle Blas; "why does this ill-faced gentleman call me Mr. Blas, as if that would make me any better? What does it look like to you?"

"Well, as for me," said Uncle Gil, "did he not come to shake hands with me as if we had some plot between us? Did he not call me citizen? I, who have never been out of the village, and never want to go."

As for Mother Holofernes, the more she saw of her future son-in-law, the less regard she had for him. It seemed to her that between that innocent red hair and the cranium, were located certain protuberances of a very curious kind; and she remembered with emotion that malediction she had uttered against her

daughter on that ever memorable day on which her foot was injured, and her washing spoilt.

At last, the wedding day arrived. Mother Holofernes had made pastry and reflections—the former sweet, the latter bitter; a great *olla podrida* for the food, and a dangerous project for supper; she had prepared a barrel of wine that was generous, and a line of conduct that was not. When the bridal pair were about to retire to the nuptial chamber, Mother Holofernes called her daughter aside, and said: "When you are in your room, be careful to close the door and windows; shut all the shutters, and do not leave a single crevice open but the keyhole of the door. Take with you this branch of consecrated olive, and beat your husband with it as I advise you; this ceremony is customary at all marriages, and signifies that the woman is going to be master, and is followed in order to sanction and establish the rule."

Panfila, for the first time obedient to her mother, did everything that she had prescribed.

No sooner did the bridegroom espy the branch of consecrated olive in the hands of

his wife, than he attempted to make a precipitous retreat. But when he found the doors and windows closed, and every crevice stopped up, seeing no other means of escape than by passing through the keyhole, he crept into that; this spruce, red-and-white, and well-spoken bachelor being, as Mother Holofernes had suspected, neither more nor less than the Evil One himself, who, availing himself of the right given him by the anathema launched against Panfila by her mother, thought to amuse himself with the pleasures of a marriage, and encumber himself with a wife of his own, whilst so many husbands were supplicating him to take theirs off their hands.

But this gentleman, despite his reputation for wisdom, had met with a mother-in-law who knew more than he did; and Mother Holofernes was not the only specimen of that genus. Therefore, scarcely had his lordship entered into the keyhole, congratulating himself upon having, as usual, discovered a method of escape, than he found himself in a phial, which his foreseeing mother-in-law had ready on the other side of the door; and no sooner had he got into it than the provident old dame

sealed the vessel hermetically. In a most tender voice, and with most humble supplications, and most pathetic gestures, her son-in-law addressed her, and desired that she would grant him his liberty. But Mother Holofernes was not to be deceived by the demon, nor disconcerted by orations, nor imposed upon by honeyed words; she took charge of the bottle and its contents, and went off to a mountain. The old lady vigorously climbed to the summit of this mountain, and there, on its most elevated crest, in a rocky and secluded spot, deposited the phial, taking leave of her son-in-law with a shake of her closed fist as a farewell greeting.

And there his lordship remained for ten years. What years those ten were! The world was as quiet as a pool of oil. Everybody attended to his own affairs, without meddling in those of other people. Nobody coveted the position, nor the wife, nor the property of other persons; theft became a word without signification; arms rusted; powder was only consumed in fireworks; prisons stood empty; finally, in this decade of the golden age, only one single deplorable event

occurred . . . the lawyers died from hunger and quietude.

Alas! that so happy a time should have an end! But everything has an end in this world, even the discourses of the most eloquent fathers of the country. At last the much-to-be-envied decade came to a termination in the following way.

A soldier named Briónes had obtained permission for a few days' leave to enable him to visit his native place, which was Villagañanes. He took the road which led to the lofty mountain upon whose summit the son-in-law of Mother Holofernes was cursing all mothers-in-law, past, present, and future, promising as soon as ever he regained his power to put an end to that class of vipers, and by a very simple method—the abolition of matrimony. Much of his time was spent in composing and reciting satires against the invention of washing linen, the primal cause of his present trouble.

Arrived at the foot of the mountain, Briónes did not care to go round the mountain like the road, but wished to go straight ahead, assuring the carriers who were with him, that if the mountain would not go to the right-about for

him he would pass over its summit, although it were so high that he should knock his head against the sky.

When he reached the summit, Briónes was struck with amazement on seeing the phial borne like a pimple on the nose of the mountain. He took it up, looked through it, and on perceiving the demon, who with years of confinement and fasting, the sun's rays, and sadness, had dwindled and become as dried as a prune, exclaimed in surprise :—

"What ever vermin is this? what a phenomenon!"

"I am an honourable and meritorious demon," said the captive, humbly and courteously. "The perversity of a treacherous mother-in-law, into whose clutches I fell, has held me confined here during the last ten years; liberate me, valiant warrior, and I will grant any favour you choose to solicit."

"I should like my demission from the army," said Briónes.

"You shall have it; but uncork, uncork quickly, for it is a most monstrous anomaly to have thrust into a corner, in these revolutionary times, the first revolutionist in the world."

Briónes drew the cork out slightly, and a noxious vapour issued from the bottle and ascended to his brain. He sneezed, and immediately replaced the stopper with such a violent blow from his hand that the cork was suddenly depressed, and the prisoner, squeezed down, gave a shout of rage and pain.

"What are you doing, vile earthworm, more malicious and perfidious than my mother-in-law?" he exclaimed.

"There is another condition," responded Briónes, "that I must add to our treaty; it appears to me that the service I am going to do to you is worth it."

"And what is this condition, tardy liberator?" inquired the demon.

"I should like for thy ransom four dollars daily during the rest of my life. Think of it, for upon that depends whether you stay in or come out."

"Miserable avaricious one!" exclaimed the demon, "I have no money."

"Oh!" replied Briónes, "what an answer from a great lord like you! Why, friend, that is the Minister of War's answer! If you can't pay me I cannot help you."

"Then you do not believe me," said the demon, "only let me out, and I will aid you to obtain what you want as I have done for many others. Let me out, I say, let me out."

"Gently," responded the soldier, "there is nothing to hurry about. Understand me that I shall have to hold you by the tail until you have performed your promise to me; and if not, I have nothing more to say to you."

"Insolent, do you not trust me then?" shouted the demon.

"No," responded Briónes.

"What you desire is contrary to my dignity," said the captive, with all the arrogance that a being of his size could express.

"Now I must go," said Briónes.

"Good-bye," said the demon, in order not to say *adieu*.

But seeing that Briónes went off, the captive made desperate jumps in the phial, shouting loudly to the soldier.

"Return, return, dear friend," he said; and muttered to himself, "I should like a four-year-old bull to overtake you, you soulless fool!" And then he shouted, "Come, come, beneficent fellow, liberate me, and hold me by the tail,

or by the nose, valiant warrior;" and then muttered to himself, "Some one will avenge me, obstinate soldier; and if the son-in-law of Mother Holofernes is not able to do it, there are those who will burn you both, face to face, in the same bonfire, or I have little influence."

On hearing the demon's supplications Briónes returned and uncorked the bottle. Mother Holofernes's son-in-law came forth like a chick from its shell, drawing out his head first and then his body, and lastly his tail, which Briónes seized; and the more the demon tried to contract it the firmer he held it.

After the ex-captive, who was somewhat cramped, had occasionally stopped to stretch his arms and legs, they took the road to court, the demon grumbling and following the soldier, who carried the tail well secured in his hands.

On their arrival they went to court, and the demon said to his liberator :—

"I am going to put myself into the body of the princess, who is extremely beloved by her father, and I shall give her pains that no doctor will be able to cure; then you present yourself and offer to cure her, demanding for your recompense four dollars daily, and your dis-

charge. I will then leave her to you, and our accounts will be settled."

Everything happened as arranged and foreseen by the demon; but Briónes did not wish to let go his hold of the tail, and he said :—

"Well devised, sir; but four dollars are a ransom unworthy of you, of me, and of the service that we have undertaken. Find some method of showing yourself more generous. To do this will give you honour in the world, where, pardon my frankness, you do not enjoy the best of characters."

"Would that I could get rid of you!" said the demon to himself, "but I am so weak and so numbed that I am not able to go alone. I must have patience! that which men call a virtue. Oh, now I understand why so many fall into my power for not having practised it. Forward then for Naples, for it is necessary to submit in order to liberate my tail. I must go and submit to the arbitration of fate for the satisfaction of this new demand."

Everything succeeded according to his wish. The Princess of Naples fell a victim to convulsive pains and took to her bed. The king was greatly afflicted. Briónes presented himself

with all the arrogance his knowledge that he would receive the demon's aid could give him. The king was willing to make use of his services, but stipulated that if within three days he had not cured the princess, as he confidently promised to, he should be hanged. Briónes, certain of a favourable result, did not raise the slightest objection.

Unfortunately, the demon heard this arrangement made, and gave a leap of delight at seeing within his hands the means of avenging himself.

The demon's leap caused the princess such pain that she begged them to take the doctor away.

The following day this scene was repeated. Briónes then knew that the demon was at the bottom of it, and intended to let him be hanged. But Briónes was not a man to lose his head.

On the third day, when the pretended doctor arrived, they were erecting the gallows in front of the very palace door. As he entered the princess's apartment, the invalid's pains were redoubled, and she began to cry out that they should put an end to that impostor.

"I have not exhausted all my resources yet," said Briónes gravely, "deign, your Royal Highness, to wait a little while." He then went out of the room and gave orders in the princess's name that all the bells of the city should be rung.

When he returned to the royal apartment, the demon, who has a mortal hatred of the sound of bells, and is, moreover, inquisitive, asked Briónes what the bells were ringing for.

"They are ringing," responded the soldier, "because of the arrival of your mother-in-law, whom I have ordered to be summoned."

Scarcely had the demon heard that his mother-in-law had arrived, than he flew away with such rapidity that not even a sun's ray could have caught him. Proud as a peacock, Briónes was left in victorious possession of the field.



THE FOX AND THE GOOSE.

A FOX and a goose were very great friends. The goose, which, as you know, is a very honest and industrious bird, said to the fox :—

" Friend fox, I have a little bit of property here, and if you like to join with me, we will cultivate it between us."

" That would greatly please me," answered the fox.

" Then it will be necessary to till it together when the season arrives," said the goose.

" Very well," replied the fox.

A little afterwards, when they met, the goose said :—

" It is time to sow the seed."

" That is your business," said the fox, " I have nothing to do with that."

Some months passed, when the goose said to the fox :—

"Friend, the grass is choking the wheat; it is necessary to weed the field."

"Very well," answered the fox, "you see to that; it is not my business."

A short time passed by, when the goose said to the fox :—

"Friend, the wheat is ripe and must be reaped."

"All right," replied the fox, "you attend to that; it is not my business."

Then the goose, for all its good nature, began to be distrustful, and told its friend the greyhound what had passed.

The greyhound, who was very shrewd, saw at once that the fox was going to play off one of its tricks upon the goose's good nature, and said to it :—

"Reap the wheat; put it in the barn, and hide me in a sheaf of corn, without leaving more than one eye uncovered, so that I may see all that may happen."

The goose did as the greyhound had said; and after a time the fox arrived, and when it saw the barn filled with splendid wheat already

thrashed, it was very delighted, and, dancing about, sang :—

"Lio, lio,
The straw and the wheat are mine!
Lio, lio,
The straw and the wheat are mine!"

As it said this, it approached the sheaf in which the greyhound was concealed, and on seeing the eye among the straw, said—

"Ah, there's a grape!"

"But it is not ripe," replied the greyhound, as it leaped out of its hiding-place, and killed the fox.



THE TRIBULATIONS OF A COBBLER.

THERE was once a cobbler who was unsurpassed by anybody in ugliness, and as regards bad temper was equalled by none. He would sit before a little table in the doorway, wearing a cotton cap that had once been blue and white, but the tints of which had long since faded into one indefinable hue. This said cobbler, with his leather apron and horn spectacles, was the butt of all the mischievous little urchins of the district, as well as of the elders, his customers; and they had so exercised his patience that he had not any left.

