

Our Little German, Armenian, and Bohemian Cousins

VOLUME TEN

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Volume 10

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Libraries of Hope

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Our Little German Cousin

Mary Hazelton Wade

Illustrated by L.J. Bridgman



Bertha

Preface

When the word Germany comes to our minds, we think at once of ruined castles, fairies, music, and soldiers. Why is it?

First, as to the castles. Here and there along the banks of the River Rhine, as well as elsewhere throughout the country, the traveller is constantly finding himself near some massive stone ruin. It seems ever ready to tell stories of long ago—of brave knights who defended its walls, of beautiful princesses saved from harm, of sturdy boys and sweet-faced girls who once played in its gardens. For Germany is the home of an ancient and brave people, who have often been called upon to face powerful enemies.

Next, as to the fairies. It seems as though the dark forests of Germany, the quiet valleys, and the banks of the beautiful rivers, were the natural homes of the fairy-folk, the gnomes and the elves, the water-sprites and the sylphs.

Our German cousins listen with wonder and delight to the legends of fearful giants and enchanted castles, and many of the stories they know so well have been translated into other languages for their cousins of distant lands, who are as fond of them as the blue-eyed children of Germany.

As to the music, it seems as though every boy and girl in the whole country drew in the spirit of song with the air they breathe. They sing with a love of what they are singing, they play as though the tune were a part of their very selves. Some of the finest musicians have been Germans, and their gifts to the world have been bountiful.

As for soldiers, we know that every man in Germany must stand ready to defend his country. He must serve his time in drilling and training for war. He is a necessary part of that Fatherland he loves so dearly.

Our fair-haired German cousins are busy workers and hard students. They must learn quite early in life that they have duties as well as pleasures, and the duties cannot be set aside or forgotten. But they love games and holidays as dearly as the children of our own land.

CHAPTER I

Christmas

"Don't look! There, now it's done!" cried Bertha.

It was two nights before Christmas. Bertha was in the big living-room with her mother and older sister. Each sat as close as possible to the candlelight, and was busily working on something in her lap.

But, strange to say, they did not face each other. They were sitting back to back.

"What an unsociable way to work," we think. "Is that the way Germans spend the evenings together?"

No, indeed. But Christmas was near at hand, and the air was brimful of secrets.

Bertha would not let her mother discover what she was working for her, for all the world. And the little girl's

mother was preparing surprises for each of the children. All together, the greatest fun of the year was getting ready for Christmas.

"Mother, you will make some of those lovely cakes this year, won't you?" asked Bertha's sister Gretchen.

"Certainly, my child. It would not be Christmas without them. Early to-morrow morning, you and Bertha must shell and chop the nuts. I will use the freshest eggs and will beat the dough as long as my arms will let me."

"Did you always know how to make those cakes, mamma?" asked Bertha.

"My good mother taught me when I was about your age, my dear. You may watch me to-morrow, and perhaps you will learn how to make them. It is never too early to begin to learn to cook."

"When the city girls get through school, they go away from home and study housekeeping don't they?" asked Gretchen.

"Yes, and many girls who don't live in cities. But I hardly think you will ever be sent away. We are busy people here

in our little village, and you will have to be contented with learning what your mother can teach you.

"I shall be satisfied with that, I know. But listen! I can hear father and Hans coming."

"Then put up your work, children, and set the supper-table."

The girls jumped up and hurriedly put the presents away. It did not take long to set the supper-table, for the meals in this little home were very simple, and supper was the simplest of all. A large plate of black bread and a pitcher of sour milk were brought by the mother, and the family gathered around the table.

The bread wasn't really black, of course. It was dark brown and very coarse. It was made of rye meal. Bertha and Gretchen had never seen any white bread in their lives, for they had never yet been far away from their own little village. Neither had their brother Hans.

They were happy, healthy children. They all had blue eyes, rosy cheeks, and fair hair, like their father and mother.

"You don't know what I've got for you, Hans," said

Bertha, laughing and showing a sweet little dimple in her chin.

Hans bent down and kissed her. He never could resist that dimple, and Bertha was his favourite sister.

"I don't know what it is, but I do know that it must be something nice," said her brother.

When the supper-table had been cleared, the mother and girls took out their sewing again, while Hans worked at some wood-carving. The father took an old violin from its case and began to play some of the beautiful airs of Germany.

When he came to the "Watch on the Rhine," the mother's work dropped from her hands as she and the children joined in the song that stirs every German heart.

"Oh, dear! it seems as though Christmas Eve never would come," sighed Bertha, as she settled herself for sleep beside her sister.

It was quite a cold night, but they were cosy and warm. Why shouldn't they be? They were covered with a down feather bed. Their mother had the same kind of cover on

her own bed, and so had Hans.

But Christmas Eve did come at last, although it seemed so far off to Bertha the night before. Hans and his father brought in the bough of a yew-tree, and it was set up in the living-room.

The decorating came next. Tiny candles were fastened on all the twigs. Sweetmeats and nuts were hung from the branches.

"How beautiful! How beautiful!" exclaimed the children when it was all trimmed, and they walked around it with admiring eyes.

None of the presents were placed on the tree, for that is not the fashion in Germany. Each little gift had been tied up in paper and marked with the name of the one for whom it was intended.

When everything was ready, there was a moment of quiet while the candles were being lighted. Then Bertha's father began to give out the presents, and there was a great deal of laughing and joking as the bundles were opened.

There was a new red skirt for Bertha. Her mother had

made it, for she knew the child was fond of pretty dresses. Besides this, she had a pair of warm woolen mittens which Gretchen had knit for her. Hans had made and carved a doll's cradle for each of the girls.

Everybody was happy and contented. They sang songs and cracked nuts and ate the Christmas cakes to their hearts' content.

"I think I like the ones shaped like gnomes the best," said Hans. "They have such comical little faces. Do you know, every time I go out in the forest, it seems as though I might meet a party of gnomes hunting for gold."

"I like the animal cakes best," said Bertha. "The deer are such graceful creatures, and I like to bite off the horns and legs, one at a time."

"A long time ago," said their father, "they used to celebrate Christmas a little different from the way we now do. The presents were all carried to a man in the village who dressed himself in a white robe, and a big wig made of flax. He covered his face with a mask, and then went from house to house. The grown people received him with great

honours. He called for the children and gave them the presents their parents had brought to him.

"But these presents were all given according to the way the children had behaved during the year. If they had been good and tried hard, they had the gifts they deserved. But if they had been naughty and disobedient, it was not a happy time for them."

"I don't believe the children were very fond of him," cried Hans. "They must have been too much afraid of him."

"That is true," said his father. "But now, let us play some games. Christmas comes but once a year, and you have all been good children."

The room soon rang with the shouts of Hans and his sisters. They played "Blind Man's Buff" and other games. Their father took part in all of them as though he were a boy again. The good mother looked on with pleasant smiles.

Bedtime came only too soon. But just before the children said good night, the father took Hans one side and talked seriously yet lovingly with him. He told the boy of the faults he must still fight against. He spoke also of the

improvement he had made during the year.

At the same time the mother gave words of kind advice to her little daughters. She told them to keep up good courage; to be busy and patient in the year to come.

"My dear little girls," she whispered, as she kissed them, "I love to see you happy in your play. But the good Lord who cares for us has given us all some work to do in this world. Be faithful in doing yours."

