

Our Little Austrian, Hungarian, and Romanian Cousins

VOLUME TWENTY-TWO

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Volume 22

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Libraries of Hope

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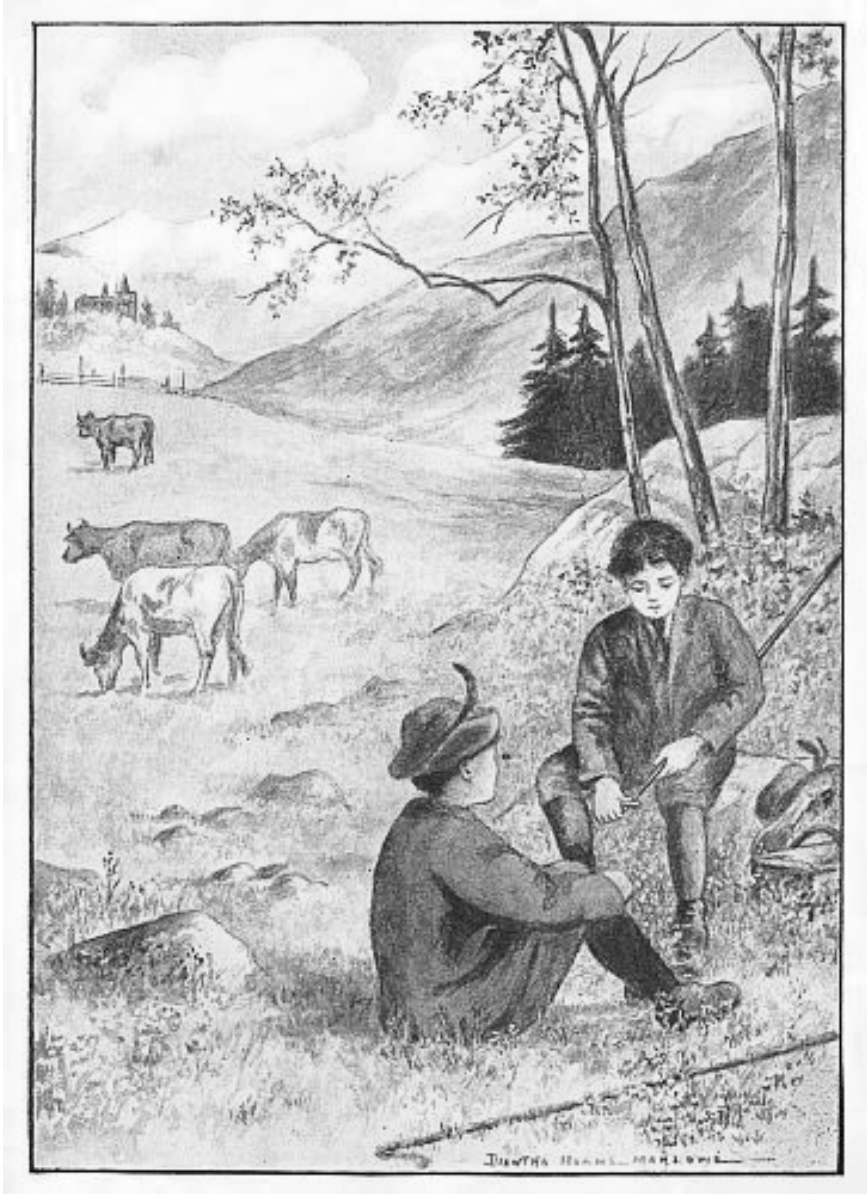
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Our Little Austrian Cousin

Florence E. Mendel
Illustrated by Diantha Horne Marlowe



"Ferdinand and Leopold . . .
would help with the cattle"

Preface

In this volume I have endeavored to give my young readers a clearer and a more intimate knowledge than is usually possessed of the vast territory known as the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which is a collection of provinces united under one ruler, and which is, strange to say, the only country of importance in the world that has not a distinctive language of its own, since the various races—German, Slav, Magyar and others—each speak their own tongue.

The northeastern provinces, Galicia and Bukowina, have not been considered in this book, owing to the fact that they are included in Our Little Polish Cousin; and, for a similar reason, Hungary and Bohemia have been omitted, as each is the subject of an earlier volume in The Little Cousin Series. The book consequently is chiefly devoted to Austria proper and Tyrol, but the other provinces,

including Dalmatia and Bosnia, are not neglected.

The publication of *Our Little Austrian Cousin* is most timely, since the Balkan War, now drawing to a close, has occupied the attention of the world. The Balkan States lie just to the south of the Austrian Empire, and Austria has taken a leading part in defining the terms of peace which the Great Powers of Europe insist shall be granted by the Balkan allies to the defeated Turks.

Our Little Austrian Cousin can well be read in connection with *Our Little Bulgarian Cousin* and *Our Little Serbian Cousin*, describing two of the principal Balkan States, which volumes have just been added to The Little Cousin Series.

Among others, I am especially indebted to Fr. H. E. Palmer, for much information concerning country customs in Upper Austria.

CHAPTER I
A Visit to Old Vienna

"Hurrah!" shouted Ferdinand, as he burst into the living room, just as his mother was having afternoon coffee.

"And what makes my son so joyful?" asked Frau Müller, as she looked up at the rosy cheeks of her young son.

"Hurrah, mother! Don't you know? This is the end of school."

"So it is," replied the mother. "But I had other things in my head."

"And, do you know," the child continued, as he drew up to the table where the hot coffee emitted refreshing odors, "you haven't told me yet where we are to go."

"No, Ferdinand, we've wanted to surprise you. But help yourself to the cakes," and the mother placed a heaping dish of fancy kuchen before the lad.

Ferdinand did not require a second invitation; like all

normal boys, he was always hungry; but I doubt very much if he knew what real American-boy-hunger was, because the Austrian eats more frequently than we, having at least five meals a day, three of which are composed of coffee and delicious cakes, so that one seldom has time to become ravenous.

"But, mother," persisted the child, his mouth half filled with kuchen, "I wish I knew. Tell me when we start; will you tell me that?"

"Yes," answered his mother, smiling. "Today is Wednesday; Saturday morning we shall leave."

"Oh, I just can't wait! I wish I knew."

"Perhaps father will tell you when he comes," suggested the mother. "Do you think you could possibly wait that long?"

"I don't believe I can," answered the lad, frankly; "but I suppose I shall have to."

That evening, when Herr Müller returned from his shop, Ferdinand plied him with questions in an effort to win from him, if possible, the long-withheld secret.

"Well, son, there's no use trying to keep you in the dark

any longer. Where do you guess we are going?"

"To see Cousin Leopold in Tyrol."

"Well, that's a very good guess, and not all wrong, either; but guess again."

"Oh, I can't. It must be splendid, if it's better than visiting Cousin Leopold."

"Well, it is better," continued Herr Müller; "for not only are we going to pass a few days with your Tyrolese relations, but we are going to a farm."

The boy's face fell visibly.

"To a farm!" he exclaimed. "Why, Uncle Hofer has a splendid farm in Tyrol; that won't be very new to me, then."

"It won't!" ejaculated his father, a trifle amused. "You wait and see, my boy. This is not to be a tiny farm of a few acres, creeping up the mountain on one side and jumping off into a ravine on the other. We sha'n't have to tie this farm to boulders to keep it from slipping away from us." And Herr Müller chuckled.

"Then it isn't in the mountains?"

"No, it isn't in the mountains; that is, not in any mountains that are like the Tyrolese mountains. But there will be

acres and acres of this farm, and you will be miles away from anyone. You will see corn growing, too; you've never seen that in Tyrol, my son."

"No," answered the child. After a few moments' silence, he added: "Will there be any young folks, father?"

"Don't let that trouble you, Ferdinand; where there's an Austrian farm there are many children."

"Hurrah for the farm, then!" shouted Ferdinand, much to the astonishment and amusement of his parents, who were unused to such impulsive outbursts. But Ferdinand Müller was a typical boy, even though he had been reared in the heart of the city of Vienna, where the apartment houses stand shoulder to shoulder, and back to back, with no room for play-yards or gardens, even; the outside windows serving the latter duty, while the school building on weekdays, and the public parks on holidays, serve the former. Austrian children are never allowed to play on the street; but, as if to make up to their children for the loss of play-space, the Austrian parents take them, upon every available occasion, to the splendid parks where are provided all sorts of amusements and refreshments at a modest

sum.

"Father," asked the lad, after a few moments' silence, during which he had sat thinking quietly, "when shall we start?"

"Saturday morning, my son. I believe your mother has everything in readiness, *nicht war, meine liebe Frau?*" he asked, as he glanced over his paper at his wife.

"Oh, mother, do say you are ready," pleaded the child, who, for all his twelve years, and his finely developed body, was yet a boy, and impulsive.

"Yes, I'm all ready," she replied.

And, for the rest of the evening, silence descended upon the boy, his small brain being filled with visions of the coming pleasure.

When Herr Müller returned to his home the following evening, he found a letter, postmarked "Linz," awaiting him.

"Hello," he said, half aloud, "here's word from our friend Herr Runkel. Wonder if there's anything happened to upset our plans?"

"Oh, father, please don't say it," pleaded the boy; "I shall

be so disappointed."

"Well, cheer up," replied his father, "there's better news than you thought for. We shall leave on Saturday morning as planned; but tomorrow Herr Runkel's sister from the convent will come to us. He asks us to take charge of her, as the Sisters find it very inconvenient this year to send an escort with her; and, as we are coming up in a day or two, perhaps we would not mind the extra trouble."

"Oh, father, won't it be fine! How old is she?"

"I believe about your age."

Friday morning Frau Müller and Ferdinand jumped into a fiaker and drove to the railroad station to meet Teresa Runkel. She was a fine-looking child, with round, rosy cheeks; quite tall, with the fair complexion, sunny hair, and soft, Austrian blue eyes that makes the women of that land famed for their beauty. She was overjoyed at this unexpected pleasure of spending a day or two in the city of Vienna, which she had never seen, although she had passed through several times on her way to and from the convent. She enjoyed the brisk drive to the tall apartment house in the Schwanengasse, and she fairly bubbled with chatter.

"After luncheon, my dear," observed Frau Müller, "we shall have Herr Müller take you about our city; for Vienna is vastly different from Linz."

Herr Müller joined the party at luncheon at eleven o'clock, which was really the breakfast hour, because Austrian families take only coffee and cakes or rolls in the early morning, eating their hearty breakfast toward the middle of the day, after which they rest for an hour or two, before beginning their afternoon duties.

At two o'clock the three were ready for the walk, for Frau Müller was not to accompany them. Joseph, the portier, an important personage in Viennese life, nodded "A-b-e-n-d" to them, as they passed out the front door of the building, over which he presided as a sort of turnkey. No one may pass in or out without encountering the wary eye of Joseph, who must answer to the police for the inmates of the building, as also for the visitors. And this is a curious custom, not only in Vienna, but other European cities, that immediately upon one's arrival at an hotel, or even a private home, the police are notified, unawares to the visitor, of his movements and his object in being in the city,

which reduces chances of crime to a minimum; burglary being almost unknown, picking pockets on the open streets taking its place in most part.

"Of course you know, children," said Herr Müller, as they passed along the broad Kärtnerstrasse, where are the finest shops of Vienna, "you've been taught in school the history of our city, so I need not tell you that."

"Oh, but please do, father," said Ferdinand. "Teresa may not know it as well as I do," he hesitated, for he noticed the hurt look in the girl's eyes, and added—"although she may know a lot more about other things."

"Well," began the father, "away back in the times before Christ, a body of rough men came from the northern part of France and the surrounding countries. They were called Celts. They were constantly roving; and so it chanced they came to this very spot where we now are, and founded a village which they called Vindobona. But about fourteen years after Christ, the Romans worked their way northward; they saw the village of the Celts and captured it. They built a great wall about it, placed a moat outside of these fortifications and settled down to retain their conquest.

They built a forum, which was a public square where all the business of the city was transacted; and, on one side, they placed their camp or praetorium. Today, we call the Roman forum the Hohermarkt, just here where we stand now," continued Herr Müller, "and here, where the Greek banker Sina has built this fine palace, stood the Roman praetorium; while here, you see the street is named for Marcus Aurelius, the Roman emperor who was born in Spain and died in this city so many hundreds of years ago."

"I've heard that ever so many times, father," said Ferdinand, "but I never realized it before; somehow it seems as if I could almost see the Celts driven out and the great wall and moat of the Romans."

Meanwhile they had walked on, down the Bauermarkt and reached the St. Stephanienplatz, with St. Stephan's Church in the middle.

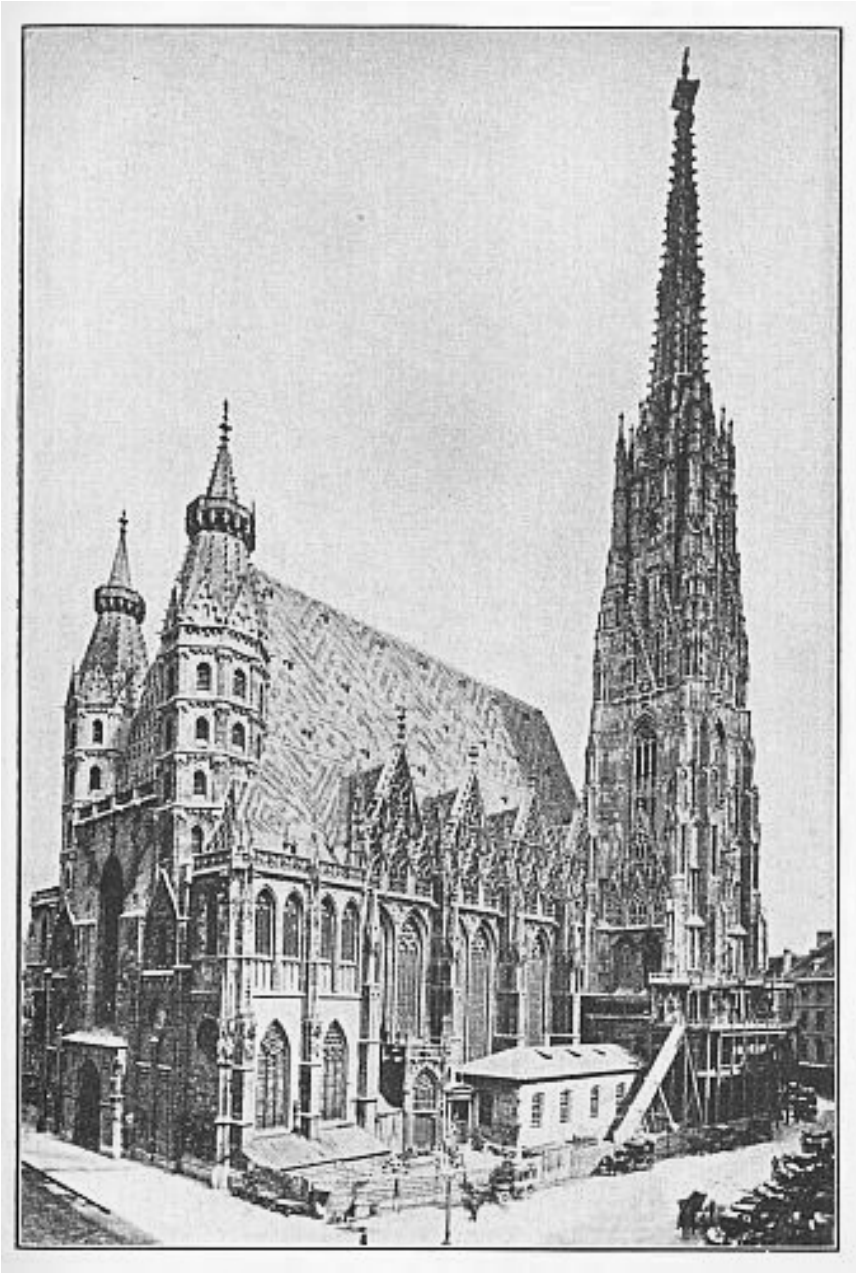
"There," said Herr Müller, pointing to the beautiful edifice, "is the oldest monument we have in Vienna, begun in 1144. Duke Heinrich Jasomirgott founded it."

"Oh, he was our first duke," spoke up Teresa, who also wished to prove that she knew her Austrian history as well

as her friend.

"Yes, Teresa," answered Herr Müller. "But it's a long jump from the Romans to Duke Heinrich. Several hundred years after the expulsion of the Celts from Vindobona, Charlemagne, the undaunted conqueror of the age, absorbed it into the German Empire; he distinguished it from the rest of the German Empire by giving it the name of the Eastmark or border of the empire (Oesterreich), hence Austria.

He placed a lord or margrave over it; and when Conrad III of Germany became emperor, he appointed Heinrich Jasomirgott ruler over the Eastmark, giving him, at the same time, the adjoining territory of Bavaria. But he had no right to dispose of these Bavarian lands as he chose, just because he was angry with the Bavarians; and when his son, Frederick Redbeard (Barbarossa) came to the throne, he gave it back to the Bavarians. But Frederick Redbeard was a politic ruler; he did not wish to offend any of his subjects; in order to make up to Henry Jasomirgott for the loss of Bavaria, he raised him to the rank of duke, and thus Oesterreich or the Eastmark became a duchy. This was



St. Stephan's Church

about 1100; then, being such an important personage, Duke Heinrich determined to make his home in Vienna. He built himself a strong castle, surrounded it with a high stone wall and a moat, as was the custom at that time, and included within it the confines of the city, so that he and his people might not be molested by neighboring princes.

"Here," continued Herr Müller, as they passed to the end of the Platz, "is the Graben. Today it is our most fashionable shopping district; but in the time of Duke Heinrich it was a moat filled with water; and here, where these rows of modern houses stand, were the ancient walls which protected the city."

"Isn't it great!" cried Teresa, who, girl though she was, could appreciate the ancient struggles of her ancestors for liberty and defence.

"Oh, father, there is Der Stock im Eisen!" said Ferdinand. "Tell Teresa about that, please; she doesn't know."

"Der Stock im Eisen?" repeated Teresa. "What is it?"

"That old tree with the iron hoop around it, at the corner of the Graben," replied her companion.

"We will reserve that tale for the evening," answered

Herr Müller; "it is getting toward coffee hour, and we want to visit many places yet."

As he spoke, they walked slowly along the Graben, which means Moat in German, and, at the end of several minutes, they reached a large open square called Platz am Hof.

"Here is what remains of the palace of the House of Babenberg, which Duke Heinrich built," said Herr Müller; "and here before it you see the Tiefe-graben, or deep moat, which amply protected the stronghold from attack. And there," he continued, moving as he spoke toward the building, "stands the Schottenhof."

"The Schottenhof?" exclaimed Teresa, astonished. "Why is it called a Scottish palace in Austria?"

"Because it was originally built and occupied by some monks from Scotland in the year 1158, whom Duke Heinrich had asked to come and instruct the citizens, not only in religion, but in the educational arts, there being no schools in those days; all the teaching was done by the Holy Fathers. But later on, the Scottish monks were dispossessed by a German order of monks; yet the Hof still bears the

name of its founders. And even today the Church owns all this most valuable property, right in the very heart of our city, which was given to them so many years ago."

"That's the first time I thought about the Hof being Scottish," admitted Ferdinand, between whom and Teresa there was much rivalry and jealousy as to the amount of knowledge possessed by each; but the lad was generous enough to admit his ignorance, because he did not wish to assume too superior airs before his guest.

"Here runs the tiny lane, the Schotten-gasse, which separates the Schottenhof from the smaller Molkerhof just across the land; and here are the ancient bastions which protected them; today, you notice, these same names are retained; the bastions are no longer required, but history preserves their memory in preserving their names, the Schotten-bastei and the Molker-bastei, now streets of the city of Vienna instead of bastions. But we have had quite enough of history," continued Herr Müller, "I am quite certain our little convent friend is tired."

"Oh, no indeed," spoke up Teresa. "At the convent we take long walks every day; and in the country at Linz, we

do much walking, too; it does not tire me at all."

"But walking about city streets is quite different from country lanes, my girl," observed Herr Müller.

"Yes, but we do not have the interesting places to visit, nor the tales to hear, in the lanes," wisely answered the child.

"Well, then, if you are quite certain you are not too tired, we will walk home. We will go by the way of the Ring, here behind the Schottenhof; and we will walk over the old walls, which were erected in later years as the original city of Duke Heinrich grew. Of course, we have no use for these fortifications in these days, so we have changed them into a magnificent boulevard."

No one, not knowing the original use of the Ring, would ever have suspected the mission it had fulfilled; so broad and handsome was the avenue encircling what is called the Inner-Stadt (Inner City), planted with magnificent trees, and bubbling over with life, color and gayety.

Teresa would like to have stopped at every fine building and park, but Herr Müller promised to ask her brother to allow her a few days with them in Vienna before returning

to the convent in the fall, that she might see all there was not time now to show her. For the present must suffice a cursory glance at the Burghof or imperial residence, the royal theatre, the Hofgarten and the Volksgarten, gay with the scarlet skirts and gold cloth caps of hundreds of nursemaids watching over their youthful cares.

"Wouldn't it be splendid to be an emperor," remarked Teresa to her companion, "and live in such a fine palace?"

"Oh, that isn't much of a palace," remarked Ferdinand, somewhat contemptuously, "that's just like a prison to me; you ought to see Schönbrunn, the summer home of the Emperor."

"Oh, I've been to Schönbrunn," returned the girl with disdain in her voice. "The Sisters took us all there once; they showed us the room where the Duke of Reichstadt died, and where his father, Napoleon, lived when he took Vienna."

"Well, I'll bet you haven't seen the celebration on Maundy Thursday, when the Emperor sends his twenty-four gorgeous gala coaches with their magnificent horses and mounted escorts in uniform to bring the four and

twenty poor men and women to his palace, that he might humble himself to wash their feet?"

"No, I haven't seen that," admitted Teresa. "Tell me about it. Have you seen it?"

"I've heard father tell about it a number of times," continued the lad. "The Emperor sends his wonderful holiday coaches with the escorts in gorgeous uniforms; they bring the poor men and women to the palace and set a splendid banquet before them; then they go to the royal chapel and hear Mass, at which the Emperor and the royal family, and the entire Court are present; after that, the poor folks are led to the banquet hall and here they are served from silver platters which the Emperor and his royal family present to them. After that, the Emperor kneels before them and wipes their feet with a wet cloth."

"He does that himself?" asked Teresa, who had listened spellbound, that her beloved emperor should conduct such a ceremony.

"Indeed he does! And, furthermore," added the boy, with ineffable pride, "he is the only monarch, so father tells me, who preserves the ancient custom. But that isn't all;

the Emperor sends these astonished poor people home again in the gorgeous coaches; he gives them each a purse in which is about fifteen dollars; he sends a great basket filled with the remains of the banquet which they have left untouched, together with a bottle of wine and a fine bouquet of flowers;—and, what do you think, Teresa?"

"I'm sure I couldn't guess," admitted the child.

"He gives them the silver platters from which he served them."

"What a splendid emperor!" cried Teresa. Then she added, "I've seen the Emperor."

"Oh, that's nothing," most ungallantly replied the boy. "Franz-Joseph walks about our streets like Haroun-al-Raschid used to in the Arabian Nights. Anyone can see the Emperor; he allows even the poorest to come and see him in his palace every week; and he talks to them just as if he was a plain, ordinary man and not an emperor at all."

"Well, I've had him speak to me," answered Teresa. "At the convent he praised my work."

There was a dead silence. Herr Müller walked along, not a muscle in his face betraying the fact that he had over-



Emperor Franz-Joseph

heard this juvenile conversation, for fear of interrupting a most entertaining dialogue.

"Has he ever spoken directly to you?" demanded the girl, seeing that Ferdinand did not reply.

"No."

Again a dead silence.

"The Emperor needs our love and sympathy," said Herr Müller, after waiting in vain for the children to renew their talk; "his beloved empress Elizabeth has been taken from him by an assassin's hand; his favorite brother Maximilian went to his doom in the City of Mexico, the victim of the ambition of a Napoleon; even his heir, the crown-prince is dead; and when our beloved king shall be no more, the very name of Habsburg will have passed away."

"He is a very kind man," replied Teresa. "He comes often to the convent; and he makes us feel that he is not an emperor but one of us."

Herr Müller touched his hat in respect. "Long live our beloved emperor, our most sympathetic friend," he said.

By this time they had gained the entrance of their home; Joseph opened the public door to admit them to the

corridor, and they ascended to the third floor to the apartment of Herr Müller.

CHAPTER II

Der Stock im Eisen

That evening, after a hearty dinner, the children called for the story of Der Stock im Eisen. And so Herr Müller began: "Many hundreds of years ago, in the old square known as the Horsemarket, lived Vienna's most skilful master-locksmith, Herr Erhanrd Marbacher. Next door to him, stood a baker shop owned by the Widow Mux. The widow and Herr Marbacher were good neighbors, and were fond of chatting together outside the doors of their homes, as the evening came on; Herr Marbacher smoking his long, quaintly painted pipe, and the Widow Mux relating the sprightly anecdotes of the day.

"But, one evening, Herr Marbacher found the widow in great distress; as she usually wore a merry smile upon her jolly face this change in temperament greatly affected the spirits of the locksmith, and he demanded the cause of her

unhappiness. With tears in her eyes, the widow confided to her neighbor the dreadful fact that her younger son, Martin, a worthless, idle fellow, had refused to do any work about the shop, and had even used harsh words.

"'Sometimes it happens,' suggested the master-locksmith, 'that a lad does not take to his forced employment; it may be that Martin is not cut out for a baker; let me have a hand with him; perhaps he will make a first-rate locksmith.'

"'A locksmith!' exclaimed the widow in astonishment. 'How can he become a locksmith, with its attendant hard work, when he will not even run errands for the baker shop! No, Herr Marbacher, you are very kind to suggest it, and try to help me out of my trouble, but Martin would never consent to become a locksmith's apprentice. He is downright lazy.'

"'Well, you might let me have a trial with him,' said the locksmith; 'I am loved by all my workmen, yet they fear me, too; they do good work under my direction, and I am proud of my apprentices. Martin, I am certain, would also obey me.'

"'Well, have your way, good neighbor,' replied the widow, 'I can only hope for the best.'

"Evidently Herr Marbacher knew human nature better than the widow, for Martin was delighted with the prospect of becoming an apprentice-locksmith, with the hope of earning the degree of master-locksmith, like Herr Marbacher, and he worked hard and long to please his master. His mother was overjoyed at the change in the lad, and Herr Marbacher himself was very well pleased.

"Now, it chanced that some little time after Martin's apprenticeship, Herr Marbacher handed him a tin pail and directed him to a certain spot on the edge of the forest, without the city walls, where he should gather clay with which to mould a certain form, for which he had had an order. As the commission was a particular one, and somewhat out of the ordinary, it required a peculiar sort of clay which was only to be found in this particular spot.

"With light heart, and whistling a merry tune, Martin, swinging his tin pail, set out upon his errand. The day was perfect; spring was just beginning; the trees were clothed in their fresh greenness, light clouds flitted across a

marvelously blue sky, the birds twittered noisily in the treetops and Martin caught the spring fever; he fairly bounded over the green fields, and reached the forest in a wonderfully short time.

"Having filled his pail, he started homewards. But, instead of keeping to the path by which he had come, he crossed through the meadows, his heart as light as ever. Suddenly he espied through the trees figures of men or boys; then voices came to his ears; he stopped and listened. Boy-like, he was unable to resist the temptation—the lure of the spring—so he changed his course and made toward the bowlers, his old-time cronies, who were engaged in their old-time sport. Slower moved his feet—his conscience prompted him in vain—he forgot the admonition of his master not to loiter on the way, for fear the city gates would be shut at the ringing of the curfew; he forgot all about the time of day, and that it was now well on toward evening. The fever of the spring had gotten into his veins; Martin paused, set down his bucket of clay, and, picking up a bowl, joined in the sport of his comrades.

"Suddenly the curfew bell reached his ears; he recalled

his errand, the warning of his master, and his heart stopped still in fright. He dropped the bowl in his hands, grasped his bucket of clay, and ran with beating heart toward the city gate, but he was too late; the gate was closed and the gatekeeper either would not or could not hear his call.

"Fear now seized Martin, in very truth. The woods about the city were infested with robbers and dangerous men; there was no way in which to protect himself; yet he had nothing about him which anyone would care to have, and that thought gave him some comfort. As he was planning how he might get within the walls, a tall man dressed in scarlet feathered cap and a long black velvet cloak upon his shoulders, stood before him.

"'Cheer up, my lad,' said the stranger. 'What is the use of crying?'

"'But I am locked out for the night,' replied Martin.

"'That is nothing to fret about,' answered the tall man. 'Here is some gold. Take it, it will open the gate for you.'

"'Oh, thank you,' said Martin, overjoyed. Then he hesitated. 'But I shall never be able to repay you,' he added. 'I have never seen so much gold.'



"'Cheer up, my lad,' said the stranger"

"'Oh, do not fret yourself about repaying me,' answered the stranger. 'I have plenty of gold, and do not need the little I have given you. Still, if you are really anxious to repay me, you might give me your soul when you have finished with it.'

"'My soul?' cried the boy aghast. 'I can't give it to you. One cannot sell his soul?'

"'Oh, yes,' replied the malicious stranger, smiling grimly, 'many people do sell their souls; but you need not give it me until you are dead.'

"'Much good would it do you then,' replied Martin; 'I cannot see what you would want with it after I am dead?'

"'That is the bargain,' retorted the tall man. And he made as if to move away and leave Martin to his fate.

"'Oh, very well,' said Martin, fearing to throw away this chance for deliverance. 'I will take your gold, and you may have my soul when I have finished with it; the bargain is made.'

"'And I shall be lenient with you,' continued the stranger. 'I will give you a chance to redeem your soul.'

"'You will?' exclaimed Martin in delight. 'And how?'

"'Only this, if you forget to attend divine service even once, during all the rest of your days, then shall I claim my bargain. Now, am I not fair?'

"Martin was very glad to be released, even with this proviso, and laughed as he moved away, for Martin had been brought up religiously by a pious mother, and he knew he should not forget his Sabbath duty.

"As the stranger had said, the gold gained entrance for Martin Mux through the closed city gate, and he straightway made his way to his room and to bed before his master should discover his absence.

"Some days later, as the apprentices were hard at work in the shop under the scrutinizing eye of Herr Marbacher, a tall man in a black velvet cloak and a red plumed cap, stood in the doorway. Martin recognized his erstwhile friend and feared he knew not what. But the stranger had come to order an iron hoop with padlock so intricate that it could not be unlocked.

"Herr Marbacher hesitated; the order was certainly unusual, and even he, the master-locksmith of Vienna, was uncertain whether he could accomplish such a commission.

But, seeing Marbacher's hesitation, the stranger cast his glance about the shop full of young apprentices, and fixing his regard upon Martin, he said, in a loud voice:

"'Among all these workmen, is there not one who can make the lock?'

"Whether impelled by fear, or feeling that having assisted him once, the devil would assist him yet a second time, Martin spoke out, 'I will do it.'

"All eyes turned toward the young apprentice.

"'You?' cried Marbacher, and he laughed very loud and very long, so excellent did he consider the joke. 'You? You are my very youngest apprentice.'

"'Let him try,' suggested the stranger warily, fearing the master would deny Martin the privilege. 'Who knows what he may be able to accomplish?'

"And so it was agreed.

"Martin worked all that day until the evening shadows compelled him to quit his work. He racked his brain; he thought and thought; yet no lock could he imagine which could not be unlocked. He carried his paper and pencil to his room with him, thinking that in the stillness of the night

he might think of some design. But, although he worked conscientiously, no ideas came to him, and he fell asleep. With visions of locks and bolts and bars in his head, it was no wonder that Martin dreamed of robbers' castles and dungeons and locks and bolts. He dreamed about a mighty robber in a fortress-castle; he was a prisoner there, he, Martin; but what his crime he did not know. He rushed toward the door to make his escape; it was locked; he tried to undo it, but in vain; then he looked about him, and the room seemed filled with padlocks, some small, some large, some handsomely wrought, some very simple; but among them he found one that looked like a huge spider. It interested him so much that he took out his pencil and mechanically reproduced it; then he felt himself sinking, sinking, down, down. With a start he awoke, he had tossed himself out of bed and lay sprawling upon the floor of his room. Rather piqued, Martin picked himself up and jumped into bed. But there upon his pillow lay a drawing. He examined it by the feeble rays of the candle, which was still burning; it was the design of the spider lock he had seen in the robber's castle in his dream.

"Impatient for the morning, Martin was at his bench early working upon the design of the lock; and when the end of the sixth day arrived, the time appointed by the stranger for the delivery of the work, Martin had the lock completed. Evidently it proved entirely satisfactory to the stranger, for he paid Marbacher the money agreed upon, and left the shop.

"At the corner of the square he stopped before the larch-tree, bound the iron hoop about the tree, locked it, put the key in his pocket and disappeared.

"Time passed. Martin, for some inexplicable reason, had left Vienna and gone to the city of Nuremburg where he continued in his profession. But, one day, he heard that the Burgomaster of Vienna had offered the title of master-locksmith to the one who would make a key which would unlock the iron hoop about the larch-tree. It was a small task for Martin to make a duplicate of the key he had once made, and with it in his pocket he travelled to Vienna and presented it to the Burgomaster.

"It was a great holiday when the hoop was to be unbound. Dressed in robes of state, glistening all over with

gold thread and medals, the Burgomaster and the City Fathers gathered in the Horsemarket, where stood the Stock im Eisen; the lock was unfastened and Martin was created a master-locksmith, much to the joy of his mother and to the overwhelming pride of his former master, Herr Marbacher.

"But, although Martin Mux had now acquired fortune and fame, he was far from being happy. His bargain with the devil haunted him; day and night it was with him, for he feared Sunday morning might come and he would forget to attend Mass. And then he would be irretrievably lost. What would he not give to be able to recall his bargain. He enjoyed no peace of mind; at his bench he thought ever of the dreaded day when he must pay; he could no longer work; he must not think; he joined his old-time idle companions; hour after hour was spent in gambling; night after night he frittered his wealth away; the more he lost the more desperate he became; poor Martin Mux was paying dearly for his game of bowls and his disobedience to his master.

"One Saturday evening Martin joined his comrades

quite early, but luck had deserted him; he lost and lost. One by one the other habitués of the place had gone until there was no one left but Martin and his few friends at the table with him. He paid no heed to time; all he thought of was to regain some of his lost money. Suddenly, as had happened some years before, out on the bowling green, Martin heard the deep tones of a bell. But this was not the curfew; it was the church bell calling to Mass.

"Martin looked up from his cards and saw the sun shining brightly through the curtained windows. His heart stood still with fright, for his bargain flashed through his mind; he threw down the cards and fled into the street, like a mad man.

"On and on he ran. He brushed past a tall man, but heeding him not, Martin rushed on.

"'Hurry, my friend,' called out the stranger, whom he had jostled. 'Hurry, the church bell has rung; the bargain is paid.'

"A malicious laugh rang in Martin's ear. He turned and saw the evil-eyed stranger, him of the black velvet cloak and red-plumed cap.

"Mad with fear, Martin bounded up the church steps. He entered the house of worship; but the stranger had said truly it was too late; the bargain was due for the service was ending. Martin Mux turned to leave the church, but at the threshold he fell dead; the stranger had claimed his soul.