"Uncle Hormazo," which was the name given to him because of his habitual threat to the youngsters to give them a blow with his last, was a very grave and strict man. He deemed it right for boots to walk about the

streets, but not for young people; that shoes should have companions, but that modest girls ought not to have any others than the hearth, the spinning-wheel, and the Prayer-book.

But his daughter Mariquita was not of her father's opinion, because never did ugly caterpillar give life to a more beautiful and frisky butterfly than was she. And this butterfly was in love, and corresponded by signs with a lieutenant, who cursed the sharp look-out of Uncle Hormazo, who in guarding his daughter forgot his old boots, and whose care for her reputation caused him to lose his own.

One day Uncle Hormazo was more worried than ever; the starch, although more rotten than usual, had been eaten by a hungry cat; the thread was in a tangle, and the cobbler's wax was lost, and he had had a squabble with three old women, who had promised to revenge themselves. A flighty young woman arrived, and without any preface said :—

"Where are my shoes?"

"They are not ready," responded Uncle Hormazo laconically.

"I have never seen a greater old fibber! Did you not tell me they would be ready?"

"I was mistaken."

"I shall not be able to go to the dance!" exclaimed the girl, stamping her foot.

"So much the better: girls lose their good name by going to dances: sew, sweep, and be off!"

"I shall dance and sing as long as I please. Who are you? I came here for my shoes, and not for sermons! You are old, and therefore do not care for singing and dancing, and you are more false than the almanack!"

And she went away singing at the top of her voice:—

"There's always a thief
In a tailor's abode!
And nought but deceit
Is the shoemaker's code!

"On shoemenders' skulls—
Inscribed on the backs—
This motto you'll find:
'*Viva* cobbler's wax!'"

Uncle Hormazo was about to reply to her when a little lad entered.

"What do you want?" the cobbler asked, with his gruff voice and a mistrustful glance.

"To ask you, Uncle Hormazo, if you have confessed."

"Be off, or I'll send you to Jericho!"

"I am come to teach you your confession, which is this :—

"I'm a cobbler,
And a sinner,
And am false;
I confess to the stone jar,
And to the big-bellied pitcher."

"Vagabond, scamp! I will give you a *hormazo* that will crack your skull!"

But the threatened skull was already out of reach.

A quarter of an hour had not passed, when another customer presented himself. This one was not so badly received, as he carried a boot in his hand; but in the front of it there was an immense hole like a fish's mouth, gaping as if to frighten Hormazo; whilst, to balance this, the heel was one sad ruin.

"Leave it here," said the cobbler, without being frightened at or bemoaning its condition, he being as accustomed to such things as an army surgeon to wounds, or an antiquary to ruins.

"You must be careful, mother said, that you sew it well and strongly!"

"I do not want advice, master joker!" grunted Uncle Hormazo. "Do you think I shall sew it with cobwebs?"

"I've warned you," said the youngster, going off at double quick march, as he shouted :—

"The poor cobbler cobbles the shoe,
To hide the holes he should sew through."

"Be off, you scoundrel, or I will give a *hormazo* that you wont forget in a hurry!"

"Uncle Hormazo," said another lad, presenting himself with all the powers of an ambassador, "my grandmother sends me to say that all through you not having mended her shoe, she was not able to go to church, and that you are a Jew!"—which is a most dreadful insult to a Spaniard of the lower classes.

'I a Jew! What an insult! Fly, or by my faith, I'll crack your skull with my last, you wretch! Tell that slanderer, your grandmother, that the barefooted go easier to glory than the shod!"

"Then, Uncle Hormazo, if you make shoes for Christians, you are working for the devil! Well says my grandmother that you are a Jew, and the song also says :—

"To church a cobbler went,
But knew not how to pray;
So passing by the altar
Cried, 'Shoes to mend to-day?'"

This time the last went flying through the air, but only struck the door, the youngster having already reached the street, where he was heard singing :—

"To church a cobbler went."

"What a trade this is for a Christian!" exclaimed the antithesis of Herod, in desperation. "I am the victim of childish tyranny. And that is not the only thing, although that is enough. They shall see that I've not got the patience of Job! Imps of mischief!"

Then he went to the doorway, and with much difficulty got upon the bench; scarcely had he settled himself, when a microscopic individual of about five years old, who scarcely spoke distinctly yet, and only preserved his equilibrium by supporting one hand against the wall, stood before him, and presenting a bull's horn at Uncle Hormazo, as a soldier might a musket, said :—

"Mr. Graceful cobbler,
Will you make shoes for this fine lad?"

"Ah, you little goose!" exclaimed the cobbler, beside himself with vexation. "You, also, want to mock me? Now you shall catch it!"

But as the enemy was so feeble, and Uncle Hormazo generous, he did not take his favourite weapon, the last, but seized a handbrush and threw it at the youngster, who, terrified, had taken to flight; but not in time enough to avoid the missile, which came with all its force against his back, and sent him and his bull's horn sprawling on the ground together. On hearing the loud bellowing of their darling, out rushed from the adjoining house his mother, his grandmother, his aunt, his godmother, and half a dozen female neighbours; and the more they compassionated the victim, the more they burned with indignation against the Fierabras cobbler. Like a volley of musketry, they launched at Uncle Hormazo the following endearing terms:—

The mother. "Heretic!"

The grandmother. "Herod!"

The aunt. "Cain!"

The godmother. "Heartless brute!"

The cousin. "Monster!"

An old woman. "Jew!"
A milliner. "Nero!"
A soldier's wife. "Despot!"
A sailor's wife. "Pirate!"
A French corset maker. "Ogre!"
A mendicant negress. "Savage!"
A nun. "Atheist!"
A little girl. "Bogey!"

The object of all this indignation continued tranquilly reuniting disjoined uppers and soles, without taking any other notice than repeating from time to time: "This time it is the brush; the next time that that badly-tutored reptile comes again to mock a respectable man, he shall have a *hormazo* that will teach him good behaviour; you are forewarned, Juana Gañotes!"

But Uncle Hormazo had not yet come to the end of his tribulations, for at this moment he saw passing by, with his little military cap perched upon his forehead, and with a jaunty air, the assistant of an officer, who, thanks to the clatter and noise of the crowd there, hoped to be able to pass without being noticed by the Cerberus of his lieutenant's beloved. But he deceived himself; to the vigilance of the dog, the cobbler united the hundred eyes of Argus.

On beholding that spruce but hostile apparition, Uncle Hormazo began to get exasperated, and put himself in a position to follow all its movements. He gave himself a blow on the head that gave his old cotton cap a similar position on his bald pate to that of the cap worn by the officer's assistant. Having through this manœuvre uncovered one of his ears, he was enabled to hear distinctly all that passed without stopping his work, and this was what the Mercury sang with a tenor voice :—

"*Arandin, arandin, arandè,*
Miss Mariquita, I wait for thee."

And he pursued his way.

" I am waiting too," said the cobbler to himself, as he put in and drew out his thread with the force of a Hercules and the courage of an Achilles.

After a little while the enemy returned, singing as he passed by :—

" Miss Mariquita, don't be late,
To meet my master at the gate."

And he went on as if quite unconscious of addressing any one.

"Don't you think you are very cunning?" groaned the cobbler with indignation.

At the expiration of about five minutes, the soldier made his third appearance: the cobbler clenched an old sole in his hands with rage; then he heard a window of his house softly opened, and a soprano voice singing:—

"*Arandin, arandin, aranderó,*
Say to thy master I'll quickly go."

Scarcely had the treble voice finished its couplet, when Uncle Hormazo, in his fury kicking over his table with all the odds and ends upon it, and grasping a last in his uplifted hand, rushed into the street, singing with a tremendous bass voice:—

"*Arandin, arandin, arandaso,*
Howe'er thou runnest thou'lt get a *hormazo*"

NOTE.—When this story is recounted in Spain, it is customary for three persons to sing the various couplets, in tenor, soprano, and bass voices respectively.

THE LITTLE ANT.

MANY years ago there was a pretty little ant, who was so methodic, neat, and well-behaved that it was like enchantment. One day when she was sweeping at the door of her house she found a penny. She said to herself, "What shall I buy with this penny? Shall I buy seeds? No, because I should not be able to crack them. Shall I buy sweets? No, that would be greedy." After further consideration she went to a shop and bought some rouge. She went home, washed, and combed, and rouged her cheeks, and seated herself at the window.

Of course, as she was so adorned and so beautiful, everybody who passed fell in love with her. A bull passed and said to her :—

"Pretty little ant, would you like to marry me?"

"How would you love me?" responded the little ant.

The bull began to bellow; the ant stopped her ears with both her hands.

"Go your way," she said to the bull, "you frighten me!"

And the same thing happened with a dog that barked, a cat that mewed, a pig that grunted, and a cock that crowed. Every one spoke pleasantly to the ant, but no one gained her goodwill until a *ratonperez** passed by and made love to her so delicately that the pretty little ant gave him her little black hand.

They lived like turtledoves, and were so happy, that the like was never seen since the world began.

It happened unfortunately that the little ant went to mass alone one day, after leaving the stew for dinner in charge of *Ratonperez*, warning him, so prudent was she, that he must not stir the stew with the little ladle, but with the large one. Unfortunately, *Ratonperez* did just the opposite to what his wife had told him;

* *Ratonperez* is a little grey insect, very inoffensive and timid, that makes no noise, and only knows how to run away.

he took the small ladle to stir the stew,—and what she had foreseen happened! *Ratonperez*, through his stupidity, fell into the stew, as into a whirlpool, and was drowned!

When the little ant returned home she knocked at the door. Nobody replied, or came to open it. Then she went to the house of a neighbour to ask her to let her get in through the roof. But the neighbour would not allow that, so she sent for a locksmith to break open the door. The little ant went direct to the kitchen; she saw the stew, and there, alas, what grief! *Ratonperez* drowned! The little ant began to weep bitterly. The bird came and said to her: "Why do you cry?"

She replied:—

"Because *Ratonperez* has fallen into the stew."

"Then I, the bird, will cut off my beak."

The dove came and said to her:—

"Why, little bird, hast thou cut off thy beak?"

"Because *Ratonperez* has fallen into the stew, and the little ant mourns and weeps for him."

"Then I, the dove, will cut off my tail."

Said the clear fountain :—

"Why, dove, hast thou cut off thy tail?"

"Because *Ratonperez* has fallen into the stew, and the little ant mourns and weeps for him, and the bird has cut off his little beak, and I, the dove, have cut off my tail."

"Then I, the clear fountain, will weep."

The princess came to fill her pitcher.

"Why, dear fountain, do you weep?"

"Because *Ratonperez* has fallen into the stew, and the little ant mourns and weeps for him, and the little bird has cut off his little beak, and the dove has cut off her tail, and I, the clear fountain, will weep."

"Then I, who am a princess, will break my pitcher."

And I who tell it, end in lamentation, because the *Ratonperez* fell into the stew, and the little ant mourns and weeps for him.



THE HUNCHBACK.

ONCE upon a time there was a certain king who had an only daughter, whom he greatly wished to see married; but the girl had been completely spoilt, and was very self-willed: she would not marry. If her father had wished her to keep single, then she would have determined to marry at once.

One day, as she came out of church, she met a beggar, very old, ugly, hunchbacked, and so persevering, that she was annoyed and would not give him any alms. The poor man, in order to revenge himself, put a flea on her; the princess, who had never seen one of these nasty little insects before, took it to the palace with her, and put it into a small bottle; she fed it with drops of milk, so that it became too fat for its prison. Then the princess

ordered it to be killed, dried its skin, and out of it had a small drum made and put into a bracelet.

One day when her father came in to urge her to marry, she replied that she would only marry the man who could tell what the little drum in her bracelet was made of.

"Very well," said her father, "let it be so; but on my faith as a king, and an old Christian, I swear that you shall marry the person who ascertains it, let him be who he may."