CHAPTER II

Toy-Making

"Wake up, Bertha. Come, Gretchen. You will have to hurry, for it is quite late," called their mother. It was one morning about a week after Christmas.

"Oh dear, I am so sleepy, and my bed is nice and warm," thought Bertha.

But she jumped up and rubbed her eyes and began to dress, without waiting to be called a second time. Her mother was kind and loving, but she had taught her children to obey without a question.

Both little girls had long, thick hair. It must be combed and brushed and braided with great care. Each one helped the other. They were soon dressed, and ran downstairs.

As soon as the breakfast was over and the room made

tidy, every one in the family sat down to work. Bertha's father was a toy-maker. He had made wooden images of Santa Claus all his life. His wife and children helped him.

When Bertha was only five years old, she began to carve the legs of these Santa Claus dolls. It was a queer sight to see the little girl's chubby fingers at their work. Now that she was nine years old, she still carved legs for Santa Claus in her spare moments.

Gretchen always made arms, while Hans worked on a still different part of the bodies. The father and mother carved the heads and finished the little images that afterward gave such delight to children in other lands.

Bertha lives in the Black Forest. That name makes you think at once of a dark and gloomy place. The woods on the hills are dark, to be sure, but the valleys nestling between are bright and cheerful when the sun shines down and pours its light upon them.

Bertha's village is in just such a valley. The church stands on the slope above the little homes. It seems to say, "Look upward, my children, to the blue heavens, and do

not fear, even when the mists fill the valley and the storm is raging over your heads."

All the people in the village seem happy and contented. They work hard, and their pay is small, but there are no beggars among them.

Toys are made in almost every house. Every one in a family works on the same kind of toy, just as it is in Bertha's home.

The people think: "It would be foolish to spend one's time in learning new things. The longer a person works at making one kind of toy, the faster he can make them, and he can earn more money."

One of Bertha's neighbours makes nothing but Noah's Arks. Another makes toy tables, and still another dolls' chairs.

Bertha often visits a little friend who helps her father make cuckoo-clocks. Did you ever see one of these curious clocks? As each hour comes around, a little bird comes outside the case. Then it flaps its wings and sings "cuckoo" in a soft, sweet voice as many times as there are strokes to



Bertha's Father and Mother

the hour. It is great fun to watch for the little bird and hear its soft notes.

Perhaps you wonder what makes the bird come out at just the right time. It is done by certain machinery inside the clock. But, however it is, old people as well as children seem to enjoy the cuckoo-clocks of Germany.

"Some day, when you are older, you shall go to the fair at Easter time," Bertha's father has promised her.

"Is that at Leipsic, where our Santa Claus images go?" asked his little daughter.

"Yes, my dear, and toys from many other parts of our country. There you will see music-boxes and dolls' pianos and carts and trumpets and engines and ships. These all come from the mining-towns.

"But I know what my little Bertha would care for most. She would best like to see the beautiful wax dolls that come from Sonneberg."

"Yes, indeed," cried Bertha. "The dear, lovely dollies with yellow hair like mine. I would love every one of them. I wish I could go to Sonneberg just to see the dolls."

"I wonder what makes the wax stick on," said Gretchen, who came into the room while her father and Bertha were talking.

"After the heads have been moulded into shape, they are dipped into pans of boiling wax," her father told her. "The cheap dolls are dipped only once, but the expensive ones have several baths before they are finished. The more wax that is put on, the handsomer the dolls are.

"Then comes the painting. One girl does nothing but paint the lips. Another one does the cheeks. Still another, the eyebrows. Even then Miss Dolly looks like a bald-headed baby till her wig is fastened in its place."

"I like the yellow hair best," said Bertha. "But it isn't real, is it, papa?"

"I suppose you mean to ask, 'Did it ever grow on people's heads?' my dear. No. It is the wool of a kind of goat. But the black hair is real hair. Most dolls, however, wear light wigs. People usually prefer them."

"Do little girls in Sonneberg help make the dolls, just as Bertha and I help you on the Santa Claus images?" asked

Gretchen.

"Certainly. They fill the bodies with sawdust, and do other easy things. But they go to school, too, just as you and Bertha do. Lessons must not be slighted."

"If I had to help make dolls, just as I do these images," said Gretchen to her sister as their father went out and left the children together, "I don't believe I'd care for the handsomest one in the whole toy fair. I'd be sick of the very sight of them."

"Look at the time, Bertha. See, we must stop our work and start for school," exclaimed Gretchen.

It was only seven o'clock in the morning, but school would begin in half an hour. These little German girls had to study longer and harder than their American cousins. They spent at least an hour a day more in their school-rooms.

As they trudged along the road, they passed a little stream which came trickling down the hillside.

"I wonder if there is any story about that brook," said Bertha. "There's a story about almost everything in our

dear old country, I'm sure."

"You have heard father tell about the stream flowing down the side of the Kandel, haven't you?" asked Gretchen.

"Yes, I think so. But I don't remember it very well. What is the story, Gretchen?"

"You know the Kandel is one of the highest peaks in the Black Forest. You've seen it, Bertha."

"Yes, of course, but tell the story, Gretchen."

"Well, then, once upon a time there was a poor little boy who had no father or mother. He had to tend cattle on the side of the Kandel. At that time there was a deep lake at the summit of the mountain. But the lake had no outlet.

"The people who lived in the valley below often said, 'Dear me! how glad we should be if we could only have plenty of fresh water. But no stream flows near us. If we could only bring some of the water down from the lake!'

"They were afraid, however, to make a channel out of the lake. The water might rush down with such force as to destroy their village. They feared to disturb it.

"Now, it came to pass that the Evil One had it in his

heart to destroy these people. He thought he could do it very easily if the rocky wall on the side of the lake could be broken down. There was only one way in which this could be done. An innocent boy must be found and got to do it.

"It was a long time before such an one could be found. But at last the Evil One came across an orphan boy who tended cattle on the mountainside. The poor little fellow was on his way home. He was feeling very sad, for he was thinking of his ragged clothes and his scant food.

"'Ah ha!' cried the Evil One to himself, 'here is the very boy.'

"He changed himself at once so he had the form and dress of a hunter, and stepped up to the lad with a pleasant smile.

"'Poor little fellow! What is the matter? And what can I do for you?' he said, in his most winning manner.

"The boy thought he had found a friend, and told his story.

"'Do not grieve any longer. There is plenty of gold and silver in these very mountains. I will show you how to

become rich,' said the Evil One. 'Meet me here early to-morrow morning and bring a good strong team with you. I will help you get the gold.'

"The boy went home with a glad heart. You may be sure he did not oversleep the next morning. Before it was light, he had harnessed four oxen belonging to his master, and started for the summit of the mountain.

"The hunter, who was waiting for him, had already fastened a metal ring around the wall that held in the waters of the lake.

"'Fasten the oxen to that ring,' commanded the hunter, 'and the rock will split open.'

"Somehow or other, the boy did not feel pleased at what he was told to do. Yet he obeyed, and started the oxen. But as he did so, he cried, 'Do this in the name of God!'

"At that very instant the sky grew black as night, the thunder rolled and the lightning flashed. And not only this, for at the same time the mountain shook and rumbled as though a mighty force were tearing it apart."