"Since that time it has been the custom for every locksmith apprentice, whether he comes into Vienna to seek his fortunes, or whether he goes out from Vienna to other parts, to drive a nail into the stump of the larch-tree and offer up a prayer for the peace of Martin Mux's soul. That is why the old tree is so studded with nails."

"What a dreadful bargain for Martin to make!" said Teresa fearfully. "How could he have given his soul away?"

"He chose the easier way out of a small difficulty, and he paid dearly for it," replied Herr Müller. "It is not always the easiest way which is the wisest, after all."

CHAPTER III

The Farm in Upper Austria

The following morning the Müller family and Teresa Runkel boarded the boat in the Canal which should take them up current to Linz. It was most exciting for Ferdinand, who had never been on the Danube before, but to Teresa it was quite usual, for she always made the journey to and from her home by way of the river.

There was a great deal of excitement upon the quay—the fish boats had come in with their supply for the day, and fishermen were shouting themselves hoarse in their endeavors to over-shout their competitors.

The children seated themselves in the bow of the boat that they might miss nothing of the scenery which is so delightful near Vienna, with its green banks, its thick forests and its distant mountains.

"Do you know what that grim castle is, over there on

the left?" asked Herr Müller.

"Oh, yes," replied Teresa quickly. "That is the Castle of Griefenstein."

"Then you know its history?" asked Herr Müller.

"Yes, indeed," answered the child. "Sometimes the Sister who takes me home tells me, and sometimes father; but doesn't Ferdinand know it?"

"No," answered the boy. "I haven't been on the river before." As if it required some explanation for his seeming ignorance.

"Then tell it to him, please," said Teresa, "for it is a splendid tale."

"Long ages ago, this castle belonged to a lord who was, like all noblemen of that time, very fond of adventure. Whenever the least opportunity offered to follow his king, he would take up his sword and his shield and his coat-of-mail, and hie him off to the wars.

"Now, the lord of the castle had a young and beautiful wife whose wonderful golden locks were a never-ending delight to him. Having a great deal of time upon her hands, and neighbors being few and far between, the lady of the

castle passed her time in arranging her magnificent hair in all sorts of fashions, some very simple, while others were most intricate and effective.

"It chanced that one day, after an absence of several months, the lord of the castle returned. Hastening to his wife's boudoir, he found her before her mirror dressing her hair in most bewitching fashion.

"After greeting her, he remarked about her elaborate head-dress, and laughingly the young wife asked her husband how he liked it.

"'It is much too handsome,' he replied, 'for a young woman whose husband is away to the wars. It is not well for a woman to be so handsome.'

"And without further word, he seized the sword which hung at his side, removed it from its scabbard, and with one stroke cut off the beautiful golden locks of his young wife. But no sooner had he done so than he was angry with himself, for his display of temper. He rushed from the room to cool his anger, when, whom did he run into, in the corridor, but the castle chaplain. The poor young lord was so ashamed of himself for his ungovernable temper, that,

with even less reason than before, he seized the frightened and astonished chaplain by the two shoulders, dragged him down the castle steps and threw him into the dungeon.

"'Now,' said he, after bolting the door securely, 'pray, my good man, that the day may be hastened when the balustrade of my castle steps may become so worn by the hands of visitors that it may hold the hair of my wife, which I have cut off in my folly.'

"There is nothing so unreasonable as a man in anger; I presume had the cook of the castle chanced to come in the way of milord's anger, he, too, would have been thrown into the dungeon, and all would have starved, just to appease the temper of the impossible lord. Fortunately, the cook, or the hostler or any of the knights or attendants of the castle did not appear, and thus was averted a great calamity.

"When the lord had had time to calm down a bit, he realized how unjust had been his actions. It was impossible to restore his wife's hair, but at least he might release the chaplain. A castle without a priest is indeed a sorry place; in his haste to descend the steps to the dungeon the lord caught his foot; perhaps his own sword, which had been the

means of his folly, tripped him; in any event, he fell down the entire flight and was picked up quite dead."

"It served him quite right," interrupted Ferdinand.

"Oh, but that wasn't the end of the lord, by any means," continued Herr Müller, smiling. "He is doomed to wander about his castle until the balustrade has been worn so deep that it will hold two heads of hair like those he cut from his wife. The penitent lord has roamed about the castle for many a year crying out to all who pass, 'Grief den Stein! Grief den Stein!' (Grasp the stone). Long ago he realized how foolish had been his actions, but although he has heartily repented, yet may he never know the rest of his grave until the balustrade has been worn hollow."

"And does he yet wander there?" asked Ferdinand.

"So they say; but one cannot see him except at night. There are many who claim to have heard him calling out, 'Grief den Stein,' but although I have been up and down the river many times, sometimes in the daytime and sometimes at night, I, myself, have never heard the ghostly voice."

"I've always felt sorrier for the poor lady without her

beautiful golden hair," observed Teresa, after a moment's silence, "and I always felt glad to think the lord had to be punished for his wickedness; but, somehow, hearing you tell the story, Herr Müller, I wish his punishment might not last much longer. For he was truly sorry, wasn't he?"

Herr Müller looked quizzically at his wife, and they both turned their heads from the earnest faces of the children.

"Do you find the old legends of the Danube interesting, Teresa?" asked Herr Müller, as the boat sped along, and the children maintained silence.

"Oh, I love all sorts of tales," the child replied. "Father tells us some occasionally, but I am home so little of the time now I do not hear as many as I used to. In the summer days we are always so busy at the farm we do not have the time for story-telling as we do in the winter days."

"Austria is full of tales about lords and ladies, ghosts and towers, but the Danube legends are not as well-known as those of the Rhine. Have you ever heard that story concerning the Knight of Rauheneck near Baaden?"

"No, Herr Müller," replied Teresa.

"Well, it isn't much of a tale when you compare it with

the Habsburg legends and the Griefenstein, and Stock im Eisen, but then it is worth telling."

"Begin," commanded the young son, in playful mood.

"Well, near Baaden there stands a formidable fortress called Rauheneck where lived a knight in former years. As he was about to go to war, and might return after many years and perhaps never, he decided to hide the treasures of the castle and place a spell upon them so that none might touch them but those for whom they were intended. So, in secrecy, he mounted to the summit of the great tower of the castle and on the battlement he planted a cherry stone, saying, as he did so:

"'From this stone shall spring forth a tree; a mighty cherry tree; from the trunk of the tree shall be fashioned a cradle; and in that cradle shall be rocked a young baby, who, in later years, shall become a priest. To this priest shall my treasure belong. But even he may not be able to find the treasure until another cherry tree shall have grown upon the tower, from a stone dropped by a bird of passage. When all these conditions have been complied with, then shall the priest find the treasure at the foot of my tree, and not

until then.'

"Then the careful knight, fearing for the safety of his treasure, even after such precautions, called upon a ghost to come and watch over the castle tower, that peradventure, daring robbers who might presume to thrust aside the spells which bound the treasure, would fear to cope with a ghost."

"And did the priest ever come?" queried Teresa.

"Not yet, child; the cherry tree at the top of the tower is but yet a sapling; there are long years yet to wait."

"But we don't believe in ghosts, father," interrupted Ferdinand. "Why could not someone go and dig at the root of the tree and see if the treasure were really there?"

"One could if he chose, no doubt," answered Herr Müller, "but no one has."

"Would you, Ferdinand?" asked Teresa.

"Oh, I might, if I were a grown man and had a lot of soldiers with me."

"Do you know another legend, Herr Müller?" asked Teresa, shortly.

"Well, there is the legend of Endersdorf in Moravia.

"A shepherd once lived in the neighborhood, and although he had always been exceedingly poor, often almost to the verge of starvation, yet, one morning, his neighbors found that he had suddenly become exceedingly rich. Everyone made conjectures concerning the source of his wealth, but none of them became the confidante of the shepherd, so that none were ever the wiser. The erstwhile poor shepherd left his humble cot and built himself a magnificent estate and palace upon the spot; he surrounded himself with retainers and sportsmen and gave himself up quite naturally to a life of ease and indolence. Most of his time was spent in following the hounds; but with all his newly acquired wealth, and notwithstanding the memory of days when a few pence meant a fortune to him, the shepherd lost all sense of pity, and none about the countryside were quite so penurious and selfish as he. To such poor wayfarers as accosted him, in mercy's name, to befriend them, he turned a deaf ear, until his name was the synonym for all that was miserable and hard-hearted.

"Now, it happened, that one day a poor beggar came to the gate of the rich shepherd, asking for alms. The shepherd

was about to leave the gate in company with a noisy crowd of hunters and followers, on his way to the chase. Taking no pity on the poor man's condition, he suddenly conceived the idea of making the beggar his prey.

"'Here is sport for us, good men,' he cried. 'Let us drive the beggar before us with our whips, and see him scamper lively.'

"Whereupon, following the action of their host, the entire company raised their whips, set spurs to their horses, and drove the trembling, frightened, outraged man from before them.

"'Now has your hour come,' cried out the old man, as he turned and defied his assailants. 'May all the curses of Heaven fall upon your heads, ye hard-hearted lot of roysterers!'

"At the word, the sky, which had before been cloudless, grew suddenly black; the lightning flashed; the thunder rolled; the very ground under their feet, shook, cracked and opened, swallowing the shepherd, his followers, their horses, dogs, and every vestige of the estate vanished. In its place arose a lake whose dark waters tossed and moaned in

strange fashion.

"On stormy days, even to this present day, when the waters of the lake are lashing themselves in fury, the shepherd of the hard heart can be seen passing across the waves, his whip raised to strike some unseen object, a black hunting dog behind him. How long his punishment may last, no one knows, but he can always be seen just as he was when the earthquake swallowed him up."

"Isn't it strange," observed Teresa, "but every one of the tales end in the punishment of the wicked knight."

"Of course," remarked Ferdinand. "They wouldn't be tales at all if the wrong-doer was allowed to go free. Would they, father?"

"Indeed not; but now it's time for breakfast. Would you like to eat on deck? It is so perfect a day, it is a pity to go indoors."

This suggestion appealed wonderfully to the children, and Herr Müller left them to order the meal served upon the deck.

As night fell, the boat docked at Linz. Herr Runkel was waiting on the quay with a heavy wagon and a team of

horses to drive them to the farm. It was a beautiful drive in the bright moonlight, and the lights of Linz twinkled below them, while the Danube sparkled in the distance, just like a fairy world.

It was very late when they reached the farm house; Frau Runkel greeted them cordially, and immediately after helping them off with their wraps, poured out steaming hot coffee to warm them up, the night air having been a trifle chilly.

Ferdinand went directly to his room after coffee was served. It was on the opposite side of the house, on the ground floor; the farm house was but one story high, with a lofty attic above. In one corner of the large bedroom stood a canopied bed of dark wood, elaborately painted in bright colors, on head and foot board, with designs of flowers and birds. There were two small, stiff-backed wooden chairs, a night table, upon which stood a brass candlestick, and an enormous wardrobe or chest for his clothes. All the furnishings of the room, even to the rug by the bed, were the handiwork of the occupants of the farm house, for no true Austrian peasant would condescend to purchase these

household necessities from a shop. Between two voluminous feather beds Ferdinand slept soundly, nor did he stir until he heard voices in the garden. Hastily dressing, he made his way into the living room, where breakfast had already been partaken of by the others.

"I'm so sorry to be late," he apologized, shamefacedly. "Why didn't you call me, mother?" he asked, as he turned to the one who must naturally share the responsibility of her children's shortcomings.

"We thought to let you have your rest," answered Frau Müller. "Your day will be very full. You evidently enjoyed your downy bed."

"Oh, it was great; let us get one, mother."

"I used to sleep under one when I was a girl," replied Frau Müller, "but no one in the city uses them anymore; the woolly blankets have quite superceded them."

"You may take yours home with you, if you like," said Frau Runkel, "we have geese enough to make more."

"Now," said Herr Runkel, "if you are all ready, we'll go over and pay our respects to father and mother."

"Then your parents do not live with you?" asked Herr

Müller, a little astonished.

"No, that is not the custom among us. You see, when I got married, father made over the farm and all its appurtenances to me, being the eldest son; then he built himself another home, just over in the field, there," and Herr Runkel pointed to a tiny, cosy cottage some few hundred paces away.

"What a splendid thing to be the eldest son," remarked Herr Müller.

"Perhaps it is," replied his host, "but it entails a great responsibility, as well. You see, after the ceremony of deeding the farm away to me, I am called upon to settle an allowance upon my parents during their lifetime."

"That's but right," assented Herr Müller, "seeing that they have given you everything they possess, and which they have acquired with such toil and privation."

"Yes, but father received the farm from his father, in just the same manner; although he has enlarged it, so that it is bigger and better. But, in addition to father and mother," continued the farmer, "I have all my brothers and sisters to look after. There is Teresa at the convent in Vienna; there

is Frederick at the Gymnasium in Linz; and there is Max an apprentice in Zara; these must all be cared for; and, I can tell you, Müller, it's a responsible position, that of being the eldest son."

"But you weren't called upon, Franz," replied his friend, "to provide so bountifully for each."

"No, but what would you have?" he replied. "I have tried to be a dutiful son; and," he added, his eyes twinkling as he glanced at his wife, "I've been sort of lenient towards father and the children, because father let me off so lightly when he boxed my ears for the last time."

"Boxed your ears?" exclaimed Herr Müller, in astonishment. "What had you done to deserve such disgrace?"

"Well, that was part of the ceremony. When the farm was made over to me, it's the custom, before signing the deed, for the owner to make the rounds of his estate with his family; when he comes to each of the four corner-posts, he boxes the ears of the new owner. Now, father might have boxed mine roundly, had he chosen, for I was somewhat of a rollicker in my youth," and the genial farmer chuckled softly, "but father was sparing of my feelings. Don't you

believe he deserved a recompense?"

"He certainly did," answered his friend, and they all laughed heartily over the matter.

Meanwhile they had gained the entrance to the dower-house, as the home of the aged couple was called. As Herr Müller had not seen the parents of his friend since child-hood there were many years of acquaintanceship to bridge over; and Ferdinand, fascinated, listened to the conver-sation, for this old couple were most interesting persons to talk with.

After returning from church the family gathered on the wide verandah under the eaves, the women with their knitting, which is not considered improper even on Sundays among Austrian women.

This verandah in the peasant home in Upper Austria is a most important part of the house. It is protected from the elements by the enormous overhanging eaves above, run-ning the entire side of the house; heavy timbers support it, green with growing vines which climb from the porch boxes filled with gayly blossoming flowers. It is a tiny garden brought to one's sitting room; the birds twitter in the

sunlight, as they fly in and out of their nests under the eaves; and here the neighbors gossip and drink coffee and munch delicious cakes. In fact, it is the sole sitting room of the family during warm days, for no peasant woman would think of shutting herself in a room to do her work. One can always work to better advantage in the sunlight and open air.

The children rambled about the farm and outbuildings. The farm house was very long and deep and low, with a long, slanting roof. The front door was of heavy timbers upon which was a design of St. Martin outlined in nails, the work of the farmer, while small crosses at either side of the door were considered sufficient protection from the evil spirits who might wish to attack the family within.

The interior of the farm house was very simple; a large vestibule called the Laube or bower served as a means of communication between the different parts of the house; the sleeping rooms were ranged on one side, while the dining and living room occupied the other, with the kitchen just beyond.

The Gesindestube, or living room, was very plain, with

its bare floors and darkened walls; a tile stove in one corner, benches about the walls and chests, some plain, some elaborately decorated and carved, occupied whatever space was left. Here were kept the household linens and the wardrobes for the family, as no Austrian peasant home is built with closets as we have in America.

That evening, Herr Runkel said to Ferdinand:

"Tomorrow, my boy, we work. Would you like to help?"

"Oh, it would be jolly," replied the lad. After a moment's hesitation, he added: "What kind of work? Hoeing potatoes or weeding the garden?"

These two tasks were the only ones the lad was familiar with upon his uncle's farm in Tyrol.

The farmer laughed. "No, we won't do that," he said. "We'll leave that to the servants; but we'll make shoes."

"Make shoes!" exclaimed the child, incredulously. "Really make them yourself? I've never made shoes," he added, doubting whether he might be allowed now to assist.

"Why not?" answered Herr Runkel. "You know we are very old-fashioned here; and, as we have so far to go to the shops, why we don't go; we let the workmen come to us.

This is an off-time of the season; so we have the tailors and the shoemakers and all sorts of folk come and help us with such things as we can't do ourselves, for, you know, we make everything we use on the farm, and everything we wear."

"Oh, how fine," said Ferdinand.

"Yes, and we have jolly times, too," continued the farmer, "for when work is over we play. Isn't that right?"

Ferdinand went to bed that night with visions of tailors and shoemakers and harnessmakers and whatnot, in his head, until he fell asleep.

CHAPTER IV
The Peasants' Dance

Ferdinand needed no call to arouse him in the morning. He was awake and up long before any of his family, but he did not catch Herr Runkel nor his buxom wife, napping.

"Come along, Ferdinand, and help me get the leather ready for the men," said the farmer, and he led the way across the garden to a great timber building, two stories in height. He opened the door, and they entered a very large room, with a decided smoky smell about it.

"What is this?" asked Ferdinand.

"This is our Feld-kasten (field-box) where we keep all our supplies. Here are the seeds for planting when the time comes; here are the hams and bacons and dried meat for use during the winter; here is the lard for the year;" and Herr Runkel took off the lids of the great casks and showed the white lard to the child, astonished beyond expression,

at this collection of supplies.

"And what's in the loft?" asked the boy, seeing the substantial ladder leading thereto.

"Oh, that's for the women-folks," he replied. "We keep all sorts of things there. Let's go up."

And they ascended.

The loft was a room full of shelves; in most delightful order were ranged bundles of white cotton cloth, bundles of flax for spinning, bundles of woolen goods for making up into apparel, some dyed and some in the natural wool; there were rows and rows of yarn for embroidering the garments of the peasants, and upon the floor in one corner was a great heap of leather, with all sorts of machinery, and harness, and Ferdinand never could learn what there was not here, so overwhelmed was he.

"Here we are," said Herr Runkel, as he tugged at the pile of leather. "We must get this out, for the shoemakers start after breakfast. Give us a lift, child," and he half dragged, half lifted the leather to the trap-door and let it slide down the ladder.

For days afterwards Ferdinand was in a fever of

excitement. First he would help cut out the leather for the heavy farm shoes, working the best he could with his inexperience; the main thing being to keep busy, and he certainly accomplished it. Then he helped the tailors, for everyone who could be spared about the farm joined in the tasks of the journeymen, that they might finish their work and move on to another farm, before the busy season should begin for the farmers.

It is customary in addition to the low wages of about twelve cents a day for servants to receive their clothing, as part payment, so that upon a large farm, of the extent of Herr Runkel's, there were many to be provided for. Frau Müller assisted Frau Runkel in the kitchen, where Teresa, too, was kept busy; even Ferdinand not disdaining to make himself useful in that department.

At length the journeymen were finished, and Herr Müller spoke about leaving in a few days for Tyrol.

"We shall have a merrymaking, then, before you go," said his host. "But I presume parties are not a novelty to you; are they, Ferdinand? City folks, especially Viennese, are very gay."

"Oh, we never have parties in Vienna," replied the lad. "That is, private parties; they cost too much. But we have our masked balls and ice festivals. Of course I can't go to those; they are only for grown folks."

Herr Müller took up the thread of conversation at this point. "Vienna, with all its glitter, is but a poor city, after all," he said. "Living is very costly; the rich and the aristocracy have impoverished themselves by their extravagant ways of living. They dwell in fine homes, wear gorgeous uniforms and gowns, but cannot pay for these extravagances. They have shooting-lodges in the mountains, country villas for the summer, besides their town homes, but they have the fear constantly over their heads that these will be taken from them, to redeem the mortgages upon them."

"I am more than ever thankful," replied the farmer, "that I have my farm and my family, and owe no man."

"You are certainly right," answered his friend. "It is to such men as you that Austria must look in the future."

"But about the party, Herr Runkel," interrupted Ferdinand, who feared that his host might forget his suggestion.

"Oh, yes. Well, we'll have that Saturday night; so run along and help the women-folks get ready for it, for you never saw such feasts as we do have at our parties, child."

Ferdinand, being just a boy, rushed off to the kitchen to provide for the "spread" that was to come, and he and Teresa chattered like two magpies over the splendid prospect.

Although Ferdinand Müller did not quite believe that Saturday afternoon would ever come, it eventually did come; and a perfect day, too. Teresa was dressed in her most shining silver buckles and her whitest of homespun stockings, while Frau Runkel outshone everyone in the room with her gayly embroidered apron over her dark skirt, and her overwhelming display of hand-made silver ornaments in her ears, upon her arms, about her neck, and on her fingers. And her head-dress was a marvel to behold, glistening with gold thread and shining with tiny beads of various colors.

The table was set in the Gesindestube; there were roast ducks, and geese and chickens, roast meats and stewed meats, and Wienerschnitzel (veal cutlet), without which

no Austrian home is complete. There were sausage and cheese and black bread and noodles; there were cakes with white frosting and pink frosting, and some were decorated with tiny colored seeds like caraway-seeds. Never had Ferdinand beheld such a sight before; but truly the Austrian peasant knows how to enjoy life.

The reception over, the host and hostess led the way to the dining table, the men placing themselves on the bench on one side while the women sat opposite them on the other. With bowed heads, the host said the grace; then began the gayety. There was no constraint; each helped himself and his neighbor bountifully. Meanwhile, the two young children, at the foot of the board, were not neglected, but kept up a lively conversation of their own, utterly oblivious of their elders.

"Wait until the dessert comes," said Teresa. "Did you ever see one of these nettle-cakes?"

"Nettle-cakes?" repeated the lad. "What is that?"

"Oh, you will see," replied the young lady, looking wise. "But be careful, I warn you, not to prick your fingers. Perhaps, though," she added, "mother may not allow us to

join in, for this is a special feast-day, in honor of you and your parents."

Ferdinand was not kept long in suspense. The viands having been disposed of to the satisfaction of everyone, the maid brought in the "pièce de resistance." It towered high above her head, and had she not been brought up in the open air of the country she certainly never would have had the strength to manage such a burden. Upon a huge wooden dish was piled high fresh fruits from the orchard, cakes with delicious frosting, nuts and bright flowers. It was a medley of color, set off by great streamers of gay ribbons and bows; quite like a bridal cake, but vastly more interesting.

Tongues wagged fast, you may be sure; all wished to get a chance at the gorgeous centrepiece, nevertheless, they all waited for their host's approval, and, waiting his opportunity, when many were not on the alert, he raised his hand, and then such a scramble you never saw in all your days. The men rose out of their seats and grabbed for one particular sweetmeat, which might appeal to the palate of his fair partner; but for all their precautions, knowing the



"It towered high above her head"

hidden secrets of the dessert, many emerged from the battle with scratched hands or bleeding fingers, for these delicious cakes and luscious fruits covered prickly nettles, a trap for the unskilful.

But what mattered these trifles to the happy-hearted peasant folk. They chatted and laughed and dived for fruit and decked the hair of their favorites with gay flowers, or cracked nuts with their knife handles and fed them to their lady loves. With the coffee, the feast ended.

Carrying the benches to the sides of the room, where they ordinarily reposed, the table was cleared as if by magic. Now the dance was on. Zithers and violins appeared, and the darkened rafters of the Gesindestube rang with the clatter of many feet.

By ten o'clock all was quiet at the farm house; the guests had complimented their host and hostess upon the success of the evening, and the elaborateness of the table; they bade farewell to the Müller family, and saying good night to all, made their way over the fields, singing with hearty voices, their tuneful folk-songs; and thus Ferdinand heard the last of them ere he fell asleep.

CHAPTER V

Some Tyrolese Legends

The following morning Herr and Frau Müller and Ferdinand bade their kind host and hostess good-by and they set out for Linz, where they would take the train to Innsbruck, the capital of Upper Tyrol. Ferdinand was very loth to leave the farm, he had had such a splendid time there, and felt that he had not seen half of the farm-life; but Herr Runkel promised that he should come again the following summer and spend the entire vacation with them, to which his parents consented, so the child was content. However, he was to visit his cousin Leopold, and that was always a treat, for Tyrol is so charming and so different from other spots in Austria, it would be a difficult child, indeed, to please, who would not be content with a trip to Tyrol.

Herr Hofer and his son Leopold met them at the station in Innsbruck, with a heavy wagon and two strong horses;

the Hofers lived in Volders in the Unter-Innthal or valley of the Lower Inn River, some distance in the mountains; all the country to the north of the Inn being designated as the Upper and that to the south, as the Lower valley.

"Have you had your luncheon?" asked Herr Hofer, as soon as the greetings were over.

"Oh, yes, we lunched on board the train," replied Herr Müller.

"Then, let's get off," said Herr Hofer, "for we have a long drive before us." He pulled his horses' reins and the beasts started off at a good pace.

Leaving the station, they turned down the Margareth-platz with its fountain of dragons and griffins, where young women were filling their pitchers, for Innsbruck is very primitive in many of its customs. Down the broad and splendid Maria-Theresa Strasse the carriage turned, and stopped before a most gorgeous palace, whose roof shone in the bright sunshine like molten metal.

"Oh, uncle, who can live in such a beautiful house?" asked Ferdinand.

"That is the Goldne Dachl, or the House with the

Golden Roof," replied his uncle. "It was built ever so many years ago by our beloved Count Frederick of Tyrol. You've heard of him?" he queried.

"Oh, yes," replied the lad. "But I don't know about this house of his."

"Well, Count Frederick was a most generous man; he would lend to all his friends who were not always very prompt in repaying him, and sometimes forget they owed him anything at all. At length, his enemies began to call him the Count of the Empty Pockets. This was very unjust, for poor Friedl (that's what we call him, who love him, you know) had had a very hard time of it, indeed. His own brother had driven him from his throne and usurped it himself, and made it a crime for anyone to even shelter poor Friedl, who wandered about from place to place like the veriest vagabond. But, at length, he discovered that he had many friends who longed to show their devotion to him; he made a stand for his rights and secured his throne. But still, the nickname did not leave him. So, just to prove to his people that he was unjustly called the Count of the Empty Pockets, he ordered this wonderful roof of gold to be put on

his palace. They say it cost him $70,000, which certainly was a great sum for a man with empty pockets."

Turning the horses' heads in the opposite direction, Herr Hofer conducted them through the Triumphal Arch and gained the country road.

"I thought to show the boys the Abbey of Wilten," explained Herr Hofer, as they trotted along, "and perhaps stop at Schloss Amras, as we may not have an opportunity soon again."

"Oh, uncle," cried Ferdinand, "I love to see old ruins and castles. We have a lot of fine ones about Vienna, but they are all alike."

"Well, these will be quite different, I can assure you," replied his uncle.

The two boys occupied the rear seat with Frau Müller, while the fathers sat upon the front. And verily the little tongues wagged as only boys' tongues can do. In the midst of their spirited conversation, the carriage stopped before a splendid old church.

"Oh, father," exclaimed Ferdinand, "what queer looking men!"

Herr Müller looked about, but saw no one.

"Where?" he asked.

"Why, there, by the sides of the church door."

Both men laughed.

"They *are* queer looking, aren't they?" said Uncle Hofer. "But you would think it a lot queerer did you know how they came to be here."

"Oh, tell us," the boy exclaimed.

"Well, once upon a time, way back in the Middle Ages, there were two giants who lived in different parts of the earth. Each of them was twelve feet or more tall; one was called Haymo and the other Tirsus. Now, in those times, giants did not remain quietly in their strongholds; they set out on adventures; so it chanced that, in the course of their travels, these two mighty giants encountered each other, right on this spot where this abbey stands. But of course, there was no abbey here then; the ancient Roman town of Veldidena was hereabouts.

"Now, when the two giants met, they stopped, looked one at the other and measured his strength. Well, it naturally fell about that they decided to prove their strength; in

the struggle, sad to tell, Haymo killed Tirsus. Poor giant Haymo. Big as he was, he wept, for he had not meant to harm his giant comrade. At length, to ease his mind, he determined to build an abbey on the spot, as that seemed to be the solace for all evils, in those days. And then Haymo would become a monk, and for eighteen whole years he would weep and weep as penance for the deed.

"But poor Haymo had more than he bargained for. He did not know that the Devil had claimed this same spot; no sooner did Haymo bring the stones for the foundation of his church than the Devil came and pulled them down. But Haymo persisted, for he really must keep his vow; and evidently he conquered the Devil himself, for the abbey stands, as you see, and these are the two statues of the giants guarding the portal of the church, so that the Devil may not come, I suppose."

"Poor Haymo," said Ferdinand. "What a hardship to weep for eighteen years, nicht wahr, Leopold?"

"*Yawohl,*" came the stolid reply, while the two men chuckled softly.

It is a peculiarity of Tyrol that, not until one attains

middle age at least, does he begin to appreciate humor the least bit. Children are always too serious to admit of "fun" in their prosaic lives, so that, were it not for the elderly people, humor might eventually die out altogether in Tyrol, so serious a nation are they.

"Shall we go inside, father?" asked Leopold.

"We have not time; night will overtake us, and we must go on to Schloss Amras yet. There really is little to see, however."

And while the lads strained their necks and eyes to catch a glimpse of the beautiful paintings upon the outside walls of the abbey, the wonderful gilding and stucco, the horses disappeared around a bend in the road, and it was lost to sight.

Now they commenced to climb, for the road is always up and up in Tyrol. Below them lay the wonderful view of Innsbruck, with the Inn running gayly along; there, too, was the fair abbey with its two giants carved in stone, watching ever at the portal.

"Have you boys any idea where we are?" asked Herr Hofer.

Both shook their heads negatively.

"All this country hereabouts is alive with interest attaching to Andreas Hofer, our patriot," replied he. "Here, at this very Gasthaus (inn) was where he made his last effort against the enemy. We shall learn more of it as we go along," he continued, "but there is not much use to stop here now. We go a few steps further to the Schloss."

Truly it was a delightful old place, this castle of Amras, one of the few feudal castles left. There was an old courtyard paved with great stones, there were battlements and towers and relics of Roman invasions. The guide led them through the castle, room after room, filled with most interesting articles of every description pertaining to ancient times and wars, all of which intensely absorbed the boys' attention.

"Oh, what an immense bowl!" cried Ferdinand. "And of glass. What is it for?"

"That is the welcome bowl," replied the attendant. "We call it, nowadays, the loving cup. In every castle there were many like this; there was a gold one for ladies, a silver one for princes and a glass one for knights, which latter was the



Statue of Andreas Hofer, near Innsbruck

largest of all. When guests came to the castle, the welcome bowl was brought out, filled to the brim and handed to the guest, who was supposed to drink it off at a draught, if he was at all of a hazardous or knightly disposition. To his undoing, it sometimes happened he did not survive the ordeal; but that mattered not at all to him; he had displayed his bravery and that was worth life itself. After the bowl was drained, a great book was brought out, in which the guest was requested to write his name, no doubt as a test as to his real station, for no one but the highest and noblest were able to write or read in those times, and it often chanced even they were unable to do so."

"Why, that is what they do in hotels!" said Ferdinand.

"Yes," replied the guide, "and probably that is where the custom originated, for the manager of a hotel but preserves the ancient custom of registering the names of his guests."

All too soon the visit came to an end; the party made its way to the near-by inn to spend the night.

CHAPTER VI
More Legends

The inn-keeper, Herr Schmidt, was a big, raw-boned man with a red face and a jolly air. He was a genuine Wirthe or inn-keeper of the old-time; and after supper, as they all sat in the great sitz-saal together, he told them wonderful tales of the country round about, which so abounded in legends and folklore. As the position of Wirthe descends from father to son, for generations back, as long as there remains any sons to occupy that honored position, naturally, too, the legends are passed from one to the other, so that no one is quite so well able to recite these as our hearty friend Herr Schmidt.

"If it were not so late," remarked Herr Hofer, while the men sat and smoked their long, curious pipes, "I should continue on to Volders, for it looks as if tomorrow might be stormy."

"Oh, you need have no fear as to that," replied the host. "I noticed Frau Hütte did not have her night-cap on."

Ferdinand looked at his little cousin with his face so puckered up with glee and merriment, that Leopold laughed outright.

"Do tell Ferdinand about Frau Hütte, father!" said the child.

"No, I think Herr Wirthe better able to do that. Bitte," and he saluted the inn-keeper in deference.

"And have you never heard of Frau Hütte, my boy?" asked the host.

"No, sir," replied the boy. "You know I live in Vienna."

"Well, everybody knows her," replied the inn-keeper; "but then, you are a little young yet, so I will tell you."

"Very long ago, in the time of giants and fairies— But then you don't believe in fairies, do you?" and the fellow's eyes sparkled keenly.

"Oh, yes, I do," exclaimed the boy hastily, for fear if he denied the existence of such beings, he should miss a good story.

"Well, then, there was a queen over the giants who was

called Frau Hütte."

"Oh," interrupted the lad, "then she isn't a real person?"

"Oh, yes, she was; but that was long ago," continued the story teller. "Well, Frau Hütte had a young son who was very much like any other little child; he wanted whatever he wanted, and he wanted it badly. One day, this giant child took a notion he should like to have a hobby horse. Without saying a word to anyone, he ran off to the edge of the forest and chopped himself a fine large tree. But evidently the child did not know much about felling trees, for this one fell over and knocked him into the mud. With loud cries, he ran home to his mother. Instead of punishing him, she bade the nurse wipe off the mud with a piece of white bread. No one but the very richest could afford the luxury of white bread, black bread being considered quite good enough for ordinary consumption, so no wonder the mountain began to shake and the lightning to flash, just as soon as the maid started to obey her mistress' command.

"Frau Hütte was so frightened at this unexpected storm that she picked up her son in her arms and made for the mountain peak some distance from her palace. No sooner

had she left the palace than it disappeared from view, even to the garden, and nothing was ever seen of it again. But even in her retreat the wasteful queen was not secure. When she had seated herself upon the rock, she became a stone image, holding her child in her arms. And there she sits to this day. When the clouds hover about her head then we know there will be a storm, but when Frau Hütte does not wear her night-cap," and the Wirthe's eyes sparkled, "then we are certain of clear weather."

"Ever since then, the Tyrolese have made Frau Hütte the theme of a proverb 'Spart eure Brosamen fur die Armen, damit es euch nicht ergehe wie der Frau Hütte,' which really means 'Spare your crumbs for the poor, so that you do not fare like Frau Hütte,' a lesson to the extravagant."

There were endless more stories, all of which delighted the boys immensely, but we could not begin to relate them all, for Tyrol is so overladen with the spirit of the past, and with the charm of legend, that the very air itself breathes of fairies and giants, and days of yore, so that in invading its territory one feels he is no longer in this work-a-day world,

but in some enchanted spot.

Early the next morning, up with the sun, all were ready for the drive home. As Herr Wirthe had predicted, the day was fair; as they drove away from the Inn, they caught a glimpse of Frau Hütte in the distance beyond Innsbruck, and, sure enough, there she sat on her mountain peak, with her great son safely sheltered in her arms.

"Shall we go to the salt mines, father?" asked Leopold, as they made their way along the mountain road.

"No, we cannot take the time; mother will be waiting for us and the women folks are impatient to visit, I know."

"They have wonderful salt mines at Salzburg," said Ferdinand. "Perhaps we may go there some time to visit them."