Proclamation was accordingly made that the princess was ready to marry whoever could tell what the drum in her bracelet was made of; and from all the four parts of the world came kings, princes, dukes, counts, and gentlemen of good estate, and all to see the flea's skin, though not one could say what it was. The most extraordinary thing about it was, that whenever it was struck, the sound the little drum gave forth was similar to that uttered by beggars when they solicit alms. Then the king ordered that everybody, rich or poor, who came should be allowed to see the drum in order to try and ascertain what it was made of.

Among the princes who came there happened to be one who was very handsome, and for whom the princess took a desperate liking; so, when she was in her balcony and saw him passing, she cried out :—

"A flea's skin
My bracelet is in."

The prince did not hear her voice; but she was heard by the horrible old beggar to whom she had denied alms. The old fellow at once comprehended what the words she said signified, for he was very cunning; so he at once entered the palace and said that he had come to see what was in the bracelet of the king's daughter. Scarcely had he seen it, than he said :—

"A flea's skin
The bracelet is in!"

There was no escape from it: the princess would have objected, but she was given by her father to the dirty old beggar, for he had guessed the enigma she herself had insisted upon.

"Go away at once with your husband," said the king, "and I do not wish you ever again to remember that you have a father."

Weeping and ashamed, the princess had to go off with the hunchback, and they travelled farther and farther, until they came to a river through which they had to wade.

"Take me on your shoulders and carry me across the river, because that is my wife's duty," said the old man to her.

The princess did what her husband commanded; but when they were in the middle of the stream, she began shaking herself in order to shake him off, and he began falling off in fragments, first his head, then his arms and legs, and at last, all but his hump, which remained stuck fast on the princess's shoulders.

When she had crossed the river, she inquired the way; and whenever she spoke the hump on her back mimicked her voice and repeated what she said, as if, instead of a hump on her back, she had an echoing stone there. Some of the folks she met laughed, and others were angry, thinking that she was mocking them, so that at last there was nothing to be done but to pretend to be mute. In this state she went on her way begging, until she arrived at a city that belonged to the prince for whom she had taken so great a liking. She went to

the palace to ask them to employ her, and she was taken on as a maidservant. The prince saw her, and was so struck with her beauty that he said :—

"That girl has such a beautiful face that if she were not a hunchback and mute, I would marry her."

The prince's marriage with a foreign princess was much talked about, so the pain and jealousy of the hunchback, who became every day more enamoured of the heir to the kingdom, may be well imagined. At last the matrimonial contract was arranged with another princess, who was as upright as a dart and as talkative as a magpie. The prince went forth with a grand retinue to bring her home, and great preparations were made in the palace for the wedding. The supposed mute had to fry some cakes; and as she was frying them she said to her hump :—

"Dear little hump, would you like a nice little cake?"

The hump, which was that of an old man very fond of sweet things, replied that it would like it.

"Then look into my pocket," said she.

The hump made a leap off her back to her pocket, when the princess, who was already prepared with the tongs in her hand, seized the hump and popped it into the boiling oil, where it quickly melted into a lump of lard.

As soon as the princess found herself freed from the hump, she went to her room, and dressed, and adorned herself with a robe of green and gold.

When the prince arrived he was delighted to see the mute girl without her hump, and so well and magnificently attired.

The bride, who noticed this, said :—

"Behold the mute in her new array
Upon her mistress's bridal day!"

To which the princess haughtily replied .—

"And then behold the shamelessness
Of her who'd be master before she's mistress;"

As soon as the prince found that the mute could speak, and that there was no trace left of her hump, he gave up the other princess and married her, and they had many children, and lived happily ever afterwards.



FORTUNE AND MISFORTUNE.

SITUATED on a rock at the foot of a chain of mountains, as the nest of a stork on a tower, was a town, the name of which I shall not mention, like those who record a miracle without mentioning the saint.

Two men lived in this town, and had been fated, one to good and the other to ill fortune. The one was known as Don José the Wealthy, the other as "Uncle Jack the Miserable." Don José had commenced life by selling linen and cloth in the streets; he speedily opened a store, directly afterwards became a merchant, and, almost before one could take breath, created the largest business in the whole town. He was a much respected man, because he was neither mean nor stingy, but charitable and

humane. Wealth had not made him haughty, nor much possession presumptuous. He was not vain and did not care for pompous language, as so many successful people do; briefly, Don José and his family were all good folks, and in his house, as in that of St. Basil, all, down to the very water-carrier, were of one way of thinking.

In the abode of "Uncle Jack," as in all where they are breadless, every one was peevish, and they were all hungry naked, and always quarrelling, the little ones weeping and getting slaps to still them.

One day Don José ordered "Uncle Jack" to be called; and the man appeared in a reluctant manner, and with a sort of "I don't want to be worried" air. On entering he said:—

"Heaven preserve you, Don José."

"And you also, for all that you look so dispirited and out of countenance!"

"Ah, well, sir; that is because I am hungry, and my entrails feel as if they would like to devour each other; and when the stomach is empty everything is out of sorts. Why your honour always looks so elated and so contented is because your inside is full."

"Well, it is true that I have nothing to grumble about."

"And I believe, sir, that you are always in a position to be contented because your speculations are always profitable, and you are lucky, whilst I am the most unfortunate being in existence."

"Jack, in this world there always have been and always will be some who laugh and some who cry; but let us come to the point. I have sent for you in order that you may go to the palace of Fortune, and tell her that for my part I am satisfied, and that I do not wish for more: and I will give you ten pounds for your commission, to enable you to make a start in the world."

Instead of jumping for joy at this fine proposition, the one occasion in his life when Fortune favoured him, Jack's covetousness overpowered him, and he said to Don José:—

"What, sir! Ten pounds would not make nor ruin any one; just think, sir, that Fortune's palace is raised up there where our Lord called thrice and was not heard. If I go by the water I may get drowned, and if I go by land I may get among wolves. If your honour will

give me fifteen pounds, it will be well worth the labour."

Don José had been well forewarned against Jack's evasions, but he determined to put them to the test, and now said he would give only twelve dollars, and the matter should be arranged. But Jack's greed still had hold of him, so he turned back and said to Don José that twelve dollars was very little.

"Would you like nine?" responded Don José quietly.

"Sir, are you fooling me?" said Jack; "if I did not wish to go for twelve, should I care to go for nine?"

"Then do not go," said Don José.

On hearing this, Miserable Jack was terrified.

"What shall I do without those nine dollars that I am so badly in want of?" thought the poor man; and turning to the wealthy one, said that he would go for the nine.

"Would you like six?" inquired Don José.

"You know well that I cannot go for six," responded Jack.

"Do not go then," said Don José.

Miserable Jack went off; but scarcely had he reached the street, when he thought better of



"I will give you ten pounds for your commission."

it, as he had much need of the money. "The rich can kill or cure," said he to himself; "and it is of no use to cut off my nose to spite my face. Would that I had gone for the twelve! The proverb is true, that 'Greed bursts the sack.'" So he returned and said to the rich man :—

"Don José, necessity has no law. I will go for the six dollars."

"Would you like three?" responded the rich man.

"The demon take the three dollars! They are not enough to pick up! Good-day, Don José!"

"Till our next meeting, friend."

Scarcely had Miserable Jack got into the street than he thought, "Shall I go without those three dollars? I, who have not even a quarter of one, nor know where to get it?" So he went back and shouted from the doorway :—

"Don José, I will go for the three paltry dollars!"

"Would you go for one?" said the rich man.

"Yes, sir," responded Miserable Jack with

the rapidity of a pistol shot; and started off running, for fear Don José would want to alter his proposal.

After having travelled the whole day along rough roads, he arrived at a rock so high and so rugged that not even a goat could have climbed it, and even the rays of the sun lost their footing. On the summit was situated the palace of Fortune, which was built of real alabaster, with doors of pure gold. When he had finished climbing and reached the top, he entered into a court like a royal court, full of all kinds of flowers, fruits of all seasons, and of shrubs ever green.

He called out loudly for Don José the Wealthy's Fortune; and there presented herself to him a girl as resplendent as sunshine, graceful, fair, and fresh, each cheek like a rose, and each eye like a star, and more bedecked with gems than a jeweller's shop.

"What do you want with me?" asked the girl.

"Don José the Wealthy has sent me here to inform your ladyship that he is satisfied, and does not wish for anything further. Do you wish to return any answer?"

"Tell him from me," replied the fair maiden, "that I shall continue to give to him, whether he wishes it or no, until he die, because it gives me real pleasure to do so. And now return whence you came, because your misery infects my palace."

"And has not this basket of roses one little favour for me? Even one just the size of a piece of spice?"

"I am not your Fortune, and am not able to do anything for you," responded the beautiful girl; "but there, at the back of my palace, is she who is yours; go, and talk to her."

And with that she went off dancing like a top and singing like a canary.

Miserable Jack went away, giving enormous strides, and after giving a farewell to the palace found himself with his Fortune.

Her habitation was a precipice as black as death, in every crevice of which was a viper, and in each fissure a snake.

"Is this where my Fortune dwells?" said Miserable Jack. "As the bird, so the nest. I am going to call her, that I may have the pleasure of seeing her repulsive face."

And he began to call out.

Out of the rubbish came an old woman uglier than she who cheated St. Antony, and than she who stoned St. Stephen, with a toothless mouth and blear eyes without any lashes.

"What do you want?" asked the old woman with a voice that sounded like a rattle.

"To order you to the Demon like a condemned one as thou art!"

"Then learn," said the old woman, "that because you have caught me napping, you have gained a dollar; but if you had not caught me napping, not for twenty would you have come."



THE FAIRY FRIAR.

ONCE upon a time there were three little brothers, who supported themselves by kneading a bushel of dough every night. One morning when they got up early as usual, and went to perform their daily task, they were surprised to find the work done for them, and the loaves all ready to put into the oven. And this happened for several days in succession. Wishing to find out who it was that did them such a service, they hid themselves one night and watched. They beheld a very little fairy, dressed like a friar, but with his clothes all old and ragged. So they made a new suit of clothes for him and left it in the kitchen. When the fairy came and saw the new garments placed there for him, he went off with them, singing :—

"The little friar, when his clothes are new,
Does not want kneading or baking to do;"

and never came back any more.

This proves, my dear children, that there are many who, like the little friar, are compliant and useful until they receive a benefit, but that when that is once received, they do not return to repay the person whom they are indebted to for it.

THE KING'S POWER.

THERE was once a miller who was very anxious to grow rich; thus it was, that when he began to work the stones of his mill, he repeated without ceasing at every stroke,—

"Grind, grind,
Until I grow rich."

It so happened that the king was one day passing by, and he asked what it was that he was saying; to which he replied, that in his anxiety to emerge from poverty, he was accustomed to say,—

"Grind, grind,
Until I grow rich."

When the king returned to his palace he ordered a very large cake to be made and filled with silver coins, and then sent it to the miller. When the miller saw it, he said to his wife:—

"Wife, let us send this cake to our landlord, who has often done us good service, and may favour us still more hereafter."

And so they sent it.

"After some few days the king again passed by, and found the miller in the same state, and as poor as he had been on the first occasion. He was working his stone, and singing,—

"Grind, grind,
Until I grow rich."

"Did you not receive the cake I ordered to be sent to you?" inquired the king.

"Yes, my lord," replied the miller; "but your Majesty must know that I have a landlord who has shown me favour, and with a view of increasing his goodwill, I sent it to him."

"One can see," said the king, "that he who is born to be poor will be poor to the end. You must know, man, that the cake which I sent you was filled with silver coins."

When he heard this, the miller became desperate and tore his hair.

"Do not be afflicted," said the king; "if I do not make you rich, my power is small indeed."

When he had said that, the king returned to

his palace and ordered a cake full of gold coin to be sent to the miller.