"What became of the poor boy?" asked Bertha.

"He fell senseless to the ground, while the oxen in their fright rushed headlong down the mountainside. But you needn't get excited, Bertha, no harm was done. The boy was saved as well as the village, because he had pulled in the name of God.

"The rock did not split entirely. It broke apart just enough to let out a tiny stream of water, which began to flow down the mountainside.

"When the boy came to his senses, the sky was clear and beautiful once more. The sun was shining brightly, and the hunter was nowhere to be seen. But the stream of water was running down the mountainside.

"A few minutes afterward, the boy's master came hurrying up the slope. He was frightened by the dreadful sounds he had heard. But when he saw the waterfall, he was filled with delight.

"'Every one in the village will rejoice,' he exclaimed, 'for now we shall never want for water.'

"Then the little boy took courage and told the story of his meeting the hunter and what he had done.

"'It is well you did it in the name of the Lord,' cried his master. 'If you had not, our village would have been destroyed, and every one of us would have been drowned.'"

"See! the children are going into the schoolhouse, Gretchen. We must not be late. Let's run," said Bertha.

The two little girls stopped talking, and hurried so fast that they entered the schoolhouse and were sitting in their seats in good order before the schoolmaster struck his bell.

CHAPTER III

The Wicked Bishop

"The Rhine is the loveliest river in the world. I know it must be," said Bertha.

"Of course it is," answered her brother. "I've seen it, and I ought to know. And father thinks so, too. He says it is not only beautiful, but it is also bound into the whole history of our country. Think of the battles that have been fought on its shores, and the great generals who have crossed it!"

"Yes, and the castles, Hans! Think of the legends father and mother have told us about the beautiful princesses who have lived in the castles, and the brave knights who have fought for them! I shall be perfectly happy if I can ever sail down the Rhine and see the noted places on its shores."

"The schoolmaster has taught you all about the war with

France, hasn't he, Bertha?"

"Of course. And it really seemed at one time as if France would make us Germans agree to have the Rhine divide the two countries. Just as if we would be willing to let the French own one shore of our beautiful river. I should say not!"

Bertha's cheeks grew rosier than usual at the thought of such a thing. She talked faster than German children usually do, for they are rather slow in their speech.

"We do not own all of the river, little sister, as it is. The baby Rhine sleeps in an icy cradle in the mountains of Switzerland. Then it makes its way through our country, but before it reaches the sea it flows through the low lands of Holland."

"I know all that, Hans. But we own the best of the Rhine, anyway. I am perfectly satisfied."

"I wish I knew all the legends about the river. There are enough of them to fill many books. Did you ever hear about the Rats' Tower opposite the town of Bingen, Bertha?"

"What a funny name for a tower! No. Is there a story

about it, Hans?"

"Yes, one of the boys was telling it to me yesterday while we were getting wood in the forest. It is a good story, although my friend said he wasn't sure it is true."

"What is the story?"

"It is about a very wicked bishop who was a miser. It happened one time that the harvests were poor and grain was scarce. The cruel bishop bought all the grain he could get and locked it up. He intended to sell it for a high price, and in this way to become very rich.

"As the days went by, the food became scarcer and scarcer. The people began to sicken and die of hunger. They had but one thought: they must get something to eat for their children and themselves.

"They knew of the stores of grain held by the bishop. They went to him and begged for some of it, but he paid no attention to their prayers. Then they demanded that he open the doors of the storehouse and let them have the grain. It was of no use.

"At last, they gathered together, and said:

"'We will break down the door if you do not give it to us.'

"'Come to-morrow,' answered the bishop. 'Bring your friends with you. You shall have all the grain you desire.'

"The morrow came. Crowds gathered in front of the granary. The bishop unlocked the door, saying:

"'Go inside and help yourselves freely.'

"The people rushed in. Then what do you think the cruel bishop did? He ordered his servants to lock the door and set the place on fire!

"The air was soon filled with the screams of the burning people. But the bishop only laughed and danced. He said to his servants:

"'Do you hear the rats squeaking inside the granary?'

"The next day came. There were only ashes in place of the great storehouse. There seemed to be no life about the town, for the people were all dead.

"Suddenly there was a great scurrying, as a tremendous swarm of rats came rushing out of the ashes. On they came, more and more of them. They filled the streets, and even

made their way into the palace.

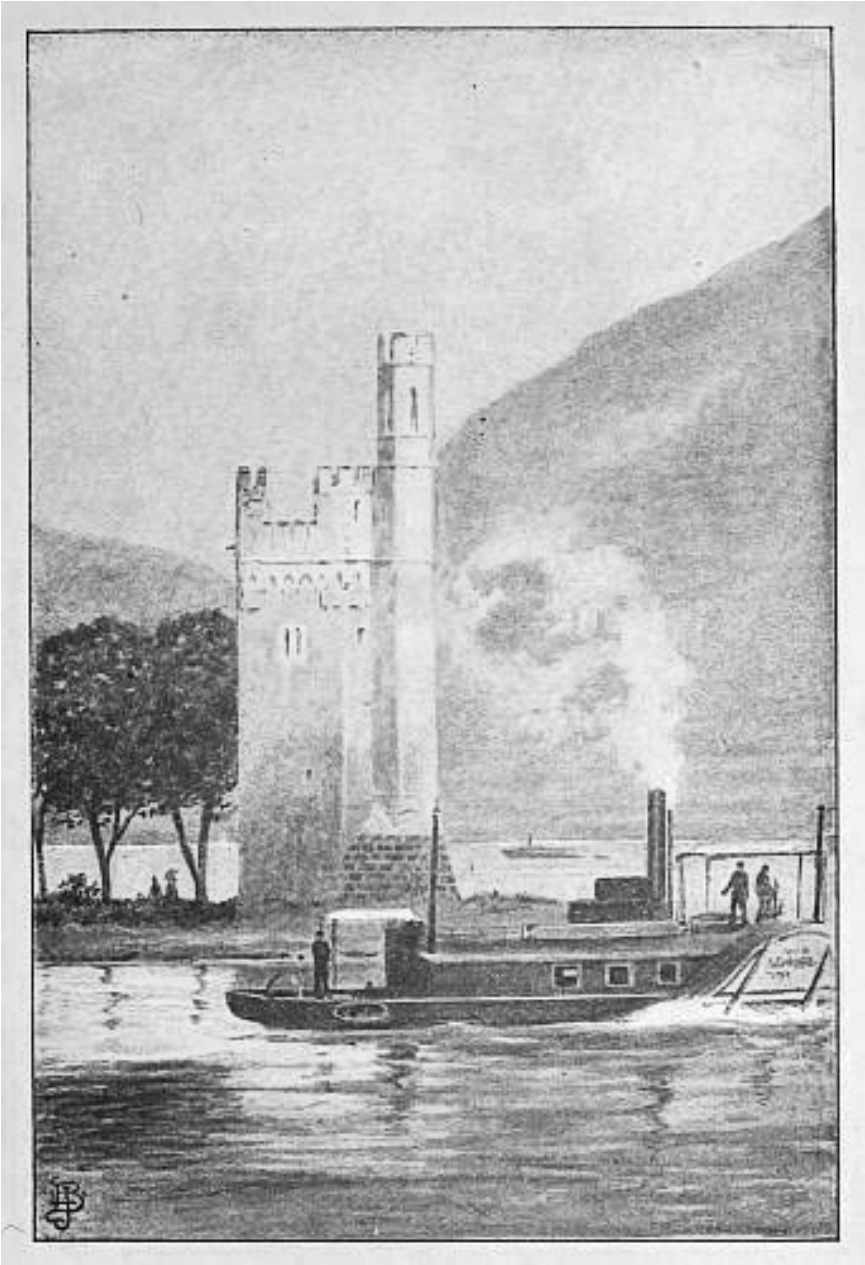
"The wicked bishop was filled with fear. He fled from the place and hurried away over the fields. But the swarm of rats came rushing after him. He came to Bingen, where he hoped to be safe within its walls. Somehow or other, the rats made their way inside.

