

heaven to utter my last prayer, and murmuring "Our Father," it recurred to me that God was Pallidina's Father too, and running to the Piazza del Duomo I said my prayers there, then lay down on the flags, and for the last time a placid slumber closed my childish eyes, for on waking on the morrow I felt myself an independent and responsible being—a child no longer.

Pallidina, always an early riser, was, as

usual, the first to arrive on the Piazza, and we went together into the cathedral to say our prayers.

"Now come and take me to your aunt, for I want to speak to her," said I; and looking much surprised, but not uttering a remark, she obeyed, and in a quarter of an hour we reached the Capella del Carmine, on the other side the Arno.

"Do you see that little old woman? That



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is my Aunt Clotilde." Then, going up to her, "Aunt, here is my brother Momo, who has something to say to you."

"What is it, my boy?" kindly inquired the old woman.

"You can do me a great kindness. My father has forsaken me."

"So I heard from the little girl."

"Yesterday my bed and all I had were carried off. I am in the streets."

"Oh, what joy!" cried Pallidina; "we can have him with us."

"I come," continued I, "to ask permission to work for you, and pray you to be so kind as to let me sleep on straw in the passage at your door."

The aunt reflected.

"There is the little loft where we put all sorts of things," suggested Pallidina; "he can sleep quite well there."

"I agree with you then for a month, on trial," said Clotilde; "I shall see how you behave, and if I am satisfied you can stay on."