

"*Buona notte*," replied the little old white-haired lady.

At her accustomed hour of the morning, came Claudina into the little room. Feeling her way to the window, she threw open wide the jalousies. A flood of sunshine beat into the room and made all dazzling white. Claudina felt thankful for it. It was a new day. It was a wonderful day.

She turned to the bed. There was the still white head alone upon the pillow, the powerless hand just showing from beneath the coverlet still holding tightly its string of beads.

"*Buon giorno, signora*," she said, trying to make the note of some cheerfulness in her voice.

But there was no reply.

Far away out in the wonderful city, she heard the cry of a gondolier. "Ohé—"—and in through the window, there floated a butterfly of white, that had been beating its wings against the jalousies outside. Into the room it flew, dipping and dancing, swaying and lifting in the free air of the day just born.

THE END