"There was now only one hope of safety. The bishop fled to a tower standing in the middle of the Rhine. But it was of no use! The rats swam the river and made their way up the sides of the tower. Their sharp teeth gnawed holes through the doors and windows. They entered in and came to the room where the bishop was hiding."

"Wicked fellow! They killed and ate him as he deserved, didn't they?" asked Bertha.

"There wasn't much left of him in a few minutes. But the tower still stands, and you can see it if you ever go to Bingen, although it is a crumbling old pile now."

"Rats' Tower is a good name for it. But I would rather hear about enchanted princesses and brave knights than wicked old bishops. Tell me another story, Hans."



The Rats' Tower

"Oh, I can't. Listen! I hear someone coming. Who can it be?"

Hans jumped up and ran to the door, just in time to meet his Uncle Fritz, who lived in Strasburg.

The children loved him dearly. He was a young man about twenty-one years old. He came home to this little village in the Black Forest only about once a year. He had so much to tell and was so kind and cheerful, every one was glad to see him.

"Uncle Fritz! Uncle Fritz! We are so glad you've come," exclaimed Bertha, putting her arms around his neck. "And we are going to have something that you like for dinner."

"I can guess what it is. Sauerkraut and boiled pork. There is no other sauerkraut in Germany as good as that your mother makes, I do believe. I'm hungry enough to eat the whole dishful and not leave any for you children. Now what do you say to my coming? Don't you wish I had stayed in Strasburg?"

"Oh, no, no, Uncle Fritz. We would rather see you than anybody else," cried Hans. "And here comes mother. She

will be just as glad as we are."

That evening, after Hans had shown his uncle around the village, and he had called on his old friends, he settled himself in the chimney-corner with the children about him.

"Talk to us about Strasburg, Uncle Fritz," begged Gretchen.

"Please tell us about the storks," said Bertha. "Are there great numbers of the birds in the city, and do they build their nests on the chimneys?"

"Yes, you can see plenty of storks flying overhead if you will come back with me," said Uncle Fritz, laughingly. "They seem to know the people love them. If a stork makes his home about any one's house, it is a sign of good fortune to the people who live there.

"'It will surely come,' they say to themselves, 'and the storks will bring it.' Do you wonder the people like the birds so much?"

"I read a story about a mother stork," said Bertha, thoughtfully. "She had a family of baby birds. They were not big enough to leave their nest, when a fire broke out in

the chimney where it was built. Poor mother bird! She could have saved herself. But she would not leave her babies. So she stayed with them and they were all burned to death together."

"I know the story. That happened right in Strasburg," said her uncle.

"Please tell us about the beautiful cathedral with its tall tower," said Hans. "Sometime, uncle, I am going to Strasburg, if I have to walk there, and then I shall want to spend a whole day in front of the wonderful clock."

"You'd better have a lunch with you, Hans, and then you will not get hungry. But really, my dear little nephew, I hope the time will soon come when you can pay me a long visit. As for the clock, you will have to stay in front of it all night as well as all day, if you are to see all it can show you."

"I know about cuckoo-clocks, of course," said Gretchen, "but the little bird is the only figure that comes out on those. There are ever so many different figures on the Strasburg clock, aren't there, Uncle Fritz?"

"A great, great many. Angels strike the hours. A

different god or goddess appears for each day in the week. Then, at noon and at midnight, Jesus and his twelve apostles come out through a door and march about on a platform.

"You can imagine what the size of the clock must be when I tell you that the figures are as large as people. When the procession of the apostles appears, a gilded cock on the top of the tower flaps its wings and crows.

"I cannot begin to tell you all about it. It is as good as a play, and, as I told Hans, he would have to stay many hours near it to see all the sights."

"I should think a strong man would be needed to wind it up," said his nephew.

"The best part of it is that it does not need to be wound every day," replied Uncle Fritz. "They say it will run for years without being touched. Of course, travellers are coming to Strasburg all the time. They wish to see the clock, but they also come to see the cathedral itself. It is a very grand building, and, as you know, the spire is the tallest one in all Europe.

"Then there is so much beautiful carving! And there are such fine statues. Oh, children, you must certainly come to Strasburg before long and see the cathedral of which all Germany is so proud."

"Strasburg was for a time the home of our greatest poet," said Bertha. "I want to go there to see where he lived."

The child was very fond of poetry, even though she was a little country girl. Her father had a book containing some of Goethe's ballads, and she loved to lie under the trees in the pleasant summertime and repeat some of these poems.

"They are just like music," she would say to herself.

"A marble slab has been set up in the old Fish Market to mark the spot where Goethe lived," said Uncle Fritz. "They say he loved the grand cathedral of the city, and it helped him to become a great writer when he was a young student there. I suppose its beauty awakened his own beautiful thoughts."

The children became quiet as they thought of their country and the men who had made her so strong and great—the poets, and the musicians, and the brave soldiers

who had defended her from her enemies.

Uncle Fritz was the first one to speak.

"I will tell you a story of Strasburg," he said. "It is about something that happened there a long time ago. You know, the city isn't on the Rhine itself, but it is on a little stream flowing into the greater river.

"Well, once upon a time the people of Zurich, in Switzerland, asked the people of Strasburg to join with them in a bond of friendship. Each should help the other in times of danger. The people of Strasburg did not think much of the idea. They said among themselves: 'What good can the little town of Zurich do us? And, besides, it is too far away.' So they sent back word that they did not care to make such a bond. They were scarcely polite in their message, either.

"When they heard the reply, the men of Zurich were quite angry. They were almost ready to fight. But the youngest one of their councillors said:

"'We will force them to eat their own words. Indeed, they shall be made to give us a different answer. And it will

come soon, too, if you will only leave the matter with me.'

"'Do as you please,' said the other councillors. They went back to their own houses, while the young man hurried home, rushed out into the kitchen and picked out the largest kettle there.

"'Wife, cook as much oatmeal as this pot will hold,' he commanded.

"The woman wondered what in the world her husband could be thinking of. But she lost no time in guessing. She ordered her servants to make a big fire, while she herself stirred and cooked the great kettleful of oatmeal.

"In the meanwhile, her husband hurried down to the pier, and got his swiftest boat ready for a trip down the river. Then he gathered the best rowers in the town.

"'Come with me,' he said to two of them, when everything had been made ready for a trip. They hastened home with him, as he commanded.

"'Is the oatmeal ready?' he cried, rushing breathless into the kitchen.

"His wife had just finished her work. The men lifted the

kettle from the fire and ran with it to the waiting boat. It was placed in the stern and the oarsmen sprang to their places.