"Perhaps," replied his father. "But, while we are on the subject, did it ever occur to you that Salzburg means the 'town or castle of salt?'—for, in the old times, all towns were within castle-walls, to protect them from depredations of the enemy."

"Isn't it curious?" meditated Ferdinand.

The Inn River crossed, they continued to climb. Herr

Hofer stopped to rest the horses; he glanced about him at the panorama below, and chuckled mirthfully.

"What's the matter, uncle?" asked Ferdinand.

"Oh, nothing much; but every time I see the towns of Hall and Thaur, just over there," and he pointed with the handle of his whip, "I think of the Bauernkrieg."

"But there isn't anything very funny about a war, is there, uncle?" asked the serious little fellow.

"Well," rambled on his uncle, "there was about this one. You see, in early times, when Tyrol was not quite so peaceful as it is today, these two cities were most jealous of each other, and were always at feud. A watchman stood on the tower, day and night, to prevent any surprise from his neighbor. One night, in midsummer—and a very hot night it was, too—the people of Hall were roused from their slumbers, if they had been able to sleep at all in such heat, by the voice of the watchman calling them to arms.

"'What is the trouble, watchman?' cried one and all, as they appeared at their windows.

"'Oh,' exclaimed the frightened fellow, 'hasten, friends, hasten! The whole town of Thaur is at our gates; and not

only are they advancing toward us, but each man boldly carries a lantern.'

"Such audacity was never heard of before. In utmost consternation the people gathered in the village square and held a consultation. It was finally arranged that Herr Zott, the steward of the salt mine, and therefore a most important personage in the village, should meet the enemy with a flag of truce and demand the reason for this unexpected attack. The inhabitants of Hall, in fear and trembling, awaited Herr Zott's return.

"The truce-bearer left the city gates and proceeded into the plain, which separated their village from the enemy's. On and on he went; but not one soul did he meet. The great army of men, each carrying a lantern, had disappeared as if by magic. Finally he reached the walls of Thaur, where all was as quiet as it should be at that time of the night.

"He turned his horse's head homeward. The night was very still, and over the plain flashed the lights of thousands of fireflies, reveling in the warm summer breeze. It was not until he had reached the very gates of his own town that Herr Zott realized what had caused all the excitement. The

watchman had mistaken the fireflies for lanterns; and naturally, as someone must carry the lanterns, who more probable than their enemy, the people of Thaur?

"The townsfolks betook themselves to their beds again, laughing heartily over the mistake; and even to this day we laugh over the incident which has become a by-word in Tyrol; Bauernkrieg, or the peasant's war."

"But I don't see how peasant's war can mean anything now," said Ferdinand.

"Well, when one becomes excited over nothing," returned his uncle, "they exclaim 'Bauernkrieg.' Some day you will hear it, and then you will recollect the origin of it."

Not long after this tale, the carriage stopped in front of a most charming home on the mountainside. The first story was stuccoed, while across the entire front and two sides of the second and third stories ran a wide wooden balcony. Boxes of red and white geraniums decked the top of the fancy balustrade, while vines trailed themselves far over, giving the house a most "homey" appearance. The lower story receded far behind the overhanging second story, which formed a convenient space for sheltering the cattle.

There is little available space in Tyrol for outbuildings, the mountains rising so precipitously that there is but little level. But, as stone floors separate the house from the stable, odors do not penetrate as much as one would imagine.

At the front of the house stood a woman of middle age, her hair carefully drawn back under an immense head-dress, so tall it seemed as if she would be unable to enter the doorway. She wore a black skirt, so very full it had the appearance of being a hoop-skirt; but this effect was produced by her ten extremely full petticoats. The reputation of a Tyrolese woman depends, in a great degree, to the number of petticoats she wears; sometimes young girls, who value modesty highly, wear as many as fifteen or more.

Over the black skirt, which showed to advantage the white stockings and low shoes with their shining buckles of silver, was a most elaborately embroidered black apron, the work of many hours of tedious labor for the housewife. About her waist was twined a bright yellow sash which brightened up the dark bodice, with its short sleeves tied fantastically with bright yellow ribbons.

The woman nodded to the travelers; Herr Hofer pulled

up his horses and descended from the carriage.

"Well, *meine liebe frau*, here we are," said he, as he greeted his wife.

Such hugging as followed! Ferdinand was clasped time and again against the ample bosom of Frau Hofer, and even Herr Müller came in for a goodly share, while as for the greeting that Frau Müller received, no words may convey its warmth.

The party made its way up the narrow stairway with carved balustrade, which led from the ground floor to the second story, upon the outside of the house. This is the most convenient manner of building staircases in Tyrol, because it does not track mud and dirt through the corridors, and saves much interior space.

The guest room was certainly restful looking. Its dark polished floor of pine had been newly polished until it fairly radiated; the big bed of wood, painted a vivid color of green, also had received scrupulous polishing; two small home-made rugs, one at the bedside, the other at the washstand, had been scrubbed and beaten until it seemed as if there would be nothing left of them. At the side of the canopied

bed stood a tiny foot-stool: the Tyrolese beds being extremely high make the use of a stool necessary. No doubt the object of this is to avoid draughts, as none of the floors are carpeted, many being of cement. Immaculate white curtains hung at the casement windows, those dear little windows, unlike anything we have in America, which open into the room and give such a cosy character to the home. A basin of Holy Water was hung in its accustomed place, and the image of the Virgin hung over the table; for, you must know, the Tyrolese are devout Roman Catholics, as, in fact, are nearly all the natives of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

CHAPTER VII

A Night with the Senner

Merry days followed; there were excursions almost every day. Ferdinand and Leopold would spend part of the time picking flowers on the mountainsides, or would help with the cattle and in the garden, so that their elders might be able to devote more time to recreation with their guests.

One morning the two men and boys set out with rück-sacks on their shoulders, and long alpenstocks in their hands, to climb the mountain and visit an "alp" in the pasture lands, for in the summertime the cows of the neighboring villagers are driven to pasture in charge of a few attendants, sometimes men, called senner, sometimes women, called sennerin, where they remain during the entire season.

"Have you never seen the senner*ei*, Ferdinand?" asked his cousin.

"Oh, yes. Don't you remember the last time I was here," replied Ferdinand, "we saw them drive the cattle away?"

"But I said the senner*ei* (dairy)," repeated the child.

"No, but I should love to see the cheeses made; the alps look so picturesque."

"Well, they aren't quite so nice when you reach them," admitted his cousin; "however, we are not going specially to see the dairy but the dance which the senner have on Saturday night. Oh, it's great."

"Do they have one every Saturday night?"

"Very near, as long as the season lasts; it's wonderful, Ferdinand. I've seen some of the fellows do the most astonishing tricks."

Of course, such conversation stimulated the city lad's desire to a great pitch; and it was with the keenest joy he tramped over the rocky mountains, which was difficult for him. But he said nothing; he kept before his mind the delights of the dance he should witness, and plodded on.

At length they reached the first "alp," or chalet, as the huts which serve for sleeping room and dairy for the senner are called. These chalets are built at different heights up

the mountain; when the cattle have eaten all the green grass available at one level they are driven to the next higher pasture and so on until, towards the beginning of November, they return to the village for the winter.

Picturesque as the "alp" may look from the distance, it is scarce one of grandeur upon closer view. It consists of a low wooden hut, usually of one room, and a sort of adjoining alcove. In the main room is a bunk built against the wall; nothing but straw serves for the mattress; there are no coverlets except the blanket the senner always carries with him, and in which he wraps himself. In another part of this uninviting room is a hollowed space where the fire is built, over which hangs a great crane and an iron pot for use in making the cheeses so famous throughout Tyrol.

The alcove serves as a store room for the cheeses, and for the dairy, while off to one end is sometimes a room for such cattle as are ill or young cattle who must be protected from the chill night air of the mountain.

As evening advanced from all directions came merry voices, ringing the clear notes of yodels from over the mountainsides. Each sennerin knows the peculiar yodel of

her swain; and you may be sure her heart beats light when she hears, miles and miles away, the beautiful, clear notes of his call. This is the only method the mountaineers have of communicating with each other. The peculiar notes carry across ravines and hillsides as distinctly as if one were close at hand.

"Oh, father," said Ferdinand, as he touched him upon the elbow, "what queer-looking men these are! I have not seen such costumes about here. Do they belong to Tyrol?"

"Yes, but these men are from the south, from Meran. When a man is married he must distinguish himself by placing a green cord about his hat, so that he may not allow folks to think him single; we other Austrians wear the wedding ring, the same as the women; but in the different provinces, customs vary."

Ferdinand watched the different costumes of the men, as they poured in from all directions. There were some in brown jackets trimmed with red, and wide brown suspenders; all Tyrolese men wear these wide suspenders, sometimes of one color, sometimes of another, but usually green, of which color they are passionately fond, no doubt because

their country is so wonderfully green. Most of the men wore knee trousers of leather, while some were of homespun, but that was an extravagance. The stockings, usually grey and home-knitted, reached from the ankle to just below the knee leaving the latter bare. Without exception, all wore the Tyrolese cap of rough green cloth, at the back of which was the black-cock's tail, while one or two isolated fellows were fortunate enough to deck their hats with the Gamsbart or Beard of the Chamois, as it is called; but this is not the correct name for it, as it is not the beard of the chamois but the long tuft which grows upon his back in the winter.

On the green of the mountainside, in a spot selected for its advantage of being as near level as possible, the dance took place. The senner and sennerin went through manœuvers that did them credit; they swung each other in giddy fashion until one almost believed they would spin themselves down the mountainside, and thus dance to their deaths; but after whirling at great speed for many minutes, they would suddenly pull up with a jerk and seem none the worse for the whirling.

It was no unusual sight for Ferdinand to see the Tyrolese dances; but here on the pasture lands, on their native heath, he saw them perform many which were most unfamiliar to him. He always smiled when he saw the women place their arms about their partners' necks and waltz in that fashion; and then, when the couples separated, the women to dance round and round, holding out their full skirts to their greatest width, while the men indulged in all sorts of fantastic gymnastics, was truly bewildering.

At length the evening drew to a close; the company dispersed as quickly as it had assembled, and all was quiet upon the mountainside. One might have imagined himself back to the days of Old Rip Van Winkle, so mysterious did the entire proceeding seem.

In the morning, the party descended the mountain. The air was very clear, although the day was cloudy, the sun steadfastly refusing to appear; but this made walking agreeable for which all were thankful.

"Did you ever hear so many bells in your life?" observed the city cousin.

"Oh, those are the cow-bells," replied Leopold. "Each

herd has its own peculiar tone, so that the cattle won't get mixed up, where there are so many together. And then the senner can tell right away to which owner they belong."

"But there is such a constant tinkling, and so many different tones, I don't see how one can ever tell which is his own," replied the lad.

"That is because you are not used to it," answered his uncle. "After you have been on the mountain awhile, you, too, would be able to distinguish your own bell as well as the senner in charge."

And to the tinkling of the bells, the party descended until they were well out of reach of the bewitching sounds.

CHAPTER VIII

Through the Tyrolese Mountains

When the pedestrians reached home in the early afternoon, a letter was awaiting Herr Müller. It was from Herr Runkel, stating he was obliged to make a visit to Dalmatia to see his younger brother Max on business, and if Herr Müller would care to make the trip with him, he would meet him at Villach in Carinthia the following Tuesday. Of course, there was new excitement now for the boys; the one wished to go with his father, while the other was urgent in his demands that the cousin remain with him. Finally it was arranged that both boys should accompany Herr Müller, while Frau Müller should remain with her relatives and join her husband and son at Gratz in Styria, on their return.

Leopold had never made a journey from home before, except the one time he had been to Innsbruck, quite recently, to meet his Müller relations; so you may be certain

there was one little heart which beat faster than normal.

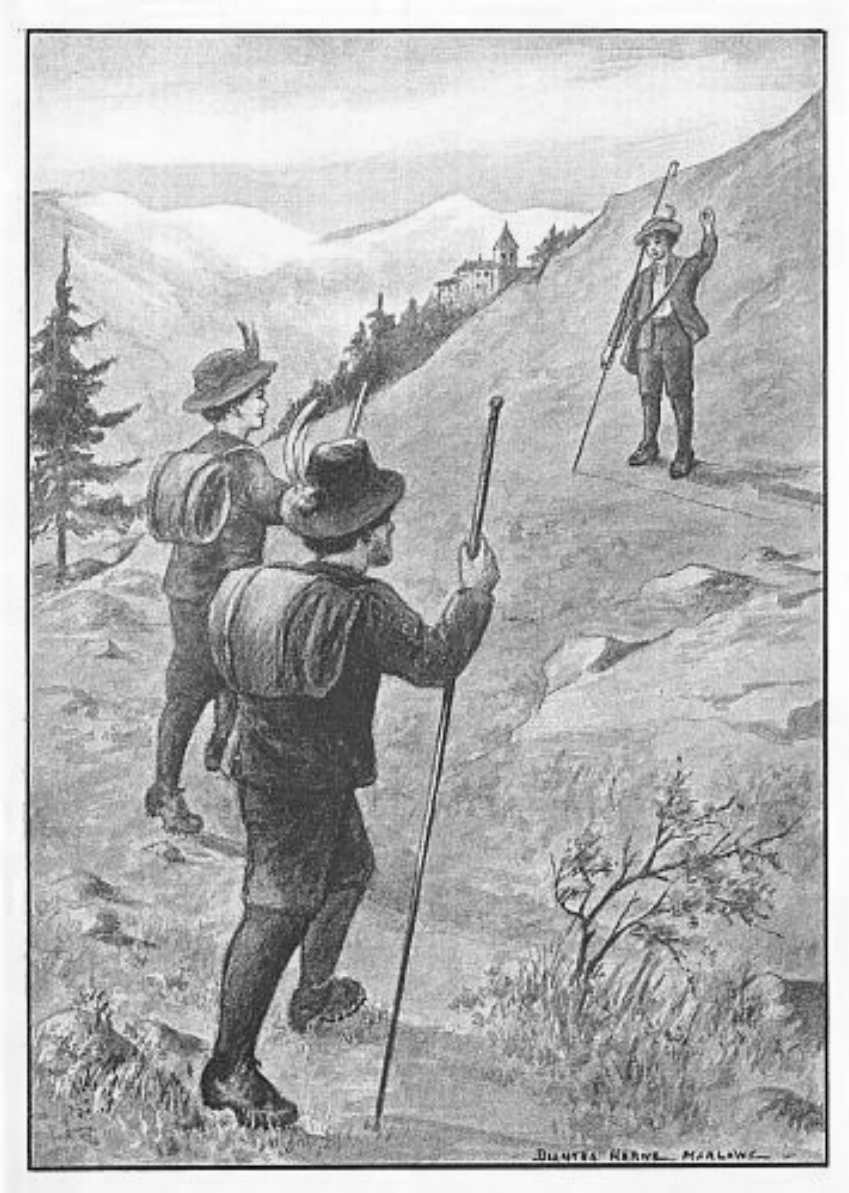
"We shall leave tomorrow, then," decided Herr Müller, "if you think you can be ready in that time," he added, addressing the Tyrolese youngster. "Because we shall want to visit some of the mountain towns; and if you boys want to see anything of Tyrol we had better walk than take the train."

"Oh, I could be ready tonight," ventured the child, delighted beyond measure. But his uncle assured him the morning would be ample time, and the two lads skipped away to talk over the plans.

As the sun was just beginning to peep above the mountaintop, the party of three set off, with many admonitions from Frau Hofer to her child, and many also from Frau Müller that Ferdinand should not allow his cousin to be too adventuresome. But to this Leopold smiled.

"I am used to the mountains, auntie," he said. "Ferdinand will tire long before I do, you'll see."

How glorious it was to tramp thus, in vagabond fashion, over the mountains! They stopped wherever night overtook them, passed through Brixen, the wine center of much



"Tramp thus, in vagabond fashion,
over the mountains!"

importance in Tyrol, and on through narrow defiles through which there seemed no exit. A bracing walk of six miles from Brixen brought them to Klausen, or The Pass, so completely hidden among mountains there was but room for one long, narrow street.

"Well, I had no idea Klausen was quite so narrow," Herr Müller remarked. "I can well believe the tale of the barber, now."

"What barber, uncle?" asked Leopold.

"The barber of Klausen. You've never heard it? Well, there once lived a barber in this town who was old and full of rheumatism; he had a client whom he must shave every morning; but the poor barber found it very difficult to descend three flights of steps from his dwelling and ascend three more on the opposite side of the street, in order to shave his customer. He could not afford to lose this fee, yet it was exceedingly painful for him to attempt the climb.

"One morning he opened his window and called to his neighbor. Upon hearing the barber's voice, the man in the opposite house opened his window and asked what was wanted.

"'Allow me,' said the ingenious barber. 'I am unable to descend the stairs this morning; my rheumatism is getting the better of me. But, in order that you may not lose your shave, if you will lean a little way out of your window, I shall be able to accomplish the duty quite as well as though you were sitting in your chair in your room.'

"For a moment the man hesitated; but, as the village was small, and there was but one barber, it was either a question of going unshaved, or of following the fellow's advice. Accordingly, he consented; he stretched his neck far out of the window, the barber placed the towel beneath his chin, and, with all the dexterity in his power, he proceeded to shave his client; and thenceforth the barber performed this operation in a similar manner, quite to the satisfaction of them both."

They passed on through the village of Waidbruck, the very center of romanticism; for here, right at the mouth of the Grodenerthal, rises the fascinating Castle of Trostburg, the home of the Counts of Wolkenstein; and here was born Count Oswald, the last of all the long line of Minnesingers or troubadours, who found employment and enjoyment in

wandering from castle to castle, their harps or zithers under their arms, singing love-songs or reciting war-stories that stirred the young blood to action.

They climbed to the magnificent Castle of Hauerstein, so hidden among the mountain peaks and dense woods that one might imagine it to be the palace of the Sleeping Beauty; and then they diverged a few miles up the ravine in order to visit Santa Claus' shops, for such might be called the village of St. Ulrich with its countless numbers of toy shops. In every cottage men, women and young children busy themselves from morning until night, from one year's end to the other, in making toys; carved animals for Noah's Arks, dolls and wagons, to supply the world's demand of the children. Here, too, the very language is different from any other spoken roundabout; for the inhabitants, primitive in language as in everything else, still cling to the tongue of the Romans, which is today known as the Latin or Romansch tongue.

They passed the night at Botzen, and, as the sun sunk behind the lofty mountains just beyond, a gorgeous glow overspread their entire summit.

"Isn't it beautiful!" remarked the two lads almost at the same moment.

"And it looks just like a rose garden, too," added Leopold.

"It is a rose garden, child," answered Herr Müller. "It is called the Rosengarten or Gardl (Little Garden)."

"But is it possible, father," asked Ferdinand, "that roses will bloom on such lofty heights?"

"Well, this is the legend about it. Once upon a time, there lived an ugly dwarf who was king over all the underground sprites and elves in the mountains of Tyrol. He was in the habit of going forth from his palace, wrapped in a magic cloak which rendered him invisible. Now, it chanced that during one of these expeditions, Laurin went into the country of Styria, which lies right over there to the east. We shall pass that way on our return to Vienna. He saw a most beautiful maiden who was playing in a meadow with her attendants. Suddenly she disappeared from before the very eyes of her companions; they shouted, but no answer came back to them; in great dismay they fled back to the castle to report the news to the princess' brother Dietlieb.

"Dietlieb had heard of Laurin and his propensity for carrying off fair maidens; Dietlieb was a brave knight and had traveled far, so, as soon as he heard the news, he suspicioned at once that Laurin had done the deed. Immediately he set out for the city of Bern, where the king held his court, to demand that the dwarf be punished for his insolence. But the king was powerless against Laurin's magic; however, he warned Dietlieb not to attempt to approach too near the dwarf's domains, for it was guarded by four magnificent pillars of shining gold, and a fence of silken thread stretched between.

"'Remember,' said the king, 'should you happen to break so much as one strand of Laurin's fence, he will demand the forfeit of a foot and a hand.'

"In hot rage Dietlieb left the king's palace; what mattered to him Laurin's magic powers, if only he could recover his dear sister, the Princess Kunhild?

"With a few faithful companions he set out over the mountains until he reached the Rose garden before the dwarf's underground abode, the very sight of which so enraged the worthy knight that he tore away the silken

threads and destroyed the four gorgeous pillars.

"Within his subterranean palace, Laurin heard the destruction without; he mounted his war-horse, and putting on his magic belt, which endowed him with supernatural strength, he appeared at the door of the cave covered with sparkling jewels from head to foot.

"'Who has dared to enter my domains?' he shouted. 'And to destroy my garden? Let him who has done the deed stand forth that I may exact the punishment!'

"'Be not so hasty, Sir Laurin,' replied one of the knights, 'we will gladly repay you three, four-fold, if you wish, what you demand. The season is early and your roses will bloom again.'

"'I care not for your gold,' replied the indignant king; 'I have gold and to spare. I demand satisfaction, and satisfaction I shall have.'

"So saying, he spurred on his horse. There was a hotly contested battle; in the end, he was overpowered by Dietlieb, who had torn from him his magic belt, and thus robbed him of his strength.

"'Come,' said Laurin, 'let us not harbor ill feelings

against one another. Come into my palace, Sir Knights, and drink to the health of the fair Kunhild.'

"He led them through the door of the cave, down several long corridors at the end of each of which was a stout door, one of bronze, another of steel and a third of gold, and entered the banquet hall, where the table was gorgeously decorated with gold and silver and most rare flowers.

"As the dinner drew to a close—at which Kunhild had presided, dazzling with jewels—the knights fell into a sound doze; when they awoke each was locked securely in a separate cell with no means of communicating one with the other. But, when all was still, Kunhild entered her brother's dungeon and released him by the aid of her magic arts, which she had learned while captive.

"'Take this ring,' she said, 'gather up your weapons and flee for your life.'

"'But will you go with me?' he said.

"'I will come later,' she replied. 'But make your escape now before Laurin discovers us.'

"Dietlieb did not require a second bidding. The magic

of Laurin had penetrated through the stone walls of the cell, however, and he followed the knight to the outer earth and there they fought a terrible battle. When Laurin found himself yielding to the superior strength of the knight, he blew a shrill blast upon his golden horn, and five enormous giants appeared. Meanwhile Kunhild had not been idle; she had released the companions of her brother, who now rushed to the scene of the fray, and in spite of his magic arts, and his reinforcement of the five giants, Laurin was made prisoner and carried off into Styria. The garden was left uncared for, and little by little it died; but on just such evenings as this, one can see the gorgeous roses, which will bloom only as the sun descends."

"Do you think, father," said Ferdinand, "that there is really an underground palace in those mountains?"

"Well, that's what they say; many have tried to find the entrance, but the key has been lost; someday, one may be fortunate enough to find it, and then great riches will be his. It is my private opinion that within those mountains lie metals unknown to exist, and when one has opened the door to them, he will discover great riches in them."

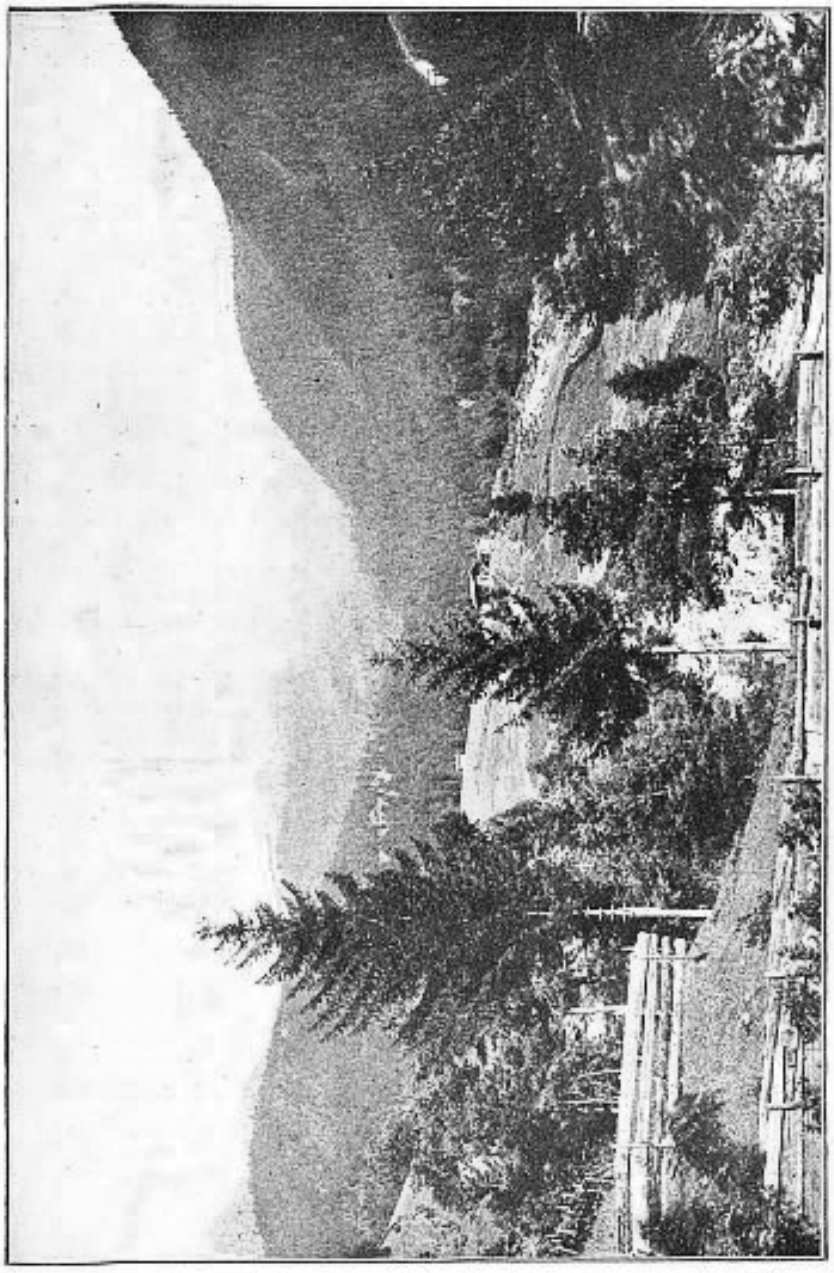
"I should like to gather just *one* rose, uncle," said Leopold. "I think mother would like to have one, for she has never seen the Rosengarten."

"You cannot do that, my boy, because they are not real roses; the rocks of the mountain are composed of magnesia and chalk, which take on these beautiful colors when the rays of the setting sun fall upon them; and it is only the sharp, jagged points of those rocks which simulate roses, that you see."

Another night would see them out of Tyrol, much to the regret of Ferdinand, for he had never imagined such an interesting land to exist.

"How did Tyrol come to belong to our country, father?" asked Ferdinand.

"Well, in the olden times," answered Herr Müller, "Tyrol was governed by counts who ruled like kings; but in 1363 a princess was the ruler; she was a woman with a very hasty temper and was nicknamed Pocket-mouthed Meg. Some say she received this nickname because her mouth was so extraordinarily large; but others tell a tale of her Bavarian cousin, who lived in the adjoining territory, who



The Rosengarten

struck her on the mouth during a quarrel. It certainly was not a very gentlemanly thing for the Bavarian cousin to do, but children were not brought up so carefully as they are today, and you must not think too harshly of this little Bavarian, which sounds quite like barbarian. But Queen Margaret could never forgive nor forget that blow; in after years, when her own son was dead, and her kingdom must be left to someone, she preferred to give it to her Habsburg cousins, who were Austrians, so that ever since, with the exception of a few years in which several nations struggled for possession of it, it has belonged to the Austrian Empire.

"You know Emperor Maximilian I, who was one of our greatest rulers, loved Tyrol best of all his provinces," continued Herr Müller.

"I don't blame him," replied Ferdinand, "I think he was quite right."

CHAPTER IX

The Habicht-Burg Ravens

From Botzen, the train took them through the Pusterthal, which is on the north boundary of Italy, and on to Villach in Carinthia, where they were to meet Herr Runkel. There were great demonstrations when he saw the two young lads.

"Have you never been to Dalmatia?" he asked them.

Both shook their heads negatively.

"What a splendid thing, then, that business called me to Zara," he replied, "for Dalmatia is one of the provinces of our empire which is different from any of the others. You see, in the first place, it is on the Adriatic Sea, and could one have vision that would carry that far, he might glance over into the opposite country of Italy. But, as if to make up for that lack of supernatural power, Italy has brought her customs and manners into Dalmatia, so we shall really be

seeing two countries at one time."

Through Carinthia the party made its way, over the Kara-Wanken Mountains into Istria and spent the night at Trieste. As neither of the boys had seen the sea before, it was a never-ending source of wonder and delight to them to wander about the wharves, to see the ships of many nations lying in the harbor, flying their flags of many colors, and to see the curious sights of a sea-town. There was nothing to remind them of Austria with its German customs, even the name of the city (Tergeste) being Roman, which was conquered by that nation, and colonized about B. C. 41. There are no longer strassen (streets), but vias, and piazzas (squares) take the place of platze. As in most Italian cities, there were narrow, winding streets, some of which were nothing more than mere flights of steps lined on each side, in place of a balustrade, with houses.

In the morning it had been arranged to make a hasty trip to Miramar, the charming residence of the Archduke Maximilian, the favorite brother of the emperor.

"Here it is," said Herr Müller, "that the ominous ravens warned the archduke of the fatality which should overtake

him in accepting the throne of Mexico at the instance of Napoleon III of France. And the raven's warning came true, for the unfortunate young prince never returned."

"Tell us about the ravens, father," said Ferdinand, as they stood upon the terrace before the villa, overlooking the wonderful Adriatic.

"Well, you know the house of Habsburg occupies the Austrian throne today," began Herr Müller.

"Yawohl," replied the two simultaneously.

"Well, many hundreds of years ago, the founder of the Habsburg dynasty, Count Rudolph, was born in a very ancient and formidable castle in the northern part of Switzerland, somewhere near Zurich. The castle was known throughout the country by the peculiar name of the Hawk's Castle or Habicht-burg, from a story concerning one of the first counts who lived there.

"This was Count Gontran, of Altenbourg. He was a brave and gallant knight and loved to spend his time among the mountains hunting, when he was not away to the war. As he was so fearless in this sport, pursuing his enemy to the remotest spots of their lairs, he gained the sobriquet of

the 'Hawk Count' or Der Habicht Graf.

"One day he had climbed to the top of a most peculiarly shaped rock, which much resembled a fortress. In his eagerness to reach the summit he had lost sight of his companions; but in his joy at the marvelous panorama spread beneath him, he quite forgot all about them, and gave himself up only to the spell of the wildness surrounding him.

"Suddenly the air grew thick with moving objects; the sun was hidden from sight, and then the count realized that numberless vultures, whose habitation he had invaded, had gathered about the rock in swarms, waiting for their time to come when they might claim him their victim. But Der Habicht Graf was no craven; he made no attempt to fight; well he knew they would not attack him until he had passed that stage when he would be able to defend himself.

"All at once, while he thus stood defying his antagonists, a shrill cawing was heard on all sides; in a few moments the air was filled with innumerable ravens who seemed to have appeared from out the very heavens, so silently and unexpectedly had they come. There was a sharp battle between

the two swarms, the smaller birds being able to drive off the larger on account of their greater numbers. And then, when all vestige of both feathered tribes had disappeared, Count Gontran was able to find his way down the almost inaccessible rock, where he joined his companions at its base, who had given him up for lost, as their shouts had failed to reach him, and no answering call came back to them.

"From that day Der Habicht Graf chose the raven for his pennon; he became their protector, feeding them in winter, until, as time went on, they became verily a pest.

"Der Habicht Graf died, and others came into possession of Der Habicht-burg. There was little sentiment in these descendants concerning the ravens, and when Count Rudolph succeeded to the estate in 1240, he had them all driven away or killed. Ever since that time, the birds have taken a peculiar delight in foretelling disaster to the house of Habsburg (as Habicht-burg has been corrupted into). And right here, in this garden," continued Herr Müller, "was where the ravens came and flew about the heads of the Archduke Maximilian and his young wife Carlota

before they left on that fatal journey."

"What happened then, father?"

"Surely you must know. The Mexicans refused to accept a foreign ruler; he was sentenced to be shot, and although Carlota made the trip to France three times to beg Napoleon III to save her husband, the emperor was deaf to all her appeals."

"That was because Napoleon was not born a king, father," remarked Ferdinand. "Had he been truly royal, he would have saved Maximilian."

Herr Müller made no further comment, but shook his head slowly in an affirmative nod.

From Trieste the boat was taken to Pola, one of the oldest cities in the country, quite at the extreme tip of Istria. Although the Romans built a city here in 178 B. C., yet many of the ancient landmarks remain, among which, outside the ancient city walls, stands the splendid Amphitheatre where gladiators fought and wild beasts contended with human beings for supremacy.

As Herr Runkel was obliged to make Zara on a specified day, they were not permitted to linger in the Istrian

peninsula, with its almost continuous olive-groves and vineyards, famous throughout the world; but boarding a small steamer they slowly made their way to the sea-coast town of Zara in Dalmatia, stretching like a lizard along the Adriatic.

No longer was there sign of modernism or progress; every object, every peasant spoke of the past, of long-flown glory, and of poverty. One could almost imagine himself back in those days, six hundred or more years before Christ, when the Argonauts inhabited the spot, and who, in turn, ceded to the Celts and they to the inevitable Romans. Then Charlemagne coveted Dalmatia; later the influential Venetians wrested it from the Germans; and in 1798 it was finally ceded to Austria, to whom it has ever since belonged, except for a short period when it belonged to France.

The peasants were gorgeous in their gay costumes; there were men in light-colored trousers, very tight fitting, laced with fancy cords of gold or silver thread, and most elaborately embroidered about the pockets in front; there were short jackets of bright cloth designed in intricate fashion in

tinseled thread, with tassels about the edges; there were women with blue skirts, very short, over which was an apron so heavily embroidered that it seemed more like an Oriental rug than a bit of cloth, while the bodice was one mass of embroidery. Every conceivable spot was embroidered; about the neck, the shoulders, down the front and at the wrists. There was color, color, color; fringes and tassels and gold thread, as if these poor gewgaws could make up to the peasant for all the poverty he suffered and the monotony of his life. But how charming they did look in their apparel; if their lives were not the sunniest, they surely tried to embody the very sunlight into their clothing, and that helps a lot, for they were never so happy as when decked in their gayest, wearing the hand-made filigree silver ornaments about their necks, in their ears and upon their fingers, even about their waists, which no persuasion nor hunger can prevail upon them to part with.

Herr Runkel's younger brother Max was an apprentice in Zara; his term was about to expire and some arrangement must be made for the future. It was this which had brought Herr Runkel to Zara. While he was busy with his brother's

affairs, the rest of the party wandered about the ancient city; they visited the market-place, alive and riotous with brilliant coloring; they inspected the wharves, and commented upon St. Mark's Lion, which reposed over the entrance-gate from the harbor, in the city wall, a relic of Venetian invasion, as if that stone lion was yet watching for the return of his people. They even crossed over to the islands, which lie like so many bits of broken mainland, to watch the fishing which is so remunerative, the sardine fishery being one of the greatest sources of revenue of the country.

His business terminated satisfactorily, Herr Runkel suggested they might return by way of the provinces of Bosnia, Croatia and Styria, because these held such wonders in sightseeing for the children.