After a short time the king again passed by the mill, and was much pleased to see that it was all newly decorated and repaired; but when he approached close to the handsome building he heard bitter weeping inside. He inquired the cause, and was informed that the miller had died that night, and that, extraordinary to relate, he had a paper, which no one was able to withdraw, clutched in his hand. Then the king entered the chamber in which the deceased was; the poor man was extended on his bier, and held the paper, that no one had been able to take from him, with the rigidity of death; but as soon as the king approached it dropped on the floor. The king took up the paper and read these words written upon it,—

"I wished him poor,
Thou wished him rich,
Resuscitate him if thou art able."

JUAN HOLGADO AND DEATH.

ONCE upon a time there was a certain man named Juan Holgado (*i.e.*, John Well-off); and truly nobody could have less deserved such a name, for morning nor evening, as a rule, could the poor fellow get enough to satisfy his hunger. Moreover he had a heap of youngsters with gullets like sharks.

One day Juan Holgado said to his wife:—

"These brats are a pack of gluttons, and are capable of swallowing oilcloth itself. I should like to eat a hare by myself, at my pleasure, and without those young mastiffs to take it out of my mouth."

His wife,—who was a sweet woman, and always endeavouring to improve matters, in order not to worry the children,—sold a dozen

of eggs, which her hens had just laid, bought a hare with the money, cooked it with some meat broth, and early in the morning on the following day said to her husband:—

"Here in this pan is a cooked hare and half a loaf of bread; go and eat them in the field and much good may it do you."

Juan Holgado was not deaf, but seized the pan and ran off without waiting to see which way he was going. After he had gone about a league and a half, he sat down beneath the shade of an olive-tree, more contented than a king, and, recommending himself to our Lady of Loneliness, drew forth the bread, and putting down the pipkin with the hare in it, prepared for the feast. But just imagine his feelings when he suddenly saw, seated in front of him, an old woman dressed in black, and as ugly as—an unwilling gift! She was yellower and as skinny as lawyer's parchment; her eyes were as sunken and ghastly as a burnt-out lamp; her mouth was like a basket, whilst as for a nose—well, she had none, not even the memory of one. The grace which Juan Holgado said when he beheld this companion, dropped as it seemed from the clouds, was not

a benediction. But what was to be done? He was not quite a barbarian, so he asked her if she would like to eat.

As the old woman wished for nothing else, she answered that, rather than be unmannerly, she would partake of his meal. She seated herself and began to eat. Good gracious! It was not eating, but devouring. What a gullet! In a twinkling she had put the whole hare out of sight.

"By all that is holy!" said Juan Holgado to himself; "it would have been better to have had my children to eat the hare than this old she demon! When one is unlucky, nothing ever goes right."

When the old woman had finished—and not even the hare's tail was left—she said:—

"Juan Holgado, I liked that hare very much."

"So I have seen!" replied Juan Holgado.

"I wish to repay the favour."

"May you live a thousand years!" slily remarked Juan, as he noticed the old lady's decrepitude.

"Doubtless I shall," responded she, "as I am Death herself."

Juan Holgado gave a very uneasy start, as he invoked Heaven.

"Do not disturb yourself, Juan Holgado, that need not trouble you. In order to repay you your favour, I am going to give you some advice. Become a doctor; for, according to my experience, there is no such a profession in the world as that, for becoming famous and gaining money."

"Madam Death, I should be very contented if, instead of that, you would oblige me with a good crop of years for myself; besides, the medical business is not in my line."

"Why not, man?"

"Because I have never studied it."

"That is nothing."

"Madam, I know neither Latin nor Greek."

"It does not matter."

"Madam, I know nothing of Geography."

"That does not affect the question."

"Madam, I cannot count beyond one."

"It is all the same."

"Madam, my hand trembles so that I cannot write; nor can I read without getting into a brown study."

"Nonsense, fibber, nonsense!" said Death,

"I am getting impatient at so many difficulties. Strange too with a fellow like you, Juan Holgado, who has a good sound headpiece! Have I not been saying for the last hour, that it does not matter? I tell you, I would not give a penny whistle for all the doctors know: I neither come nor go because they call me, or know me. I please myself, and laugh at the doctors; and when I like, I lay hold of one by the ear and carry him off. When the world was first peopled there were no doctors, and then things went on comfortably and pleasantly, but as soon as doctors were invented there were no more Methuselahs. You shall be a doctor, without any more fuss; and if you refuse, you shall come with me now, as sure as I am Death. Now attend to me, and be silent. In your whole life you have never prescribed anything but pure water, have you?"

"There you are right," answered Juan Holgado, who was more prepared to assent to what Death said than to listen to her.

"If, when you enter a room, you see me seated at the head of the invalid, you may be sure that the person will die, that there is no remedy, and that you may prepare the per-

son for me. If, on the contrary, I am not there, you may assure the invalid of recovery, and prescribe pure water."

With these words the very ugly old woman took leave, after making a profound courtesy.

"Good madam," said Juan Holgado, "I did not wish to take leave of you with that '*Until we meet again;*' and I hope that your ladyship will have little desire of visiting me, because I have not always got a hare with which to regale myself, and when I had this one, the old thief carried it off."

"Don't be troubled, Juan Holgado," said Death, "whilst your house is not dilapidated I will not call there."

Juan Holgado returned home and related to his wife what had passed; and his wife, who was more quickwitted than he, said to him, that whatsoever the old woman had said to him he might believe, because there was no one more truthful and certain than Death. And she soon spread about that her husband was a skilful doctor, and that he had only to look at an invalid in order to be able to know whether he would die or recover.

One Sunday there were a bevy of young

girls, as merry as kittens, standing at the door of a house as Juan Holgado passed by. "Here comes Juan Holgado," said one of them, "who at the end of his days sets up for a doctor. It is as if one went in for salad soup at the end of a feast! And so now he is to be called *Don Juan*, and the *Don* becomes him about as well as a high-crowned hat would a mule!" And they all began to sing ironically.

"Let us have a joke with this conceited fellow!" said one of the girls. "I will pretend to be ill, and see if he will believe it."

No sooner said than done. The girls left a basket of figs that they were eating from, and before you could say "Jack Robinson," the girl who devised the scheme was in bed, and all of the others were pretending to bemoan her. Choking with laughter, they ran off to call Juan Holgado. He came, and as he entered he noticed at the street door a great heap of figskins. Inside the door, the first person to greet him was his compatriot Death, who was seated at the head of the bed, more serious than an empty bottle.

"She is very ill," then said Juan Holgado, and was going away.

"What is the matter with her?" said the girls, who could scarcely refrain from laughter.

"She has a surfeit of figs," replied he.

Juan Holgado went away, and in two hours the girl was dead. The reputation which this gave to our doctor may be imagined. Whenever any one was ill in future, Juan Holgado was called in; and he gained guineas so quickly that he did not know what to do with them. He bought a title for his family, and some orders of knighthood for his sons. In the meanwhile he was satisfied with things as they went, so that he grew so fat and round that it did one good to see him; his face was like the full moon; his legs like pillars, and his fingers like sausages.

All this time Juan Holgado was very careful of his house. When the youngsters did any little injury to any part of it, he inflicted corporal punishment on them. He always retained a mason in his employ, whom he paid by the year, to keep the house in order, for he remembered that Death had told him that whilst he kept his house free from dilapidation she would not call there.

The years passed by, and each time ran faster

than before, like a stone running down hill. The last brought a bad state of affairs. Juan Holgado received them very ungraciously, and in revenge one carried away his hair, another his teeth, another bent his backbone nearly double, and another obliged him with a limp.

One day he was very bad, and Death sent him a warning by a bat, for which Juan Holgado was not very thankful. Another day he was suffering from phlegm, and Death sent to say, by an agent, that she was ready to visit him. Juan Holgado said to the messenger that it was all make-believe with him. Another day an accident happened, and Death sent word by a dog, which howled outside his door, in the street. Juan Holgado took his crutch to the dog, and gave it a hard whack. The invalid grew worse, and Death called at the door. Juan ordered it to be barred, and that it should not be opened to her; but she managed to get in through a crack.

"Madam Death," said Juan Holgado to her, with a very bad grace, "you said that you would not come for me whilst my house was free from dilapidation; thus it is, that in spite of your messages, I have not expected you."

"What!" exclaimed Death, "don't you know that you have lost your powers? Don't you see that you have lost your teeth and your hair? Your body is your house."

"I did not know that, madam," said the invalid; "thus it is that I trusted in your words, and your arrival takes me by surprise."

"So much the worse for you, Juan Holgado," replied Death, "for he who is always forewarned is never surprised nor troubled at my coming; but you were blind, when you did not know that you were born to die; and you die in order to gain rest."





THE COCK AND THE GOOSE.

A CERTAIN cock ruled over a poultry yard. He formed a friendship with a goose who had fine plumage, had travelled and had dabbled in the fountain of knowledge; its gait was not elegant, but it was firm; its voice was not melodious, but it was grave and sententious. The goose advised its friend, the cock, to cut off his crest, which was provocative of hostility, and his spurs, which were useless. The cock complied, and then went out for a walk with his friend.

The goose, who was very confiding, left the gate of the poultry yard open. When they returned the cock went to his hearth to light up, and saw two gleaming lights there.

"What strange lights are those?" exclaimed the cock. And going nearer he saw that they were the eyes of a cat which darted on to him.

He put himself into position for fighting, but as he had no spurs, the cat killed him.

The goose, when it beheld this, never ceased repeating: "Peace, gentlemen; peace, peace, gentlemen; peace, peace, peace;" but this did not prevent the cat from making an end of him too.



UNCLE CURRO AND HIS CUDGEL.

THERE was once a man who lived very gaily, without thinking of the morrow; and what with eating, drinking, and never working, he soon found himself without house and with scarcely enough money left to get food for one day in the thirty. At last his spirits were so broken that he could not go home to the reproaches of his wife and children, but went to a neighbour's and borrowed a rope to hang himself with. He then went into a field and fastened the rope to an olive-tree; but just as he was about to put it round his neck a little fairy, dressed like a friar, appeared and said to him,—

"Man, what are you going to do?"

"To hang myself, sir; can't you see that?"

"Are you a Christian, and going to do what Judas did? Go away, and do better! Take

this purse, which can never be emptied, and help yourself from it."

Uncle Curro, for so was our hero commonly called, took the purse and pulled out a dollar, and then another, and another, and saw that the purse was like the mouths of women, which give forth words and words, and yet are never exhausted. He saw this, so untied the rope and took the road home. On the way he saw a public-house, which he entered, and began to eat and drink as much as he could, paying for it as he had it, to try his skill with the purse, and because the landlord did not care to give trust to so large a consumer. He ate so much and drank so much, that he soon fell under the table, and slept as soundly as the dead in the churchyard.

The landlord, who had noticed that the purse whence his customer drew his money never became empty, told his wife to make one like it. When this was done, he stole Uncle Curro's and replaced it by the one his wife had made.

When Uncle Curro woke up, he resumed his way home, where he arrived as jolly as a sunny day.

"Rejoice!" he cried to his wife and children. "Here is enough money to put an end to all our troubles!" and he put his hand into the purse and drew it out empty. He put it in again, but there was nothing to take out. When his wife saw this, she got in such a passion, that she added another blow to the large stock she had already given him.

More desperate than ever, he seized the rope and again went off to hang himself. Once more he arrived at the same spot, and fastened the rope to a branch of the olive-tree.

"What are you going to do, Christian?" said the voice of the little fairy, who again appeared to him.

"To hang myself up like a string of onions from the kitchen roof," responded Uncle Curro, quite beside himself.

"What makes you lose patience again?" said the fairy.

"Sir, I have not got anything to eat."

"You are very culpable; but—I'll try you again. Take this cloak, and with that you will never be in want of food." The fairy gave him the cloak and then disappeared.

