The Gold

Once upon a time there was a king who, having found some gold mines in his kingdom, employed most of his vassals to extract the gold from those mines; and the result was that the lands were left uncultivated, and that there was a great famine in the country.

But the queen, who was prudent and who loved the people, had secretly made chickens, pigeons, hens and other delicacies all of fine gold; and when the king wanted to dine she had those golden delicacies served to him, with which he was quite pleased, because at first he did not understand what the queen meant; but, seeing that they brought him nothing more to eat, he began to get angry. The queen then asked him to see clearly that gold was not food, and that it would be better to employ his vassals in cultivating the land, which never tires of producing, than to bring them to the mines in search of gold, which satisfies neither hunger nor thirst, and which has no value beyond the esteem men give it, an esteem that would turn to contempt as soon as gold appeared in abundance.

The queen had good sense.