CHAPTER X

Through Dalmatia and the Border-Lands

Early the following morning they made their start, packs on backs, over the low, waste lands of Dalmatia. The sun was burning hot; nothing but extensive plains of desert met the eye; far in the distance were low mountains, which glistened in the scorching sun with a startling whiteness, most dazzling to the eyes. There was a sameness about the landscape which wearied the boys.

"I certainly should not like to live here," remarked Leopold; "it is not so nice as Tyrol; there is too much barrenness, and too much dazzling whiteness."

"Nevertheless," replied his uncle, "this is a fine country; the wine and olive oil are famous the world over, to say nothing of the fruit and flowers. If you did but stop to think about it, most of the fruit and flowers we have in Vienna out of season come from this region."

"But how can anything grow in a desert?"

"We shall soon see," replied his uncle. "Dalmatia looks baked, but it is extremely productive."

After some time, the soil began to grow more and more irregular. Great stones lay upon the surface, and immense fissures opened up at irregular distances.

"Now, my boy, can you call this a desert?" asked Herr Müller. "Here are the gardens of Dalmatia."

"The gardens?" exclaimed both children.

"Yes."

"But I see nothing but great ravines," said Leopold.

"They are not ravines, child, but great cracks opened up in the swampy soil which has burst asunder from the terrific heat of the sun. But that is what saves the country from starvation; on the bottom of these fissures are deposits of fertile soil washed into them by the rains, and here the peasant plants his crops. Here you see one too narrow to plant anything in, but over there," and he pointed to the immediate right, "is one which stretches a mile or more."

"How interesting!" exclaimed Ferdinand. "But what a queer place to plant crops."

At the farm-house, a low, uninviting hut with thatch roof, they stopped to fill their flasks. The farmer led them to the rear of the house where was a huge tank of stagnant water.

"But we cannot drink that," said Herr Runkel, astonished.

"It is all there is," remarked the peasant. "In Dalmatia we drink rain water. It is all we have. There are no streams in Dalmatia except in the mountains, and often those are underground."

"Underground?" cried Ferdinand. "How do you get the water then?"

"Oh, the water runs along in the limestone until it meets with some obstruction, or when it deems it time to appear upon the surface, then it will flow on in a fine stream for some distance, when perhaps it will disappear again for awhile."

"I never heard of such a thing," said Leopold, to whom water was so very plentiful in Tyrol.

"It is a wise precaution of Nature," answered the peasant. "In these hot lands, were it not for this provision, the

streams would soon dry up."

"But why don't you convey this water from the mountains to your home?" asked Herr Müller.

"That costs too much; we have no money to spend on luxuries; we have the rain and we gather the water as it falls."

Walking on, having thanked the peasant for his courtesy, they came in sight of a convent.

"Now we shall have some fresh water, I am bound," said Herr Müller. "Convents are always well supplied with refreshments of all kinds."

A friar in brown costume opened the door to them and ushered them into a cool courtyard, paved with brick, in which were small openings at regular intervals. At the well in the centre of the court the flasks were filled with delicious, clear, cool water.

"It surprises me," said Herr Runkel, "that you have such delicious water here, while just below, a mile or two, the peasant told us there was no water available for miles around, except rain water."

"He is quite right, too," returned the affable friar. "If it

were not for the rain we should all perish; but the peasant does not take the pains to collect the rain in just the same manner as we do."

He then explained to them the method of obtaining the drinking water. The earth under the brick pavement was dug out to the depth of several feet; the sides and bottom were lined with some hard substance, sometimes clay, sometimes cement, to form a foundation to the cistern. In the middle of the pit was built a well of brick; fine, clean sand was then put in to the level of the court; the brick pavement was then laid, through the openings of which the rain passed into the bed of sand, and, as it seeped through the brick well eventually the sand filtered the water from all impurities and imparted to it a taste, without which it would have been "flat."

A brief rest, and some slight refreshment, upon which the friar insisted, and the travelers plodded on; they passed peasants pushing crude wooden ploughs such as have been in use since long-forgotten ages, but which seem specially adapted to the rocky, stubborn soil of Dalmatia. And being so close to the border of Bosnia they encountered Bosnian

peasants, fine tall men much like Turks in their costumes, for Turkey lies just next door on the south. The Bosnian Mohammedan women veil their faces like the Turkish women, and wear white garments with an apron of many colors, not outdoing, however, the men with their gold embroidered vests, their scarlet jackets and the fez upon their heads. A curious contrariety of nature is, that although the Bosnians and Herzegovians dislike the Turk, nevertheless they cling to the Turkish costume with pertinacity. So deep was their hatred of the Turk that these two provinces combined and placed themselves under the Austrian rule.

As night approached, the travelers made their way towards a very large, low house surrounded with outbuildings, and all enclosed by a strong palisade of timbers built for defense.

"We shall pass the night at the Community House," said Herr Runkel.

"A Community House?" repeated Leopold.

"Yes. You see, in the olden times, the borders of this country, and the neighboring ones, Serbia, Bosnia, Croatia

and Romania, were constantly being overrun by the Turks, who have always been the dread of nations, their cruelty being proverbial. The inhabitants of these border-countries were forced to protect themselves, as in unity was their strength. Consequently, they built a Community or General House in which the villagers might live together for mutual protection, and mutual benefit as well."

"But they don't have wars to fear any more, do they?" asked Ferdinand.

"No. Nevertheless custom of long-standing cannot be lightly laid aside. Our empress Maria-Theresa, seeing the advantage these communities afforded as a means of defense, had a long line of them built, seven thousand miles long, from the Carpathian Mountains on the east of Transylvania to the sea-coast in Croatia to protect the border from the Turks, but now these fortifications have been abandoned. However, isolated Communities remain, being a part of the customs of Serbia, and you will find them vastly different from anything you have yet seen."

It was quite late in the afternoon; the sun had not yet sunk, because the days were at their longest; however, it

was certainly dinnertime, if not past, and the party were hungry.

Knocking at the door of the largest and most important-looking building, which was of timber, and one story only, it was opened by a young man in Serbian costume who ushered them into the room. It was an enormous room, to say the least; in the centre extended a wooden table set for the evening meal, and about which were already seated the inhabitants of the Community.

The eldest man, who had the honor to be, at the time, the Stareshina or Hausvater, arose from his seat and greeted the strangers.

"And may we have the honor of receiving you as our guests?" he asked, simply.

Herr Runkel thanked him, and explained that they were on a tour of the provinces with the lads, and should be most grateful for a night's shelter. Room was made for them at the table, and right heartily were they received by the Zadruga, or Community family. The two boys were lost in admiration of all they saw; and although they were plied with cheeses and meats and bread, and even fruits of all

kinds, yet their hunger seemed to have left them in their wonderment. At one end of the great room was a brick stove or sort of fireplace, the largest either of the lads had ever seen. To carry off the smoke from the blazing logs, was built a huge canopy, round and very large at the bottom, tapering to a small circumference at the top, and allowing the smoke to escape through the open roof at that point. Over the fire, but high enough to prevent them being burned, were cross-beams from which hung huge pieces of beef, bacons, hams and all sorts of meat smoking for future use, while the cooking was done in huge pots of iron suspended by chains from the beams.

The women were dressed in white linen bodices with long, flowing sleeves; their skirts were a combination of two wide aprons, one at the front and one at the back, over which was another smaller apron elaborately embroidered in brilliant colors. About their waists were scarlet sashes, with a second somewhat higher up of the same brilliant hue; red leather high boots, filigree silver ornaments or beads about their necks, and on their heads a filmy veil with fancy border fastened to the hair with a silver pin, and

hanging far down over their shoulders like a mist. In this most picturesque costume they certainly resembled our scarlet flamingo or bird-of-paradise more than anything else one could think of.

The men, too, were splendid in their gay costumes; loose trousers like the Turks, with top-boots of black leather; scarlet vests embellished with silver thread and silver buttons, and white coats, very long, reaching almost to the boots.

The meal finished, the Stareshina (the presiding elder of the Zadruga) and his wife, the Domatchina (which means homekeeper), arose and thus gave the signal for the others to arise. Those women whose allotted work it was to attend to the clearing of the table, betook themselves to the task. The Domatchina arranges all the work to be done by each during the week, and turn about is taken, so that there may be no cause for dissatisfaction, while the Stareshina attends to the matters of the farm. Thus harmony always prevails; prosperity reigns wherever these Communities are established, and happiness is paramount.

Although there seemed no apparent necessity for a fire,

fresh logs were added. The men brought out their pipes, drew up the benches toward the hearth and began conversation. Some brought their musical instruments; the women sat with their spinning or sewing, while the little girls even were occupied with elaborate embroideries for their trousseaux later in life, which are always begun in childhood.

There was great unity and happiness in the circle. Amid laughter, song and anecdotes the evening passed; as the hour advanced the Stareshina conducted evening prayers. Goodnight was said by all, and each family betook himself to his own vayat (hut) outside the main building or Koutcha, which alone was reserved for the use of the Stareshina and the unmarried members of his family. As soon as one of his family should marry, he would have a separate vayat built for him about the Koutcha.

The travelers were conducted to the guest-house, reserved solely for that purpose, and long into the night the children lay and talked over the strange customs they had seen, and plied their elders with endless questions as to the meaning of it all.

"Let them be children, Fred," said Herr Runkel. "We brought them on this trip to learn," and he explained to them those things they wished so much to know. That the Slavs never allow their hearth-fire to die out, no matter how hot the season, for as surely as they do, all sorts of evils would befall them; that is one of the unswerving superstitions of the nation. The fire of their hearth is as a sacred flame to them, which must be tended and cared for with unremitting zeal, which harks back to the days of paganism when the fire was looked upon as the most sacred thing in their religion, and was kept ever burning in their temples and public places; finally it became the custom for each family to have his own hearth or fire, but the superstition that should it die out it would bring all sorts of maledictions upon the household, has remained. No doubt the difficulty of obtaining the fire by means of friction (matches of course, being unknown) accounted for the careful preservation of the flame. However it be, the Slavs still retain the ancient custom.

He explained to them how the House father and the House mother of this great family are elected by vote,

serving a given number of years; sometimes one, sometimes more, as custom establishes; but usually the eldest man in the Community holds that post of honor, while his wife is the House mother. He told the lads how the farm is worked by each member of the Zadruga under the supervision and instruction of the Stareshina, each receiving his share, according to his labor, at the end of the season, the finances being in charge of the House father. He told them how many of the young men, longing for higher education at the universities or in the arts, such as painting, etc., were sent by the Zadruga to the city which afforded the best advantages for them, the expenses being borne by the Community funds, should there not be sufficient to the young men's credit to pay for it, entirely; this extra sum being repaid when the students should be in position to do so.

The children were fascinated with the Community, where everyone seemed so happy and well cared for; and they begged to be allowed to remain many days, but Herr Müller reminded them that Frau Müller would be awaiting them at Gratz.

"But we shall come again, *nicht wahr, mein Vater?*" asked

Ferdinand.

"Yes, we shall come again, and soon maybe," he replied.

"And I, too?" queried Leopold.

"Naturlich."

Off in the morning, the party journeyed through the southeastern portion of Carniola, so rich in mountains and minerals. There were unusual sights to be seen here, too; huge caverns were fashioned in the rocks, and grottoes of curious formations. They saw the peasant women making lace, a product for which the province is particularly famed.

At Marburg, Herr Runkel and Leopold Hofer bade farewell to their companions, and boarded the train for Innsbruck where Herr Hofer would meet his young son; while Herr Müller and Ferdinand continued on up into Styria to the city of Gratz, where Frau Müller awaited them.

Styria, or Steiermark, is a splendid province of the Austria-Hungarian empire, famous even in the time of the Romans, for its production of ore, and holding today an important place in the commercial world for its minerals. Gratz, the capital, is a charming city with an excellent university, and lies on the River Mur. It has been said of it that

it is "La Ville des Grâces sur la rivière de l'Amour" (the favored city on the river of Love) being a play upon words, amour (love) being interpreted Mur.

Of course there was an excursion to the Castle-hill, where formerly stood the ancient castle; and Herr Müller pointed out to the children the spot where Charles II ordered twenty thousand books of the Protestant faith to be burned in public.

A few days' visit and they were once more on their way for Vienna, and home. Ferdinand's tongue had never ceased to chatter, there were so many interesting details to report to the mother; and when Vienna was reached it did seem as if the child never could settle down to life in the City, after his splendid rambles about the open country, wandering where he willed.

"Father," he remarked, after some days at home, "we did not go to Moravia. We visited all the provinces except that."

"Yes, it is true," replied his father, "but, you know, we lingered longer than we intended, and Teresa is due to arrive shortly. We shall have to reserve Moravia for another

vacation-time. I think you will not find the customs there very different, however, from those of Bohemia.* But I should like to have you see Olmutz, the ancient capital of Moravia, where our emperor Franz-Joseph was proclaimed king."

* Our Little Bohemian Cousin

CHAPTER XI

Vienna

With the arrival of Teresa Runkel busy days followed; visits to the Prater, which Emperor Joseph II had dedicated to the public for a playground and recreation park; to the Capuchin Church, where lie the remains of the imperial families from the time of Matthias I in 1619, and where the ill-starred Duke of Reichstadt (L'Aiglon), the only son of Napoleon of France, lies buried among his kinsfolks, as well as his imperial mother, Marie Louise. And, best of all, there was the excursion to the Castle of Laxenburg just outside Vienna, one of the imperial chateaux, standing in the midst of a miniature island, which is reached by a tiny ferry boat, quite as though it were some ancient feudal castle with its moat, minus the drawbridge and portcullis.

Here they were frightened nearly out of their senses while inspecting the dungeons, at hearing an automaton

chained to the wall shake its cumbersome fetters as if he were some prisoner living out his days in the hopelessness of the dungeon. But Herr Müller quieted the alarms of the young girl by explaining the pleasantry of the custodian, who gives his visitors thrills, which is what they really come for, as he says.

"I wish you could be here for the ice-carnival, Teresa," said Ferdinand, after one busy day's sight-seeing. "It's wonderful, with the lake all lit up by electric lights and lanterns, and tiny booths dotted here and there, and skaters in their furs and gay gowns. Can't you manage to come at Christmas time?"

"I should love to," she replied. "I'll write and ask brother Franz if I may."

"And maybe mother will let us go to one of the masked balls," the lad said, half hesitatingly, for he knew this would, indeed, be a privilege.

"Scarcely yet, Ferdinand; children do not attend balls; but there are countless other festivities for children, which would delight Teresa much more than a masked ball at which she could but look on. It is far better to be a

participant, isn't it, my dear?"

"Oh, much," answered the child, politely. Nevertheless, she did wish she might see the ball.

A few days later Ferdinand and his mother drove the Austrian girl to the railroad station, where she was met by the Sister who would conduct her and others to the Convent.

At the conductor's call "Einsteigen!" the doors of the train were fastened, and Ferdinand waved farewell to his little friend, through whose childish head flashed visions of a merry Yule-tide to come, passed in the home of her friends, with dances and parties, and skating and endless merriment.

THE END

Our Little Hungarian Cousin

Mary F. Nixon-Roulet
Illustrated by John Goss



"He . . . quickly began a little tune."

Preface

A part of the great Austrian Empire, Hungary, is a kingdom in itself, with its own laws and its own government. Through this land runs the "beautiful blue Danube," with castles and towns upon its wooded banks; on one side the mountains, on the other the Great Plains.

Here dwell many races with quaint customs and quainter costumes, and it is of these people that you will read in Our Little Hungarian Cousin.

CHAPTER I

With the Tziganes

Banda Bela, the little Gypsy boy, had tramped all day through the hills, until, footsore, weary, and discouraged, he was ready to throw himself down to sleep. He was very hungry, too.

"I shall go to the next hilltop and perhaps there is a road, and some passerby will throw me a crust. If not, I can feed upon my music and sleep," he thought to himself, as he clambered through the bushes to the top of the hill. There he stood, his old violin held tight in his scrawny hand, his ragged little figure silhouetted against the sky.

Through the central part of Hungary flows in rippling beauty the great river of the Danube. Near to Kecskés the river makes a sudden bend, the hills grow sharper in outline, while to the south and west sweep the great grass plains.

Before Banda Bela, like a soft green sea, the Magyar plain stretched away until it joined the horizon in a dim line. Its green seas of grain were cut only by the tall poplar trees which stood like sentinels against the sky. Beside these was pitched a Gypsy camp, its few tents and huts huddled together, looking dreary and forlorn in the dim twilight. The little hovels were built of bricks and stones and a bit of thatch, carelessly built to remain only until the wander spirit rose again in their breasts and the Gypsies went forth to roam the green velvet plain, or float down the Danube in their battered old boats, lazily happy in the sun.

In front of the largest hut was the fire-pot, slung from a pole over a fire of sticks burning brightly. The Gypsies were gathered about the fire for their evening meal, and the scent of goulash came from the kettle. Banda Bela could hardly stand from faintness, but he raised his violin to his wizened chin and struck a long chord. As the fine tone of the old violin smote the night air, the Gypsies ceased talking and looked up. Unconscious of their scrutiny, the boy played a czardas, weird and strange. At first there was a cool, sad strain like the night song of some bird, full of the

gentle sadness of those without a home, without friends, yet not without kindness; then the time changed, grew quicker and quicker until it seemed as if the old violin danced itself, so full of wild Gypsy melody were its strains. Fuller and fuller they rose; the bow in the boy's fingers seeming to skim like a bird over the strings. The music, full of wild longing, swelled until its voice rose like the wild scream of some forest creature, then crashed to a full stop. The violin dropped to the boy's side, his eyes closed, and he fell heavily to the ground.

When Banda Bela opened his eyes he found himself lying upon the ground beside the Gypsy fire, his head upon a bundle of rags. The first thing his eyes fell upon was a little girl about six years old, who was trying to put into his mouth a bit of bread soaked in gravy. The child was dressed only in a calico frock, her head was uncovered, her hair, not straight and black like that of the other children who swarmed about, but light as corn silk, hung loosely about her face. Her skin was as dark as sun and wind make the Tziganes, but the eyes which looked into his with a gentle pity were large and deep and blue.

"Who are you?" he asked, half conscious.

"Marushka," she answered simply. "What is your name?"

"Banda Bela," he said faintly.

"Why do you play like the summer rain on the tent?" she demanded.

"Because the rain is from heaven on all the Tziganes, and it is good, whether one lies snug within the tent or lifts the face to the drops upon the heath."

"I like you, Banda Bela," said little Marushka. "Stay with us!"

"That is as your mother wills," said Banda Bela, sitting up.

"I have no mother, though her picture I wear always upon my breast," she said. "But I will ask old Jarnik, for all he says the others do," and she sped away to an old Gypsy, whose gray hair hung in matted locks upon his shoulders. In a moment she was back again, skimming like a bird across the grass.

"Jarnik says you are to eat, for hunger tells no true tale," she said.

"I am glad to eat, but I speak truth," said Banda Bela calmly.

He ate from the fire-pot hungrily, dipping the crust she gave him into the stew and scooping up bits of meat and beans.

"I am filled," he said at length. "I will speak with Jarnik."

Marushka danced across the grass in front of him like a little will-o'-the-wisp, her fair locks floating in the breeze, in the half-light her eyes shining like the stars which already twinkled in the Hungarian sky.

The Gypsy dogs bayed at the moon, hanging like a crescent over the crest of the hill and silvering all with its calm radiance. Millions of fireflies flitted over the plain, and the scent of the ripened grain was fresh upon the wind.

Banda Bela sniffed the rich, earthy smell, the kiss of the wind was kind upon his brow; he was fed and warm.

"Life is sweet," he murmured. "In the Gypsy camp is brother kindness. If they will have me, I will stay."

Old Jarnik had eyes like needles. They searched through Banda Bela with a keen glance and seemed to pierce his heart.



"Searched through Banda Bela
with a keen glance"

"The Gypsy camp has welcome for the stranger," he said at length. "Will you stay?"

"You ask me nothing," said Banda Bela, half surprised, half fearing, yet raising brave eyes to the stern old face.

"I have nothing to ask," said old Jarnik. "All I wish to know you have told me."

"But I have said nothing," said Banda Bela.

"Your face to me lies open as the summer sky. Its lines I scan. They tell me of hunger, of weariness and loneliness, things of the wild. Nothing is there of the city's evil. You may stay with us and know hunger no longer. This one has asked for you," and the old man laid his hand tenderly upon little Marushka's head. "You are hers, your only care to see that no harm comes to these lint locks. The child is dear to me. Will you stay?"

"I will stay," said Banda Bela, "and I will care for the child as for my sister. But first I will speak, since I have nothing to keep locked."

"Speak, then," said the old man. Though his face was stern, almost fierce, there was a gentle dignity about him and the boy's heart warmed to him.

"Of myself I will tell you all I know," he said. "I am Banda Bela, son of Šafařik, dead with my mother. When the camp fell with the great red sickness* I alone escaped. Then was I ten years old. Now I am fourteen. Since then I have wandered, playing for a crust, eating seldom, sleeping beneath the stars, my clothes the gift of passing kindness. Only my violin I kept safe, for my father had said it held always life within its strings. 'Not only food, boy,' he said, 'but joy and comfort and thoughts of things which count for more than bread.' So I lived with it, my only friend. Now I have two more, you—" he flashed a swift glance at the old man, "and this little one. I will serve you well."

"You are welcome," said old Jarnik, simply. "Now, go to sleep."

Little Marushka, who had been listening to all that had been said, slipped her hand in his and led him away to the boys' tent. She did not walk, but holding one foot in her hand, she hopped along like a gay little bird, chattering merrily.

"I like you, Banda Bela, you shall stay."

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* Smallpox

CHAPTER II

Along the Gypsy Trail

Banda Bela found life in the Gypsy camp quiet, but not unpleasant. He had a place to sleep and food to eat. Jarnik was good to him and Marushka his devoted friend. Rosa, a young and very pretty Gypsy girl, was kind to the waif, and the rest of the tribe paid no attention to him. What was one ragged boy, more or less, to them? The camp fairly swarmed with them.

Since the Tziganes had crossed the mountains from India many hundred years ago, they had wandered about Hungary, and the Gypsies to whom Banda Bela had come were of the Gletecore, or wandering Gypsies, a better race than the Kortoran who dwell in mud huts or caves near the villages.

The Gletecore are never still. They wander from one end of Hungary to the other, playing their music, begging,

stealing, sometimes carving little utensils out of wood, or tinkering for the living which seems to come to them easily, perhaps because they want but little.

There was little that Banda Bela could do, but he waited upon old Jarnik, ran errands, watched Marushka, and caught many a fine fish from the river for the fire-pot. The Danube was full of fish, delicious in flavour.

Always the little boy could make music, and his violin charmed many an hour for him, while Marushka, ever following at his heels like a little dog, learned to love his music scarcely less than he did.

One morning Marushka wakened Banda Bela by calling loudly:

"Banda Bela! Come! The sun is up. Stepan has come back, and they move the camp today!"

Banda Bela sprang to his feet and hurried out of the tent. Already there were signs of stir in the camp. Stepan, a young Gypsy chief, was standing beside the cart which was being loaded with camp utensils. Banda Bela had not seen him before, for the chief had been away from the band ever since the boy came.

Stepan was six feet tall; part of his coal-black hair was braided into a tight knob over his forehead, the rest hung down in matted, oily locks upon his shoulders. In his mouth was a long Weixel-wood pipe, and he wore a loose, white, cotton shirt gathered around the neck, and baggy white trousers. He was very handsome and his copper-coloured skin shone as if it was polished. All about him swarmed children and dogs, while the older Gypsies were packing up the camp effects and loading them into the two or three carts, which patient horses stood ready to draw.

"Eat quickly," cried Marushka. "There is but a crust left, I saved it for you. We go on the road today, and hunger will gnaw your stomach before we camp again." Banda Bela took the food, ate it hurriedly, and ran up to Stepan.

"Let me help," he said briefly.

"Who are you and what can you do?" the young chief looked him over keenly.

"I am Banda Bela. I can make music with my violin, swing an adze, cut bowls from wood, drive a horse, row a boat, catch fish, do as I am bid, and keep my tongue silent," he said.

"If you can do the last two things you have already learned much," said Stepan. "Go and help Jarnik load, for he is old and feels himself young."

Banda Bela nodded and went over to where the old man was loading one of the carts. He helped as best he could and soon the wagons were loaded and the camp deserted. The Gypsies had taken the road. It was a beautiful day. The wind blew cool and free from the river, which swept along at the foot of wooded heights, gleaming like glass in the morning sun. Ducks splashed in the water, and now and then Banda Bela saw the waters boil and bubble. Something black would flash above the surface, there would be a splash and a swirl of waters, and the radiating ripples reached the shore as a great fish would spring into the air, flash in the sunlight, and sink into the waters again.

Steamers passed down the stream on their way to Budapest, or towing huge barges filled with the peasants' teams and wagons, loaded with grain to be ground at the quaint water mills, built on piles out in the stream where the current was so strong as to turn the huge wheels quickly and grind the grain, raised on the great plains of the south.

To the north the mountains rose blue and beautiful. The boy saw all. His eyes shone; his cheek was flushed.

"Good is the Gypsy trail," he said to himself. "Sun, light, and wind, all free, and I am with mine own people. Life is sweet."

All day long the carts rumbled along. When the sun was high overhead the Gypsies rested beside the river. Banda Bela caught some fish, and Rosa cooked them for supper.

Next day they turned from the river and travelled over the plains. There was no shade. To the right stretched great fields of maize and flax. The dust was white and fine, and so hot it seemed almost to prick their faces like needles. It rose in white clouds around the carts and followed them in whirling columns.

In front of them from time to time other clouds of dust arose, which, upon nearing, they discovered to be peasant carts, driven with four or six horses, for the peasants in this part of Hungary are rich and prosperous. The soil is fertile and yields wonderful crops, though for ninety years it has had no rest, but the peasants are not tempted to laziness by the ease with which things grow. They begin their day's

work at three o'clock in the morning and work until eight or nine at night, eating their luncheon and supper in the fields.

Banda Bela saw many of them, fine, tall fellows, working easily and well, but in his heart he was glad that he did not have to toil under the hot sun.

Shepherds were seated here and there in the fields, looking like small huts, for they wore queer conical bundas which covered them from their necks to their knees. These sheepskin coats are worn both winter and summer, for the shepherds say they keep out heat as well as cold.

The shepherds must watch the flocks by day and night, and when the weather is wet they sleep sitting on small round stools to keep them from the damp ground. Toward dark the Gypsy band halted by the roadside, near to a group of shepherds' huts. Here they were to stop for the night and Banda Bela was glad, for his legs ached with fatigue. He had walked nearly all day except for a short time when Marushka had asked to have him ride in the cart and play for her.

The shepherds greeted the Tziganes kindly. Jews and

Armenians the Hungarians dislike, but for the Gypsies there is a fellow feeling, for all Hungarians love music and nearly all Tziganes have music at their fingers' ends and in their velvet voices.

The Gypsies pitched their tents and Banda Bela stole aside from the camp to play his beloved violin. He tuned it and then gently ran his bow up and down the strings and began a soft little melody. It was like the crooning song of a young mother to her child. The boy was a genius, playing with wonderful correctness and with a love for music which showed in every note he sounded. The shepherds paused in preparing their evening meal and listened. When he ceased playing they called to him, "If you will play more you may eat with us."

"I will play gladly, and gladly will I eat," he answered, showing in a gleaming smile his teeth, even and white as a puppy's. In the pockets of the shepherds' coats were stored all manner of good things, bacon, black bread, and wine, even slivowitz, the wonderfully good Hungarian brandy, which Banda Bela had tasted only once in his life, but which the Gypsies make to perfection.

The shepherds' camp had a one-roomed, straw-thatched hut, which they used as a storehouse for their coats and extra food supplies. A great well was in front of the hut. It had a huge beam of wood with a cross-piece at the top and from this hung a bucket. The boy drew up a bucketful of the water and found it deliciously cold.

Near the camp was the shepherds' cooking hut, made of reeds tied together and with a hole in the top for the escape of the smoke. The hut looked like a corn shock with a door in one side. This door was open and Banda Bela saw a fire burning brightly, a pot hung over the embers, and a smell of kasa arose, as a tall shepherd tossed the meal and bacon into a kind of cake.

Marushka had strayed away from the Gypsies and now stood beside Banda Bela shyly watching the cooking in silence. She was a quiet little thing, with her golden hair unlike the bold, black-eyed little Gypsy children who rolled around the ground, half clad, snatching food from the pot and gnawing bones like hungry dogs.

"Who is this child?" asked one of the shepherds. "She is no Gypsy. What is your name, child?"

"I am Marushka," she answered sweetly. "Who are you?"

"I am a shepherd," he said, smiling at her.

"Do you tend sheep all day?" she demanded.

"No, once I was one of the juhasz,* but now I am past that. I am one of the gulyas,† and in another year I shall be among the csikos."‡

"Where are your oxen?" asked Marushka.

"There in the plain," he said, pointing to what looked like a great, still, white sea some distance away. As he spoke the sea seemed to break into waves, first rippling, then stormy, as the oxen rose to their feet, many of them tossing their heads in the air and bellowing loudly. They were immense creatures, perfectly white and very beautiful, with great dark eyes and intelligent faces.

"There are my children," said the shepherd. "But I am afraid there is a wind storm coming, for they show fear only of storm or fire." He watched the herd for a few moments,

* Swine-herd.
† Ox-herd.
‡ Horse-herd.

but though they snuffed the air they finally settled down quietly to rest again.

"Let us eat," said the shepherd. "Perhaps the storm has passed over."

How good the kasa tasted. The little Tziganes had never eaten it before, and they enjoyed it thoroughly.

The sun was sinking in the west, and the yellow fields of grain were gleaming as if tipped with gold. Dusk deepened, stars peeped out of the violet heavens. Here and there leaped sudden flame, as some shepherd, feeling lonely, signalled thus to a friend across the plain. Mists rose white and ghost-like; the land seemed turned to silver. The tired children turned to seek their camp to sleep when—

"Lie down!" cried one of the shepherds. "Lie flat on your faces and do not stir! A storm comes!" So urgent was the call that Banda Bela dropped at once flat upon the grass, grasping Marushka's hand and pulling her down beside him.

"Don't be afraid," he said. "Only lie still and the storm will pass above us." She lay like a little frightened bird, trembling and quivering, but saying nothing. The great

wind broke over them with a swirl as of fierce waters. It whistled and screamed, blowing with it a fine white dust, then as quickly as it had come it passed, and all was still. Banda Bela raised his head and looked around him. The wind had died down as suddenly as it had sprung up and the plain was so still that not even the grasses stirred. Their shepherd friends rose from the ground where they too had thrown themselves, and one of them called to the children to come back.

"Are you safe?" he asked.

"Oh, yes," said Banda Bela.

"I was frightened, but Banda Bela held my hand," said little Marushka. "Now I am very thirsty."

"The dust and wind always cause great thirst," said the herder. "But no one need be thirsty in the 'Land of a Thousand Springs!' Here is water cool and fresh in the great well, and a little sweet, white wine. Drink and then run quickly away to sleep, for it is late for small men and women."

"What are those giant things which stand so dark against the sky? They frighten me," cried Marushka, as she

clung to Banda Bela and looked behind the shepherds' huts.

"Only mighty haystacks, little one. Enough hay is there to last twenty regiments of soldiers fifty years, so that our cattle need never go hungry. Go now. Tomorrow you camp here and I will show you many things."

"Would that those children were mine," he said to himself as the two ran away to the camp. "The boy I like, he is clean and straight, and his music stirs my soul; but the little girl reaches my very heart."

CHAPTER III

At the Gulyas' Hut

From the Gypsy camp came sounds of wailing. Loud and long the howls arose and Banda Bela sprang from the ground where he had spent the night, to see what was the trouble. He found a group of Gypsies gathered around the door of one of the tents, the women seated on the ground, rocking back and forth, wailing, while the men stood in stolid silence. Then Marushka stole timidly to his side and whispered, "Oh, Banda Bela, old Jarnik is dead. He died in the night." The child's eyes were red with weeping. "They did not know it till the morning. Poor old Jarnik! He was so good and kind!"

Banda Bela looked anxious. Waif and stray that he was he had grown quickly to know his friends from his enemies. Jarnik had been his friend. Now that he was gone would the other Gypsies befriend him? The lonely boy had learned to

love little Marushka and hated the thought of leaving her, but he felt that without Jarnik he would not long be welcome in the Gypsy camp. Silently he took the child by the hand and led her away from the wailing crowd of Gypsies.

"We can do no good there, little one," he said. "Come with me. I have a bit of bread from yesterday." Marushka's sobs grew less as he seated her by the roadside and gave her bits of bread to eat.

"Do not cry, little one," he said gently. "Jarnik was old and tired and now he is resting. You must be all mine to care for now. I shall ask Stepan to give you to me." He thought over the last talk he had had with Jarnik.

"Take care of the little one," the old man had said. "She has no one here in all the tribe. She is not a Gypsy, Banda Bela. We found her one day beneath a tall poplar tree beside the road, far, far from here. She could scarcely speak, only lisp her name, ask for 'Mother,' and scold of 'bad Yda.' She was dressed in pretty white clothes and we knew she was the child of rich persons. My daughter had just lost her baby and she begged for the child, so we took her with us. The Gypsies say she will bring bad luck to the tribe, for

people say she is stolen, so you must care well for her. There are those in the tribe who wish her ill."

Banda Bela remembered this, and thought how he could protect the little girl from harm. Childlike, her tears soon dry, Maruskha prattled about the sunshine and the sky. As they sat, a huge cloud of dust came down the road. Nearing them, it showed a peasant cart drawn by five fine horses, and in it sat a large peasant woman, broad-bosomed and kindly faced. She smiled as the children stared up at her, and the cart rumbled on and stopped at the shepherds' huts.

Attracted by the gay harness of the horses, the children wandered toward them.

"Good morning, little folk," called out their friend of the night before. "Come and eat again with me. Here is my wife come to spend a few days with me. She has good things in her pockets." Marushka went up to the peasant woman and looked into her face and then climbed into her lap. "I like you," she said, and the woman's arm went around her.

"Poor little dirty thing!" she exclaimed. "I wish I had her at home, Emeric, I would wash and dress her in some of

Irma's clothes and she would be as pretty as a wild rose."

"I wash my face every morning," said Marushka, pouting a little. "The other Gypsy children never do." Her dress was open at the neck and showed her little white throat, about which was a string, and the shepherd's wife took hold of it.

"Is it a charm you wear, little one?" she asked.

"No, that is my mother's picture," said Marushka, pulling out of her dress a little silver medal.

"Let me see it." The shepherd's wife examined the bit of silver. "Emeric!" she called to her husband in excited tones. "See here! This is no Gypsy child! Beneath her dress her skin is white—her hair is gold—her eyes are like the sky, and around her neck she wears the medal of Our Lady. She is of Christian parents. She must have been stolen by those thieving Gypsies. What do you know of Marushka?" she demanded, turning to Banda Bela, but the boy only shook his head.

"I have been with the band only a few weeks," he said. "Old Jarnik told me that they found the child deserted by the roadside and took care of her."

"A likely story," sniffed the woman. "I shall go and see

this Jarnik!"

"But he cannot answer—" began Banda Bela, when the good woman interrupted—

"Not answer! Boy! there is no man, be he Gypsy or Christian, who will not answer me!" The shepherd nodded his head reminiscently.