Uncle Curro then extended the cloak on the

ground ; and no sooner had he done so than it was covered with all kinds of food, cooked in a manner that would have done credit to the king's kitchen. When our hero had eaten until he could eat no more, he folded up the cloak and started off homewards. On reaching the public-house he felt tired and lay down there to sleep. The landlord remembered him, and at once suspected that he had something valuable with him ; and his worldly knowledge directing him to the cloak, he stole it away and put another in its place.

When Uncle Curro got home he called his wife and children to come and eat, saying that this time they should eat to their heart's content. He then unfolded the cloak, but instead of victuals, he saw it covered with patches of all sizes and all colours.

Alas for him ! Mother and children both fell upon him and gave him no mercy. He seized the rope and went off to hang himself once more.

And, as it had happened before, the fairy appeared, and this time gave him a cudgel, assuring him that with it he could make everybody leave him in peace, and that he would

only have to say, "Cudgel, beat them," in order to put any one to flight, and that he would then be left quite unmolested.

Our hero seized the cudgel and took his way home, grand as a magistrate with his wand of office. He soon saw his wife and children coming towards him, and shouting all kinds of insults and outrages at him. Then he said, "Cudgel, beat them," and scarcely had the words been spoken, than the cudgel began to bestow some hearty whacks on the lads; their mother hastened to their aid, when Uncle Curro exclaimed, "At her, cudgel, and let her have it," and such a vigorous drubbing did she get from the cudgel that she was killed.

Justice was invoked, and the magistrate presented himself with his officers.

"Cudgel, beat them," said Uncle Curro as soon as he saw them; and the cudgel distributed such blows amongst them that each one equalled a thunderbolt. The magistrate was killed, and the officers took to their heels in such a fright that they scarcely touched the ground as they scampered away.

Then the king was informed of what had taken place, and he ordered a regiment of

grenadiers to go and seize Uncle Curro and his cudgel. No sooner did he see them coming than he said, "Cudgel, beat them," and it darted into the midst of the ranks. It began banging the heads of the grenadiers with a roar like that of a watermill; one lost an arm, another a leg, and the colonel an eye; so, to finish matters quickly, the grenadiers all seized their muskets and knapsacks, and marched home double quick, believing that the Evil One himself was after them.

Free from care, Uncle Curro went to sleep, putting his cudgel in his bosom so that no one should steal it. Whilst he slept they bound him hand and foot and carried him to prison, where he was tried and sentenced to death. The following day he was taken from his cell; and then he was taken on to the scaffold, where they untied his hands. Then he drew out his cudgel and cried to it, "Cudgel, beat them," and it played such havoc there that many were left for dead by the blows.

"We must provide for this man," said the king, "otherwise he will finish off all my subjects; tell him that I will give him a very large estate in America."

This was done. His majesty gave him an estate in Cuba, where he built a city, and in this city Uncle Curro caused so many deaths with his cudgel that it received the name of *Matanzas* (slaughter).



IF HEAVEN WILL IT.

ONCE upon a time a Galician was returning to Galicia after having spent some time in Seville. When he was close to his abode, he met some one who inquired where he was going.

"To my native place," replied the Galician.

"If Heaven will it," answered the former.

"Whether Heaven wills it or no," added the Galician to himself, already seeing his village from afar, and being only separated from its outskirts by a river.

Scarcely had he muttered the words ere he fell into the water and was changed into a frog.

In this condition the poor man lived for three years, being in continual danger from his spiteful foes, bad boys, leeches, and storks. At the end of three years another Galician re-

turning home happened to pass by there; and a wayfarer chancing to ask him whither he was going, replied:—

"To my native place."

"If Heaven will it," croaked a frog that poked its head up out of the water.

And when it had said this, the frog, which was the first Galician, suddenly found itself once more a man.

He went on his way gayer than Easter, and having met with another traveller, who asked him whither he went, he answered him:—

"To my own place, if Heaven will it; to see my wife, if Heaven will it; to see my children, if Heaven will it; to see my cow, if Heaven will it; to sow my land, if Heaven will it; so that I may get a good harvest from it, if Heaven will it."

And as he religiously added to everything, "if Heaven will it," he was allowed to see his wishes accomplished. He found his wife and children well; his cow had a calf; he sowed his field, and reaped a good harvest because Heaven willed it.

UNPALATABLE ADVICE.

ONCE upon a time there was a man who, whenever he returned from hearing a sermon preached, began to murmur at the preachers, saying that they did nothing but afflict the mind and sadden people, by speaking to them of dangers, evils, and penalties; that was not his plan, he liked to speak only of virtues and rewards, and such things, seeming to fancy that one went to a sermon as to a comedy, in order to be diverted.

It came to pass that this man went on a journey, taking a large sum of money with him. He arrived with his servant at an inn where they rested for the night.

Whilst supper was being served to the master in his room, the servant, who had remained in the kitchen, heard some folks say that, in order to reach the place whither they were travelling, one had a choice of two roads, one long, bad,

and painful to travel, but secure, and another level, short, and picturesque, but dangerous on account of its being infested by thieves and malefactors.

The servant, who knew that his master did not like warnings nor anything that would disturb him, did not mention a word to him about what he had heard; but when the following day arrived, without any further question, took the short and level road.

They had not proceeded far when they were met by some malefactors, who, after robbing and illtreating them, left them naked and tied to some trees on the verge of a precipice.

"Alas!" cried the servant, "well did I know the dangers and disastrous end that awaited us by this road!"

"Then, if you knew it, wretch," replied his master, "how was it that you did not caution me, and advise me of the dangers we were running into?"

"It was, sir," answered the servant, "because I have always heard you say that those who spoke of dangers, evils, and penalties, did nothing but afflict the mind and sadden people."



THE PROMISE.

ONCE upon a time there was a certain woman who had no children, but who so longed for a son that, finding Heaven did not respond to her prayers, she promised the Evil One that if he would only procure her a child, upon the boy's attaining his fourteenth year he should be given up to him. After some time her wishes were fulfilled, and she obtained a son.

At first the woman was very delighted with her child; but as he grew older, and began to approach fourteen, she became more and more disquieted and melancholy. One day, seeing his mother weep, the boy asked the cause of her affliction, when she told him. When he had heard the reason, the lad exclaimed:—

"Since there is no help for it,—for if you did not keep your promise the Evil One would come for you,—I must go to him."

The poor boy set off; but he did not know the way. He met some muleteers, and asked them if they could direct him.

"Heaven forbid!" responded they. "But the path below leads to a cavern wherein we have seen a monster, who may be able to tell you."

Following the path, the lad arrived at the cavern, where he saw the monster, who was a most frightful and deformed man. When he learned the boy's errand he felt pity for him; and besides pointing out to him the way he should take, he also gave him a letter for the Evil One's daughter.

"She will not want to receive it," said he; "but tell her that it is from her godfather, and that if she does not take it I will not direct any one else to her dwelling."

When the boy arrived at his destination, he delivered the letter and the message to the Evil One's daughter. She was very angry, yet could not but act as her godfather's letter had advised.

"You are innocent," she said to the boy; "and before my father can possess himself of you, he must make you commit sin. Presently

he will take you to a garden of flowers, beautiful in appearance, but really filled with poison; therefore, do not gather or smell any, but tell him that they do not please you."

And so it came to pass. When the Evil One took the boy to a most beautiful garden full of the loveliest flowers, the lad would neither pick nor smell any of them, notwithstanding all that he urged. Then the Evil One thought to himself, "I will take care that you do not escape me to-morrow!"

The following day, the Evil One's daughter, who knew her father's thoughts, said to the lad:—

"To-day my father will tell you to go past a cave from which a hideous bear will come forth to devour you; when you see it coming, you must say three times, 'Lord, help me,' and instead of hurting you, it will run away."

And so it came to pass. The Evil One roared, and said to himself, "To-morrow you shall not escape me, for I will go in person to kill you."

Then the Evil One's daughter said to the lad:—

"To-morrow my father will come in person

to kill you. Hide behind the door of your cell, and when he comes give him two blows with these sticks, which you must put into the form of the Cross, and he will fall to the ground with his face to the earth, as if dead. Then you must run away and not stop running until you come to a church!" And the lad did so, and was freed from the snares of the Evil One.



THE FAIRY HEN.

A WOMAN once saw a most beautiful black hen enter her poultry yard and lay an egg, as large as a turkey's and as white as chalk. The woman grew very proud of this black hen, which laid a most beautiful egg for her every day. But at last the hen ceased to lay, which so annoyed its mistress, that she ceased to give it any food, saying :—

"The hen that does not lay,
Shall have no corn to-day."

To which the fowl, opening its beak fearfully wide, replied :—

"Lay eggs and get no corn !
For that I was not born !"

And spreading its wings, it made a spring, flew out of the window, and disappeared.

By this the woman perceived that the beautiful black hen was a fairy, which had been sent to reprove her greediness.



DAME FORTUNE AND DON MONEY.

DAME FORTUNE and Don Money were so enamoured of one another, that one was never to be seen without the other. "After the rope comes the bucket;" after Dame Fortune came Don Money. Thus it came to pass that, as folks talked so much about them, they determined to marry.

Don Money was a short, thick-set individual, whilst Dame Fortune was a flighty, unreliable, thin creature, and as blind as a bat.

No sooner had the newly married couple spent their honeymoon, than they came to words; the wife wished to command, but Don Money, who was bumptious and haughty, was not inclined to give way. As they both wished to be master, and neither to submit, they

determined to put to the proof which of the two was the more powerful.

"Look," said the wife to the husband, "do you see down there that poor fellow looking so crest-fallen and wretched? Let us see which of us two, you or I, can give him the better fate."

The husband agreed; they went towards the poor man and addressed him.

The poor fellow, who was an unfortunate, that in his whole life had never before seen either of them, neither the one nor the other, opened his little olive-like eyes when the two grandees placed themselves before him.

"Heaven guard you!" said Don Money.

"And your lordship, also!" responded the man.

"Do you know me?"

"I do not know your worship."

"Have you never see my face?"

"Never, in all my life."

"But do you possess nothing?"

"Oh, yes, sir; I have six sons, ragged as robins, with throats like sieves; but in point of goods, I have no more than from hand to mouth, even when I can get that."

"And why don't you work?"

"Because I cannot get work. I have such bad luck that everything with me is as crooked as a ram's horn. From the time that I married, luck has deserted me, and I have been the most unfortunate of beings. The proprietor placed us here to make a well, promising us both some crowns when the work was completed, but he has never paid us a single sixpence."

"And the proprietor has done well," said Don Money, sententiously; "for as the proverb says, 'Money in hand, still hold command.' But I want to assist you, friend," said Don Money pompously, putting a dollar into the poor man's hand.

It seemed like a dream to the poor fellow, who flew rather than ran, for joy gave wings to his feet. He went straight to a baker's and bought some bread; but when he went to pull out the money he found nothing in his pocket but a hole, through which the dollar had gone.

In despair the poor fellow began to seek for it; but it was not to be found. Besides the dollar he lost his time, and besides his time he lost his patience, and began to curse his evil fortune.



"I want to assist you, friend," said Don Money.

Dame Fortune smiled, and Don Money's face grew yellower than ever; but he could find no other remedy than to pull out his purse and give the poor man a piece of gold.

This produced a magical effect upon him, as his glittering glances portrayed. This time it was not bread that he went off for, but for cloth to make his wife and children their much-needed garments. But when he went to pay for it with the gold piece, the tradesman put himself in a passion, said that his employer was a coiner, and that he would denounce him to justice. On hearing this, the poor fellow's face flushed and grew so hot that one could have roasted beans at it; he felt that it was his usual luck, so went to Don Money with downcast mien to relate what had passed.

On hearing his story Dame Fortune burst out laughing, and Don Money's face grew livid.

"Take this," said he to the poor man, giving him one hundred dollars; "you have had bad fortune, but I will get you out of it, or I have little power."

The poor man went away so transported with delight, that he did not see until it was

too late a band of thieves, who stripped and left him as bare as a new-born babe.

