

And Neoncapos, the king's jester, bowed himself unto the earth, and said, He hath, my lord.

Then was Pharaoh, the king, filled with amazement, and said, Tell me what he hath said unto thee.

And Neoncapos raised himself before the king, and answered him, and said :

As I went out upon the errand whereunto thou hadst sent me forth, I remembered thy commandment to obey it. And I spake only unto the bird which thou gavest me, and said unto him :

There was a certain great king which held a people in bondage, and set over them taskmasters, and required of them all the bricks that they could make, man for man, and day by day ;

For the king was in great haste seeking to build a palace which should be greater and nobler than any in the world, and should remain to himself and his children a testimony of his glory forever.

And it came to pass, at length, that the king gave commandment that no more straw should be given unto them that made the bricks, but that they should still deliver the tale which had been aforetime required of them.

And thereupon the king's jester laughed.

Because he said to himself, If the laborers have not straw wherewith to attemper the clay, but only stubble and chaff gathered from the fields, will not the bricks be ill-made and lack strength and symmetry of form, so that the wall made thereof will not be true and strong, or fitly joined together?