"Jarnik won't," said Marushka. "He's dead!"

"Dead!" The woman was a little disconcerted.

"He died during the night," said Banda Bela. "There is great wailing for him now. We came away because nobody wanted us around. They will wail all day."

"Eat with us again, children," said the kind-hearted shepherd. "Your cheeks are the cheeks of famine. You are hungry, both eat! and the boy can make music for us. There will be time enough to question the Gypsies tomorrow."

Before the herder's hut a bough with several short branches protruding from it had been thrust into the ground, and upon these cooking pots had been hung. Soon goulash was simmering in the pot, and kasa was tossed together. The peasant's wife had brought bread and fine cheese, and curious-looking things which the children had

never seen before.

"These are potatoes," said she. "They are new things to eat in this part of the country. The Government wants to encourage the people to earn their living from the earth. So it has made a study of all that can be raised in the country. Hungary produces grapes, maize, wheat, cereals, hemp, hops, and all manner of vegetables, and the State helps the people to raise crops in every way that it can. About five years ago the head of the Department of Agriculture decided that the people should be taught to raise potatoes, which are cheap vegetables and very nourishing. Arrangements were made with three large farms at Bars, Nyitra, and Szepes, to raise potatoes from seeds sent them by the Department. The next season these potatoes were distributed for seed to smaller farmers, with the condition that they in turn distribute potatoes for seed to other farmers. In this way nearly everyone soon was raising potatoes.

"Sit and eat," said she, and the children feasted royally. There was white wine to drink, but Marushka had buffalo's milk, cool and sweet. The little girl's face was smiling and she looked bright and happy.

Then Banda Bela played his very best, for the kindness had won his heart.

"Can you sing, boy? Have you music in your throat as well as in your fingers?" asked the shepherd's wife.

"I sing a little, yes," he answered. "I will sing to you the 'Yellow Cockchafer,' which Czuika Panna sang to Ràkoczi."*

Cserebogár sarga cserebogár
Nem Kérdem én töled mi Korlesz nyár
Ast sem Kérdem sokáig élek e?
Csak azt mond meg rozsámé leszek e?

"Little Cockchafer, golden fellow,
I ask thee not when comes the summer time,
Nor do I ask how long shall life be mine.
I ask thee but to tell me
When I my love's shall be."

The boy's voice was sweet and true, and he sang the little song prettily, but so mournfully that tears streamed

* A famous Hungarian patriot.



down the broad, red face of the peasant woman.

"Why do you sing to break one's heart?" she demanded, and Banda Bela answered:

"I sang it but as my mother sang when she was here."

"She is dead, then?"

"She and my father, my brothers and sisters. I have no one left." The boy's face clouded.

"Me you have," said Marushka, with a funny little pout.

"I must go to my herd now," said the shepherd. "Come back tonight and we shall give you your supper for another

song."

They reached the shepherd's hut that evening to find his wife awaiting him, but he did not come. He was far away with his herd. As it grew dark his wife gave the children bread and milk and bade them hurry to bed.

"It is late for little children like you," she said. "To-morrow we will see you again. Today I asked about you at the camp and got but black looks in answer."

Banda Bela hurried Marushka away, fearing a scolding, for he had not meant to stay away all day, but when he reached the camp it was dark and still. The fire was nearly out under the fire-pot, the tent flaps were closed. He dared not waken anyone, but Dushka, an old Gypsy woman with an evil face, looked out from her tent.

"Oh, it is you, is it?" she said. "Well, there is no food left, but drink this and you will sleep," and she gave each of the children a mug of dark liquid. It tasted bitter but they drank obediently. Then the old woman took Marushka into her tent while Banda Bela threw himself down under a poplar tree near the fire embers, and was soon fast asleep.

CHAPTER IV

Deserted

Banda Bela slept heavily through the night. He dreamed in a confused way that he heard the Gypsies talking and one of them said, "She brings ill luck. Men ask of her white locks. The boy is well enough, though one more to feed. But the other brings ill fortune to the band." Another said, "No ill will come to them." Then he dreamed no more, but slept a dead and heavy sleep. He was awakened by a hand upon his shoulder. Someone shook him and he started to his feet to see the shepherd bending over him.

"What is it?" asked Banda Bela.

"Where is your camp and where is the little girl?" demanded the shepherd.

Banda Bela looked around him in amazement. Of the Gypsy camp there was not a trace left, save that dead embers lay where once the fire-pot had been. Tents, carts,

horses, Gypsies—all had vanished from the face of the earth as completely as if they had never been there.

"They have gone and left me!" cried Banda Bela. "Marushka! Where is Marushka?"

"Banda Bela!" called a faint voice behind him, and he turned quickly to see the little girl sitting under a great poplar tree, rubbing her eyes stupidly. He ran to her and the shepherd caught her in his arms.

"What happened in the tent last night?" asked Banda Bela.

"Rosa took me on her lap and cried," said Marushka, "then I went to sleep; but why am I here and where is Rosa?"

"During the night my wife awoke and heard faint sounds of stirring about outside the tent and muffled horses' hoofs. One of the horse herd is missing, many things are taken from the cook hut, and the Gypsies are gone. I do not know why we did not hear them more plainly when they passed," said the shepherd.

"They always tie up their horses' feet in rags when they travel at night," said Banda Bela. "Now they may be many

miles from here. No one knows where, for they always cover their tracks. Don't cry, Marushka, I'll take care of you."

"You are but a child yourself," said the shepherd. "Come to my hut and eat and then we shall see what is to be done."

Marushka dried her tears and followed Banda Bela. In silence the two children ate the bread and milk the shepherd's wife prepared for them. Then Banda Bela said:

"Stay here, Marushka. I am going to the cross-roads to see if they have left a sign for us, but I do not think it at all likely."

"What sign would they leave?" asked the shepherd.

"When they go and wish their friends to follow they leave at each cross-road a twig pointing in the direction they have gone. For fear one would think it but a stray twig they cross it with another, and the Gypsy always watches for the crossed branches when following a trail."

"You may look, but you will find no crossed branches at the cross-roads," said the peasant, as Banda Bela ran off. The peasant and his wife talked together in low tones. Soon the boy came back and shook his head mournfully.

"They have left no trail," he said. "They left us behind

on purpose."

"The draught they gave you was drugged," said the shepherd. "Tell me, Banda Bela, what will you do?"

"I must take Marushka and go to the city," said the boy. "By walking slowly and often carrying her we can do it. In the city I can play in the streets and earn bread for both."

"But do you like the city? It is noisy and dirty. You will not be free as on the wild," said the peasant's wife.

"I shall like it not at all," said the boy. "But there is nothing else."

"If Marushka will come and live with me I will care for her as my child," said the shepherd's wife. "She shall have clean clothes and plenty to eat and a garden with flowers. Will you come, little one?"

Marushka looked up into the kind face and smiled. "I will come if Banda Bela may come also," she said. The shepherd laughed.

"I told you, Irma, it was useless to take the one without the other. Take both. Banda Bela will serve you well, of that I am sure."

"That I will," said the boy heartily. "Only take care of

Marushka and sometimes let me play my music and I will do all that you tell me."

"In this world one can but try," said the shepherd's wife, "then see if good or evil come. I have not the heart to leave these two waifs to starve on this great plain. Come, Emeric, the horses! It will be night before I reach home and there will be much to do."

Almost before the children knew it they found themselves seated beside the shepherd's wife as the cart was whirled along in the opposite direction from which they had come.

They passed country carts made of a huge pine beam with a pair of small wheels at either end. Gay parties of peasants were seated on the pole, the feet braced against a smaller pole.

"What queer-looking people," said Marushka.

"They are not Magyars," said Banda Bela.

"How did you know that?" asked Aszszony Semeyer.

"My father told me many things of Hungary as we travelled together," said the boy. "He told me all the history of how the country first belonged to the Magyars. I

remember it almost in the very words he told me."

"What did he say?" demanded Aszszony Semeyer.

"'Many hundreds of years ago the Hungarian people,' he said," began Banda Bela, "'were shepherds who tended their flocks upon the plains of Scythia. The story is that Nimrod, son of Japhet and Enet, his wife, went into the land of Havila, where Enet had two sons, Hunyar and Magyar. These grew up to be strong and to love the chase. One day, as they hunted, they heard sounds of music. These they followed, and came to the hut of the 'Children of the Bush,' where there were two daughters of the king, singing beautifully.

"'Hunyar and Magyar married these two sisters, and their lands were not enough. Westward they moved, from the children of Hunyar coming the Huns, from Magyar's children, the Magyars.

"'They conquered many peoples, but left to each its customs. All were ruled under one chief. So that is why we have so many different peoples today.'"

"You know more than I do, Banda Bela," said Aszszony Semeyer.

"My father used to tell me many stories and legends, but I never remembered them very well."

"Marushka, you will be very tired before you reach the village. Curl up on the seat and perhaps you can take a nap."

"Yes, Aszszony," Marushka said obediently, and she and Banda were very quiet.

It was a long drive, but at last the cart rattled down the street of a large village and drew up in front of a white house. Marushka was already asleep and had to be carried into the house. Banda Bela stumbled along after the shepherd's wife and, though with his eyes half shut, obediently ate the bread and milk she put before him. Then he found himself on the kitchen floor before a huge tub of water, with a cake of soap and a large towel.

"Strip! Scrub!" commanded Aszszony Semeyer. "Scrub till you are clean from head to foot, then dry yourself, and I will bring you some clothes. You will never see these again." She picked up a brass tongs from the huge fireplace and with them carried the boy's rags out of the room, her nose fairly curling at the corners with disgust.

Banda Bela did his best. The water was cold, for Hungarians enjoy cold baths, and at the first plunge his teeth chattered. But after a while he rather enjoyed it and scrubbed himself till his dark skin glowed freshly, in spots, it is true, yet he thought it quite wonderful. Not so Aszszony Semeyer. She entered the kitchen, red and flushed with her labours in scouring Marushka.

"You are not clean, no! I will show you—" and she caught up a scrubbing brush. Banda Bela gasped. He would not cry. He was too big a boy for that, but he felt as if he were being ironed with a red-hot iron. Arms, legs, and back—all were attacked so fiercely that he wondered if there would be any skin left. Half an hour she worked, then wiped him dry and said:

"Now you look like a tame Christian! You are not really clean, it will take many scrubbings to make you that—and more to keep you so—but the worst is done." She cut his wild locks close to his head and surveyed her work proudly.

"Not such a bad-looking boy," she said to herself. "Now for a night shirt and bed." She threw over his head an old cotton shirt and led him up to the attic. "Sleep here," she

said, pointing to a clean little bed in one corner. "Rest well and tomorrow we shall see what we can do."

"Where is Marushka?" asked Banda Bela.

"Asleep long ago. You shall see her in the morning," and the boy slept.

The sun woke him early and he lay for a few moments looking about the little room. It was high under the eaves, from which hung long strings of bright red peppers, drying for the winter's use. The morning sun glanced on them and turned them to tongues of fire. From the little window Banda Bela saw down the village street, across the green fields where sparkled rippling brooks, away to the hills. His heart gave a great leap. He had not slept in a room before in all his life. He felt stifled. There was his home, the free, glad föld, he would fly away while yet he could! He sprang from his bed, but where were his rags? Beside his bed was a clean white suit, whole and neat, though patched and mended, and as he paused he heard a voice cry out from below:

"Where is my Banda Bela? I cannot eat my reggeli*

* Breakfast.

without Banda Bela."

"I must stay with Marushka," he said to himself, and with a sigh he hurriedly put on the white suit, and ran downstairs. Aszszony Semeyer was in the kitchen.

"Good morning," she said. "One would not know you for the same boy. Marushka is in the garden feeding the geese. Run you and help her," and she pointed to the back of the house, where a little garden was gay with flowers, herbs, and shrubs.

Banda Bela went to find his little charge, but saw only four or five geese and a little peasant girl throwing them handfuls of corn. She was a cute little thing, dressed in a blue skirt, a white waist, and an apron with gaily embroidered stripes. One plait of fair hair hung down her back, while another plait was coiled around her head, pressed low on her brow like a coronet. The child's back was turned toward Banda Bela, and he was about to ask her if she had seen Marushka, when she turned and saw him, and then ran to him, crying, "Oh, Banda Bela! How nice you look! At first I did not know you, but your eyes are always the same! Haven't I a pretty dress? The shepherd's wife gave it

to me. It belonged to her little girl who is dead! Is she not good to us, Banda Bela?"

The boy's sense of gratitude was lively, but the memory of the fearful scrubbing he had received was equally strong within him, and he said:

"She is very good, yes—but, Marushka, did she scrub you last night?"

"Oh, yes, very hard, but I like the feel of myself this morning. Don't I look nice?"

"I should never have known you, and you certainly look nice. I hope you will be happy here."

"Oh, I am very happy," she said, brightly. "Of course I could not be if you were not here, but if you stay with me I shall like it very much. You will stay always, won't you?"

Banda Bela looked across the tiny little garden to the sweep of blue hills beyond the town. They glistened with dew in the morning sun. How fair they looked! But the child's sweet eyes were upon him wistfully and he could not resist their pleading, though the föld and air and sky all called to him and claimed him as their own. He knew how hard it would be for a Gletecore to resist the call of the

wander spirit, but to Marushka he said:

"I shall stay with you as long as you need me," and Marushka smiled happily.

"I shall always need you," she said. "So always I shall have you. Now come and see the geese," and she led him to see the white-feathered creatures with whom she had already made friends. There were two big black hairy pigs beside, and from their pen these grunted cheerfully at the children as Aszszony Semeyer called them in to breakfast.

CHAPTER V

The Fair of Harom-Szölöhoz

The village of Harom-Szölöhoz lies on the edge of the plain, where the rolling lands sweep toward the hills and those in turn to the mountains.

Many of the men of the village were sheep or cattle herders, as Emeric Semeyer, living with their herds and seldom returning home save for high days and holidays. Others dwelt in the villages and worked in the grain fields, while still others worked in the salt mines each year for some months at least, for the salt mines of Hungary are famous the world over, and employ many labourers.

It was a pleasant little village. In the centre was an open space around which was clustered the church, with the town house and the larger houses. All the cottages were white-washed, and had gray-shingled roofs. Some of them had gay little flower gardens and a few had trees planted by

the doorway. Their shade is not needed, for though the sun is hot, there is always the szöhördo to sit in. This is a seat placed under the eaves which always overhang at one side of the roof. Here often the firewood is stacked and one log serves as a seat upon which the old people may sit and gossip, protected alike from sun and rain.

Upon the doorway of Aszszony Semeyer's house were carved some tulips, a pattern much used in Hungary. In the porch of the house dried kukurut and paprika hung in long ribbons to dry. The front door opened into the kitchen where the soup pot simmered upon the huge brick stove. Many of the cottages in this part of Hungary have but one room, but Aszszony Semeyer was rich and she had two rooms and a loft above. She kept the house wonderfully clean, yet she always seemed to have plenty of time to sit at the window and embroider varrotas. The varrotas are Hungarian embroideries worked with red and black and blue threads upon linen cloth the colour of pale ochre. The thread and linen is woven by the women, and in nearly every cottage in the village someone may be seen seated at the window spinning, weaving, or embroidering.

Aszszony Semeyer's father had been one of the beres* employed by the Tablabiro,† and he had been able to leave his daughter, for he had no sons, a cottage and some money, so that she was better off than many of the village people. This did not keep her from working hard, for all Magyars are industrious and hard working. She did not intend that anyone under her care should be idle; and Banda Bela found that he and Marushka must work if they were to eat.

"Now then, my sugars," she said to them, "we shall see what there is for you to do! Some work there must be for one and the other. But a square pane will not fit a round window, so we must give you something that you can do out of doors. You, Banda Bela, shall go to help the swine-herd, and Marushka shall be goose girl."

"Oh, I should like that!" cried Marushka. "I think the geese are so funny and I like to see them eat."

"You shall learn to embroider, and, as you sit on the meadow watching the geese, you can place many stitches.

* Labourers employed by the year.
† Lord of the Estate

When you marry you will have whole chests full of embroideries, like any well brought up maiden. Otherwise you will be shamed before your husband's people.

"Banda Bela, you shall go with the swine-herd. That will keep you out of doors, and you will like that, I am sure."

"I will try," said Banda Bela. "But I have never worked."

"Quite time you learned, then," said the good woman. "We will start in the morning. Today you and Marushka may go about the village and make yourselves at home. You will find much to interest you. Come back when the big bell of the church rings. That will be dinner time."

"Oh, Banda Bela, see those people jumping up and down in the river!" said Marushka. "What are they doing?"

"Washing, I think," said Banda Bela. "See, they take a dress or an apron and put it in the stream and tread on it, stamping it against the stones until the dirt all comes out, then they rinse it out and put it in their wooden trays and take another piece and wash it."

"I thought the wooden trays were cradles for babies," said Marushka. "The Gypsies use them for that."

"Yes, but I have seen them used for many things," said



Washing in the River

Banda Bela. "The peasants carry goods to market in them; in the city the baker boys use them to carry bread, wash-women use them, and cooks use them to cut up meat for goulash or to chop paprika in."

"Banda Bela, we're coming to such a crowded place—what are all those people doing?" asked Marushka, pointing to a street which was crowded to overflowing with peasants, their white costumes and gay aprons and jackets flashing about like bright birds in the sunlight.

"It must be a market day," said the boy. "I have often seen the village markets when I was travelling with my father. It might be fair time, and that is great fun! Let us go and see, Marushka. They have lots of pretty things in the stalls."

The two children ran down the street, which was filled with carts, covered with gay-coloured cloths, the horses having been taken out and stabled elsewhere.

Stalls had been built up and down the sides of the street and these were filled with fruit, melons, embroidery, clothes, and wonderful crockery. Plates and jugs in gay colours and artistic designs have been made by the peasants

in this part of Hungary for hundreds of years, and in the cottages one can see, hung along the walls under the rafters, jugs, cups, and platters of great beauty. No peasant would part with his family china, as he would feel disgraced unless he could display it up on his walls.

Ox carts lumbered down the streets, the huge horns of the oxen frightening Marushka. Boys with huge hats, loose white shirts, and trousers above the ankles, bare-footed girls and girls in top boots, men and women, geese, pigs, horses, and cows, all crowded into the square, where were the church with its white spire and golden cross, the magistrate's house, and the inn named "Harom Szölöhoz" as its three bunches of grapes above the door showed.

"Banda Bela," said Marushka, "what are those women sitting behind those red and yellow pots for? They look so funny with the great flat hats on their heads."

"They are cooking," said Banda Bela. "I have seen these village fairs when I used to travel with my father. In the bottom of those pots is burning charcoal upon which a dish is set. In the dish they cook all kinds of things, frying meat in bacon fat, making goulash and anything else a customer

may want."

"Isn't that funny!" said Marushka, whose idea of cookery was the Gypsy fire-pot over a fire of sticks. "What lovely frocks the girls wear! I like those boots with the bright red tops, too—I wish I had some," and she looked down discontentedly at her ten little bare toes. Banda Bela laughed at her.

"You're a funny little bit of a Marushka," he said. "Yesterday you hadn't a frock to your name, only a little rag of a shirt, and you were all dirty and your hair had never been combed. Now you have a pretty dress and an embroidered apron, and hair like a high-born princess, yet you are not satisfied, but must have top boots! They would pinch and hurt your feet terribly and cramp your toes so that you couldn't wiggle them at all. After you had worn boots awhile your toes would get so stiff that you couldn't use them as fingers as we do. People who always wear boots cannot even pick up anything with their toes. If they want a stick or anything that has fallen to the ground they have to bend the back and stoop to pick it up with the fingers."

Marushka looked thoughtful for a moment, her little

toes curling and wriggling as she dug them into the sand, then she said:

"But the boots are so pretty, Banda Bela, I would like them!" The boy laughed.

"You will have to have them someway, little sister," he said. "And one of those bright little jackets, too, since you so much like to be dressed up like a fine bird."

"Why do some of the women wear jackets and some not, and some of them such queer things on their heads?" asked Marushka.

"This fair brings people from all around and there are many kinds of people in Hungary," he said. "Those tall straight men with faces all shaved except for the waxed moustache are Magyars, while the fair-haired fellows who look as if they didn't care about their clothes and slouch around are called Slövaks. The girls who wear those long, embroidered, white robes, sandals on their feet and black kerchiefs on their heads, are Romanians. The Magyar girls wear gold-embroidered aprons, big white sleeves and zouave jackets, and the boots you like so much."

"I am a Magyar," said Marushka, tossing her head

proudly. "All but the boots."

"High-born Princess, boots you shall have," laughed Banda Bela. "But how?" He knit his brows, as they stopped at a stall where boots were displayed for sale. "I know!" he cried, while Marushka looked longingly at the boots. "I shall play for them."

His violin was under his arm, and he raised it to his chin, tuned it softly, and quickly began a little tune. Hungarians love music and it was but a moment before a crowd gathered around. He played a gay little song, "Nezz roysám a szemembe," one of the old Magyar love songs in which a lover implores his sweetheart to look into his eyes and read there that for him she shines like a star in the blue of heaven, and when he had finished everyone cried for more. This time he whisked into a dance tune and feet patted in time to the music and faces were fairly wreathed in smiles. When he stopped with a gay flourish, everybody cried, "More, boy, more!" and Banda Bela smiled happily as one in the crowd tossed him a krajczar.* He took off his cap and passed it around among the crowd. Many a krajczar fell into

* Small coin.

it and one silver piece came from a Magyar officer, a tall fine-looking man with a sad face, who stood on the edge of the crowd.

"Who are you, boy, and why do you play? Do you need money?" asked the officer.

"Not for myself, Your Gracious Highness, but the little one wishes red-topped boots and also a jacket," said the boy simply.

"These of course she must have," said the officer, with a smile which lighted up his sad face. "Where is this little sister of yours? At home with her mother?"

"No, Most High-Born Baron," said Banda Bela. "The mother I have not, but Aszszony Semeyer is very kind to us, and Marushka is here with me. That little maid by the cooking stall."

"She is a fair little maid, of course she must have her boots," said the officer. "But you have earned them, for your music is like wine to empty hearts. What is your name, boy, and where do you live?"

"My name is Banda Bela, Most Gracious Baron. I live since yesterday at the house of Emeric Semeyer. My father

was Gergeley Banda, the musician, now dead."

"I have often seen and heard your father in Budapest," said the officer kindly, laying his hand on the boy's shoulder. "You will play as well as he did if you keep on."

Banda Bela's eyes shone.

"That would please me more than anything else in all the world," he said. "I think now I have enough for Marushka's boots, so I need not play more, save one thing for the pleasure of those who have paid me. I will play a song of my fathers," and he played a gentle little melody, with a sad, haunting strain running through it, which brought tears to the eyes.

"Boy, you are a genius! What is that?" asked the baron when he had finished.

"It is called the 'Lost One,'" said Banda Bela. "The little song running through it is of a child who has been lost from home. The words are:

"The hills are so blue,
The sun so warm,
The wind of the moor so soft and so kind!
Oh, the eyes of my mother,

The warmth of her breast,
The breath of her kiss on my cheek, alas!"

The officer put a whole silver dollar in the boy's hand and turned away without a word, and Banda Bela wondered as he saw tears in the stern eyes.

Then Marushka got her boots and her jacket and Banda Bela bought some new strings for his violin, and a little box of sugar jelly which he took to Aszszony Semeyer, and to her also he gave the store of krajczar left after his purchases had been made.

CHAPTER VI
Village Life

Banda Bela found life with the pigs rather quiet in spite of the noise his four-footed friends made, but he soon learned to know all the pigs by name and to like them, dirty as they were, but he never grew fond of them as Marushka did of the village geese. These followed her like a great white army, as she led them beside the river. They seemed to understand every word she said and would squawk in answer to her call, and come with flapping wings across the field, whenever she spoke to them.

So, too, would the storks who nested in the eaves of the houses, and it was a funny sight to see the long-legged, top-heavy birds stalking around after Marushka, until she gave them bits of her black bread, when they would spread their great wings and fly off contentedly to their nestlings in the eaves.

Marushka's hours at home were quite as busy as those she spent with the geese, for Aszszony Semeyer was a noted housekeeper and did not intend that any little girl under her care should grow up without learning to do housework. Marushka learned to embroider, to sew, to mend, to clean the floors and to cook. She was an apt pupil and it was not long before she could cook even turoscsusza as well as her teacher. Turoscsusza is not easy to make. First one mixes a paste of rye and barley meal, stirred up with salt and water. This is rolled out thin and cut into little squares which are dropped quickly into boiling water, then taken out, drained and put into a hot frying pan, with some curds and fried bacon, and cooked over a hot fire. It takes practice to know just how long it must be cooked to make it to perfection, and Marushka felt very much encouraged when Aszszony Semeyer said to her at last:

"You can make it just as well as I can, child." The little girl knew that no higher compliment could be paid her.

At Christmas time she learned to make the hazelnut cakes which are so deliciously good, and she and Banda Bela enjoyed the Christmas tree, the first they had ever

seen, and which is found in every peasant household in Hungary. In the poorer cottages it is often but a little fir branch decorated with bits of coloured tissue paper and a few candles, but Aszszony Semeyer had a large tree, with all sorts of decorations and presents for the children, who got up at five o'clock to see them, though Marushka was very sleepy, for she had stayed up for the midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. Banda Bela had first helped Aszszony Semeyer "strew the straw," one of the quaint Christmas customs in this part of Hungary, where the peasants strew fresh straw upon the floor and sit upon it to insure their hens laying plenty of eggs during the coming year. He also made up the "plenty brush," taking an onion for Aszszony Semeyer, Marushka, and himself, with little bundles of hay and barley ears tied with scarlet ribbon and laid upon the table. This will be sure to bring plenty of onions, hay, and barley to the house during the year.

In order to keep off fire Banda Bela and Marushka had each taken some beans on a plate and raced all around the szvoba,* touching the wall with the plate, and they had

* Room.

given the pigs and the geese bits of salt to bring them good luck.

Thus the winter passed busily and pleasantly for the two children. They lived on simple but hearty fare. For breakfast there was czibere, made by steeping black bread in water for three weeks until it soured, and making this into soup by adding beaten eggs and sheep's milk. For dinner they had often goulash or turoscsusza with vegetables or bread.

Marushka learned also to boil soap, to make candles, dry prunes, and smoke sausages. She helped to cure the hams, crying bitterly over the death of Banda Bela's little piggies. She churned and made cheese, much of which was stored up for winter use, as were also many of the vegetables from the little garden, which Banda Bela weeded and cared for.

Both children helped to make the slivovitza, or plum brandy, of which every Hungarian household must have some, and which is very good to drink.

Right after Easter the children were invited to a wedding, and as Banda Bela was to play for the czardas, Marushka was delighted.

One of the neighbours, just at the end of the village, had several élado leanyök,* called this because in Hungary a bridegroom must pay his father-in-law a good price if he wishes a wife. Sometimes a peasant pays only twenty florins for his wife, but sometimes he has to pay as much as two hundred florins.

The day before Irma's marriage, Lajos, the best man, came to the door of Aszszony Semeyer's cottage. Bowing and taking off his hat, he said:

"Most humbly do I beg your pardon for my intrusion under your roof, but I am deputed to politely invite you and your family to partake of a morsel of food and drink a glass of wine, and to dance a measure thereafter on the occasion of the wedding feast of the seed that has grown up under their wings. Please bring with you knives, forks, and plates."

Aszszony Semeyer accepted the invitation, and as Sömögyi Irma was a Slövak girl, the marriage ceremonies were very different from those which a Magyar maiden would have had.

The Slövak wedding is all arranged for by the best man.

* Salable daughters.

Of course the young people have been lovers for some time and have plighted their troth through the window on a moonlight night, but no one is supposed to know about that. The lover and his friend, who is called the staro sta, on a Saturday night go to the door of the lady's cottage and say:

"Good friends, we have lost our way. In the king's behalf we seek a star." At this the girl hastily leaves the room and the staro sta exclaims:

"Behold! There is the star for which we seek. May we go and seek her? We have flowers with us to deck her, flowers fair as those which Adam bound upon the brow of Eve in the Garden."

"I will call her back," says the bride's father, and the girl returns to smilingly accept the staro sta's flowers, and his offer of marriage for his friend. The flowers are distributed, speeches are made, and everybody drinks the health of the betrothed pair in slivovitza, binding their hands together with a handkerchief.

The night before the wedding there is a cake dance, when the czardas is danced, the wedding cake is displayed,

and everybody cries, laughs, and puts a bit of money into a plate to help toward the wedding expenses, for the wedding feast must last two days, and it costs a great deal of money.

Irma's feast was very fine, for her father was village magistrate and could afford to make her marriage quite a social event. Even the High-Born Baron and Baroness from the great house came, and Marushka was delighted to see them, for she had heard the little peasant girls tell how kind the Baron was, and how beautiful his wife.

The High-Born Baron danced the czardas with the bride and the High-Born Baroness trod the measures with the bridegroom, and Marushka could hardly keep her eyes off the Baroness. Her eyes were soft and brown, her teeth white as little pearls, her complexion a soft olive with rose-hued cheeks, her hair blue-black, soft and fine, waving about her face and piled high with roses at each side above her ears. Her dress was of brocaded silk, the bodice trimmed with pearls, the large sleeves filmy with laces almost as fine as those she might have worn to court. Hungarian women love fine clothes and dress beautifully and the High-Born Baroness wished to pay honor to Sömögyi Vazul, for he had

served the Baron's house and his father's before him.

The Baron wore his handsomest uniform, top boots, embroidered coat and magnificent cloak, trimmed in gold braid and buttons, and it was a proud moment in Irma's life when he put his hand upon her elbow and led her out to dance the quaint dance of the Hungarians, with its slow movement gradually growing faster and faster until it ends in a regular whirl.

Banda Bela played his best and the czardas of Irma's wedding was long talked of in the village as the most beautiful which had ever been danced. Then the High-Born Baron spoke to his wife and she smiled and nodded her head and asked Banda Bela if he could play the accompaniment to any of the folk-songs.

"Yes, Your Graciousness," he answered, "to any one of them."

"Then I will sing for you," said the Baroness, and a rustle of expectancy went round the szvoba, for it was well known in the village that the High-Born Graciousness was a famous singer and had often been asked to sing to the King. She sang the little folk-song which every Hungarian knows.

"How late the summer stars arise!
My love for thee was late in rising too.
But what of that, or aught, to me?
Why is thy glance so icy cold?
My heart burns hot with love for thee!"

Her voice was tender and sad like that of all the Magyar women, and Marushka thought she had never heard anything so beautiful as the song to which Banda Bela's notes added a perfect accompaniment.

Then the wedding cakes were passed about, and the little girl had her full share. Banda Bela rejoiced in the present of a silver piece from the Baron.

"Who is this child?" demanded the Baroness, attracted by Marushka's fair hair amidst the dark-haired little Magyars and Slövaks.

"A little one adopted by Aszszony Semeyer," replied the magistrate, "as is also the Gypsy boy who played for you."

"She does not look like a Gypsy child," said the Baroness, knitting her brows a little. "She reminds me of someone I have seen—" as Marushka smiled up at her and



"'Who is this child?' demanded the Baroness"

made her a quaint little peasant's courtesy with more than peasant's grace.

CHAPTER VII

The Unexpected

Aszszony Semeyer's brother-in-law had a large vineyard and, when it came time for the vintage, the good woman drove the children over to her brother's farm. The grapes grew in long lines up and down the hillside where the sun was strongest. White carts, drawn by white oxen, were driven by white-frocked peasants. All were decked with grape leaves, all had eaten golden grapes until they could eat no more, for the great bunches of rich, yellow grapes are free to all at vintage time. From these golden grapes is made the amber-hued "Riesling," and the children enjoyed very much helping to tread the grapes, for the wine is made in the old-fashioned way, the grapes being cast into huge vats and trod upon with the feet till the juice is entirely pressed out. The peasants dance gaily up and down upon the grapes, tossing their arms above their heads and making

great pleasure of their work.

After the long, happy, sunny day the white cart of Aszszony Semeyer joined the line of carts which wound along from the vineyard, filled with gay toilers. At her brother's farm they stayed all night, for the vintage dance upon the grass under the golden glow of the harvest moon was too fair a sight to miss.

They stayed, too, for the nut-gathering. Hungarian hazel nuts are celebrated the world over, and the nutting was as much a fête as had been the vintage. This was the last frolic of the year, and the children went back to Harom Szölöhoz to work hard all winter. Banda Bela still helped the swine-herd, but Marushka was no longer a goose girl. Aszszony Semeyer had grown very fond of the little girl and spent long hours teaching her to sew and embroider. Many salt tears little Marushka shed over her Himmelbelt, or marriage bed-cover. Every girl in Hungary is supposed to have a fine linen bedspread embroidered ready to take to her home when she is married. It takes many months to make one of them, and Marushka's was to be a very elaborate one.

The linen was coarse, but spun from their own flax by Aszszony Semeyer herself. In design Marushka's Himmelbelt was wonderful. The edge was to be heavily embroidered in colours, and in one corner was Marushka's name, a space being left for the day of the wedding. In the centre was a wedding hymn which was embroidered in gay letters, and began:

> "Blessed by the Saints and God above I'll be
> If I do wed the man who loveth me;
> Then may my home be full of peace and rest,
> And I with goodly sons and daughters blest!"

Marushka worked over it for hours and grew to fairly hate the thought of marrying.

"I shall never, never marry," she sobbed. "I shall never finish this horrid old Himmelbelt and I suppose I can't be married without it."

Banda Bela sympathized with her and often played for her while she worked. Through the long winter the children learned to read and write, for all children are compelled to go to school in Hungary, and the Gypsies are

the only ones who escape the school room.

Marushka learned very fast. Her mind worked far more quickly than did Banda Bela's, though he was so much older. There was nothing which Marushka did not want to know all about; earth, air, sky, water, sun, wind, people—all were interesting to her.

"The wind, Banda Bela, whence comes it?" she would ask.

"It is the breath of God," the boy would answer.

"And the sun?"

"It is God's kindness."

"But the storms, with the flashing lightning and the terrible thunder?"

"It is the wrath of Isten, the flash of his eye, the sound of his voice."

"But I like to know what makes the things," said Marushka. "It is not enough to say that everything is God. I know He is back of everything. Aszszony Semeyer told me that, but I want to know the how of what He does."

"I think we cannot always do just what we like," said Banda Bela calmly. "I have found that out many times, so

it is best not to fret about things but to live each day by itself." At this philosophy Marushka pouted.

One afternoon in the summer the children asked for permission to go to the woods, and Aszszony Semeyer answered them:

"Yes, my pigeons, go; the sky is fair and you have both been good children of late—go, but return early."

They had a happy afternoon playing together upon the hills which were so blue with forget-me-nots that one could hardly see where the hilltops met the sky. Marushka made a wreath of them and Banda Bela crowned her, twining long festoons of the flowers around her neck and waist, until she looked like a little flower fairy. They wandered homeward as the sun was setting, past the great house on the hill, and Maruskha said:

"I wonder if the High-Born Baron and his gracious lady will soon be coming home? In the village they say that they always come at this time of the year. Do you remember how beautiful the High-Born Baroness looked at Irma's wedding?"