Dame Fortune chucked her husband, who was as confused as a drunkard, under the chin.

"Now it is my turn," said she, "and we shall see which can do better, petticoats or breeches."

Then she approached the poor man whom the thieves had thrown on to the ground; she lifted him up, and breathed upon him. At this moment he found under his hand the dollar he had lost.

"That is something," said he to himself; "I can go and buy bread for my children, who for the last three days have had such short commons that their stomachs must be as empty as drums."

On passing the shop where he had purchased the clothing, the tradesman called him in and said that he must confess how ill he had behaved to him, that he had imagined the gold piece was bad, but that he had taken it to an assayer who had assured him that it was very good, and so just in weight that it rather exceeded the standard than fell short of it; that

he might now have it back, and, moreover, all the clothing he had bought in recompense for the manner in which he had been treated.

The poor fellow was very satisfied, and took off his goods. As he was passing the square he beheld a party of civic guards taking with them the thieves who had robbed him. He followed them before the judge, who was a judge after God's own heart, and he made them restore the hundred dollars, without costs or fees.

The poor man lodged this money with a friend of his in a mine, and the mine had scarcely been excavated three yards before veins of gold, lead, and iron were discovered. Soon after this he was called *Don*, afterwards his *Lordship*, and eventually his *Excellency*.

Henceforth Don Money was thoroughly cowed, and forced to confess that the grey mare was the better horse; whilst Dame Fortune grew more inconsistent and nonsensical than ever, and since that time has distributed her favours without rhyme or reason, to good and bad, wise or foolish, alike.



THE CARLANCO.*

ONCE upon a time there was a goat of domestic habits, that had three little kids, all well brought up, and well behaved.

One day when the mother had to go to the mountains, she saw a wasp drowning in a stream; so she held out a branch to it, which the wasp got hold of and was saved.

"Heaven reward you! You have done me a work of real mercy," said the wasp to the goat. "If ever you have any need of me, go to that ruined wall, where my convent is. I have many little cells there, but they are very ruinous as our community is very poor, and has no means to furnish them. Inquire for the Abbess, that is for me, and I will at once come

* A mystical monster, equivalent to Bogie.

to your assistance, and do for you all that lies in my power."

On saying this, the wasp flew away singing her matins.

A few days later, early in the morning, the goat said to her little ones :—

"I am going to the mountain for a bundle of wood ; shut yourselves in, bar up the door, and be very careful not to open to any one, because the Carlanco is roving about here. Do not open the door until I say to you :—

"'Open, my darlings, open !
I am your own fond mother !'"

The little kids, who were very dutiful, did exactly what their mother had told them to do. They heard some one calling at the door, with a voice like a calf's, saying :—

"Open, I am the Carlanco !
And can break down rocks and mountains !"

The kids had barred the door up very strongly ; so they answered from within :—

"Open it, strong one !"

And as the Carlanco was not able to do that, it went away in a passion, promising them that it would pay them out yet. The following

morning it hid itself, and heard what the mother said to the little kids, which was the same as the day before. Directly it thought enough time had passed, it went to the door, and, imitating the goat's voice, said :—

"Open, my darlings, open !
I am your own fond mother."

The little kids, believing that it was their mother, went to the door and opened it, and saw that the Carlanco itself was there. They scampered off with all their might, and by means of the ladder, which they pulled up after them, they got on the roof, where the Carlanco could not get at them. The monster was in a passion at this; it closed the door, and began raging about, and snorting in such a manner that the poor little kids shivered with fright. Presently the mother arrived, and called to them to open the door, when they cried out to her from the roof, that they could not, as the Carlanco was in the house.

When the goat heard this, she flung down her bundle of wood, and with the speed of lightning flew to the convent of wasps, and knocked at the door.

"Who is it?" inquired the door-keeper.

"Mother, I am a little goat, at your service."

"A goat here, in this convent of devout and indigent wasps? Go off! I have no alms to give. Go your way, and Heaven protect you," said the door-keeper.

"Call the Abbess to come quickly," said the goat; "if not, I will go for the bee-hunter, whom I saw near here."

The door-keeper was frightened at this threat, so she went and called the Abbess, who came, and to whom the goat recounted what had happened.

"Be of good heart, goat," said she; "I will help you. Let us be off to your house."

When they arrived, the wasp crept into the house through the keyhole, and began to sting the Carlanco, now in the eyes, now on the nose, in such a manner that it was quite bewildered, and opened the door and ran off like the whirlwind.

Another Version.

Three little lambs assisted one another in building a little house; building it with branches and bushes. When it was finished,

the eldest one went into it, shut the door, and kept the other two outside. There was nothing else for the others to do but to build another house, and this they did; but when it was finished, the elder of the two went into it, shut the door, and left the youngest outside by itself. Whilst this poor little forsaken one was weeping, a mason went by, and he asked what was the matter; so the little lamb told him the whole story. Then the mason built it a very good house, with strong stone walls and a slate roof; moreover he strengthened the door with iron spikes, so that if the Carlanco came he would impale himself on them.

The Carlanco came, and on arriving at the little house of the eldest lamb, said :—

"Open the door to the Carlanco,
Else I will kill you."

The little lambkin responded :—

"Open it yourself, strong one."

Then he broke open the door, which was only made of boughs, and ate her up; and the same thing also happened to the second lamb; but when he arrived at the house of the third, he said :—

"Open the door to the Carlanco,
Else I will kill you."

The little lambkin responded :—

"Open it yourself, strong one."

Then he dashed so furiously against the door that he impaled himself upon the iron spikes, and was killed.



BENIBAIRE.

ONCE upon a time there were three little kids who were very poor, and the eldest said :—

"What shall we do?"

The second replied :—

"I don't know."

And the third said :—

"I know what we will do. We will go to Benibaire's house and steal three flasks of oil."

"Well thought of," said the others; "we will go there."

After walking a league, they heard a voice crying :—

"Bah, bah."

They saw a great sheep, and were afraid, and ran away, saying :—

"Fly, fly,
It is going to attack us."

But the sheep cried to them :—

" Don't be afraid. Where are you going ? "

" To Benibaire's house, to steal three flasks of oil," they answered.

" Would you like me to go too ? " said the sheep.

" Oh, yes," they replied.

They went another league, and heard a voice that said :—

" Mieaou, mieaou."

And they saw a very great black cat, and were frightened, and ran away, saying :—

" Fly, fly,
It is going to scratch us."

But the cat cried to them :—

" Don't be frightened, I won't scratch you. Where are you going ? "

" To Benibaire's house, to steal three flasks of oil," they replied.

" Would you like me to go too ? "

" Oh, do come," answered the kids.

They went a league farther, and heard a voice crowing :—

" Cock-a-doodle-doo."

And they saw a very fiery cock, and were frightened, and fled, saying :—

"Fly, fly,
It is going to peck us."

The cock said to them :—

"Don't be afraid, I won't peck you. Where are you going ?"

"To Benibaire's house, to steal three flasks of oil."

"Would you like me to go ?"

"By all means," replied the kids.

They went another league, and saw a packing needle, and were frightened, and ran away, saying :—

"Fly, fly,
It will prick us."

But the needle said :—

"Don't be afraid, I won't prick you. Where are you going ?"

"To Benibaire's house, to steal three flasks of oil."

"Would you like me to go ?"

"Yes, come along."

They went another league, and arrived at Benibaire's house ; and as it was night, the door was closed.

"How shall we get in ?" said the little kids.

To which the cock replied :—

" I will fly on to the roof, and get down the chimney."

And he did so, and opened the door to them all. They entered the house, and said, " Where shall we hide ourselves ? "

The cock replied :—

" I have my place already ; I will go into the chimney."

The cat hid in the cinders ; the needle put itself into the towel, and the sheep got behind the door. Then the kids went to the jars to draw the oil. Whilst they were drawing it they let the funnel fall, and this aroused Benibaire, who said :—

" Oh, Lord ! thieves have got into my house."

He got up and went to the chimney, and looked up the flue, to see if it were day. Whilst he was looking up, the cock dropped some lime into his eyes and blinded him. He ran to the towel to wipe his face, and as the needle was there, it pricked him ; he went to kindle a fire by the eye of the cat in the ashes, and she darted out at him and scratched him ; he went flying to the door, and when he got there the sheep gave him a push and he rolled

into the street; he went to the mill, and fell into the river, and was drowned, and the three kids remained masters of the house, and had a very good time of it.





MORO'S EARS.

I.

THERE was once a certain parish priest named Don Toribio, who presided over the spiritual wants of Zarzalejo, to the parochial benefice of which place he had been presented. What we have to relate of him does not reflect much credit upon the man, but it in no way dishonours the sacerdotal office; it is the man only, and not the priest or his class, that is brought into contempt.

Don Toribio was very stout, probably resulting from the fact that he had little to do, as Zarzalejo was a very little place, containing only twenty-four inhabitants, all poor agricultural labourers who did not much wish for his ministrations. Occasionally he attended the conferences which the clergy of the district

held in Cabezuela, which was a neighbouring town, and he was always enjoined by the president to study something or the other; but Don Toribio, instead of spending his unoccupied time in study, passed it in riding hither and thither on Moro, a very fine ass, that had been brought up from infancy in the priest's house, where it had been taught a number of tricks that delighted its master and often made him laugh heartily.

The parish church of Zarzalejo was as bright as a silver plate, and everything in it was as "neat as a new pin;" this, however, was not due to the priest, but to Pedro, who was both sacristan and acolyte (*monaguillo*), and a very shrewd fellow into the bargain.

One day Pedro had a very interesting conversation with his father, Robustiano.

"Father," said Pedro, "I am getting too old for an acolyte. The other day, when the bishop passed through this place, and I went from Don Toribio with Moro, in order to carry his Grace's portmanteau to Cabezuela, we had some conversation together. Whilst his Grace rode along on his mule, I went on foot leading Moro."

"'In what condition is the church of Zarzalejo?' inquired the bishop of me.

"'Very good,' I replied; 'but has your Grace not seen it?'

"'No; I have never yet had time to stop in Zarzalejo; but next year, *D.V.*, I will pay it a pastoral visit, and shall then see the church.'

"'Then I am certain your Grace will be pleased with it; for, although it is not my place to say so, you will be able to see your face in any part of it. Every day I give all the saints such a shaking, to free them from dust, that the very church trembles.'

"'Are you the sacristan, then?'

"'Sacristan and acolyte, at your Grace's service.'

"'Sacristan, man, is all very well; but you are too old for an acolyte.'

"'But who is to be it?'

"'Not you, man. Acolytes should be boys, whose innocent and infantile faces remind one of the angels; and nothing can be more improper than for the post to be filled by a shepherd with a beard as long as a goat's.'

"Thus said the bishop; and if *he* said so a few days ago, what would he say if he found

me in the same position in a twelvemonth's time ?"

"You are right, son, and so is his Grace," replied Robustiano.

"And what do you think I had better do ?"

"Tell the priest that you must resign your post, and come and work in the fields with me."

"But, father——I am so fond of the church."

"We are all fond of the Church, son, because in it God gives the poor and afflicted that hope and comfort which is denied by man."

"Yes; but that is not exactly what I meant to imply."

"Then, if not, what the dickens did you mean ?"

"That I wish to become parish priest of Zarzalejo."

"Do you jest with me, lad ? You know that I have a heavy fist."

"But, father, there is no harm in my wish."

"But there is plenty of impossibility. To be ordained curate, you would have to be very good and wise in everything; besides, where the dickens are you going to get the wherewithal to follow such a profession ?"

"If you would only make some sacrifice in order to help me, I would make such progress that in a few years no one in Zarzalejo would dare to call you old Robustiano."

"Who the dickens does call me that?"

"Don Toribio."

"We shall see; that fellow is capable of anything. . . . But, lad, who has promised you the benefice of Zarzalejo?"

"There would be no difficulty about that, father, because the curacy of Zarzalejo is parochial, and there is no fear that any one would dispute it with me."

