

sometimes even settle on her back, or sit like a crown upon her head, chirruping and singing, as if in all the security of a shady wood.

"The sight of a sleek and beautiful cat seated calmly in the midst of a cage of birds was so new and unexpected that when Francesco brought them to the fair of Lussari he was surrounded instantly by a crowd of wondering spectators. Their astonishment hardly knew any bounds when they heard him call each feathered favorite by its name, and saw it fly toward him with delight, till all were perched on his head, his arms and his fingers.

"Delighted with his ingenuity, the spectators rewarded him liberally, and Francesco returned in the evening with his little heart swelling with joy, and gave his mother a sum of money large enough to support her for many months.

"This ingenious boy next trained some young partridges, one of which became strongly attached to him. This bird, which he called *Rosoletta*, once brought back to him a beautiful goldfinch that had escaped from its cage and was lost in a neighboring garden. Francesco was in despair at the loss, because it was a good performer, and he had promised him to the daughter of a lady from whom he had received much kindness. On the sixth morning after the goldfinch had escaped, *Rosoletta*, the tame and intelligent partridge, was seen chasing the truant bird before her along the top of the linden trees toward home. *Rosoletta* led the way by little and little before him, and at length getting him home, seated him in apparent disgrace in a corner of the aviary, whilst she flew from side to side, in triumph at her success."

"Oh, isn't that all wonderful!" exclaimed Harry. "I wish I could have seen that cat with all the birds sitting around her or perched on her head. But isn't there more of the story? It is so interesting."

"A little more," answered Uncle Rea, with a slight shade in his voice. "Francesco died very suddenly."

"Oh dear! How did that happen, uncle?"

"He was gathering a species of mushroom common in Italy, and not being careful, picked and ate some that were poisonous, and died in a few days in spite of every remedy that could be given."

"Poor Francesco!" sighed Harry. "And what became of his birds?"

"During the three days of his illness," said Uncle Rea, "the birds flew constantly round and round his bed, some lying sadly upon his pillow, others flitting backward and forward above his head, a few uttering brief but plaintive cries, and all taking scarcely any food.

"His death showed, in a wonderful manner, what love may be excited in animals by gentle treatment. Francesco's birds

were all sensible of the loss of a benefactor, but none of his feathered favorites showed such real grief as *Rosoletta*. When poor Francesco was placed in his coffin, she flew round and round it, and at last perched upon the lid. In vain they several times removed her; she still returned, and even persisted in going with the funeral procession to the place of graves. During his burial she sat upon a cypress tree to watch where they laid the remains of her friend; and when the crowd left, she forsook the spot no more, except to return to the cottage of his mother for food. While she lived she came daily to perch and to sleep upon the turret of a chapel which looked upon his grave; and here she lived, and here she died about four months after the death of her beloved master."—*Children's Hour*.

"SHINE YOUR BOOTS, SIR?"

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

The voice was childish, and sweet-toned, but a little unsteady. The man glanced down under the brim of an old felt hat that had once been white, and a pair of soft, large eyes looked up into his.

"Shine your boots, sir?"

The man shook his head, as he uttered a brief "No," and passed on.

But the tender face and soft, asking eyes haunted him. After walking on for half a block, trying to forget the face and eyes of the boy, he stopped, turned round, and went back, he hardly knew why.

"Shine your boots, sir?" It was the same innocent voice, but a little firmer in tone. He looked down at the bare feet and worn old clothes, and a feeling of pity touched his heart.

"Not this morning, my lad," answered the man, "but here's the price of a shine;" and reached him ten cents.

"Haven't come to that yet." And the lad drew himself up a little proudly. "I'm not a beggar, but a bootblack. Just let me shine 'em, sir. Won't keep you a minute."

There was no resisting this appeal. So the man placed his boot on the boy's foot-rest, and in a little while the surface was like polished ebony.

"Thank you!" said the little fellow, as, on finishing the second boot, he received his fee.

The man walked away, holding in his mind, very distinctly, an image of the boy that did not fade.

On the next morning, while on his way to business, he was greeted by the same lad with,—