"'Pull, men! Pull with all the strength you have, and we will go to Strasburg in time to show those stupid people that, if it should be necessary, we live near enough to them to give them a hot supper.'

"How the men worked! They rowed as they had never rowed before.

"They passed one village after another. Still they moved onward without stopping, till they found themselves at the pier of Strasburg.

"The councillor jumped out of the boat, telling two of his men to follow with the great pot of oatmeal. He led the way to the council-house, where he burst in with his strange present.

"'I bring you a warm answer to your cold words,' he told the surprised councillors. He spoke truly, for the pot was still steaming. How amused they all were!

"'What a clever fellow he is,' they said among them-

selves. 'Surely we will agree to make the bond with Zurich, if it holds many men like him.'

"The bond was quickly signed and then, with laughter and good-will, the councillors gathered around the kettle with spoons and ate every bit of the oatmeal.

"'It is excellent,' they all cried. And indeed it was still hot enough to burn the mouths of those who were not careful."

"Good! Good!" cried the children, and they laughed heartily, even though it was a joke against their own people.

Their father and mother had also listened to the story and enjoyed it as much as the children.

"Another story, please, dear Uncle Fritz," they begged.

But their father pointed to the clock. "Too late, too late, my dears," he said. "If you sit up any longer, your mother will have to call you more than once in the morning. So, away to your beds, every one of you."

CHAPTER IV

The Coffee-Party

"How would you like to be a wood-cutter, Hans?"

"I think it would be great sport. I like to hear the thud of the axe as it comes down on the trunk. Then it is always an exciting time as the tree begins to bend and fall to the ground. Somehow, it seems like a person. I can't help pitying it, either."

Hans had come over to the next village on an errand for his father. A big sawmill had been built on the side of the stream, and all the men in the place were kept busy cutting down trees in the Black Forest, or working in the sawmill.

After the logs had been cut the right length, they were bound into rafts, and floated down the little stream to the Rhine.

"The rafts themselves seem alive," said Hans to his

friend. "You men know just how to bind the logs together with those willow bands, so they twist and turn about like living creatures as they move down the stream."

"I have travelled on a raft all the way from here to Cologne," answered the wood-cutter. "The one who steers must be skillful, for he needs to be very careful. You know the rafts grow larger all the time, don't you, Hans?"

"Oh, yes. As the river becomes wider, the smaller ones are bound together. But is it true that the men sometimes take their families along with them?"

"Certainly. They set up tents, or little huts, on the rafts, so their wives and children can have a comfortable place to eat and sleep. Then, too, if it rains, they can be sheltered from the storm."

"I'd like to go with you sometime. You pass close to Strasburg, and I could stop and visit Uncle Fritz. Wouldn't it be fun!"

"Hans! Hans!" called a girl's voice just then.

"I don't see her, but I know that's Bertha. She came over to the village with me this afternoon. One of her friends has

a coffee-party and she invited us to it. So, good-bye."

"Good-bye, my lad. Come and see me again. Perhaps I can manage sometime to take you with me on a trip down the river."

"Thank you ever so much."

Hans hurried away, and was soon entering the house of a little friend who was celebrating her birthday with a coffee-party.

There were several other children there. They were all dressed in their best clothes and looked very neat and nice. The boys wore long trousers and straight jackets. They looked like little old men. The girls had bright-coloured skirts and their white waists were fresh and stiff.

Their shoes were coarse and heavy, and made a good deal of noise as the children played the different games. But they were all so plump and rosy, it was good to look at them.

"They are a pretty sight," said one of the neighbours, as she poured out the coffee.

"They deserve to have a good time," said another woman with a kind, motherly face. "They will soon grow

up, and then they will have to work hard to get a living."

The coffee and cakes were a great treat to these village children. They did not get such a feast every day in the year. Their mothers made cakes only for festivals and holidays, and coffee was seldom seen on their tables oftener than once a week.

In the great cities and fine castles, where the rich people of Germany had their homes, they could eat sweet dainties and drink coffee as often as they liked. But in the villages of the Black Forest, it was quite different.

"Good night, good night," said Hans and Bertha, as they left their friends and trudged off on a path through the woods. It was the shortest way home, and they knew their mother must be looking for them by this time.

It was just sunset, but the children could not see the beautiful colours of the evening sky, after they had gone a short distance into the thick woods.

"Do you suppose there are any bears around?" whispered Bertha.

The trees looked very black. It seemed to the little girl

as though she kept seeing the shadow of some big animal hiding behind them.

"No, indeed," answered Hans, quite scornfully. "Too many people go along this path for bears to be willing to stay around here. You would have to go farther up into the forest to find them. But look quickly, Bertha. Do you see that rabbit jumping along? Isn't he a big fellow?"

"See! Hans, he has noticed us. There he goes as fast as his legs can carry him."

By this time, the children had reached the top of a hill. The trees grew very thick and close. On one side a torrent came rushing down over the rocks and stones. It seemed to say: "I cannot stop for any one. But come with me, come with me, and I will take you to the beautiful Rhine. I will show you the way to pretty bridges, and great stone castles, and rare old cities. Oh, this is a wonderful world, and you children of the Black Forest have a great deal to see yet."

"I love to listen to running water," said Bertha. "It always has a story to tell us."

"Do you see that light over there, away off in the

distance?" asked Hans. "It comes from a charcoal-pit. I can hear the voices of the men at their work."

"I shouldn't like to stay out in the dark woods all the time and make charcoal," answered his sister. "I should get lonesome and long for the sunlight."

"It isn't very easy work, either," said Hans. "After the trees have been cut down, the pits have to be made with the greatest care, and the wood must be burned just so slowly to change it into charcoal. I once spent a day in the forest with some charcoal-burners. They told such good stories that night came before I had thought of it."

"I can see the village ahead of us," said Bertha, joyfully.

A few minutes afterward, the children were running up the stone steps of their own home.

"We had such a good time," Hans told his mother, while Bertha went to Gretchen and gave her some cakes she had brought her from the coffee-party.

"I'm so sorry you couldn't go," she told her sister.

"Perhaps I can next time," answered Gretchen. "But, of course, we could not all leave mother when she had so

much work to do. So I just kept busy and tried to forget all about it."

"You dear, good Gretchen! I'm going to try to be as patient and helpful as you are," said Bertha, kissing her sister.

CHAPTER V

The Beautiful Castle

"Father's coming, father's coming," cried Bertha, as she ran down the steps and out into the street.

Her father had been away for two days, and Hans had gone with him. They had been to Heidelberg. Bertha and Gretchen had never yet visited that city, although it was not more than twenty miles away.

"Oh, dear, I don't know where to begin," Hans told the girls that evening.

"Of course, I liked to watch the students better than anything else. The town seems full of them. They all study in the university, of course, but they are on the streets a good deal. They seem to have a fine time of it. Every one carries a small cane with a button on the end of it. They wear their little caps down over their foreheads on one

side."

"What colour do they have for their caps, Hans?" asked Gretchen.

"All colours, I believe. Some are red, some blue, some yellow, some green. Oh, I can't tell you how many different kinds there are. But they were bright and pretty, and made the streets look as though it must be a festival day."

"I have heard that the students fight a good many duels. Is that so, Hans?"