"Well, lad, we won't talk any more of the subject now; but I would part with the clothes off my back to see you become priest. To-morrow we will go to see the schoolmaster of Cabezuela, and you shall stay there to study Latin, which is the first and foremost thing to be learnt in order to say mass. But, woe betide you if you do not study diligently; because if you don't, I'll let you taste the stick about your back, and you know my hand is not a light one."

Pedro jumped for joy on hearing this, and ran off to place the resignation of his duties in the priest's hands.

2.

Don Toribio became very melancholy when he heard that Pedro was studying for a curacy; even his favourite avocations of jaunting about on Moro, and teaching the animal tricks, grew tedious and wearied him. And that the distraction of the unfortunate priest was not without reason this soliloquy proves :—

"That Pedro," said he to himself, "is as cunning as a fox; he will soon become a priest, and obtain this benefice, dispossessing me, and I shall again have to go through all the troubles of getting a new appointment. It will be impossible for me to oppose him, for I do not know an iota of Latin; and frankly, to study does not suit me. It is a fatality that I should have a horror of books, but what can I do? Every one has his forte. That rascal of a Pedro, who so longs to be a priest, as if to be it one had nothing to do but to tumble into the surplice and spend one's life in luxury. Well, well, my lad, if you become parish priest of Zarzalejo, there is no cunning left in this roguish Spain!"

Every day Don Toribio soliloquized in a similar fashion, trying by all the few ideas he

possessed to discover some means of inducing Pedro to abandon the ecclesiastical career. One day, whilst he was worrying over his troubles, Robustiano presented himself and said that he wished to have a few words with him.

"You know already, sir," said the farmer to Don Toribio, "that Pedro has been upwards of six months in Cabezuela, learning Latin, with the view of becoming a priest, because, as it appears, he has taken a fancy to enter the Church."

"Yes, I know it, and I am much afraid the lad is losing his time, because there is so much to be learnt before one can be ordained."

"That is what I am also afraid of, *Señor Cura;* I came, therefore, to ask you if, when the lad comes home for the vacation, you will kindly examine him, without letting him know what you are about, and tell me the result privately. If he is not really making any progress I will give him a thorough flogging, and set him to work in the fields with me; it is no good wasting any more time if the lad is not diligent, or is a dolt by nature."

"You are right, man," responded Don Toribio, "and reason like a good father. I

will take an opportunity of examining Pedro without letting him know what I am about, and will tell you frankly how he acquits himself."

After this conversation Robustiano took leave of the priest, satisfied that so clever a gentleman would be able to thoroughly test his son's progress.

3.

Directly Pedro arrived at Zarzalejo he went to visit the priest; and as he saw Moro in the court before the house, he went to stroke him. Owing to his master's bad temper, Moro had not received any caresses for some time past; so, when Pedro approached, he misunderstood his motives, and kicked at him with such force that, but for the lad's agility, he would have come off sorely. Astonished at such a reception from an animal he had done many a good turn to, Pedro went on his way, murmuring :—

"I well deserve such treatment for forgetting that from asses one can expect nothing but kicks."

The priest received him with much apparent affection, saying to him :—

"I thought, Pedro, you were going to salute me in Latin."

"After a style, sir, I could have done so," replied the youth modestly, "for I have worked as hard as possible; but I feared it would look arrogant."

"Nonsense, man, there is no arrogance in knowing anything. Tell me in Latin how you have employed your time."

The youth began, and frightened the priest with the volubility with which he explained himself. We say the "volubility," and not the correctness, because Don Toribio only comprehended that he spoke fluently.

"And is that the Latin which you have learnt during the last half," inquired the priest with a gesture of disapproval.

"Yes, sir."

"Then it is a pity, my lad, that you have wasted your time."

The lad, who justly believed that he had employed his time very well,—and, indeed, his tutor had told him so,—was sadly cut up by the priest's sally, and returned home almost in tears.

Robustiano was not long in seeking the

priest's house, in order to learn what progress Pedro had made in Latin.

"Robustiano," said the priest to him, as soon as he saw him, "I have bad news for you. The lad has returned more ignorant than he went away, because he does not know an iota of Latin, and has even forgotten the little he had learnt formerly by being so much with me."

"You have broken my heart with this news, sir," exclaimed the poor man, putting his hand to his head to wipe away the perspiration that began to gather on his forehead.

"I feel for you greatly; but it was my duty to undeceive you, because it would not be doing you any good to let you go on sacrificing yourself for the lad."

"By my life, when I get home, I will not leave a whole bone in the rascal's body."

"Man, do not commit any barbarities!"

"Ah, you don't know, Mr. Priest, what a fist I have got."

"Let your fist rest, and follow my advice."

"A thousand demons!——Forgive my want of respect, sir; but I don't know what I say. What would you have me do?"

"What I would have you do is, not to touch

the lad, but instead of dedicating him to a profession for which he is not suited, dedicate him to agriculture, in which he will be able to become a man as skilled and respected as yourself."

"I will try to follow your advice, sir; but——"

"There is no need of any *but*, Robustiano. You fancy that one can become a priest without any labour. Yet in order to become a priest one must learn a great deal. Now, only look at me! I am not one of the dullest, although it is scarcely right for me to say so; and yet there are priests who know more than I do."

"Sir, that seems impossible!"

"There is nothing impossible. However, you see that your boy would not do for the clerical profession; so, instead of making a bad priest, make a good farmer of him."

"Well, sir, frankly, I cannot answer for myself, because, as I have told you, I have a heavy fist——"

"No more of fists! Do not be so savage! In this world we are what God has made us, and not what we wish to be. To some He has given talent, and to others——"

"Very well, sir, we won't say any more about that. I will do what you wish, because a poor stupid like I am does not know what to say to a gentleman so learned as you are. Many thanks for everything."

"Don't speak of it, Robustiano."

And poor Robustiano went away from the priest's house even more miserable than poor Pedro had from his visit. All his hopes of having a priest in his family had flown.

4.

Robustiano had promised not to thrash the lad; but when Pedro, attempting to defend himself from the accusation that he did not know an iota of Latin, maintained that he knew at least as much as Don Toribio, and attempted to cast doubt upon the veracity and good faith of the priest whose words caused his father to make him abandon the ecclesiastical career and devote himself to agriculture, old Robustiano nearly lost all control over his temper, and scarcely restrained himself from breaking his stick over poor Pedro's shoulders.

Several months passed by, and Pedro worked diligently in the fields by his father's side; but

he devoted all his leisure moments and not a few of his nights to the study of Latin, using for this purpose the books he had brought with him from Cabezuela.

One day Don Toribio received a letter from the bishop, announcing that his Grace intended to pay a pastoral visit to Zarzalejo, and naming the day when he would arrive. The bishop wished to pass the night at the priest's residence, adding,—

"Pray do not put yourself out of the way to make any unusual preparations on my account. As regards meals, all that I have to tell you is, *orexis more parve*" (*i.e.*, my appetite for meat is small).

This was a most irritating letter for the priest. He could manage to spell out the Spanish words, but was completely fogged over the Latin.

"What the dickens does his Grace mean?" he exclaimed, as he wiped off the perspiration that came out on his brow as he tried to make out the meaning of those words, which I should have translated by, "I am very moderate in my appetite." "And this cursed Latin," he continued, "contains the most important part of

the letter, because it explains what dish his Grace would like prepared for him. *Orexis more parve*——A thousand demons seize me if I can understand that! *Orexis more*—— one would think he was speaking of Moro's ears (*orexas del Moro*), but that is not possible! And who is there in this place knows any more of Latin than I do, save Pedro? And how can I ask him? He will certainly know; but how can I have the face to ask him? However, there is no help for it but to apply to him, though I must do it so skilfully that he will not be able to discover my object."

So saying, he put the bishop's letter into his pocket and went to the field where Pedro and his father were working.

"What is going on abroad, sir?" said Robustiano to him.

"I don't know what is taking place abroad, but I have great news for Zarzalejo."

Indeed! And what, may I ask, is that?"

"That on the 24th, we shall have a visit from the bishop!"

"Ah, that is, indeed, news! But how do you know that?"

"Because I have received a letter from his

Grace, announcing his visit, and informing me that he will stay at my house. Here is the bishop's letter, which I would read to your scholar, but I have left my spectacles at home."

And the priest handed the letter to Pedro, who read it through rapidly. When he came to the Latin words, Don Toribio said to him with a gracious smile :—

"That is Greek for you, my lad."

Pedro was no fool, and instantly divined what the priest was after, so he answered :—

" Thanks, sir, for the favour you have done me."

" It is just, my son, that if I do not translate it, you should translate it, so that your father may understand it."

" You are right, sir," said Robustiano. " What do you say to that, fool ? "

" His Grace says here, that he will be contented if Don Toribio will have the pair of Moro's ears cooked for him."

Robustiano was about to let Pedro feel his fist, when the priest stopped him, and said to the youth :—

" Are you certain of what you say ? "

" As certain as you are that I do not know

an iota of Latin. The thing could not possibly be clearer: *orexis* the ears (*orexas*); *more*, of Moro; *parve*, the pair (*par*)."

"Well, friend Robustiano," said the priest, "the lad has guessed the truth this time, despite his ignorance of Latin and the singularity of the bishop's commission."

"But is it possible that his Grace can have such a taste?"

"Friend, the letter speaks for itself."

"And how does his Grace know that your ass is called *Moro?*'

"I can explain that," said Pedro. "He must have heard me several times call it by name when I went with his Grace to Cabezuela."

"One can see that these grandees," said Robustiano, "don't know what to eat, if they tickle their palates with such filth."

Pedro was not badhearted, but he could not withstand the temptation of repaying the two blows he had received, the one from Moro, and the other from the priest.

5.

Finally, the bishop arrived at Zarzalejo, and

was welcomed gaily by the people of the village and its vicinity, headed by Don Toribio. Pedro and his father also went to receive his Grace.

It was usual for the priest to receive the bishop at the doors of the church; but as the people here were all very primitive, the priest thought that he ought first to go forth to receive his Grace at the outskirts of the village and then proceed to the church in order to don his vestments, and give his bishop a clerical reception.

Honest Robustiano was extremely disgusted at hearing the priest and the schoolmaster felicitating the bishop upon his arrival in Spanish, and whispered to his son :—

"If you had not been such a confounded fool, you would have been able to-day, before all the people, to have congratulated the bishop in Latin!"

These words suddenly revealed to Pedro,—what he had never yet known,—how much sympathy his father had had with the object of his aspirations. On hearing them, he advanced towards the bishop and, without the slightest hesitation, addressed him in Latin.

His Grace was much surprised at hearing the lad express himself so excellently in Latin; and being a good classical scholar, and greatly attached to Latinity, was not able to refrain from giving the signal for the applause in which all the people heartily joined, in a few eulogistic words congratulating Zarzalejo upon the possession of a youth so well versed in the Latin tongue.

Upon hearing this, poor Robustiano was so overcome with joy and pride, that, without knowing what he was about, he embraced his son, and, flinging his hat into the air, called for cheers for his Grace. As for Don Toribio, he could scarcely dissimulate his vexation.

His Grace desired that Pedro might accompany him, not only to church, but also to dinner at the priest's house. This new honour conferred upon his son quite transported Robustiano with joy, whilst all his neighbours congratulated him.

Upon their return from church, the bishop, his secretary, the priest, and Pedro seated themselves at the dinner-table; the last with much emotion and modesty, but without clumsiness.

The priest had provided an excellent repast for his guests, as was proved by the appetite and complacency with which his Grace and the secretary partook of it. The principal courses had all been discussed, and finally appeared the singular dish which, the priest believed, had been desired by the bishop.

His Grace and his secretary were helped, and began to eat it. The taste of the food seemed strange to them; and as they noticed that the priest and Pedro both politely declined partaking of that dish, the bishop inquired :—

"Don Toribio, what meat is this?"