"She was beautiful and kind, and sang like a night-

ingale," said Banda Bela. "Come, Marushka, we must hurry, or Aszszony Semeyer will scold us for being late!"

As they neared the village they heard a noise and a strange scene met their gaze! A yoke of white oxen blocked the way; several black and brown cattle had slipped their halters and were running aimlessly about tossing their horns; seventeen hairy pigs ran hither and thither, squealing loudly, and all the geese in town seemed to be turned loose, flapping their wings and squawking at the top of their voices. Children were dashing around, shouting and screaming, in their efforts to catch the different animals, while the grown people, scarcely less disturbed, tried in vain to silence the din.

"They are frightened by the machine of the High-Born Baron, Marushka," said Banda Bela. "See, there it is at the end of the street. I have seen these queer cars in Budapest, but none has ever been in this little village before, so it is no wonder that everyone is afraid. There, the men have the cattle quiet, but the geese and the pigs are as bad as ever."

"Let us run and lead them out, Banda Bela," cried Marushka. "You can make the pigs follow you and I can

quiet the geese. It is too bad to have the homecoming of their High-Born Graciousnesses spoiled by these stupids!" Marushka dashed into the throng of geese calling to them in soft little tones. They recognized her at once and stopped their fluttering as she called them by the names she had given them when she was goose girl and they all flocked about her. Then she sang a queer little crooning song, and they followed her down the street as she walked toward the goose green, not knowing how else to get them out of the way.

Banda Bela meantime was having an amusing time with his friends the pigs. They were all squealing so loudly that they could scarcely hear his voice, so he bethought himself of his music and began to play. It was but a few moments before the piggies heard and stopped to listen. Banda Bela had played much when he was watching the pigs on the moor, and his violin told them of the fair green meadow where they found such good things to eat, and of the river's brink with its great pools of black slime in which to wallow. They stopped their mad dashing about and gathered around the boy, and he, too, turned and led them from the

village.

It was a funny sight, this village procession. First came Marushka in her little peasant's costume, decked with her wreath and garlands of forget-me-nots, and followed by her snow-white geese. Next, Banda Bela, playing his violin and escorting his pigs, while last of all came the motor car of the High-Born Baron, the Baron looking amused, the Baroness in spasms of laughter.

"Oh, Léon," she cried. "Could our friends who drive on the Os Budavara* see us now! Such a procession! That child who leads is the most beautiful little creature and so unconscious, and the boy's playing is wonderful."

"They must be the Gypsy children Aszszony Semeyer adopted. We saw them when we were here last year," replied her husband. "What a story this would make for the club! We must give these children a florin for their timely aid."

But the children, unconscious of this pleasant prospect, led their respective friends back into the village by another way, so that it was not until the next day that the "High-

* Celebrated drive in Budapest.



"First came Marushka."

Born" ones had a chance to see them, and this time in an even more exciting adventure than that of the village procession. It was the motor car again which caused the trouble.

Marushka and Banda Bela had been sent on an errand to a farm not far from the village and were walking homeward in the twilight. Down the road came a peasant's cart just as from the opposite direction came the "honk-honk" of the Baron's motor. Such a sight had never appeared to the horses before in all their lives. They reared up on their hind legs, pawing the air wildly as the driver tried to turn them aside to let the motor pass. A woman and a baby sat in the cart, and, as the horses became unmanageable and overturned the cart into the ditch, the woman was thrown out and the baby rolled from her arms right in front of the motor. The mechanician had tried to stop his car, but there was something wrong with the brake and he could not stop all at once. Marushka saw the baby. If there was one thing she loved more than another it was a baby. She saw its danger and in a second she dashed across the road, snatched up the little one and ran up the other side of the road just

as the motor passed over the spot where the baby had fallen.

"Marushka," cried Banda Bela as he ran around the motor. "Are you hurt?"

"Brave child!" cried the Baron, who sprang from his car and hurried to the group of frightened peasants. "Are you injured?"

"Not at all, Most Noble Baron," said Marushka, not forgetting to make her courtesy, though it was not easy with the baby in her arms.

The child's mother had by this time picked herself out of the ditch and rushed over to where Maruskha stood, the baby still in her arms and cooing delightedly as he looked into the child's sweet face, his tiny hand clutching the silver medal which always hung about Marushka's neck. The mother snatched the baby to her breast and, seating herself by the roadside, she felt all over its little body to see if it was hurt.

"You have this brave little girl to thank that your baby was not killed," said the Baron. The woman turned to Marushka.

"I thank you for—" she began, stopped abruptly, and then stared at the little girl with an expression of amazement. "Child, who are you?" she demanded.

"Marushka," said the little girl simply. The woman put her hand to her head.

"It is her image," she muttered. "Her very self!"

The Baroness had alighted from the motor and came up in time to hear the woman's words.

"Whose image?" she demanded sharply.

The woman changed colour and put her baby down on the grass.

"The little girl looks like a child I saw in America," she stammered, her face flushing.

"Was she an American child?" demanded the Baroness.

"Oh, yes, Your Graciousness," said the woman hastily. "Of course, she was an American child."

"Now I know that you are speaking falsely," said the Baroness. "This little one looks like no American child who was ever born. Léon," turning to her husband, "is this one of your peasants?" Then she added in a tone too low to be heard by anyone but her husband, "I know that she can tell

something about this little girl. Question her."

The Baron turned to the woman and said:

"This little girl saved your baby's life. Should you not do her some kindness?"

"What could I do for her, Your High-Born Graciousness?" the woman asked.

"That I leave to your good heart." The Baron had not dwelt upon his estates and managed his peasants for years without knowing peasant character. Threats would not move this woman, that he saw in a moment.

"She is a Gypsy child," the woman said sullenly.

Banda Bela spoke suddenly, for he had come close and heard what was said.

"That she is not! She is Magyar. Deserted by the roadside, she was cared for by Gypsy folk. Does she look like a Gypsy? Would a Gypsy child wear a Christian medal upon her breast?" The boy's tone was sharp. Marushka heard nothing. She was playing with the baby.

The woman looked from Marushka to the baby, then at the Baron, hesitating. "Let me see your pretty medal, child," she said at length, and Marushka untied the string

and put the medal in the woman's hand.

"I used to think it was my mother, but now I know it is Our Lady," said Marushka gently. The woman looked at it for a moment, then gave it back to the little girl and stood for a moment thinking.

"High-Born Baron," she said at last, "I will speak. Those it might harm are dead. The little girl who saved my baby I will gladly serve, but I will speak alone to the ears of the Baron and his gracious lady."

"Very well," said the Baron as he led the woman aside.

"Škultéty Yda is my name, Your Graciousness," she said. "I was foster-sister to a high-born lady in the Province in which lies Budapest. I loved my mistress and after her marriage I went with her to the home of her husband, a country place on the Danube. There I met Hödza Ludevit, who wished to marry me and take me to America, for which he had long saved the money. He hated all nobles and most of all the High-Born Count, because the Count had once struck him with his riding whip. Then the Countess' little daughter came and I loved her so dearly that I said that I would never part from her. Ludevit waited for me two years,

then he grew angry and said, 'To America I will go with or without you.' Then he stole the little baby and sent me word that he would return her only on condition that I go at once to America with him. To save the little golden-haired baby I followed him beyond the sea to America. He swore to me that he had returned little Marushka to her parents.

"The Count traced us to America thinking we might have taken the child with us, and then I learned that the baby had never been sent home. My wicked husband had left it by the roadside and what had become of it no one knew. It turned my heart toward my husband into stone. Now he is dead and I have brought my own baby home, but my family are all dead and I have no place to go. These people were kind to me on the ship, so I came to them, hoping to find work to care for my baby, since all my money was spent in the coming home. This little girl who saved my baby I know to be the daughter of my dear mistress." She stopped.

"How do you know it?" demanded the Baroness.

"Your High-Born Graciousness, she is her image. There

is the same corn-coloured hair, the same blue eyes, the same flushed cheek, the same proud mouth, the same sweet voice."

"What was the name of your lady?" interrupted the baroness, who had been looking fixedly at Marushka, knitting her brows. "The child has always reminded me of someone; who it is I cannot think."

"The foster sister whom I loved was the Countess Maria Andrássy."

"I see it," cried the Baroness. "The child is her image, Léon. I have her picture at the castle. You will see at once the resemblance. I have not seen Maria since we left school. Her husband we see often at Court. I had heard that Maria had lost her child and that since she had never left her country home. I supposed the child was dead. This little Marushka must be Maria Andrássy."

"We must have proofs," said the Baron.

"Behold the medal upon the child's neck," said Yda. "It is one her mother placed there. I myself scratched with a needle the child's initials 'M. A.' the same as her mother's. The letters are still there; and if that is not enough there is

on the child's neck the same red mark as when she was born. It is up under her hair and her mother would know it at once."

"The only way is for her mother to see her and she will know. This Gypsy boy may be able to supply some missing links. We shall ask him," said the Baron. When Banda Bela was called he told simply all that he knew about Marushka and all that old Jarnik had told him.

"There is no harm coming to her, is there?" he asked anxiously, and the Baroness said kindly:

"No, my boy, no harm at all, and perhaps much good, for we think that we have found her people." Banda Bela's face clouded. "That would make you sad?" she asked.

"Yes and no, Your Graciousness," he answered. "It would take my heart away to lose Marushka for whom I have cared these years as my sister, but I know so well the sadness of having no mother. If she can find her mother, I shall rejoice."

"Something good shall be found for you, too, my lad." The Baroness smiled at him, but he replied simply:

"I thank Your High-Born Graciousness. I shall still have

my music."

The Baroness flashed a quick glance at him. "I understand you, boy; nothing can take that away from one who loves it. Now take the little one home, and tomorrow we shall come to see Aszszony Semeyer about her. In the meantime, say not one word to the little girl for fear she be disappointed if we have made a mistake."

"Yes, Your High-Born Graciousness," and Banda Bela led Marushka away, playing as they went down the hill the little song of his father.

"The hills are so blue,
The sun so warm,
The wind of the moor so soft and so kind!
Oh, the eyes of my mother,
The warmth of her breast,
The breath of her kiss on my cheek, alas!"

CHAPTER VIII

Marushka Makes a Journey

Marushka was so excited that she scarce knew how to contain herself. The Baroness had come to see Aszszony Semeyer and had talked long with her. Then she had called Marushka and the little girl saw that Aszszony Semeyer had been crying.

"Marushka," the Baroness said. "Will you come with me and make a journey? I want to take you in the motor to Budapest."

"The High-Born Baroness is very good," said Marushka, her eyes shining. "I should like to go very much, but not if Aszszony Semeyer does not wish it."

"Good child," said Aszszony Semeyer, "I do wish it."

"Then why do you cry?"

"There are many things to make old people cry," said the peasant woman. "I am certainly not crying because the

High-Born Graciousness wishes to honour you with so pleasant a journey—(that is the truth, for it is the fear that she will not come back that forces the tears from my eyes)," she added to herself.

"Aszszony Semeyer will have Banda Bela," said the Baroness. Marushka opened her eyes very wide.

"Oh, no, Your Graciousness, because Banda Bela must go wherever I go. If he stays at home, then I must stay, too."

"Such a child!" exclaimed Aszszony Semeyer. "She has always been like this about Banda Bela. The two will not be separated."

"In that case we shall have to take Banda Bela also," said the Baroness, and Marushka clapped her hands with glee.

"That will be nice," she exclaimed. "I shall love to see the city and all the beautiful palaces, and I shall bring you a present, Aszszony Semeyer, but I will not go unless you wish me to."

"I do wish it, dear child, but do not forget your old aunt," for so she had taught the children to call her.

So it was decided that they should start the next week when the Baron's business would have been attended to.

Part of Marushka's journey was to be taken in the motor, and, as she had never ridden in one before, she was very much excited as they set out on a bright day in August. She wanted to sit beside Banda Bela with the driver, but the Baroness said, "No, it would not be proper for a little girl." So she had to be satisfied with sitting between the Baron and Baroness on the back seat.

Up hill and down dale they rode. The road at times was so poor that the wheels wedged in the ruts and all had to get out while the driver pushed from behind.

They ate their luncheon at a ruined castle which had once been a beautiful country place. It belonged to a friend of the Baron but had been deserted for many years. Beyond it lay a corn-coloured plain and blue hills, and on top of one of the hills gleamed the white walls of a monastery.

"Near here are some famous marble quarries," said the Baroness. "They are finer even than the ones at Carrara in Italy, which are celebrated all over the world. There is so much marble around here that it is cheaper than wood. See there! even the walls of that pig-pen are of marble. Yonder is a peasant's hut with a marble railing around the garden.

Even the roads are mended with it, and the quarries in the hillsides have hardly been touched yet. Some day someone will be made very rich if they will open up this industry, and it will keep many of our people from going to America."

"Why do they go to America?" asked Marushka. "And where is America? It cannot be so nice as Magyarland."

"Well, little one, it is as nice to Americans, but when our Hungarian people go there they always come back. Sometimes the Slövaks remain, but never the Magyars. They go there and work and save. Then they send for their families, and they too work and save, and at last they all come home. There is a story told of the last war in Hungary. Two Magyar peasants had gone to America and worked in the far west. One day in a lonely cabin on the plains they found an old newspaper and read that there was war in Hungary. They put together all their money, saved and scrimped, ate little and worked hard, until they got enough to go home. They reached Hungary before the fighting was over and begged to be sent at once to the front, to have a chance to serve their country before the war was over."

"But how do people know about America?" asked

Marushka.

"There are agents of the steamship companies who go from village to village trying to get the people to emigrate," said the Baroness. "They tell them that in America one finds gold rolling about in the streets and that there everyone is free and equal. Our people believe it and go there. Many of those who go are bad and discontented or lazy here at home. When they get to America and find that gold does not roll in the streets and that they must work for it if they want it, they are more discontented than ever, and the people of America think that Hungarians are lazy and good for nothing. When they come home they talk in the villages of the grand things they did in America and make the people here discontented and unhappy."

"Why don't the people ask them, if America was so nice, why did they not stay there?" asked Marushka, and the Baroness smiled.

"Those of us who have estates to take care of wish they would," she said. "The returned emigrant is one of the problems of Hungary."

"Why are there so many beggars?" asked Marushka. "I

never saw one in Harom Szölöhoz."

"That is a prosperous village with a kind over-lord," said the Baroness. "But there are so many beggars in Hungary that they have formed themselves into a kind of union. In some towns there is a beggar chief who is as much a king in his way as is His Majesty the Emperor. The chief has the right to say just where each beggar may beg and on what days they may beg in certain places. The beggars never go to each other's begging places, and if anyone does, the other beggars tell the police about him and he is driven out of town.

"In some provinces the very old and sick people are sent to live with the richest householders. Of course no one would ever refuse to have them, for alms asked in the name of Christ can never be refused, and as our gracious Emperor has said, 'Sorrow and suffering have their privileges as well as rank.'"

"He must be a very good Emperor," said Marushka. "It seems to me that you are a very wonderful lady and that you know everything. It is interesting to know all about these things. When I grow up I am going to know all about

Magyarland."

The journey in the train was even more exciting for the children than that in the motor, and they enjoyed very much hearing about the various places through which they passed.

When they reached Budapest, Marushka was dumbfounded, for she had never imagined anything so beautiful. The train rolled into the huge station, with its immense steel shed and glass roof, upon which the sun beat like moulten fire. The children followed the Baroness through the gate and into the carriage, which rattled away so quickly that it swayed from side to side, for in Hungary people are proud of their fine horses and always drive as fast as they can.

Marushka caught glimpses of broad, well-paved streets and large, handsome buildings, as the Baroness pointed out the opera house, theatres, churches, museums, and the superb houses of parliament built upon the banks of the Danube.

"Across the river you see Buda," said the Baroness. "In old times Buda was very old-fashioned, but in the last



"'Across the river you see Buda,'
said the Baroness"

twenty years the royal palace has been built and many other costly buildings, and soon it will be as handsome as Pest. The improvements within the last ten years are wonderful. The streets are clean and neat, no ugly signs are permitted upon the houses, no refuse on the streets, and the citizens vie with each other in trying to make that side of the river as beautiful as this. The Emperor takes great interest in the enterprise."

"You speak about the Emperor sometimes," said Marushka. "And other times about the King. Who is the King?"

"The same as the Emperor," replied the Baroness. "You see, Austria and Hungary have been united under one government, and the King of Hungary is Emperor of Austria. There were many wars fought before this arrangement was made, and all the different peoples of the empire agreed to live peaceably together."

"How long has Hungary had a king?" asked Marushka.

"Oh, for years and years," said the Baroness. "It was about the twelfth century when the Aranybulla* was made,

* Hungarian Magna Charta.

which gave to the nobles the right to rebel if the king did not live up to the constitution. See! There are the barracks and the soldiers drilling. The country boys who come up to be trained are sometimes so stupid that they don't know their right foot from the left. So the sergeant ties a wisp of hay on the right foot and a wisp of straw on the left. Instead of saying, right-left, to teach them to march, he says szelma-szalma. Isn't it droll?"

"What is that building by the river?" asked Marushka. "The one with the little turrets and the tower before which the geese are swinging?"

"That, my little goose girl, is the Agricultural Building, and should you go inside you would find specimens of every kind of food raised in Hungary. But here we are at the hotel where we shall spend the night. You must have some supper and then hurry to bed, for tomorrow is the fête day of St. Stephen, and all must be up early to see the procession."

Marushka was so sleepy the next day that she could only yawn and rub her eyes when the maid called her at five o'clock to dress for the fête.

The twentieth of August, the feast of St. Stephen, is the

greatest fête of the year in Hungary.

Marushka and Banda Bela were very much excited over it, for they had often heard of the fête but had never supposed they would have the good fortune to see it.

"Come, children," the Baroness said as they hastily ate their breakfast. "We must hurry away. Hear the bells and the cannon! Every church in the city is ringing its chimes. We must be in the Palace Square by seven or we will miss some of the sights."

"I think the High-Born Baron and his Gracious Lady are the finest sights we shall see," whispered Banda Bela to Marushka, and the Baroness caught the words and smiled at him. There was a subtle sympathy between these two, the high and the lowly, the Magyar noblewoman and the Gypsy boy, a sympathy born, perhaps, of the love of music which swayed them both.

Marushka felt wonderfully fine as their carriage rolled into the Palace Square, where the procession in honour of St. Stephen was forming. It was a gorgeous sight, for all were dressed in their gayest attire, and officers, soldiers, prelates, and guard of honour from the palace made a

continual line of conflicting hues.

While the procession was passing Marushka almost held her breath, then, as the golden radiance of colour flashing in the sunlight streamed past, she clapped her hands in glee, and cried:

"Oh, your Gracious High-Bornness! Isn't it splendid! How glad I am that St. Stephen is the Magyar saint and that I am a Magyar!" The child's eyes were shining, her cheeks flushed, her hair a golden coronet in the sunshine, and she looked like a beautiful little princess.

At the sound of her voice an officer in uniform, who was passing, turned and looked into the child's face, then glanced from her to the Baroness, who waved her hand in greeting. He doffed his cap and then came to the carriage.

"Good morning, Count. It is long since I have seen you in Budapest. Are you not marching today?" the Baroness said.

"No, Madame." The officer had a kind face, but it seemed very sad to Marushka. She thought she had seen him before, but did not remember where until Banda Bela whispered that it was the officer who had given them

money for Marushka's top boots at the fair.

"I was on duty at the palace this morning, but am returning home at once. My wife is not very well," he said.

"It is long since I have seen her. Will she receive me if I drive out to your home?" the Baroness asked.

"She will be glad to see you," he said, "though she sees but few since her ill health."

"I shall drive out today with these little folk, to whom I am showing the sights," said the Baroness.

The count's eyes fell upon Banda Bela, and he gave a quick smile.

"Why, this is the little genius who played the violin so wonderfully well down at the village fair," he said; and Banda Bela smiled, well pleased at being remembered.

"The little girl is yours?" he asked. The Baroness hesitated.

"No," she said. "She is not mine. She is the child of a friend of mine." Marushka wondered what good Aszszony Semeyer would say to hear herself spoken of as a friend of the Baroness, and, amused, she looked up at the Count with a beaming smile. He started a little and then stared at

her fixedly, just as the Baroness with a hasty adieu bade the coachman drive on.

"Madame," he asked quickly, as the horses started. "Who is the friend whose child this is?" The Baroness looked back at him over her shoulder.

"That I cannot tell you now," she said. "This afternoon at your castle I will ask you to tell me!"

CHAPTER IX

"Oh, the Eyes of My Mother!"

"Oh, High-Born Graciousness, what is that beautiful street we are driving into?" asked Marushka, as they drove out in the afternoon, and the coachman turned the horses into a magnificent avenue.

"This is Andrássy-ut, the famous boulevard, which leads to the park," replied the Baroness. "We are driving toward Os Budavará, the Park of Budapest, and it is one of the most beautiful sights in the world."

As she spoke they entered the park, and the children gazed in wonder at its beauty. Swans floated on the miniature lakes; in the feathery green woods bloomed exquisite Persian lilacs, children played on the green grass beneath the willows or ran to and fro over the rustic bridges. On the Corso the fashionables drove up and down in the smartest of costumes, their turnouts as well appointed as any in Paris

or London. The men were many of them in uniform, the women, some of them with slanting dark eyes almost like Japanese, were graceful and elegant.

"The skating fêtes held in the park in winter are the most beautiful things you can imagine," said the Baroness. "The whole country is white with snow. Frost is in the air, the blood tingles with the cold. Ice kiosks are erected everywhere, and coloured lights are hung up until the whole place seems like fairyland, and the skaters, dressed from top to toe in furs, look like fairy people skimming over the ice."

"It must be beautiful," said Marushka.

"But what is that man playing?"

"The taragato, the old-fashioned Magyar clarinet," was the answer, and the old instrument seemed to tell tales of warlike days, its deep tones rolling out like the wind of the forest. A boy near by played an impudent little tilinka (flageolet), and Banda Bela said:

"That never sounded like real music to me; only the violin sings. It is like the wind in the trees, the rustle of the grass on the moor, the dash of the waves on the shore, the

voice of the mother to her child."

"Banda Bela, you are poet as well as musician," said the Baroness. "You shall never go back to Harom Szölöhoz to live. You shall stay with me. I will sing to your music, and you shall study music till you are the greatest violin player in all Hungary."

"When a Gypsy child comes into the world they say his mother lays him on the ground and at one side places a purse and at the other a violin," said Banda Bela. "To one side or other the baby will turn his head. If he turns to the purse he will be a thief, if he turns to the violin he will earn his living by music. My mother said she would give me no chance to choose ill, but an old woman near by laid forth both the purse and the violin and I turned my head to the violin and reached for it with my baby hand. When they placed the bow in my hand I grasped it so tight they could scarce take it from me."

"Banda Bela," said Marushka, and her tone was pettish. "You like your violin better than you do me!" The boy laughed.

"My violin has earned you many a supper, Little One;

do not dislike it!"

"Oh, Your Graciousness, what are those strange things?" cried Marushka. "They are not automobiles, are they?"

"No, my child, they are the new steam thrashing machines which the government has just bought, and is teaching the peasants to use instead of the old-fashioned ways of thrashing. Now we are getting into the country. See how beautifully the road winds along the Danube! Is it not a wonderful river? There is a famous waltz called the 'Beautiful Blue Danube' and the river is certainly as blue as the sky. See that queer little cemetery among the hills. I have often wondered why some of the gravestones in the village cemeteries had three feathers and coloured ribbons on them."

"If you please, Your Graciousness," said Banda Bela, "I can tell you. That is for the grave of a girl who has died after she was of an age to be married, yet for whom no one had offered the buying money. Aszszony Semeyer told me that."

"Aszszony Semeyer told me that every peasant kept a wooden shovel hung upon the wall of his house with which

to throw in the last shovelful of earth upon his loved ones," said Marushka with a shudder. "Ugh! I didn't like that."

"Very few people like to think about death," said the Baroness. "See that thicket of prickly pears beside the road? Once when I was a little girl and very, very naughty, I ran away from my nurse and to hide from her I jumped over the wall and landed in just such a thicket as that. I think the pears must be naughty, too, for they liked that little girl and would not let her go. The thorns pricked her legs and tore her frock and scratched her hands when she tried to get her skirts loose, until she cried with pain and called 'Kerem jojoro ide'* to her nurse."

"I did not think the Gracious Baroness was ever naughty," said Marushka.

"The Gracious Baroness was quite like other little girls, my dear," she said, smiling. "Ah, I have a little twinge of toothache!" she exclaimed.

"That is too bad." Marushka was all sympathy. "Aszszony Semeyer says that if you will always cut your finger nails on Friday you will never have toothache."

* "Come to me."

"Is that so? Then I shall certainly try it," said the Baroness soberly. "Do you see the gleam of white houses between the trees? Those are the beautiful villas and castles of the Svabhegy, the hill overlooking the Danube, and here live many of my very good friends.

"I am going to visit one of them for a little while and you must be good, quiet children and sit in the carriage while I go in to make my call. Then, perhaps, I will take you in for a few moments to see the house, for it is a very beautiful one. See! here we are at the gate," as the carriage turned into a beautifully ornamented gateway, above which was carved the legend: If you love God and your Country, enter; with malice in your heart, go your way.

The driveway wound through beautiful grounds, and through the trees were seen glimpses of the Danube. The house itself was white and stood at the crest of the hill overlooking the river.

"This place belongs to the Count Ándrassy," said the Baroness. "He has also another place in the föld and is very wealthy. When my grandfather went to visit his grandfather in the old days, they once took the wheels from his

carriage and tied them to the tops of the tallest poplar trees on the estate to prevent his leaving. Another time they greased the shafts with wolf fat, so that the horses would not allow themselves to be harnessed up, for they are so afraid of the wolf smell. Still another time they hid his trunks in the attic so that it was three months before my grandfather finally got away.

"That was old-fashioned hospitality. Here we are at the door. Sit quietly here and I will return," and the Baroness sprang down. There was a swish of her silken skirts and the front door closed behind her.

The children chattered gaily to each other of all they had seen and heard since they had left Harom Szölöhoz, and Marushka said:

"It seems so long since we have left the village, Banda Bela; somehow it seems as if we would never go back."

"I think you never will." Banda Bela spoke a little sadly. "Were you happy there, Little One?"

"Oh, yes," she said brightly. "I was happy with you and Aszszony Semeyer. Only, when I saw other children with their mothers, there was the ache right here—" she laid her

hand on her heart.

"I know," said Banda Bela. "I have that always. Only when I play my violin do I forget."

"But I cannot play the violin, nor can I do anything, only embroider that horrible Himmelbelt," and Marushka pouted, while Banda Bela laughed at her.

"Think how proud you will be some day to show that Himmelbelt to your husband," he said, but just then the Baroness and the Count came out of the house together.

"What do you think?" the Baroness asked the Count.

"I think you are right, but Maria shall decide," he answered. "We will say nothing to her and her heart will speak."

"Come in, children," said the Baroness, who looked strangely excited. Her eyes shone and her cheeks were flushed, while the Count's face was pale as death and he looked strangely at Marushka.

"Banda Bela," said the Baroness, "the Countess is not very well. She loves music as you and I do, and I want you to come in and play for her. She is very sad. Once she lost her dear little daughter, and you may play some gentle little

songs for her. It may give her pleasure. It is a beautiful thing, Banda Bela, to give pleasure to those who are sad."

The Baroness chattered on as they entered the house. Marushka looked up at the Count's face. Sad as it was she felt drawn toward him. She saw him watching her closely and smiled up at him with the pretty, frank smile which always lighted up her face so charmingly.

"High-Born Count," she said shyly, "I have to thank you for the first present I ever received in all my life."

"What was that, Little One?" he asked.

"The top boots which Banda Bela bought for me at the fair at Harom Szölöhoz. They were bought with the florin you gave to Banda Bela for his playing. They were so nice!" She dimpled prettily.

"I am glad they gave you pleasure. Come, we will go in and hear Banda Bela play," said the Count, holding out his hand. Marushka slipped her hand into his and he led her into the house, entering by the large hall, on the walls of which hung deer horns and wolf heads, while a huge stuffed wolf stood at one end, holding a lamp in his paws. The Count was a great sportsman and had shot many of these

animals himself in the forests of the Transylvania.

Banda Bela tuned his violin and then began to play. It seemed to Marushka as if she had never before heard him play so beautifully. Many things he played, all soft and dreamy, with a gentle, haunting sadness through them, until at last he struck into a peculiar melody, a sort of double harmony of joy and sorrow, which he had never played before.

"What is that, Banda Bela?" demanded the Baroness. "Who wrote it, what are the words?"

"If you please, Your Graciousness"—the boy flushed, "it is but a Gypsy song of sorrow. The words are but in my own heart."

"Strange boy," she thought, but at that moment the door opened and a lady hastily entered the room. She was tall and very beautiful, with great masses of corn-coloured hair and deep blue eyes, but her face had a look of terrible sadness.

"Arpád!" she exclaimed. "What is this music? It makes me weep for my lost one and I am nearly blind with weeping now." Her eyes, seeking her husband's, fell upon Marushka,

who during the music had been leaning against the Count, his arm around her. The Countess' eyes travelled up and down the little figure, then sought her husband's face with a sort of eager, frightened questioning.

"Arpád!" she cried. "Arpád! Who is this child?"

"Maria, my dearest! I have brought her here that you may tell me who she is," he said, trying to speak calmly.

She drew the little girl toward her and Marushka went willingly and stood looking into the sweet face of the Countess.

"Such a likeness," whispered the Baroness. "They are as like as two sisters."

Then, all in a moment, the Countess gathered Marushka into her arms and covered the child's face with kisses. "You are mine," she cried, tears streaming down her face. "Mine! Arpád! I know it is our little daughter come back to us after all these years. My heart tells me it is she!"

Marushka looked frightened for a moment, then she clung around her mother's neck, and the Baroness quietly drew Banda Bela from the room. From the hall the sound of the Gypsy boy's violin came as he played, with all his soul

in his touch, the song of his father:

"The hills are so blue,
The sun so warm,
The wind of the moor so soft and so kind!
Oh, the eyes of my mother,
The warmth of her breast,
The breath of her kiss on my cheek, alas!"

THE END

Our Little Romanian Cousin

Clara Vostrovsky Winlow

Illustrated by Charles E. Meister



"Offered him his hand."

Preface

In Southern Europe are a number of comparatively small countries known as the Balkan States, which remind one very much of quarrelsome children whose troubles have to be straightened out by older brothers and sisters. Many years ago there were more independent and partially independent states than now. Two of these little principalities called Walachia and Moldavia found that they could better protect themselves from their neighbors if they stood together. So they combined under one government, and the present country of Romania was formed in 1857.

In its native form the name of this country was "Romania," representing the claim of the inhabitants to descent from the Roman legions that colonized the country. These colonists, who called themselves "Romani," or "Rumeni," came from the Carpathian lands and the present Transylvania in the early Middle Ages.

When once started, Romania grew quite strong as a state. The people wanted to learn, and improve their condition, and there is no better example of this than their farming, for this country has become one of the greatest grain exporting countries in Europe. This was done, for one thing, by giving up their old-fashioned wooden plows, which just scratched the surface of the ground, and using modern steel plows from other countries which turned the ground over, just as our plows do.

The Romanian men and women are strong and sturdy, and the men are noted for their bravery and hardiness. So, among the Romanian children, we find hardy, manly little boys and cheerful, if serious-minded, little girls. However, they like to play, just as do all of our little foreign cousins. This little book tells about their everyday games and pastimes, how they live, and how they dress.

The brave fathers and brothers of our little Romanian cousins took their places in the battle line to defend their homes in the great war that is now being fought in Europe. No one knows what the outcome of this terrible struggle will be. Will Romania be destroyed, or will she emerge a

greater and more powerful country, standing for liberty and justice? Time only will tell.

CHAPTER I

The Doctor Prescribes

Jonitza lay sprawled out on the warm carpet in the living room near a big brick stove that reached almost to the ceiling. Beside him were his playthings and two picture books with fancy covers, but he kicked his slippered feet discontentedly at them, until his mother, seated at the other end of the room, arose, put down her sewing, and with a scarcely audible sigh, picked them up and laid them on the table.

Jonitza paid no attention. Ever since he had been seriously ill the month before, he had grown accustomed to having people wait on him. He now turned on his back and began tracing in the air with his finger the pretty stenciled patterns that covered the walls. Tiring of that, he started beating a monotonous tattoo with one foot, until his mother, with the faintest shade of impatience, said: "I think

you'd better get up. You've been lying on the floor for a whole hour doing nothing."

Jonitza arose languidly, stretched himself, and walking over to one of the big double windows, plumped himself down into a deep arm chair in front of it.

Jonitza's home was a very comfortable one-story house in the city of Galatz, one of the leading ports on the Danube River, near the border line between Moldavia and Wallachia, the two provinces which with Dobrudja make up the kingdom of Romania. It was in one of the best residence districts, at one end of a high earth cliff. Somewhat below this cliff extended the flat level of the Lower Town, made up principally of mills and business houses, immense warehouses for grain, much of which is exported from Romania, and wharves stretching out to the river.

The little boy could not see much of this, but far below, in between the scattered apricot trees and lilac bushes in the garden, he could just get a glimpse of an interesting procession of rude carts to which bullocks or buffaloes were harnessed, toiling slowly upward on a wide road. He had become so interested in the struggles of one cart that

looked as if it were loaded with the enormous reeds that are used for fuel by the poorer people of Galatz that he did not hear the bell ring and so was quite unprepared to have a hand suddenly laid on his shoulder and to look up into the smiling face of the family Doctor.

Jonitza had a guilty feeling without knowing why and tried his best to scowl and look away. It wasn't easy though.

"Why aren't you out-of-doors?" the Doctor asked in a surprised tone.

It was Jonitza's turn to be surprised. "Why," he stammered, "it's—too cold," here he shivered, "I—I—I am not well enough."

"What nonsense!" the Doctor said. "The air is delightful. I've been traveling around half the day in it. And, even granting that you're not well—why, fresh air is the only thing that will make you well."

Jonitza suppressed a yawn and looked listlessly about him. The Doctor shrugged his shoulders as he said: "I see I must leave a new prescription for you." Saying this, he tore a leaf from his notebook, hastily wrote something on it, folded it, and handed it to Jonitza's mother who stood near

by, with: "Please treat what is written here seriously, Mrs. Popescu. I shall have more to say regarding it to your husband. Now I must hurry away."

But Mrs. Popescu barred the entrance.

"Not until you have had some coffee," she said. At the same moment, a maid entered with a tray on which were coffee and sweets, the refreshments usually handed to visitors in Romania. The Doctor took a taste of the coffee and one of the sweetmeats and laughingly remarked as he left: "It's only fresh air that keeps me from breaking down under the régime to which I am subjected."

It was only after the door had closed behind him that Mrs. Popescu unfolded the paper that he had given her. As she glanced over it she gave an exclamation that caused her son to look up inquiringly.

"Come here," she said to him, and, when he approached, she put her arms around him. "The Doctor asked this to be taken seriously, and he has ordered—"

Jonitza's eyes grew round with something like terror, as he fixed them on her.

"It's nothing bad. Do look natural," his mother hastily

continued. "He has simply ordered me—to take you to spend a month on a farm near some springs in the foot-hills!"