"If you should see them, you would certainly think so. Many of the fellows are real handsome, but their faces are scarred more often than not.

"'The more scars I can show, the braver people will think I am.' That is what the students seem to think. They get up duels with each other on the smallest excuse. When they fight, they always try to strike the face. Father says their dueling is good practice. It really helps to make them brave. If I were a student, I should want to fight duels, too."

Bertha shuddered. Dueling was quite the fashion in German universities, but the little girl was very tender-

hearted. She could not bear to think of her brother having his face cut up by the sword of any one in the world.

"What do you think, girls?" Hans went on. "Father had to go to the part of the town nearest the castle. He said he should be busy for several hours, and I could do what I liked. So I climbed up the hill to the castle, and wandered all around it. I saw a number of English and American people there. I suppose they had come to Heidelberg on purpose to see those buildings.

"'Isn't it beautiful!' I heard them exclaim again and again. And I saw a boy about my own age writing things about it in a notebook. He told his mother he was going to say it was the most beautiful ruin in Germany. He was an American boy, but he spoke our language. I suppose he was just learning it, for he made ever so many mistakes. I could hardly tell what he was trying to say."

"What did his mother answer?" asked Bertha.

"She nodded her head, and then pointed out some of the finest carvings and statues. But she and her son moved away from me before long, and then I found myself near

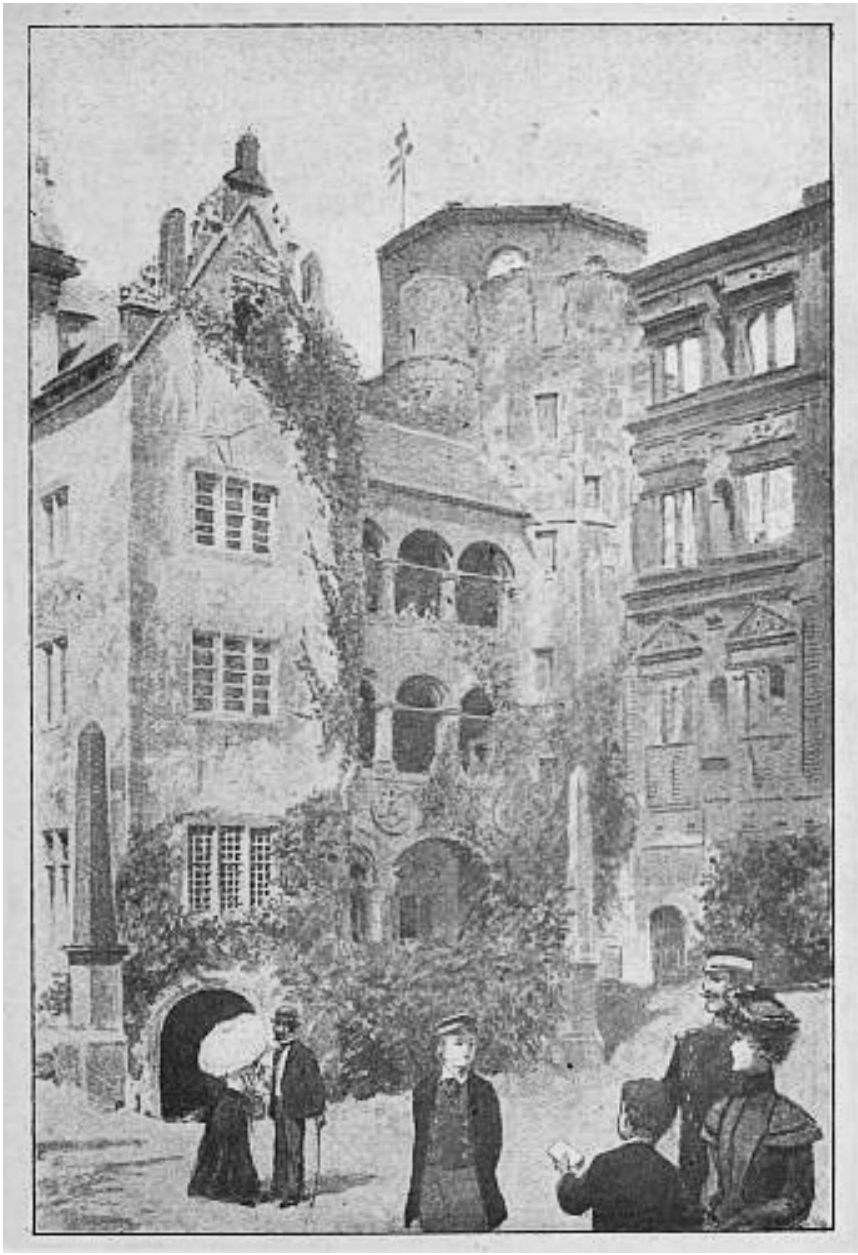
some children of our country. They must have been rich, for they were dressed quite grandly. Their governess was with them. She told them to notice how many different kinds of buildings there were, some of them richly carved, and some quite plain. 'You will find here palaces, towers, and fortresses, all together,' she said. 'For, in the old days, it was not only a grand home, but it was also a strong fortress.'"

"You know father told us it was not built all at once," said Gretchen. "Different parts were added during four hundred years."

"Yes, and he said it had been stormed by the enemy, and burned and plundered," added Bertha. "It has been in the hands of those horrid Frenchmen several different times. Did you see the blown-up tower, Hans?"

"Of course I did. Half of it, you know, fell into the moat during one of the sieges, but linden-trees have grown about it, and it makes a shady nook in which to rest one's self."

"You did not go inside of the castle, did you, Hans?" asked Gretchen.



Courtyard of Heidelberg Castle

"No. It looked so big and gloomy, I stayed outside in the pretty gardens. I climbed over some of the moss-grown stairs, though, and I kept discovering something I hadn't seen before. Here and there were old fountains and marble statues, all gray with age."

"They say that under the castle are great, dark dungeons," said Bertha, shivering at the thought.

"What would a castle be without dungeons?" replied her brother. "Of course there are dungeons. And there are also hidden, underground passages through which the people inside could escape in times of war and siege."

"Oh, Hans! did you see the Heidelberg Tun?" asked Gretchen.

Now, the Heidelberg Tun is the largest wine-cask in the whole world. People say that it holds forty-nine thousand gallons. Just think of it! But it has not been filled for more than a hundred years.

"No, I didn't see it," replied Hans. "It is down in the cellar, and I didn't want to go there without father. I heard some of the visitors telling about the marks of the

Frenchmen's hatchets on its sides. One of the times they captured the castle, they tried to break open the tun. They thought it was full of wine. But they did not succeed in hacking through its tough sides."

"Good! Good!" cried his sisters. They had little love for France and her people.

That evening, after Hans had finished telling the girls about his visit, their father told them the legend of Count Frederick, a brave and daring man who once lived in Heidelberg Castle.

Count Frederick was so brave and successful that he was called "Frederick the Victorious."

Once upon a time he was attacked by the knights and bishops of the Rhine, who had banded together against him. When he found what great numbers of soldiers were attacking his castle, Count Frederick was not frightened in the least. He armed his men with sharp daggers, and marched boldly out against his foes.

They attacked the horses first of all. The daggers made short work, and the knights were soon brought to the

ground. Their armour was so heavy that it was an easy matter then to make them prisoners and take them into the castle.