"That, my Lord," responded the priest, "is the dish which you especially asked for in your letter."

"What do you mean, sir? I did not specify any particular meat."

"I have your Grace's letter here," said the priest, as he drew the bishop's letter from his pocket. "Your Grace will see that in it you desired me to have Moro's pair of ears cooked for you."

"*Moro!* And what is that, man?"

"Moro is my saddle-ass."

"Don Toribio, are you mad?"

"No, my Lord! your letter most explicitly says, '*Orexis more parve.*'"

If the house had fallen down, it could not have startled the bishop more than hearing such a translation of his words; and immediately he and the secretary began to feel very ill, because they had already taken a mouthful or so of the donkey's ears.

Pedro was even more astounded than the priest at the results of his trick. Deeply ashamed, and penitent, he flung himself at the feet of the venerable prelate:—

"My Lord," he exclaimed, "forgive Don Toribio, who is quite innocent of this miserable jest; I only am to blame."

The bishop begged for an explanation of what looked like an unseemly piece of impertinence; but after he had listened to the lad's excuses he comprehended the whole affair, he being as shrewd as he was prudent and benignant.

Soon afterwards the bishop started for Cabezuela, intending to sleep there, and not at Zarzalejo, as he had at first proposed. Before he departed he summoned the priest and Pedro, and said to them:—

"Don Toribio, you know well that Latin is the proper idiom for the Catholic Church, and yet you, who are one of the ministers of the Church, have forgotten that language; therefore, it is indispensable that you return to the seminary of this diocese in order to study it. You, Pedro, who aspire to be ordained, and to obtain the benefice of Zarzalejo, for the sake of a wretched trick have wandered from the right path. After you have obtained the consent and blessing of your father, you shall go with me, and I will try to guide you in the ecclesiastical career, since it seems Heaven calls you to it."

Some few years later, Pedro became parish priest of Zarzalejo; and Don Toribio, who was living in a neighbouring town, studied like a demon in order to try for a benefice at Cabezuela.

"Ah!" he sighed, "if I were only a bishop I should find something better to do than merely give benedictions!"

THE POWER OF WILL.

FROM 1836 to 1838, there was civil war in Spain between the Isabelinos, or Royalists, and the Carlists. Where the Carranza and Soba valleys join, the local belligerents were: in Carranza, a detachment of Carlist custom-house officers, commanded by a native named Joseph; and, in Soba, the villagers and peasants of the vicinity, were under the command of a man nicknamed "Geringa," or "The Quibbler."

Joseph was a robust, sprightly young man, and skilful in guerilla stratagems, whilst Geringa was as thin as a threadpaper, moody, and stubborn as a mule, so much so, indeed, that his wife's chief fear was, that one day he might take it into his head that he was in danger of death, because then all the doctors in the world could not cure him.

At a certain festival which was celebrated

in Carranza, a large number of people came from all the adjoining villages, including several from Soba. Among the crowd were Joseph and the Geringa. In a large circle the Geringa might be seen admiring a charlatan, who pretended that he had a little dog so clever that he had only to say to it, "Chuchumeco, find out for me the only man in Carranza who is able to assassinate without the law interfering with him," and it would go and put its paws upon the village doctor! And when he added, "Chuchumeco, who is the most foolish person here?" went straight as an arrow to a poor wretch who was just married for the third time, after having led a miserable life with the two former wives.

Joseph, seeing the Geringa open-mouthed with admiration at the existence of such wonders, said to him, "What! are you surprised at what that man does with his little dog?"

"Yes; it is marvellous!"

"Those who have the *power of will* can do that, and much more, if they choose."

"What! could you do that?"

"What I can do is much more than make

a dog, which is a clever animal, obey me. I can compel an ass, which is the most stupid creature, do what I wish. Those who have the power of will can accomplish anything with it."

"And you have this power?"

"I have it, as you shall see."

"And how?"

"By doing a much more difficult thing than this man does with his dog. The dog only obeys by a sign which, unseen by the public, its master gives it; but that which I am going to do admits of no deception; it is pure power of will. You shall see that when I say to that ass, loud enough for the whole crowd to hear, "die," it will obey me instantly, because the power of my will is irresistible."

The Geringa, and all who heard Joseph, began to laugh; but Joseph went up to the charlatan's ass, and, taking hold of it by the one ear, put his mouth close to the other, and in a voice that stunned the animal, shouted :—

"Die!"

On hearing that terrible shout, the ass fell to the ground as if struck by a thunderbolt and lay as if dead.

All the people, and Geringa more than anyone, uttered a shout of surprise.

The charlatan, hearing what had happened, and seeing his donkey immovable, began to swear, thinking Joseph had killed it.

"Don't worry yourself, my good fellow," said Joseph, "and the donkey shall quite as quickly have as much consciousness as you have, because, although with the power of my will I have, as you see, killed it, with the same power I can resuscitate it."

Joseph stood for a moment with his eye fixed on the ass, and then went up to its head, and cried: "Ho! get up, and walk about to show that you are alive!"

The ass began to move, got up, began to run about, and after distributing a few kicks, made for an adjacent grove of trees.

When Geringa returned to Soba, he did not fail to recount to everybody the prodigious power of will exercised by Joseph; and as no one was able to persuade him that the animal had been stunned by the shout of the voice in its ear, he remained fully convinced that the man's power of will had worked miracles.

As has already been stated, Joseph was the

chief of the Carlist rebels, and Geringa was the chief of the royalist villagers.

Joseph wore as uniform a little jacket with scarlet cuffs, collar, and trimming. One day he was standing in his shirt sleeves, at the door of his lodgings in Sangrielo, hoping that his landlady, who was sitting at the same door, would offer to mend certain portions of his jacket, which had begun to gape at the seams, as if entreating to be sent to the infirmary.

"You are getting rather shabby," said the landlady, "and cannot compare with the Soba townsfolk, especially with Geringa, who has had a new coat made that looks as grand as a general's."

"Indeed!" said Joseph, somewhat annoyed at these words, "you will see that I shall soon have a coat as good as Geringa's."

"Oh, that is your talk, and is nothing but words!"

"I tell you," exclaimed Joseph, in a tone of vexation, "that I will have a coat as fine as Geringa's, and that by to-morrow."

The following morning, before daybreak, Joseph and his subordinates took their way towards Soba, and concealed themselves in

some brushwood near to the roadside, in the expectation that some of the townsfolk would come forth to drive off the Carlist collectors of toll.

After a little while some few townspeople, commanded by Geringa, appeared, and were surprised by the Carlists, who took Geringa prisoner. Geringa was astounded when he beheld Joseph, who now began to see, for the first time, a chance of a new official coat.

Geringa, although surprised, was no coward. Ashamed, and repenting of the sudden fright through which he had been captured, he began to upbraid Joseph, telling him that he had been made prisoner through a cowardly trick.

"Get rid of that idea, Geringa," said Joseph with much coolness; "there was no trick whatever about it; it was brought about by my power of will, which is irresistible."

Geringa did not know what to reply to that, because he, indeed, believed that the power of Joseph's will was very great.

The first thing Joseph made him do was to get out of his smart coat, whilst he divested himself of his shabby jacket, which he proposed from that moment to relieve from ac-

tive service. Geringa obeyed reluctantly; and Joseph, beside himself with joy, began to put on the coat. By tremendous exertions he succeeded in getting it on; but it was so tight, that he was nearly stifled, and the garment began to burst at the back and shoulders, opening as if it had been made of paper. Joseph divested himself of it; and in his rage at seeing that he should not be able to fulfil his promise to his landlady, tore the coat into rags, and once more resumed his slighted jacket.

A few days later an exchange of prisoners was effected, and Geringa was one of those set at liberty.

"Be careful," said Joseph to him, "when you have another coat made, that it is made larger; because when I take you next time, if the coat is not wide enough for me, I will give you one hundred blows."

"Don't flatter yourself about that!" answered Geringa, laughing at the injunction.

The landlady, who was present, and was in the secret of the whole affair, said to him:—

"Don't treat it as a jest, Geringa; for whenever that Joseph gets an idea into his head, he always carries it out. On the very day that

he says he will capture you, he will capture you, and take the coat from you as certain as if he had done so already."

"With the power of my will I can accomplish anything," added Joseph.

And Geringa was silent, and took his way towards Soba very pensively.

"Is it not folly for a man as I am," said Geringa to himself, "to believe that another man, merely by the power of his will, should be able to gain whatever he wish for? But the truth is, that Joseph is able to do this; for it is not merely what has been told me, but what I saw in Carranza with my own eyes."

Some days passed in such reflections as these; and as he said it was necessary to have a new coat, and he did not want his arms pinched by the tailor, he charged him to make it very wide and large, so that he might be able to wear plenty of underclothing with it when the cold, which in Soba comes early and goes late, was prevalent; and one knows that winter lasts a long time there, as the snow is almost always to be seen on the tops of the neighbouring mountains.

Scarcely had Geringa worn his new coat

half a dozen times, when Joseph penetrated into the neighbourhood, attacked the folks under the command of Geringa, and made their leader prisoner.

Geringa was indignant with himself, that despite his valour, which was real, and that of his subordinates, he should have again fallen into the hands of Joseph, and should have stood as if confounded and horror-stricken at seeing him, being thoroughly convinced that the man's power of will had great influence upon him.

At a glance Joseph saw that the new coat of Geringa was more roomy than the former, and hastened to put it on, with all the more pleasure that his jacket, which he still wore, now laughed at every seam. He got into this second coat more readily than he had been able to into the first; but even this one was so tight for him that it began to crack as he put it on. On seeing this, Joseph pulled it off quickly and gave it to his lieutenant, who was not quite so stout as he, and said to Geringa: "Geringa, you have accomplished half of what I charged you to do, and so I am now going to give half of what I promised you."

Upon saying this he ordered his men to give Geringa fifty strokes with a stick, being half of the hundred he had threatened him with.

A little while after this there was a fresh exchange of prisoners, and Geringa was amongst those set free.

"Geringa," said Joseph to him, "within a short time you will again fall into my hands, because the power of my will will cause you to. If you have a third coat made, have it made so that it will fit me, because if it do not, I shall have you shot without any chance of escape. Understand me well, because it will be useless to plead ignorance. The coat will have to suit as if it had been made for me."

With a sheepish smile Geringa answered :—

"Then I had better send the tailor to take your measure."

"It would save you much trouble, because you know already that I perform what I promise, and that the power of my will is irresistible."

This was in Carranza, and Joseph's landlady, who was present, and had goodwill towards Geringa, advised him not to treat Joseph's words as a joke, as he seemed by his strong will to be in league with the Evil One.

Geringa returned to Soba more thoughtful than ever, and considering the manufacture of the third coat as an indispensable thing, as it was the chief sign of his position among the townsfolk, his vexation increased. The longer he considered the matter, the more he recognised the power of Joseph's will as irresistible, and he also came to the conclusion that he would lose his life if he fell into Joseph's hands without the third coat.

"But I will consent to be shot," he said to himself, "before I will undergo the humiliation of sending the tailor to take his measure; perhaps, however, some method of avoiding this disgrace may be found, and yet the coat may be made to fit."

Geringa discovered, in effect, the means he sought, which consisted in getting Joseph's landlady to take his measure secretly, whilst he was asleep.

For the third time Joseph made Geringa prisoner. The coat which he was wearing hung about him like a sack; and at the first glance Joseph saw, that at last he should be able to present himself to his landlady without being told that he looked shabby.

He hastened to despoil Geringa of his coat, all the more readily that his own jacket was falling to pieces, and with indescribable delight, he found upon getting on the new garment that it fitted him to perfection.

Full of joy, he embraced Geringa, and set him at liberty without any exchange or ransom; and not contented with that, his generosity extended to the extremity of giving him his own old jacket, so that he should not have to return to Soba in his shirt sleeves.



Butler & Tanner, The Selwood Printing Works, Frome, and London.











