

"Oh, I am so glad!" cried Pallidina; "that way he is sure to stay on all his life."

After duly thanking Mother Clotilde, I said to Pallidina:

"Go and beg at the dairy-farms. I won't have you any longer with Teresa, she is a heartless creature."

"And what are you going to do?"

"I have got to speak to several people," replied I, with much importance. "I have business on hand."

"Do kiss me, then," returned she, "for I never was so happy in all my life as I am to-day."

Our joy was of short duration. The very next morning I was awake by Pallidina's cries. Her aunt had died suddenly in the night.

It is impossible to describe my despair, for my sister and I were now utterly forsaken. The evening before I had had hopes of finding some work; I had trusted to being recommended by old Clotilde, who was very respectable and well known to the priests: now I had no one to whom to refer for a character, for I knew that if Teresa were questioned she would say, "Little Giacomo, Bastiano's son, is a good-for-nothing fellow. His father is a vagabond, a *stregone*, and eloped with a young girl."

The neighbours ran off at once to the Curato to get Clotilde buried at the expense of the parish. All day long we remained crying in the room of the deceased; when evening came, Pallidina was so unhappy and so afraid of staying with the old woman who had come to lay her aunt out, that she and I spent the night out of doors in praying and crying, till, worn out, we both fell asleep side by side, with the sky for a covering and a stone for a pillow.

As I opened my eyes, Pallidina threw her arms round my neck.

"Brother," she said, "I have no one but you on earth; promise never to forsake me."

"I swear it!" was my reply.

"What are we to do?"

"I had hoped to get some work, sister; now it will be very difficult. The best plan, I think, will be to go and beg as before, with the rest."

"But now that your father is gone and my aunt is dead, they have no longer any engagement with us."

"Well, then, we must beg on our own account. We have our friends who always give to us."

"And where shall we lodge? Not at my aunt's, I should be too much frightened."

"Where we can, then, Pallidina."

"To-day," she said, after a little thought, "I shall go and speak to Signor Carlino, the

Cicerone, and then we will return to see my poor aunt."

"Where did your aunt keep her money?" inquired I with some anxiety.

"In her straw bed."

"Depend upon it the woman who laid her out will have taken it."

"Very likely, Momo, but I was too unhappy to think about that."

When we returned we could not see Clotilde; she was in her coffin, and they were just going to carry her away. Pallidina's screams were heartrending, and I was in despair. The landlord came, looked all about, but could not find a penny; consequently, he seized the poor furniture and Clotilde's clothes to pay his rent, then closed the door upon us,—and there we were in the street.

Rich people may wonder at such heartlessness, but the poor get accustomed to it, and are not so much pained by it as might be supposed. After all, those who let their rooms to beggars lose more than they gain, and unless they acted thus they, too, would be ruined, and they are so accustomed to hear wails and entreaties that they cease to heed them. Ah, one must be poor oneself to learn how hard some can be to the wretched, and how difficult it is now-a-days to excite pity.

I saw that henceforth we should have a struggle to live at all, for when we informed Teresa that Clotilde was dead, and that neither Pallidina nor I had a roof over our heads, she put it to the band whether they were to undertake our support or not. There was a discussion, and it was decided that we were both too big to interest the charitable, and that it was better to get rid of us; consequently, we were forbidden to return to the Piazza. Knowing that Teresa never reconsidered a matter, I made no attempt to move her, and merely said to Pallidina, "My dear, there is nothing for it but to go away."

"No one knows us elsewhere, and we shall die of hunger," said she, mournfully; then, after a short silence, she smiled up into my face: "How foolish I am to be uneasy! the good God is in other places besides the Piazza."

"Yes, my sister, He is everywhere."

"However," she said, "I won't go away without speaking to Signor Carlino, the Cicerone. I'll just see whether he is in the church." Having found him, the poor little thing accosted him very humbly: "You can't see it, sir, because I have no black to put on, but I am in mourning, my aunt is dead."

"What's all this, *figliola mia*?" was the reply; "I never knew that you had an aunt."

"No, sir, she never came here because