CHAPTER II

Jonitza Gets Interested

Evidently the Doctor did see Jonitza's father, for before the week was ended it had been definitely decided that as soon as the weather was a little warmer Mrs. Popescu would leave with her son for a month's stay in the country. Jonitza had been a trifle interested at first, then he had grumbled, and, finally, he had resumed the languid air that was so peculiarly trying to those about him.

There was one thing in particular that he rebelled against even in his languid state and that was the fact that every afternoon he was now bundled up and ordered out-of-doors for an hour.

"I don't want to go," he would say every time; and every time his mother would kiss him and answer sweetly, "It is for your own good. We must do what the Doctor orders."

Then he would go out into the garden with its lilac and

acacia bushes that were just beginning to show leaf buds and walk slowly up and down or stand first on one foot and then on the other as if unable to decide what to do. But one day things went differently. Whether it was due to the air having a genuine spring flavor for the first time that year, or to the fact that it was a holiday and he had been left at home with a couple of servants, or to the fact that the departure for the foot-hills had been definitely set for the first day of the following week, or to some other entirely different cause, in any case there was quite an alert look about the boy and even something of a sparkle in his eyes.

Maritza, the maid, noticed it and remarked to the cook: "Master Jonitza looks quite spry today. If he were well, I'd warrant he would get into some mischief." Then she forgot all about him.

A group of boys that Jonitza knew slightly passed by and one seeing him called out: "Come on with us. We're going to the marsh." To his own surprise, Jonitza called back, "All right," and joined them.

When they reached a marshy plain bordering on the Danube some of the boys left them, and Jonitza found

himself alone with two boys, both younger than himself. All three were tired from the walk, and finding the stump of an old tree, sat down on it and amused themselves counting the ducks that they saw. Suddenly something that his tutor had told him occurred to Jonitza. "Do you know," he said, "that there are more varieties of ducks on the Danube than in most parts of the world? Let's see how many different ones we can make out."

The little boys did not take kindly to the suggestion. "I am hungry," one of them said; "let's go home."

So back the three began to trudge, now and then throwing a stone into the air, or, when they could, into the water.

Jonitza felt more tired than he cared to confess to the two youngsters and inwardly planned to lie down as soon as he came within doors. "I'll be home in less than fifteen minutes, now!" he suddenly exclaimed, thinking aloud.

"How can you and see me dance?" said a voice behind him so unexpectedly that Jonitza jumped. Turning, he saw a laughing peasant all decorated with tiny bells.

"Oh, jolly!" the other boys shouted. "There's going to be a dance! Come on!"

Those little bells must have said "Come on" too, for Jonitza found himself trying to keep up with the peasant's rapid strides.

Down in the Lower Town, before one of the old domed churches, they found a crowd gathered. Although there was nothing unusual about such a gathering, one could see from the faces that something unusual was expected.

It was not a silent expectation, however. Everywhere people were talking and laughing and a few young men were even singing. As soon as the peasant with bells appeared, a shout arose. At the same instant a troop of other peasants, all attired in their gay embroidered national costumes, with bells at their girdles and on their sleeves, came in a body into the square, and taking their places began to dance and shout and sing and stamp their feet. Someone said this was the Pyrrhic Dance that was sacred in ancient mythology, and that had come to the Romanians from their Roman forefathers; a dance to prevent Saturn from hearing the voice of his infant son Jupiter, lest he devour him. Whether this explained it or not there was no doubt of the audience liking it, for at its conclusion all

clapped their hands and burst into boisterous exclamations of delight. Jonitza, feeling some of the excitement, clapped too, and no longer conscious of any tired feeling waited until almost everyone had gone before he made his way slowly home.

CHAPTER III

The Trip to the Country

On Tuesday of the following week Jonitza, his mother, and the maid Maritza, after a short trip on the train, were being driven over the vast level and wonderfully fertile plains of Romania, that stretched before them like a great green sea. There were already signs that the short spring that Romania has would soon change into summer. Wild flowers were to be seen here and there and birds twittered and flew about.

The way lay among thatched farm-houses whose gleaming walls showed that they had been freshly whitewashed at Easter. Now and then a peasant seated in a rude wagon, drawn by beautiful, creamy, short-legged oxen with wide-spreading horns, saluted them gravely.

At a little elevation in the road they passed a group of dug-outs called bordei, with turf-covered roofs and

shapeless clay chimneys. The windows in these bordei were merely irregular holes in the mud walls. At the door leading down into one of these primitive houses stood an attractive looking woman, with a bright yellow kerchief over her head, and another around her neck. She was busily spinning while she crooned a lullaby to a baby who lay blinking its eyes in an oval wooden box swinging from the branches of a tree near by.

Not far from these bordei was a cemetery filled with crosses of the oddest possible shapes. It really seemed as if the people had tried to find a new design for each new grave.

They passed wayside crosses also, before some of which peasants were kneeling in prayer.

But, despite these interesting things, there was something tiring in the long journey over the monotonously level plains, and Jonitza grew more and more restless. His pretty mother noticed it and drawing him to her she began to tell him the most interesting stories. First of all about Trajan, the great Roman Emperor, who came to their country so many centuries ago and conquered the people who

then inhabited it. She described to him the great column in Rome commemorating his victory, and told him how proud every Romanian was that he was descended from the soldiers that the Emperor left to guard the new possessions.

"Is that why we call the thunder Trajan's voice?" asked Jonitza.

"Perhaps," his mother answered. "We certainly love to call things by his name."

"The Milky Way is Trajan's Road, isn't it?" again inquired Jonitza.

His mother nodded.

"The boys call the ditch by the lumber mill Trajan's Moat," Jonitza continued.

His mother smiled. "Romania is full of Trajan's moats; it would be hard to find a village that hasn't one. There are many interesting stories," continued his mother, "connected with our history. You know, from your tutor, that the section of Romania in which we live is called Moldavia. Would you like to hear the old legend as to how it got its name?"

"Please tell it to me," her son answered eagerly, his eyes

sparkling with interest.

"Once upon a time," began his mother, "a Prince called Bogdan lived in this part of the world. Now, Bogdan had a dog whom he valued above all the other dogs that he owned.

"One day, while out hunting, this dog, whose name was Molda, caught sight of a buffalo and chased it to the very brink of a river. When the terrified buffalo waded into the water the dog in his excitement followed, was caught in the current and drowned.

"When his followers saw how deeply affected by the dog's death Bogdan was, they pursued the buffalo, killed it, and taking its head back with them, nailed it over the entrance to the Palace.

"But this did not lessen the Prince's grief. Whenever possible he would go to the river's banks to mourn. The people, seeing him there, would repeat the story, so that after a while the river became associated with the name of the dog and was spoken of as the Moldava. Gradually the name, slightly modified, was applied also to all of the surrounding country."

"Please tell me more stories about Moldavia," begged Jonitza, when his mother had been silent for some time.

"Listen then to the story of Movila," again began his mother, glad to see that the restless look had left her son's face. "This is a story of King Stephen who was great in mind but very small in body. Once in a battle with Hungarians his horse was killed under him. As the horse fell, the King was caught by one of his heralds, a man as large as Stephen was small. After assisting him to his feet, the herald offered Stephen his own horse. The King looked up at the big animal with a frown, but the herald, kneeling before him, placed Stephen's foot on his shoulder and exclaimed: 'Oh, Prince, allow me to serve you as a mole-hill.'

"'Mole-hill,' returned Stephen, getting on the horse, 'I will make a mountain of you.'

"Then Fortune favored Stephen and soon the victory was his. No sooner was he back in camp than he sent for the herald. When the latter came, he found Stephen surrounded by his court. 'Herald,' said Stephen, 'thou hast served me as a mole-hill. In return I give thee the name of Movila (little mountain). Thou shalt have no other. Thou

gavest me thy horse in my need. In return, I give thee five full domains over which thou shalt rule.'"

The carriage here stopped before a tiny tavern in a little vineyard surrounded town. They were disappointed in finding that they could get nothing for lunch except raw onions with salt and mamaliga, the cold corn meal mush that is eaten everywhere throughout peasant Romania. At first Mrs. Popescu thought they would eat from their own well-filled lunch basket, but when Maritza remarked that mamaliga was really very good, she changed her mind. Then, as they seated themselves before a table on the vine-covered veranda, she asked Maritza to tell them how the mamaliga is prepared.

"The water must be hot," said the maid, "before the meal is stirred into it. You continue stirring until it is almost done, then you can add a little grated cheese. At our house, when it is well cooked, we put it into a cloth and tie it up."

Here some dried fish which the owner of the tavern had perhaps not intended to serve at first, were laid on the table.

"These fish have a nice flavor," remarked Mrs. Popescu.

"I know how they also are prepared," said Maritza, "for my brother has helped get them ready."

"Suppose you tell us about it, Maritza," said Mrs. Popescu, evidently not wishing the party to hurry.

"Very well, ma'am," consented the maid. "First, a kind of basket work of osiers is built up. This is covered with walnut leaves in which the fish are wrapped. The building is then filled with smoke for several days, or until the fish look yellow and smell good. They are then taken down, made into bundles and surrounded by pine tree branches, which add a new flavor to them that most people like."

Here the tavern-keeper again appeared with a bottle of the damson plum brandy for which Romania is famous. But Mrs. Popescu shook her head. "Not this time," she said smiling.

From this little town the journey was a steady climb upward amid oak, beech and lime trees. There were more crosses along the roadside. In one spot there was a large group of them, all brightly painted and roofed over.

It was not until late in the afternoon that they came in sight of the village near which the farm lay where they were

to stay for a while. Full of expectations of a good supper, they drove past it and on to a pleasant and prosperous looking dwelling. In the front of the broad veranda an interesting group stood waiting to welcome them.

CHAPTER IV

The Journey's End

The medium-sized, vigorous-looking man who formed one of the group on the veranda, hurried forward to meet them. He was dark with long black wavy hair. He wore white woolen trousers, a sort of big sleeved tunic or shirt of coarse but very clean linen, well belted in at the waist by a broad scarlet woolen scarf. Over this was a sleeveless sheepskin jacket, the wool inside, the outside gayly embroidered. On his feet were goatskin sandals.

His wife was slender and quite fair. Like her husband, she was evidently wearing a holiday dress. This was a white gown covered with red and black embroidery, a brightly colored apron, and several necklaces of colored beads and coins. A gay kerchief, fringed with a row of spangles, was set well back on her light brown hair. She also advanced to meet the newcomers.

A bright-eyed boy of about twelve and a very pretty girl about four years younger were left standing and staring by the doorway. After greetings had been exchanged and all had descended from the carriage, the farmer said something to his son who immediately went up to Jonitza and offered him his hand. At the same time he proposed showing him the grounds while supper was being placed on the table.

Jonitza at once accepted the offer. He was anxious to see what was outside, and, besides, his legs felt so stiff from the long ride that he longed to exercise them.

Neither of the boys spoke at first, although they glanced shyly at each other now and then. At a corner of the house the ice was broken in an unexpected fashion. They walked right into a flock of geese who set up a "Honk! Honk!" and made a peck at Jonitza who happened to disturb them most.

Taken by surprise, Jonitza jumped awkwardly to one side. Nicolaia, his companion, could not restrain a laugh. The next minute, evidently fearing that he had hurt his new acquaintance's feelings, he put his hand on his shoulder in a friendly way and suggested a visit to the pigs.

"Katinka," he called to his sister, who was shyly

following them, "go get something to take to the pigs."

Katinka turned obediently and ran into the house. She soon reappeared, carefully holding a pan.

The pigs proved worth visiting. They were of the wild boar species with an upright row of funny hard bristles on their backs. They were so full of play, too, that Jonitza was genuinely sorry to hear the call to supper.

"It's just splendid here!" he whispered to his mother as he saw her for an instant alone before entering the big kitchen which served also as dining room.

Jonitza now noticed that although the farmer and his son had kept their hats on in the house, they were careful to remove them before sitting down to the meal.

This meal was quite an elaborate one. There was fishroe and olives, mutton and cheese, and rye bread about two inches thick and pierced all over with a fork. This was broken, not cut. There was also a kind of mamaliga cooked in milk and called balmosch. This was placed on the table on a big wooden platter, cut with a string, and eaten with layers of cheese.

CHAPTER V

Getting Acquainted

Jonitza and his mother were out early next morning after a breakfast of bacon and mamaliga.

The farm-house at which they were staying looked attractive in its cleanliness. It had been recently white-washed and the doors and window frames painted a bright blue. It was built entirely of timber. The roof consisted of thin strips of wood laid closely row upon row. Near the house were some fruit-trees and lilac bushes and a small flower garden in which basil and gilliflowers, so often mentioned in Romanian folk songs, were conspicuous.

Inside, the big living-room had a comfortable, homey air. The walls were partially covered with hand-woven tapestries. In one corner was a huge Dutch looking stove, while opposite, under an ikon, stood the primitive loom that is still to be seen in all Romanian farm-houses. Besides

the table on which the meals were served, there were some plain three-legged chairs, a large chest, a smaller table on which the basket of Easter eggs still stood, and a sort of couch which served Nicolaia as a bed at night. Its corn husk mattress had a pretty cover with an embroidered ruffle over it in the daytime. The straw pillows then changed their clothes for more fancy ones and were placed evenly against the wall.

Jonitza was anxious to show his mother the sportive pigs and he lost no time in marching her to them. When she had expressed sufficient admiration, they wandered to the well with its long sweep to which a rock was attached, and crossed themselves before the brightly painted crosses that were on each side of it. Katinka came out with a pitcher while they stood there, and knelt in prayer before the crosses before drawing up the water.

"Where is Nicolaia?" they asked her. She pointed to the cow-shed where they found him hard at work.

He smiled at them in greeting.

"This is my job," he said, "until I take the sheep to pasture in the mountains, for my mother is to let me do so this

year."

Jonitza watched his robust companion with some envy as he went cheerfully about what he had to do. Nicolaia did it all easily and quickly; at the same time he did not neglect to make an occasional pleasant remark, and he did this with the courtesy that seems natural to the Romanian peasant. Among other things he told them the names of some of the beautiful cream-colored oxen that his father owned. They were very high-sounding ones. There were Antony and Cæsar, Cassius and Brutus, Augustus, and, of course, Trajan, the finest-looking creature of all.

Then, almost without warning, the weather changed, a heavy rain setting in. This caused all, except the father who was absent, to gather in the big living-room. Here Katinka, in a matter-of-fact way, took out some embroidery on linen, which at the age of eight she was already getting ready for her bridal trousseau. Later she showed Mrs. Popescu a rug that she was beginning to weave as a covering for her bed.

In the meantime, Mrs. Popescu and Maritza also took out some embroidery, the peasant mother sat down at the loom, and Nicolaia brought out a bit of wood-carving. This,

he said, was now being taught in the village school. Jonitza alone had no work. He stood for a while by the window watching the rain splash against it and the wind shake the trees as if it meant to uproot them. It was not long, however, before he wandered to where Nicolaia sat and watched him work.

Mrs. Popescu looked over at her idle son several times. A sudden inspiration made her say: "You seem to carve very nicely, Nicolaia. How would you like to be Jonitza's teacher and earn a little money of your own?"

"Will you?" asked Jonitza dropping on the floor beside Nicolaia. The peasant boy looked up with a pleased smile. "If you think I know enough," he answered modestly, "I'll be glad to teach you."

Here his mother could not keep from remarking with a proud air: "The school teacher takes an interest in Nicolaia. He has advised him to attend the Government School of Fruit Culture which is in the next village from ours. He says he would learn other things besides taking care of fruit trees there. But that isn't possible, for he's promised as an apprentice to his uncle in Bukurest. Well, he'll learn a great

deal there, too."

"Oh, mother," exclaimed Nicolaia when his mother had left the loom and taken up some knitting, "while we are working won't you sing some songs as you do when we're alone?"

His mother's fair face flushed as she looked shyly at Mrs. Popescu. "I must get things ready for the mid-day meal," she said rising.

As soon as her back was turned, Mrs. Popescu nodded to good-natured Maritza who understood and began to sing a song about a heiduk, the traditional hero of the Romanian peasantry, a person as fascinating as our own Robin Hood. The song told how handsome he was, how winning his ways, how fearless his manner towards tyrants, how kind to the poor and unfortunate.

Nicolaia's mother was back in her place before the maid finished. "That was very nice, dear," she remarked. "And now I can't do less than sing a song, too. It'll be about a woman, the bravest shepherdess that ever was seen."

This was evidently a favorite with the children, for they joined in an odd refrain that occurred every once in a while.

She had scarcely finished when the sun came out to announce that the rain was over. A moment after the door opened and her husband entered.

CHAPTER VI
An Excursion

During the meal that followed, the farmer turned to his son with: "You will have to go to the Convent for me this afternoon. I can't spare the time myself. And perhaps"—here he turned to Mrs. Popescu—"you and your son might like the trip. It would give you a chance to see one of our old-time institutions."

Mrs. Popescu thanked him. "Nothing could be pleasanter," she said.

Soon all three were seated on a rough timber cart with apparently nothing to hold it together. To the cart were harnessed two moody looking buffaloes with horns lying almost flat along their necks. The cart swayed and twisted up the rough road when suddenly Nicolaia gave an excited exclamation. They were just in the middle of one of the great swollen streams that flowed everywhere over the

mountains.

"What has happened?" asked Mrs. Popescu anxiously, for Nicolaia was standing up and urging the animals forward.

Nicolaia gave a short, funny laugh. "The buffaloes want to take a bath," he answered, and again shouted at them. Fortunately, after a display of much stubbornness on their part, he did persuade them that neither the time nor the place was suitable for bathing, and they moved slowly on.

After safely passing through all the ruts and bogs, the creaking cart at length stopped before what was called the "Guest House" on one side of an old half-deserted convent. A servant dressed in the national costume, with a wide hat on his long curling hair, came to meet them and bid them welcome. Later one of the inmates, an elderly woman in a loose brown dress, appeared bringing coffee, preserved fruit, and buffalo milk, which Jonitza thought had a very peculiar flavor.

After they had partaken of this refreshment and expressed their appreciation of the courtesy, and while Nicolaia was busy with his errand, Mrs. Popescu and Jonitza

visited the church of the Convent and looked at the crude frescoes of heaven and hell that adorned its walls. There were many ikons or pictures of saints about, for Romania is a Greek Catholic country like Russia. The large size of the Convent showed that it must have enjoyed great prosperity in former times. Now a deep quiet reigned everywhere.

Nicolaia grew quite talkative on the way back; he told of the source of one of the streams that they passed and how difficult it was to get to it, of a hermit cave in another part of the mountains in which the bats fly at you when you enter, and finally, of some of his own immediate plans. He talked at length about a friend called Demetrius, who lived on the other side of the village and whom he planned to see on the following day, when his own work was done. "Would you like to visit him with me?" he asked, turning politely to Jonitza.

"Like!" repeated Jonitza almost rudely. "Of course."

They were passing through the village at the time and Mrs. Popescu noticed that on certain houses a flower was painted. She pointed this out. "That," explained Nicolaia, "is to let everyone know that a maiden lives there."

A little further on they met a branch entwined cart. In it sat two girls gayly talking. One of them called to Nicolaia in passing.

The girls did not look at all alike and Mrs. Popescu wondered if they were sisters.

"No," said Nicolaia, "they are only surata, that is, they have adopted each other as sisters. Any girls can do that if they love each other enough. I was at the Church when the ceremony was performed, and saw their feet chained together in token of the bond. It made them the same as born sisters. Sometimes a young man adopts another young man for his brother in the same way. The priest always asks them if they are sure of their affection, for he says the ceremony makes the new relationship very binding."

CHAPTER VII

St. George's Day

The next day the boys walked over to the home of Nicolaia's village friend, Demetrius, and here a delightful surprise awaited them. Two young bear cubs trotted like dogs at the feet of the village boy as he came to meet them.

"Where did you get these?" both boys shouted with delight.

"From my uncle," returned Demetrius. "He captured them after their mother had been killed. At first they had to be fed sheep milk with a spoon."

As he spoke, one of the little fellows ran up a tree in the yard and the other began to play with a young puppy. Soon the boys were trying to help Demetrius teach them to turn somersaults and do other tricks. They gave this up only when they remembered there were other things to settle before parting. These things all related to St. George's Day,

or, as it is sometimes called, the "Witch's Sabbath." This would come the very last of the week. There were mysteries in regard to the day, for the boys spoke in whispers while Jonitza was trying to make one of the bears jump through a hoop. He was so much interested in the antics of the little creatures that he paid no attention until just at leaving he heard something which made him open his eyes wide. Hidden treasure was to be found!

On the way home he answered Nicolaia in monosyllables and looked moody, much to the latter's surprise. "What's the matter?" Nicolaia finally asked.

For answer Jonitza glared and then burst out with: "What have I done that you won't let me go with you on St. George's Eve?"

Nicolaia was taken aback. "You've done nothing," he made haste to say. "But this must be kept a secret and your mother wouldn't like your going."

"I won't tell her," said Jonitza, wincing a little as he spoke; "that is—not until—eh—I show her the treasure. Then she won't care."

Nicolaia looked up and down the road as if trying to find

a way out of a difficulty. At last he said faintly, "Well, all right, if you can meet us in the yard by the cow-sheds at ten o'clock."

On the day before the "Witch's Sabbath," Jonitza watched Nicolaia's father cut square blocks of turf and place them before every door and window of the farm-house and stables. "Why are you doing that?" he asked. The farmer smiled at him but did not answer. Katinka, however, came and whispered that it was to keep out the witches. She turned from him to help her father place thorn branches here and there in the cut turf. Jonitza followed every act with a fascinated air. "What's that for?" he asked her. "The witches run when they see thorns," she explained, smiling at the thought.

Two of the men who were helping on the farm at the time, offered to keep watch all night near the stables lest the witches should charm the cattle and do them harm. Mrs. Popescu, who heard them make the offer, asked them if they really believed in witches.

They looked at her with the air of grown up children. "If it wasn't witches," said one with a triumphant air, "what

made old Theodoresco's cow give bloody milk last year for several months beginning the very next day after the 'Witch's Sabbath'?" Mrs. Popescu, seeing that it would be useless to argue the question, left them.

A half hour later, Nicolaia appeared and beckoned to Jonitza to follow him indoors. Here he took an earthen jar from a closet. "What do you think that is?" he asked.

"One of your mother's jars," Jonitza answered.

"No," said Nicolaia without smiling. "Put your hand inside and see what you find."

Jonitza did so and brought out some ancient coins dating back to pre-Roman times.

"My father is keeping these for luck. He found them when he was plowing," said Nicolaia. "I am showing this to you because I thought you ought to know that it may be that kind of treasure that we'll find tonight."

Jonitza had this constantly in mind the rest of the day. "How wonderful it would be to find a real treasure," he kept thinking. He ate little for supper, went to bed at once when his mother suggested it, and tried very hard to keep from falling asleep. But alas, despite his efforts, sleep came and it

was a very deep sleep, so that when he awoke it was bright morning.

He hurried out, ashamed of himself, and found his friend looking very drowsy and grinning in a somewhat downcast way. In answer to Jonitza's hurried explanations of what had happened to himself and urgent questions, Nicolaia said: "It was just after ten o'clock when we started. I was relieved that you didn't appear, for I didn't know what might happen. There was no moon at the time, but the stars were out, and as we know the hills well, Demetrius and I had no trouble making our way over them. We heard all sorts of strange noises, but we weren't a bit afraid. I thought we should surely find the treasure. You see, they say around here that it is easiest for the one born on a Sunday or at midday; and Demetrius was born just two minutes after noon on a Sunday. So that ought to count.

"We spoke only in whispers as we tried to look in every direction at once. Each of us wanted to be the first to see the blue flame which shows where the treasure lies hidden. It must have been past midnight when Demetrius seized hold of my arm. I felt his hand tremble.

"'Do you see that?' he whispered.

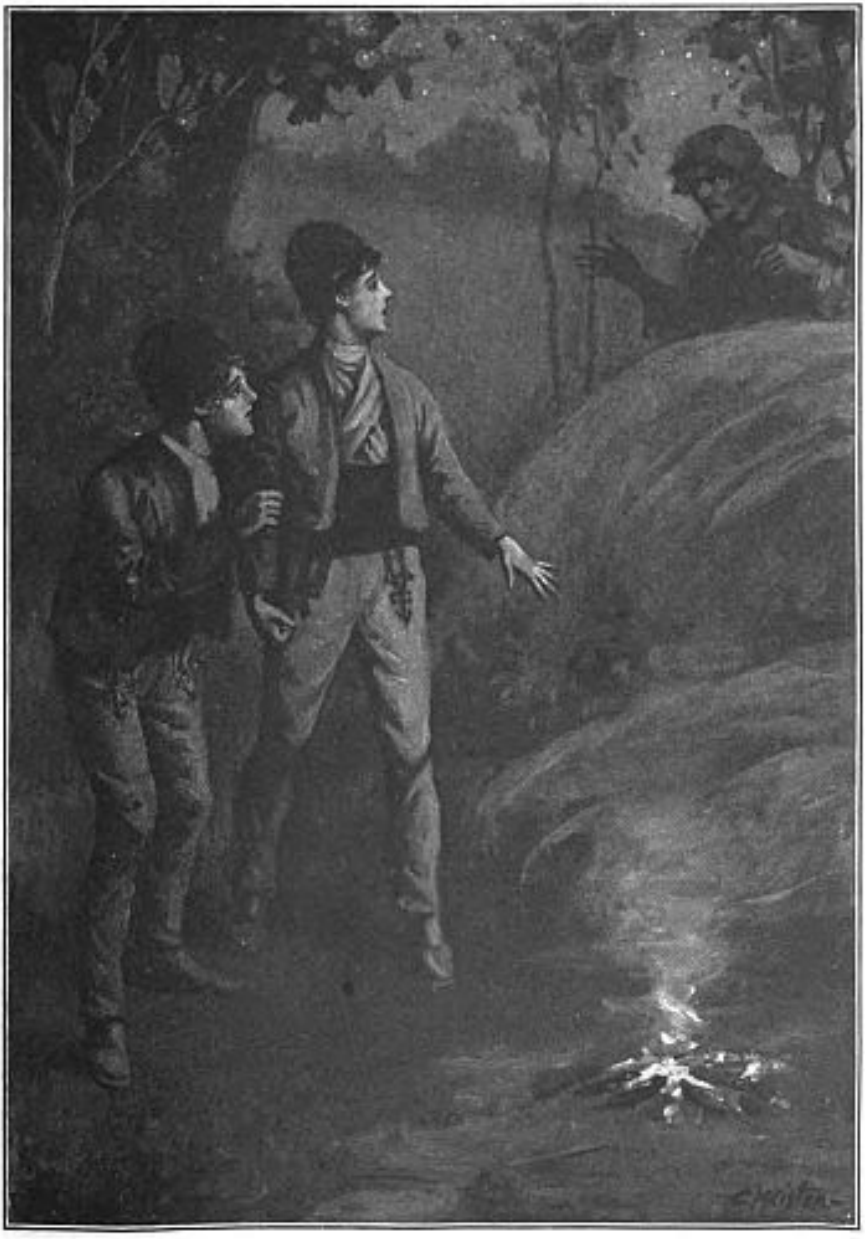
"I looked where he pointed and saw in the distance what really seemed like a tiny fire. It was not particularly blue but we did not think of that. I felt for my knife, for it must be thrown through the flame so that the spirits who guard the treasure won't harm you.

"'Have you your knife?' I whispered back.

"'Yes,' returned Demetrius. 'I'll throw first, and if I miss, you throw right after.' Before this we had not minded anything, but now as we crept on, we shuddered whenever we stepped on a dry twig or caused a stone to roll down hill.

"As we came nearer there was no sign of flame but there were bright patches on the ground as if from the remains of a fire. This could just be seen around a big boulder where we stopped for a moment to gain courage for the final step.

"As we stood there we heard a sound as of some creature rolling over. Then on the other side of the big rock, a huge form arose. We distinctly heard some cuss words and a threat so terrible that we stood as if paralyzed. Suddenly the figure began to move, and forgetful of everything else but our own safety, we ran down the hillside, stumbling over



"'We stood as if paralyzed'"

each other, now rolling away, tearing our clothes on thorn bushes, and generally having a hard time until we both landed in a brook. We crawled out very much chilled and stood listening. Everything about us was quiet, so I don't know whether we were followed or not. However, we did not dare return.

"So, of course, we didn't get any treasure. My father says it was probably some old gypsy, but I know it was a bad spirit, for as I have said, it was after midnight, and good spirits show the flame only till twelve. When it is seen later, the treasure is guarded by bad spirits."

CHAPTER VIII

The Castle of Stephen the Great

How quickly the month at the farm-house passed! Every day there was so much to see and do, and once in a while there was an excursion to some place of interest. The furthest one taken was when Jonitza and Katinka went with the maid who had accompanied Jonitza's mother to the country, for a couple of days' visit to her home in a place called Niamtz.

The day after they reached the straggling village, the children were allowed out to play. They were attracted to a great red earth cliff, where they began digging tunnels and building little cave houses. Tiring of that they wandered up toward the cliff's summit, gathering the beautiful wild flowers that they found on the way, and resting now and then under some leafy tree. When they reached the top they both shouted with delight at finding the ruins of a

castle. What a delightful place in which to play! There were four corner towers, strong buttresses and battlemented walls, as well as a large moat all the way around, now overgrown with trees.

Jonitza, who was blessed with a good memory, recalled what he had been told about the place and so hastened to instruct Katinka in his own fashion, emphasizing every word that he considered of importance. "This," said he, in his tutor's manner, "is the old castle celebrated in many of our songs, of one of our greatest kings called Stephen the Great.

"One day, Stephen the Great was fighting the Turks who were winning. He thought it was no use fighting any longer and made for home as quickly as he could. He thought his mother would be glad he wasn't killed. But instead of that she met him at the big gate you see over there, and told him he ought to be ashamed to give up; that he was fighting to free his people, and that she wouldn't ever open the gates to him and his army unless he came back as victor." (Here Jonitza gave an especial emphasis to the last word.) "So Stephen said, 'All right,' and went back.

He met the Turks in a narrow valley and was so mad that he killed almost every one of them. He was a very brave man, and I'm going to be like him."

These last words were hardly spoken when there was a clap of thunder and flash of lightning, followed by a sudden heavy downpour of rain. The children hurried to shelter which they found in one of the towers.

It was dark there and the wind and rain threatened to break through the walls. Bat-like things flew about, and strange noises, like the mournful voices of imprisoned spirits, began to be heard. Jonitza lost his brave air entirely as he and his companion crouched side by side against one of the walls. Suddenly there was a peculiarly long whistle, probably made by the wind passing through some crevice. Katinka gave a little shriek. "It is the Stafii," she cried, clinging to her friend.

Jonitza, though trembling, put his arm around her. He knew very well that she was referring to harmful elves whom all the Romanian country folk believe dwell in ruins and are always unfriendly to human beings. He tried to think of something comforting to say, but at first only



"It was only Maritza"

managed to clear his throat. After a bit what he did whisper was: "We ought to have some milk to give them." At this Katinka cried more than ever. "That's what they say, but we haven't any, we haven't any," she repeated almost in a shriek.

This was followed by another shriek as a dark form shut out what little light reached them. But it was only Maritza, who had come with a big umbrella to their rescue.

CHAPTER IX

A Spinning Bee

The evening before they left Niamtz, a crowd of Maritza's girl friends gathered at her home for a Spinning Bee.

They came with heads uncovered, for only married women in Romania wear veils or kerchiefs. They were all dressed in holiday finery, with their hair beautifully waved.

At first a merry little maiden with very red cheeks, and very black eyebrows over sparkling eyes, and black hair twisted into a double plait, came in for a good deal of teasing for some reason or other. She didn't seem to mind it and her bright answers caused much laughter and good feeling. Finally she succeeded in drawing attention from herself by asking a riddle. This was followed by another and another until everybody in the room was guessing.

Then Maritza's mother, who had been busy getting

refreshments ready, came in exclaiming, "Time for work, girls!"

At this there was a general cry of "Maritza!" "We want Maritza!" "Maritza must be our leader!"

Maritza stepped forward with some show of reluctance. "There are better spinners and better singers than I am," she said modestly. But the girls, rising quickly, formed a ring around her, singing in chorus, "It's you we want."

Then Maritza took her spindle and began to spin. At the same time she improvised a strange song all about a mysterious heiduk or chieftain who passed through their village. Suddenly she threw her spindle to the black-eyed, red-cheeked maiden, holding it by a long thread as she did so. The merry maiden caught it and was obliged to continue both the spinning and singing while Maritza pulled out the flax. This required much dexterity.

When each girl had had her turn, both in spinning and singing, refreshments were passed around. There was mamaliga, baked pumpkin, potatoes, and last of all, plenty of popcorn.

Then, while all seated resumed their work, one of their

number was begged for a story.

She smilingly consented, and told the following strange and pathetic tale.

The Story of a Lilac Tree

"This is a story of what once must have taken place, for if it had never occurred, I would not now have it to tell.

"In a little valley among the high mountains, there lived a maiden all alone. She worked all day at her spinning and weaving and sang with joy as she worked.

"So the years went on, each year adding loveliness to her face and figure. One day when out gathering firewood for her small needs she heard what sounded like a cry of pain. Making her way into the thicket she found a man sorely wounded.

"She spoke to him but he had become unconscious, and, not knowing what else to do, she took him in her strong arms and carried him to her hut and laid him on her own bed. Then she washed out his wounds and tended him like a sister.

"As soon as he could speak, he tried to express his gratitude. 'Dear maiden,' he said, 'had it not been for you I

should never again have seen the light of day, and even as it is, I fear I shall never walk again. For it was no ordinary mortal by whom I was wounded, but a demon of some kind who threatened that even should I survive, all power to move my legs will have left me. Of what good will life then be to me? Trouble yourself no longer, sweet maiden, to cure me. Rather let my wounds bleed anew.'

"But the beautiful girl shook her head. 'Why should we believe all that ill?' she said. 'I am skilled in herb lore and shall cure you.'

"For more than a week the man lay in bed while the girl tended him. And she grew to love him, he was so patient, so grateful for all she did. Then, one morning, he looked brightly at her: 'Lo, I am cured.' And he sat up in bed. But when he tried to get down he could not.

"And the next day it was the same and the next. But the man did not speak of any disappointment. Instead, he told his nurse strange stories of the life he had seen, and one day something that she found hard to bear. It was of the beautiful woman whom he loved and would have wed.

"The maiden, though now sad, still tended him faith-

fully, but to no avail. At last, in her distress, she sought out a witch who was famed for her wisdom over the whole mountain side.

"'The man is under enchantment,' said the old woman. 'He knows his cure, but will not tell it to thee.'

"'Tell me what it is!' exclaimed the maiden. 'I will pay any price for the cure!'

"'Are you sure?' asked the witch with a disagreeable laugh.

"'I am sure,' answered the maiden.

"'Know then,' said the witch, 'that only a virgin life like yours can save him. Will you give your life?'

"The girl looked down in thought. At last she spoke. 'If it is indeed so, why should I not? He is strong again and the world has need of him. He loves another from whom only bewitchment separates him. The happiness of two is worth the sacrifice of one. I will give my life that they may wed.'

"The next morning when the man made his daily trial to arise, he found to his amazement that he could do so. He looked around for the maiden, but she was nowhere to be seen. He waited all day and till the next morning but she

did not come. Then, full of regret, he went away. Near the threshold of the hut he stopped to pick a branch of fragrant lilac. As he did so, the whole bush swayed with delight, and it seemed to him that a spirit within it called his name as he turned away."