But Frederick treated them most kindly. He ordered a great banquet to be prepared, and invited his prisoners to gather around the board, where all sorts of good things were served.

One thing only was lacking. There was no bread. The guests thought it was because the servants had forgotten it, and one of them dared to ask for a piece. Count Frederick at once turned toward his steward and ordered the bread to be brought. Now his master had privately talked with the steward and had told him what words to use at this time.

"I am very sorry," said the steward, "but there is no bread."

"You must bake some at once," ordered his master.

"But we have no flour," was the answer.

"You must grind some, then," was the command.

"We cannot do so, for we have no grain."

"Then see that some is threshed immediately."

"That is impossible, for the harvests have been burned down," replied the steward.

"You can at least sow grain, that we may have new harvests as soon as possible."

"We cannot even do that, for our enemies have burned down all the buildings where the grain was stored for seed-time."

Frederick now turned to his visitors, and told them they must eat their meat without bread. But that was not all. He told them they must give him enough money to build new houses and barns to take the places of those they had destroyed, and also to buy new seed for grain.

"It is wrong," he said, sternly, "to carry on war against those who are helpless, and to take away their seeds and tools from the poor peasants."

It was a sensible speech. It made the knights ashamed of the way they had been carrying on war in the country, and they left the castle wiser and better men.

All this happened long, long ago, before Germany could be called one country, for the different parts of the land

were ruled over by different people and in different ways.

This same Count Frederick, their father told them, had great love for the poor. When he was still quite young, he made a vow. He said, "I will never marry a woman of noble family."

Not long after this, he fell in love with a princess. But he could not ask her to marry him on account of the vow he had made.

He was so unhappy that he went into the army. He did not wish to live, and hoped he would soon meet death.

But the fair princess loved Frederick as deeply as he loved her, and as soon as she learned of the vow he had made, she made up her mind what to do.

She put on the dress of a poor singing-girl, and left her grand home. She followed Frederick from place to place. They met face to face one beautiful evening. Then it was that the princess told her lover she had given up her rank and title for his sake.

How joyful she made him as he listened to her story! You may be sure they were soon married, and the young

couple went to live in Heidelberg Castle, where they were as happy and as merry as the day is long.

CHAPTER VI

The Great Frederick

"I declare, Hans, I should think you would get tired of playing war," said Bertha. She was sitting under the trees rocking her doll. She was playing it was a baby.

Hans had just come home after an afternoon of sport with his boy friends. But all they had done, Bertha declared, was to play war and soldiers. She had watched them from her own yard.

"Tired of it! What a silly idea, Bertha. It won't be many years before I shall be a real soldier. Just picture me then! I shall have a uniform, and march to music. I don't know where I may go, either. Who knows to what part of the world the emperor will send his soldiers at that time?"

"I know where you would like to go in our own country," said Bertha.

"To Berlin, of course. What a grand city it must be! Father has been there. Our schoolmaster was there while he served his time as a soldier. At this very moment, it almost seems as though I could hear the jingling of the officers' swords as they move along the streets. The regiments are drilled every day, and I don't know how often the soldiers have sham battles."

Hans jumped up from his seat under the tree and began to march up and down as though he were a soldier already.

"Attention, battalion! Forward, march!" Bertha called after him. But she was laughing as she spoke. She could not help it, Hans looked so serious. At the same time she couldn't help envying her brother a little, and wishing she were a boy, too. It must be so grand to be a soldier and be ready to fight for the emperor who ruled over her country.

"The schoolmaster told us boys yesterday about the grand palace at Berlin. The emperor lives in it when he is in the city," said Hans, wheeling around suddenly and stopping in front of Bertha.

"I think you must have caught my thoughts," said the

little girl, "for the emperor was in my mind when you began to speak."

"Well, never mind that. Do you wish to hear about the palace?"

"Of course I do, Hans."

"The schoolmaster says it has six hundred rooms. Just think of it! And one of them, called the White Room, is furnished so grandly that 2,400,000 marks were spent on it. You can't imagine it, Bertha, of course. I can't, either."

A German mark is worth about twenty-four cents of American money, so the furnishing of the room Hans spoke of must have cost about $600,000. It was a large sum, and it is no wonder the boy said he could hardly imagine so much money.

"There are hundreds of halls in the palace," Hans went on. "Some of their walls are painted and others are hung with elegant silk draperies. The floors are polished so they shine like mirrors. Then the pictures and the armour, Bertha! It almost seemed as though I were there while the schoolmaster was describing them."

"I never expect to see such lovely things," said his sober little sister. "But perhaps I shall go to Berlin some day, Hans. Then I can see the statue of Frederick the Great, at any rate."

"It stands opposite the palace," said her brother, "and cost more than any other bronze statue in the world."

"How did you learn that, Hans?"

"The schoolmaster told us so. He said, too, that it ought to stir the blood of every true German to look at it. There the great Frederick sits on horseback, wearing the robe in which he was crowned, and looking out from under his cocked hat with his bright, sharp eyes. That statue alone is enough to make the soldiers who march past it ready to give their lives for their country."

"He lived when the different kingdoms were separated from each other, and there was no one ruler over all of them. I know that," said Bertha.

"Yes, he was the King of Prussia. And he fought the Seven Years' War with France and came out victorious. Hardly any one thought he could succeed, for there was so



Statue of Frederick the Great

much against him. But he was brave and determined. Those two things were worth everything else."

"That wasn't the only war he won, either, Hans."

"No, but it must have been the greatest. Did you know, Bertha, that he was unhappy when he was young? His father was so strict that he tried to run away from Germany with two of his friends. The king found out what they meant to do. One of the friends was put to death, and the other managed to escape."

"What did his father do to Frederick?" Bertha's eyes were full of pity for a prince who was so unhappy as to wish to run away.

"The king ordered his son to be put to death. But I suppose he was angry at the time, for he changed his mind before the sentence was carried out, and forgave him."

"I wonder how kings and emperors live," said Bertha, slowly. It seemed as though everything must be different with them from what it was with other people.

"I'll tell you about Frederick, if you wish to listen."

"Of course I do, Hans."

"In the first place, he didn't care anything about fine clothes, even if he was a king and was born in the grand palace at Berlin. His coat was often very shabby.

"In the next place, he slept only about four hours out of the whole twenty-four for a good many years. He got up at three o'clock on summer mornings, and in the wintertime he was always dressed by five, at the very latest.

"While his hair-dresser was at work, he opened his most important letters. After that, he attended to other business affairs of the country. These things were done before eating or drinking. But when they had been attended to, the king went into his writing-room and drank a number of glasses of cold water. As he wrote, he sipped coffee and ate a little fruit from time to time.

"He loved music very dearly, and sometimes rested from his work and played on his flute.

"Dinner was the only regular meal of the day. It was served at twelve o'clock, and lasted three or four hours. There was a bill of fare, and the names of the cooks were given as well as the dishes they prepared."

"Did the king ever let them know whether he was pleased or not with their cooking?" asked Bertha.

"Yes. He marked the dishes he liked best with a cross. He enjoyed his dinner, and generally had a number of friends to eat with him. There was much joking, and there were many clever speeches.

"When the meal was over, the king played on his flute a short time, and then attended to more business."

"Did he work till bedtime, Hans?"