CHAPTER X

New Plans

Jonitza tried to forget that the time for leaving the country was approaching. The month had meant much to him. It had made a remarkable change in his appearance. His listless air had given way to a wide-awake interested look, and his pale cheeks had already something of a ruddy hue.

Although for her own sake, Mrs. Popescu longed for a return home, she felt something like guilt in taking her son back with her. Every night she gave much thought to the subject and every night she knelt in prayer before the ikon that hung in her bedroom, asking that light be given her as to her duty. Finally, unable to decide, she wrote a long letter to her busy husband and begged his advice.

Instead of a written answer, her husband himself arrived. His solution of the difficulty startled her.

"Why shouldn't Jonitza accompany Nicolaia as a sheep herder into the Carpathians?"

"I'm afraid," she said, "there are gypsies there—and bad shepherds—and wild animals—and the life is too hard."

Her husband made light of all these things. "I've talked it over," he said, "with the Doctor. He declares that the only trouble with our boy is that we've molly-coddled him. He advised me to trust him to Nicolaia, whose family he knows. He says that Jonitza is just the age to enjoy the experience and that he will thank us all his life for it."

But at first Mrs. Popescu did not agree. "He has grown much heartier," she said. "Perhaps he would get along very well at home now."

So it was not settled until after the whole thing was talked over with the peasant and his wife and Mrs. Popescu was persuaded that her son would be in safe hands and that, besides, the dangers were less than in the city. Then Katinka was sent to call in the boys who were busy as usual with some outside work. They came in with a surprised air, but when all was explained to them both set up a shout that echoed from the darkened rafters of the room.

Mr. Popescu laughed with pleasure. "Can that be really my son?" he said.

CHAPTER XI

In the Carpathians

"I feel as free as a bird!" Jonitza could not help exclaiming when they had actually started with their flocks for the Carpathian mountains. Like his friend, he was dressed in typical shepherd costume, consisting of a coarse white linen shirt and trousers, a long mantle of very heavy wool, and a straight round sheepskin cap. His very shoes were the same, for the boys had fashioned both pair together. They were made of pieces of goatskin that had been soaked in water until soft, gathered into pleats by means of thongs over the ankles, while other bits of thong held them securely in place.

They had a big flock of sheep under their charge, for besides those belonging to Nicolaia's father they were to herd those belonging to the richest man in that neighborhood. Besides the sheep, two intelligent wolf dogs

belonging to the neighbor went with them, as well as a donkey, to be used later to carry the packs of cheese and milk.

It was high time for the boys to start, for the other shepherds had gone, and the hot Romanian summer was beginning to be felt.

Although Nicolaia had already spent two summers on the mountains this was the first time that he was in charge of so large a flock. In consequence he shared some of Jonitza's excitement. There was another reason why this summer might prove a notable one for him. It was probably his last experience of the kind, for his parents had decided to have him apprenticed that autumn to his uncle, a cabinet maker in the city of Bukurest, and apprenticeships in Romania are for six years.

It was a hard climb for the boys. At first as they made their way upward they occasionally passed one-room shanties, each shared by an entire family and all the domestic animals. At the last one of these they stopped to ask for a drink of water. The door was open and inside they could see the scanty furniture—a rude table, a bench, a stove, and

a cot covered with the skins of wild beasts. A fierce looking man answered their call and handed them the water with so surly an air that Nicolaia, who was accustomed to the great hospitality of the section where he lived, felt a mingling of amazement and indignation. There was no garden of any kind around this house, but there was a wealth of wild flowers. Yellow foxgloves, gladiolas, and wild honeysuckle seemed determined to make the place a thing of beauty.

Just at noon, near one of the little streams that constantly crossed their path, they came upon a small band of the gypsies that are as numerous in Romania as in Hungary. By a small fire over which a kettle hung, sat two women. A short distance from them lay a dark-skinned lad, with matted hair, while leaning against a giant beech on the other side, was a young man playing a weird air that made one think of a mountain storm, on a crude violin.

From this wayside camp, the path wound around and around until at last it suddenly branched into two parts. Nicolaia stopped at this point perplexed. "I do not remember this," he said, as he chose the broader looking of the

two roads. Soon, however, he saw the mistake he made in doing so. What he had taken for a path was the channel of a mountain torrent. It ended in a steep abyss, down which some of the sheep had already scrambled.

The boys spent fully half an hour of the hardest kind of work before they got these sheep back. When, shortly after, they came to a grassy valley, both, panting hard, threw themselves under a tree.

"This is where we'll camp for the night," said Nicolaia, "now that we have all the sheep together." As he spoke, he unpacked the supper of cold meat, onions, and mamaliga that they had brought with them. They also helped themselves to a drink of sheep's milk, which is richer and thicker than cow's and of quite a different flavor.

The sun was already low, and when it sank from sight, darkness followed very soon. Quickly wrapping themselves in their mantles, the boys lay down beside their sheep. So strenuous had the day been, that hardly had they exchanged a few sentences than both were fast asleep.

The next day, after an early breakfast, they were again on their way. The scenery around was grandly wild.

Enormous birch and oak trees towered on both sides of the narrow path, while lime trees gave forth the honeyed sweetness of their blossoms. Here and there a precipice would yawn on one side of the pathway. No homes of any kind were to be seen.

The afternoon was far advanced when they reached another valley which was to form their headquarters for the summer. Several of the shepherds who shared this section noted their arrival and sent a welcome to them on their boutchoums, long pipes of cherry wood which can be heard for a great distance. In the Middle Ages, Romanians used the boutchoums to proclaim war to the troops.

Nicolaia at once led Jonitza to a sort of cave formed of large, loose stones. "This," he said, "is the store-house of six or eight of us who herd in this vicinity."

The next morning the work began in earnest. Some of it was splendid training. Each day Nicolaia and Jonitza had to creep along the crags with the flocks. Sometimes the footing was very insecure, so it was no wonder that at the end of the first day Jonitza was covered with bruises from his many falls. "I'm as stiff as a board, too," he confided to

Nicolaia, as they lay down near each other to sleep. But, by the end of the week, the stiffness was entirely gone, and Jonitza could manage to keep his footing on the rocks even better than Nicolaia. By that time, too, he had learned the call that would make the sheep clinging to the steep mountainsides stop eating, look up, and then come scrambling to him.

The donkey had been let loose as soon as the valley was reached and got into all kinds of scrapes from his dislike to being alone. Sometimes when he found that he couldn't follow the sheep, he would stand on a boulder and bray loudly as if proclaiming to an unsympathetic world his loneliness.

Sometimes the report would spread that wild animals had been seen prowling near. This meant extra watchfulness on the part of the shepherds. But whether there was reason for any especial alarm or not, every night each shepherd wrapped himself in his sheepskin or woolen mantle and lay down by his flock ready to spring up at the least sign of danger.

CHAPTER XII

In the Carpathians (Continued)

Although Jonitza and Nicolaia could not be constantly together, they tried to share at least one meal every day. Once at such a time Jonitza remarked: "How I wish I could get to the top of that mountain yonder. See what a queer shape it is! It makes me think of the picture of a peak called 'La Omu,' the man."

Nicolaia thought that a funny name. "How did it come to get it?" he asked.

"Let me think," replied Jonitza. "Oh, yes, I remember now what was written about it in my story book. It said that it had another name, 'Negoi,' but that most of the country people preferred 'La Omu' because of its resemblance to a human figure. When one came near he could see that this was caused by a big rock in the center of a mass of others. According to tradition, a shepherd once lost his way there

and began to curse God for his misfortune. Suddenly as he was cursing, God turned him into stone as a warning to others."

"Although that probably isn't 'La Omu,'" said Nicolaia, "I should like to climb it nevertheless. Perhaps Vasili would keep an eye on our sheep for a few hours if we asked him."

"Do you think so?" asked Jonitza eagerly. And he at once ran to a bluff and shouted to Vasili, who was stationed nearer to them than any of the other shepherds. Vasili called back good-naturedly, "Go on. I'll see the sheep don't wander far." And the boys started.

It took them half an hour to reach the peak. Gradually, as they ascended it, the pine and fir trees dwindled into misshapen goblin-like bushes, each of which seemed to be hiding behind one of the great boulders that were everywhere so plentiful.

At one point the boys were clambering up a steep rocky path when suddenly Jonitza gave a shriek and at the same time jumped high into the air. Nicolaia, who was a short distance behind, stopped so suddenly that he almost lost his balance. There, stretched out between the two boys, lay



"There . . . lay two long shiny snakes"

two long shiny snakes sunning themselves and apparently paying no heed to what had happened.

Nicolaia recovered himself first. He grasped tight hold of his shepherd staff and approached. "Pshaw!" he called disdainfully, to Jonitza on the other side. "They're harmless." Then jumping without fear over them, he ran to where his companion, panting hard, was leaning against a boulder.

Seeing an open space near, the boys looked it over carefully and sat down. "It was the suddenness of seeing the snakes that made me jump," said Jonitza, apparently feeling that his natural action needed explanation. At this Nicolaia chuckled and then began to lecture Jonitza on the necessity of always keeping wide awake in the mountains and never allowing himself to be surprised.

Jonitza did not relish this and interrupted his companion to ask questions. "How is one to tell harmless snakes from others? Have you ever seen snakes just born?"

At this last question, Nicolaia's eyes flashed. "How I wish I could find a snake's nest!" he exclaimed. "Don't you know that precious stones are made from snake saliva? If I

found a snake nest, I'd not run but kill the snakes, and then I'd be so rich I'd be able to buy a big farm of my own."

An answering flash came into Jonitza's eyes. "Let's go hunt for one now," he said, springing up. Nicolaia rose more slowly. "I'm willing, but I warn you that we must be careful."

So with their long shepherd staves in their hands, and keeping watch where they trod, they began a hunt among the boulders.

How it might have ended no one can tell, for they had gone scarcely twenty yards when they heard a loud cry from down below.

"It must be for us," said Nicolaia, and quite forgetful of snakes or anything else he led the way back as fast as he was able.

When they reached the slopes on which their sheep were grazing, they met a shout of laughter. "It was your donkey," Vasili explained. "He tried, as usual, to follow the flock and this time slipped down between two rocks and couldn't go forward or back. Didn't you hear him bray? I didn't know what to do and so called for you. But in the meantime this other Vasili here came bounding up from

nowhere. And you ought to have seen him manage! He tied the donkey's feet together with a thong and lifted him out as easily as one would a baby."

"You know you helped me," said a new voice.

The boys looked up to see a stranger standing near. He was of medium height but thickset and very hardy in appearance. Instead of a sheepskin cap a broad-brimmed hat was set well back over a mass of glossy black curls. His features were regular; his eyes were now smiling but there were angry lines written long before around them. The boys shook hands with him and thanked him. "It was nothing," he said. "Aren't we brothers?"

"Where are you from?"

"I belong to the other side," the youth answered, and then added, "The side that isn't free."

All knew at once that he referred to Transylvania, which, although a part of Hungary, is largely inhabited by Romanians.

"We intend to make it free," Nicolaia answered with feeling. The Transylvanian smiled and shook his head. Then, without a word more, he left them.

There was one other shepherd that they learned to know. He was the oldest there and came from Jassy, once the capital of Moldavia, a city so old that the Turks claim that it dates back to the time of Abraham. The Romanians, however, feel that they can do better than that. They put its foundations to the time of their beloved Trajan!

This shepherd, of whom later they heard strange wild tales, kept much to himself. Often, however, the monotonously melancholy notes of a wooden flute on which he played would reach them. Sometimes, too, especially at early dawn, they would hear him draw forth powerful notes on the boutchoum, such as no other shepherd could equal.

CHAPTER XIII

Leaving the Mountains

Thus the summer slowly passed in healthy out-of-door life that began to grow exceedingly monotonous at the end. It was lonely, too, for after the boys became used to the work even the noon meals together became rarer, and sometimes several days passed with no other communication than a few calls to each other.

At last September came. This is the month when the herdsmen take their sheep again to the valleys. The donkey was laden with cheeses of sheep's milk, and the boys followed the procession back to the village from which they had started. They found it delightful to be together again, and somehow, as they talked it over, the summer experience that had begun to be trying regained its charm.

They joked, they told folk tales, and Nicolaia even sang a ballad that had long been a favorite with the Romanians.

It was very touching, and, of course, had to do with a shepherd, of his love for his sheep and his dogs and his longing to lie near them even in death.

Long before they reached the farm-house they had been seen by Katinka who ran out to meet them.

Jonitza found some letters awaiting him. He picked out the daintiest, knowing it to be from his mother, and, begging to be excused, tore it open to read immediately.

It was from Sinaia, the fashionable mountain resort where "Carmen Sylva," the late loved dowager Queen Elizabeth, had had her summer home.

"Your father," said the letter among other things, "has to make a business trip among our Wallachian farmers. He intends to take you with him and finally spend a day or two with me here. Later on, we shall visit relatives for some time at the capital, Bukurest."

Two days later Mr. Popescu took his son away.

As Mr. Popescu's business was with the peasants, most of the trip was made by carriage through the very rich agricultural sections of Wallachia. Now they stopped at the farms of the wealthy, where the very latest in farm

machinery could be seen at work; then at some of the hundreds of small farms where the peasants still harvested their grain with the sickle, and threshed it with the flail. On the way they passed orchards of damson plum, from which brandy is made, and vineyards with their rich yield.

The weather favored them. Only once were they caught in a storm. The sky directly above had been monotonously blue for several days when clouds seemed suddenly to form in all directions. A wind arose that soon changed into a tempest, raising enormous clouds of dust. Angry lightning began to fly across the sky, while not only the thunder but the storm itself threatened. Through the dust they could just make out a tower which showed that they were near a village. The obedient horses strained every sinew to reach it and did just manage to get under cover at a rude inn when enormous hail stones began to fall.

It proved to be rather an interesting place where they had secured shelter, for it was not only an inn but a general store where a little of everything was kept for sale. As no especial room was assigned them, Jonitza felt free to wander about the place. On a sort of screened back porch he found

a woman pickling whole heads of cabbage, adding cornmeal to the brine to hasten fermentation. This, when stuffed with chopped pork, onions and rice, forms one of the national dishes.

Mr. Popescu smiled at the supper that was placed before them an hour later. There was, of course, mamaliga and its string, with a big pitcher of rich milk, then some salted cheese, raw onions, and some sun-dried beef that had been seasoned with spices and garlic when cooked. The platters, spoons and forks were of wood, the knives alone being of steel.

Although the owner of the inn was evidently pleased at having so much to place before his guests, he seemed to think that he could do still better. "One of my pigs," he said, "is to be killed tomorrow. If you will stay till then I can offer you something really fine."

Although that might not have been the reason, Mr. Popescu decided to stay.

"Come," the landlord's wife said to Jonitza next morning as he sat on the stoop in front of the inn. In answer to her mysterious beckoning, Jonitza followed her to the rear.

Here he found a group of men and boys gathered around a big fire from which a very pleasant odor rose.

"What is it?" Jonitza inquired. The landlady laughed and then whispered, "The pig has been killed and we are burning off its hair."

After the meat had been exposed to the heat for a sufficient length of time, thin slices were cut off and handed to each person present. This resulted in loud exclamations from some of the children whose fingers were burnt and even louder smacking of lips as the delicious morsels were tasted.

They left late that afternoon for the next village, overtaking on the way a party of reapers with scythes over their shoulders. A young woman crowned with wheaten ears led several others, all of whom chanted some melancholy air about the end of the harvest.

Everywhere they went people sang, the number of folk songs about soldier life being particularly noticeable. Many of these songs were exceedingly touching; some, however, were wild in character. All were full of a spirit of rare bravery and resignation to whatever fate had in store.

At last among the grand forests near the Prahova River, the pretty rustic houses of rural Romania changed to Swiss looking cottages, and then to fine brown and red-roofed villas, hotels and baths. Sinaia had been reached.

A little apart from the villas stood the Royal Summer Palace, with its tall roofs and glittering pinnacles.

During the trip they had changed vehicles and drivers many times, and now a very old man acted as their coachman. His eyes sparkled as he pointed out the Château. "I lived near here," he said, "when this Château was built for King Carol and Queen Elizabeth, whom they tell me is now generally called 'Carmen Sylva.' My daughter was better acquainted with her than I. Might I tell you the story, sir? It was not long after the Château was finished that the King and Queen drove up to spend a few days here. They had splendid horses and came fast. My little girl was playing by the roadside and somehow frightened the horses for they leaped to one side. They were brought under control at once, but the child had been more frightened than they and cried loudly.

"Her Majesty must have heard her for she ordered the

coachman to stop. When he had done so, she herself got out and went back to my little one, whom she comforted in a few minutes. As she kissed her and put some coins in her hands, she whispered, 'Be ready to pay me a visit tomorrow morning. I'll come for you.'

"We did not think anything of this, but the next day, sure enough, a carriage came to our little hut for Florica. You can imagine our excitement until we had our little one again and heard from her the whole story of her visit to Fairy Land, for that is what the visit to the Château was to her.

"But I have another and better reason to bless her Gracious Majesty. My brother, sir, was blind—couldn't see a thing, sir—and our Queen made him happy, as she did others like him, in the Asylum for the Blind that she founded in Bukurest.

"She was always doing good.

"She liked our peasant ways, sir, she did, and our dress. In the Château she always wore the national costume and all her maids had to do so. Deeper in the woods is a forester's hut where they tell me she wrote stories and songs

like our own."

As the man chatted they approached a deep-roofed chalet from which the sound of merry laughter and conversation was wafted down to them. Then they stopped before it and the next moment Jonitza was in his mother's arms.

CHAPTER XIV

The Capital of Romania

Jonitza had not been a week in Bukurest when he began to wish himself back in the country. At first there had been much to see, especially in the fine shops on the beautiful street called Calea Vittoriei, which extends from one end of the city to the other. On this street is also the Royal Palace and most of the theaters.

Jonitza and his parents were staying with near relatives in one of the many fine residential sections, where the big stone houses are surrounded by beautiful gardens.

Although this section was no great distance from the business center, they never walked to the latter but either drove or went in the big touring car belonging to the family.

"People must be very happy in the 'City of Pleasure'"—that is what the word Bukurest means—Jonitza said to himself one day as he watched the very lively crowds on the

streets. He was standing at the time in front of the splendid show windows of a jewelry store, waiting for his mother who had gone inside. At first he had stared at the rich gems through the glass but the interesting passing crowd had gradually attracted him; the very fashionable ladies, some light, some dark, talking so vivaciously, the priests with their long hair, and, most of all, the numerous soldiers in the splendor and variety of their uniforms.

"Jonitza," said his mother when she came out, "I am going to call on an old-time friend, and as I know such visits bore you, I shall leave you on the way to spend an hour at the National Museum. How will you like that?"

"Very much, dear mother," Jonitza answered.

So the carriage took them to the big Museum building where Jonitza alighted. Indoors he found much to interest him. He lingered before the displays of magnificent royal jeweled collars and crowns, and the specimens of Romania's mineral wealth: gold, silver, copper, rock salt, and others. There were drawings and paintings, too, to be looked at. He stood long before one of the latter. It represented a Romanian boyard or nobleman of long ago,

dressed in a long, loose, rich costume, with several jeweled daggers in his embroidered belt. A crowd of dependents surrounded him, some bowing low, some kissing his hand, some trying to get him to listen to the tale that they had to tell.

Although Jonitza's mother was late in returning to the Museum, he had still much to see when she did come. A richly dressed young woman, who treated Jonitza like an old friend, was with her.

"It is still early," his mother remarked to his mystification. And she gave some orders to the coachman who then drove them past the "Institution of the Blind," the particular pride of Queen Elizabeth (Carmen Sylva), past the University and schools of various kinds, past a beautiful pure white marble statue of some voivode or other, and on to the extensive Garden of Cismegiu; then again to the Calea Vittoriei, where the carriage stopped before the renowned restaurant of Capsa.

Here Jonitza's father, who evidently knew of their coming, was waiting to escort them into a room with tiled glistening floor, lofty mirrors, beautiful flowers, and

exquisitely neat tables. The place was crowded to overflowing, but above the hum of voices could be heard the fascinating music of a Romanian Gypsy band.

Hardly had they entered, than two fashionably dressed men joined their party. After considerable banter, the conversation became so serious that Jonitza did not understand all of it. Now and then he caught a quotation that he had heard before, as, "Leave a Hungarian to guard the thing that you value most," and "There is no fruit so bitter as foreigners in the land."

Everything tasted very good, but Jonitza would have enjoyed it more had some attention been paid to him. As it was, he was glad when the party at last arose and while the rest of the company went to the theater, he was sent in the carriage home alone.

At home, he found only servants and so went at once to the little room that was his own during his stay at the capital.

Here he threw himself down for awhile in a big armchair and gave himself up to thoughts that he had never had before, about Romania's past history, about the old-time

ballads of heiduks and chieftains that he had heard in the mountains, and about what he had caught in the conversation at the brilliant restaurant that night regarding Romania's future.

Even after he lay down on his bed he could not but wonder if Romania was yet to be a great nation, if Transylvania now belonging to Hungary, if Bukovina now a part of Austria, and perhaps Bessarabia, though claimed by Russia—all with a large Romanian population, would not be restored to her. Finally he fell into a restless sleep in which he dreamed that he was already a man and fighting that those of his own blood might be rescued from foreign governments who despised them and tyrannized over them.

CHAPTER XV

The National Dance

When Jonitza awoke he found black coffee and delicious white twists awaiting him. He dressed quickly that he might be in time for the hearty breakfast that follows. It was a holiday, and so later he had a ride behind four horses abreast with his father, first along the sluggish Dimbovitza River on which Bukurest is situated, then into the hills to an old three-towered Cathedral, one of the very few antiquities to be seen in Bukurest. From here the city looked very attractive with its metal plated steeples and cupolas, its many squares and tree-lined avenues.

Then the horses carried them still further away to a neighboring hamlet with its pretty rustic vine-embowered houses, their dark roofs forming verandas on which clay benches invited one to rest. Peasant women drawing water from wells by the wayside greeted them; children tending

geese and pigs smiled at them, and a man building a wattled fence invited them into his little country house all blue and white.

When they reached home and had had luncheon, Jonitza found that the whole family but himself had been invited to some entertainment and that he was to be left with Maritza and the servants.

He had begun to yawn and to wonder how he would spend the day, when Maritza solved the problem for him.

"Your mother said that I might take you to see the Hora danced," she announced. The Hora is the Romanian national dance.

"Oh, good!" cried Jonitza, throwing a book that he was holding up to the ceiling and catching it again.

Soon after, Maritza's brother came for his sister. He was a rather tall, dark-eyed man and dressed in spotless white linen trousers with a ruffle around the ankles and deep pointed pockets in front, embroidered in red. To be sure to be on time they started at once, Maritza laughingly repeating that they "must dance on Sunday to keep the creak out of their bones on Monday."

A half hour's walk brought them to a modest section of Bukurest, where, in a square opposite a tavern, a host of peasant men and women in their gayest costumes, were already gathered. Knowing how eager Maritza was to dance, Jonitza urged her to leave him on the lawn. "I shall be all right here under the trees," he said.

When she consented, he threw himself down to watch. Soon gypsy musicians seated themselves on a platform at one edge of the square and began to play. At once men and maidens clasped hands and began a swaying motion to words improvised by certain of the youths who were in charge of the dance for the day.

Others joined; the ring grew gigantic and then suddenly broke into two, each part with its set of leaders, while a shout of pleasurable excitement rent the air.

Jonitza enjoyed it all for quite a while and then began to yawn. As he turned to see if he could find anything else of interest his glance fell on a boy seated some distance away under a huge lime tree. Something about this boy made Jonitza sit upright. Suddenly he leaped to his feet, ran wildly forward, and put his hands over the other boy's eyes.

"Guess," he said in a muffled voice.

In answer the other boy jumped up, over-throwing Jonitza as he did so. It was Nicolaia.

For a moment both boys showed considerable emotion. "When did you come? Are you going to stay in Bukurest? Where do you live?" were some of the questions that Jonitza hurled at his companion.

Nicolaia did his best to answer. "I came yesterday," he said, "to begin my apprenticeship with my uncle. Since today is Friday and a holiday, Uncle says that I am not to begin work till Monday. He wants me to see a little of the city first."

"Hurrah!" shouted Jonitza, throwing up his cap. "Where are you going tomorrow?"

"In the morning I'm going to go to market with Auntie, so as to know how to buy. I'm to live with them and shall have to do all sorts of odd jobs at times."

Jonitza grew thoughtful. "I'll try to see you there," he said after a pause. "Mother won't let me go alone anywhere here. I'm such a lovely child"—here he grinned—"she thinks someone might steal me. But perhaps I can go with

one of the house servants or with Maritza."

"I'll look for you," said Nicolaia solemnly. Then he added: "I was so tired of watching the old dance that I was amusing myself playing Arshitza." Here he stooped to pick up a sheep bone shaped like the figure eight, and some bits of lead.

"What fun we used to have playing that at your house," said Jonitza with something like a sigh. "Let's play it now." Nicolaia nodded and they settled down for a quiet time by themselves, each trying in turn to snap as many of the lead pieces as possible into the rings.

Later they sharpened a few sticks that they found and played another game called Tzurka, not unlike our game of Cat. Then they lay down side by side on the grass and talked.

All this time the music, singing, and dancing went on, as if none of those taking part in it knew what it was to get tired. It was only with the setting of the sun that it came to a stop. Neither of the boys would have known it, however, so absorbed were they in a deep discussion, had not Maritza found them. As she shook hands with Nicolaia and looked

at Jonitza's animated face she roguishly asked, "Did you like the dance?"

"Why—yes—" responded Jonitza quite unconscious of the twinkle in her eyes. "It was splendid, wasn't it, Nicolaia? I wish it could have lasted longer!"

CHAPTER XVI
At the Market

It was not until he was alone with his mother that night that Jonitza mentioned his desire to see Nicolaia at the market on the morrow. His mother put her arms around him. "It is a long time since I've gone to market. Suppose I go tomorrow morning and take you with me?"

"How good a mother is," Jonitza thought as he went to bed, "and how well she understands a boy."

It was delightfully cool next morning when a touring car took them to what seemed a village of booths or stalls, presided over by gypsies, peasants and Jews.

Nicolaia and his aunt were evidently looking out for them for they came up as the carriage stopped. Mrs. Popescu gave Nicolaia a hearty handshake and then turning to his aunt asked for permission to keep the boy with them for the rest of the day. The aunt pointed to a basket

over her arm, already filled with the purchases that she had wished Nicolaia to help her make, and cheerfully gave her consent. Then Mrs. Popescu made a gracious offer. "While the boys are enjoying the market together, will you not let me take you home in the car?"

Nicolaia's aunt was evidently surprised and somewhat embarrassed, but when she saw that the offer was sincerely meant, climbed in with her basket, remarking that it was the first time that she had ever been in "one of those things."

As the car drove off, Jonitza grabbed Nicolaia's hand and squeezing it, exclaimed: "Isn't this fine!"

"Bully!" returned Nicolaia. "Let's go from one end of the market to the other."

To show how entirely he intended agreeing with anything that his companion might suggest, Jonitza, laughing, took hold of Nicolaia's arm and pulled him rapidly forward. Both came to a standstill where a heavily bearded man was measuring out rose leaves to be boiled into jam. Near him was a stall with the bright pottery made by the peasants, while across the lane an old woman offered amulets of



"Will you not let me take you home in the car?"

various kinds for sale. "Buy one of these," she urged the boys as their curious glances fell on her wares. "If not for yourselves, my dears, then for your mothers or sisters; what I have will surely protect them from evil."

The boys paid little attention to her words, but when she laid an arm on Nicolaia he nudged Jonitza with his elbow, said a few words in a low voice and both suddenly darted off, almost knocking down the boys and girls who were going in an opposite direction, carefully balancing stone jars or baskets laden with fruit or vegetables on their heads. They stopped again where food was offered for sale. There were melons and pumpkins, berries, dried fish, caviar, poultry, and bread booths, some of them with women in charge who were knitting or spinning, while waiting for customers.

"Look who is behind me," Nicolaia called out suddenly. Jonitza turned hastily and saw a knife-grinder who, having caught the remark, made a grimace at the boys. They followed him to a booth, and after watching him for a few minutes, made their way to a place near by where all kinds of birds were for sale. "I must have one," said Jonitza, but

when Nicolaia could not help him decide whether it should be a parrot or a canary, he decided to postpone the purchase until another day.

This bird stall was not far from another entrance than the one by which they had come. From it they could see numerous carts approaching, some of them drawn by buffaloes, with peasants seated on the front rails.

As the boys eagerly gazed around for anything out of the ordinary, the chant of a minstrel reached them. With difficulty they forced their way into a crowd gathered around an old, half-blind man who seemed to be improvising some fascinating tale of war time deeds accompanying the half-chanted words to a twanging on a flute-like instrument called a cobza. Every once in a while as he stopped the gathered people would shout their applause.

It was not until he grew tired and signified a need for rest that the boys left. Right around the corner they came upon an equal attraction. It was a sort of "Punch and Judy" show to see which a trifling fee was demanded. "We mustn't miss this," Jonitza insisted and led the way into a structure which was crowded with children.

As they came out, a bell tolled the hour. The boys stopped to count the strokes. As they ceased, Nicolaia's face grew serious. It was half an hour past the time when they were to meet Mrs. Popescu. What would she say?

But, when they found her, she did not give them a chance even to offer an excuse. "I know you're late and deserve a scolding, but how dare I scold you when I was ten minutes late myself? I do believe in punctuality, however, for sometimes time is very precious, and I'm going to try not to ever have this happen again. What about yourselves?"

"Oh, we'll try to keep track of time hereafter, dear mother," Jonitza answered both for himself and his friend, at the same time gratefully, pressing one of her hands under the laprobe.

CHAPTER XVII

Good-By

Winter had fully set in when Jonitza and his parents returned to their home city of Galatz. It was intensely cold, for the winds from Russia's vast steppes meet no hindrance in striking the great plains along the lower part of the Danube River. The snow lay heavy on roads and houses, while sprays of icicles hung low from the trees and bushes and even from the noses of toiling cattle. The Danube itself was frozen and would remain so for at least three months. Even the Black Sea further away was ice covered for several miles' distance from shore.

A warm welcome, however, awaited them indoors. The tall brick stove threw out great heat, and the secure double windows treated the powerful wind with scorn.

Friends added the warmth of welcome, and Jonitza was surprised to find how many boys there were of his own age

right in his neighborhood. He stared at them as if he had never seen them before and they stared in equal surprise at him. "The fact is," Mr. Popescu confided to the Doctor, "we have brought back a new son."

There was one very bright boy in particular to whom Jonitza was attracted largely because of some physical resemblance to Nicolaia, and this boy's opinion came to have quite an influence over him. For instance when the question of resuming his studies under his former tutor came up, Jonitza objected. "I want to go to the same school as Dimitri," he said. Dimitri was the name of his new friend. "There's a teacher there that knows all sorts of things. Besides, I want to study and work with other boys. How can I tell whether I'm stupid or dull unless I do?"

"I'm afraid I am bringing up a democrat!" his father exclaimed half jokingly when he had given his consent. He had reason to think so in earnest before the winter was over for his son took part in all kinds of sports and picked his associates without regard to the class to which they belonged. Some of Mrs. Popescu's relatives and friends did not hesitate to voice their disapproval. Once they made Mr.

Popescu think that he must interfere, but fortunately before he did he ran across his friend the Doctor.

"Your advice has done wonders for our boy," he said to him, "but—" and in a lowered tone he repeated some of the criticisms.

The Doctor gave his cheery laugh. "Let them criticize," he said. "Be thankful that your son acts as a normal boy should act; that he chooses his associates for what they are worth, not for what they can spend. Take my word for it," he added impressively, "class distinctions that have counted so much with some of us, are going to be abolished in our country as well as in many another, and that soon, even if it takes the great war to abolish them."

Jonitza had made up his mind that Nicolaia must spend the Christmas holidays with them, and Mrs. Popescu was anxious to gratify this wish. But at first it seemed that this would be impossible. It was fortunate perhaps that Mr. Popescu had a business trip to make to Bukurest and so could use a little of his personal influence. That this had some weight was shown when he returned on December 22 accompanied by Nicolaia.



"Something carefully covered with a sheet was carried mysteriously into Jonitza's room"

Jonitza had given up all hopes of having his friend with him and so was doubly pleased. He resolved to do everything he could to make the time enjoyable for him, and begged Dimitri's interest and assistance.

"Will your parents let you join me in carol singing?" was Dimitri's first question.

"Mother will, if Nicolaia would like it," replied Jonitza with confidence.

"Then," said Dimitri, "I'll come to your house this afternoon and we'll plan things."

When Dimitri came he was told that Mrs. Popescu had given her consent and the boys retired to a shed to work secretly at the preparations. They were evidently quite elaborate, for Jonitza visited the house for supplies several times. By supper time something carefully covered with a sheet was carried mysteriously into Jonitza's room where a hiding place was found for it.

On Christmas Eve Dimitri was invited over for supper. Maritza herself prepared a special dish called turte for the occasion. This consisted of thin dry wafers of dough covered with honey.

After the meal the boys hurried to Jonitza's room. When they came out it was hard to recognize them. Each had on a mask, a long gown, and a high hat of colored paper.

Nicolaia held a wooden star adorned with little bells. The center of this star was a representation of the manger, and was illuminated from behind.

They took their stand in the hallway where they sang Christmas carols, some of which ended by wishing much prosperity to the household,

"For many years,
For many years."

Then Dimitri led the way to other homes, where he knew they would be welcomed.

Before the Christmas festivities came to an end, Jonitza and Dimitri planned something far more elaborate. It was to act out a peculiar traditional drama for some of the poorest children of the town. Mrs. Popescu lent her assistance and it turned out a great success.

The name of the drama was Irozi, showing that it had something to do with the time of Herod. There were seven

boys besides Jonitza, Nicolaia and Dimitri who took part in it. The principal characters were a grumbling Herod, some Roman officers, and three Magi in Oriental costumes, a child, a clown, and an old man.

The plot is quite simple. A Roman officer brings news to Herod (who was impersonated by Jonitza), that three men have been caught going to Bethlehem to adore the new-born Christ. Entering, they hold a long dialogue with Herod, who at last orders them to be cast into prison. They, however, implore God to punish their persecutor. As they do so, strange noises are heard. These frighten Herod who begs forgiveness and lets the men go free.

Later a child comes in and prophesies the future of the Messiah. As the child proceeds, Herod's rage increases until he strikes the child dead. At this all present unite in reproaches until Herod sinks to his knees and implores forgiveness.

The success of the play was largely due to two characters whose antics pleased the little ones. One of these was the clown (Nicolaia) and the other was an old man who was in everybody's way (Dimitri). This latter had a mask with a

long beard on his face, a hunched back, and wore heavy boots and a sheepskin mantle with the wool on the outside.

When the much-applauded play came to an end, refreshments were passed around and afterwards the children sent home with their hands filled with gifts of various kinds.

In such gayeties the holidays soon passed. On the very last day of the year Nicolaia left for home, and as Jonitza and Dimitri saw him to the train they anticipated the New Year by throwing grains of corn at him and repeating the old time Romanian greeting:

"May you live and flourish like the trees of the garden and be blessed like them with all things plentiful."

THE END