"Oh, no. In the evening there was a concert or lecture, or something like that. But, all the same, the king was a hardworking man, even in times of peace."

"He loved his people dearly, father once told me," said Bertha. "He said he understood his subjects and they understood him."

"Yes, and that reminds me of a story the schoolmaster told. King Frederick was once riding through the street when he saw a crowd of people gathered together. He said to his groom, 'Go and see what is the matter.' The man came back and told the king that the people were all

looking at a caricature of Frederick himself. A caricature, you know, is a comical portrait.

"Perhaps you think the king was angry when he heard this. Not at all. He said, 'Go and hang the picture lower down, so they will not have to stretch their necks to see it.'

"The crowd heard the words. 'Hurrah for the king!' they cried. At the same time, they began to tear the picture into pieces."

"Frederick the Great could appreciate a joke," said Bertha. "I should think the people must have loved him."

"He had some fine buildings put up in his lifetime," Hans went on. "A new palace was built in Berlin, besides another one the king called 'Sans Souci.' Those are French words meaning, 'Without a Care.' He called the place by that name because he said he was free-hearted and untroubled while he stayed there.

"I've told you these things because you are a girl. But I'll tell you what I like to think of best of all. It's the stories of the wars in which he fought and in which he showed such wonderful courage. So, hurrah for Frederick the Great,

King of Prussia!"

Hans made a salute as though he stood in the presence of the great king. Then he started for the wood-pile, where he was soon sawing logs with as much energy as if he were fighting against the enemies of his country.

CHAPTER VII

The Brave Princess

"Listen, children! That must be the song of a nightingale. How sweet it is!"

It was a lovely Sunday afternoon. Every one in the family had been to church in the morning, and come home to a good dinner of bean soup and potato salad. Then the father had said:

"Let us take a long walk over the fields and through the woods. The world is beautiful to-day. We can enjoy it best by leaving the house behind us."

Some of the neighbours joined the merry party. The men smoked their pipes, while the women chatted together and the children frolicked about them and picked wild flowers.

How many sweet smells there were in the fields! How

gaily the birds sang! The air seemed full of peace and joy.

They all wandered on till they came to a cascade flowing down over some high rocks. Trees grew close to the waterfall, and bent over it as though to hide it from curious eyes. It was a pretty spot.

"Let us sit down at the foot of this cascade," said Bertha's father. "It is a pleasant place to rest."

Every one liked the plan. Bertha nestled close to her father's side.

"Tell us a story. Please do," she said.

"Ask neighbour Abel. He knows many a legend of just such places as this. He has lived in the Hartz Mountains, and they are filled with fairy stories."

The rest of the party heard what was said.

"Neighbour Abel! A story, a story," they cried.

Of course the kind-hearted German could not refuse such a general request. Besides, he liked to tell stories. Taking his long pipe out of his mouth, he laid it down on the ground beside him. Then he cleared his throat and began to speak.

"Look above you, friends. Do you see that mark on the rocky platform overhead? I noticed it as soon as I got here. It made me think of a wild spot in the Hartz Mountains where there is just such a mark. The people call it 'The Horse's Hoof-print.' I will tell you how they explain its coming there.

"Once upon a time there was a beautiful princess. Her name was Brunhilda, and she lived in Bohemia. She lived a gay and happy life, like most young princesses, till one day a handsome prince arrived at her father's palace. He was the son of the king of the Hartz country.

"Of course, you can all guess what happened. The prince fell in love with the princess, and she returned his love. The day was set for the wedding, and the young prince went home to prepare for the great event.

"But he had been gone only a short time when a powerful giant arrived at Brunhilda's home. He came from the far north. His name was Bodo.

"He asked for the princess in marriage, but her heart had already been given away. She did not care for the giant,

even though he gave her the most elegant presents—a beautiful white horse, jewels set in gold, and chains of amber.

"'I dare not refuse the giant,' said Brunhilda's father. 'He is very powerful, and we must not make him angry. You must marry him, my daughter, in three days.'

"The poor maiden wept bitterly. It seemed as though her heart would break. But she was a clever girl, and she soon dried her tears and began to think of some plan by which she might yet be free. She began to smile upon the giant and treat him with great kindness.

"'I should like to try the beautiful horse you brought me,' she said to him. He was much pleased. The horse was brought to the door. The princess mounted him and rode for a time up and down in front of the palace.

"The very next day was that set apart for the wedding. The castle was filled with guests who feasted and made merry. The giant entered into everything with a will. He laughed till the floors and walls shook. Little did he think what was taking place. For the princess slipped out of the

castle when no one was watching, hurried into the stable, and leaped upon the back of her swift white horse.

"'Lower the drawbridge instantly,' she called to the guard. She passed over it, and away she flew like the wind.

"You were too late, too late, O giant, when you discovered that Brunhilda was missing.

"He flew out of the castle, and on the back of his own fiery black horse he dashed after the runaway princess.

"On they went! On, on, without stopping. Over the plains, up and down the hillsides, through the villages. The sun set and darkness fell upon the world, but there was never a moment's rest for the maiden on the white horse or the giant lover on his black steed.

"Sometimes in the darkness sparks were struck off from the horses' hoofs as they passed over rough and rocky places. These sparks always showed the princess ahead and slowly increasing the distance between herself and her pursuer.

"When the morning light first appeared, the maiden could see the summit of the Brocken ahead of her. It was

the home of her lover. Her heart leaped within her. If she could only reach it she would be safe.

"But alas! her horse suddenly stood still. He would not move. He had reached the edge of a precipice. There it lay, separating the princess from love and safety.

"The brave girl had not a moment to lose. The giant was fast drawing near. She wheeled her horse around; then, striking his sides a sharp blow with her whip, she urged him to leap across the precipice.

"The spring must be strong and sure. It was a matter of life and death. The chasm was deep. If the horse should fail to strike the other side securely, it meant a horrible end to beast and rider.

"But he did not fail. The feet of the brave steed came firmly down upon the rocky platform. So heavily did they fall that the imprint of a hoof was left upon the rock.

"The princess was now safe. It would be an easy matter for her to reach her lover's side.

"As for the giant, he tried to follow Brunhilda across the chasm. But he was too heavy and his horse failed to reach

the mark. The two sank together to the bottom of the precipice."

Every one thanked the storyteller, and begged him to tell more of the Hartz Mountains, where he had spent his boyhood days. The children were delighted when he spoke of the gnomes, in whom he believed when he was a child.

"Every time I went out in the dark woods," he said, "I was on the lookout for these funny little fairies of the underground world. I wanted to see them, but at the same time I was afraid I should meet them.

"I remember one time that my mother sent me on an errand through the woods at twilight. I was in the thickest part of the woods, when I heard a sound that sent a shiver down my back.

"'It is a witch, or some other dreadful being,' I said to myself. 'Nothing else could make a sound like that.' My teeth chattered. My legs shook so, I could hardly move. Somehow or other, I managed to keep on. It seemed as though hours passed before I saw the lights of the village. Yet I suppose it was not more than fifteen minutes.

"When I was once more safe inside my own home, I told my father and mother about my fright.

"'It was no witch, my child,' said my father. 'The sound you describe was probably the cry of a wildcat. I thank Heaven that you are safe. A wildcat is not a very pleasant creature to meet in a lonely place.'

"After that, I was never sent away from the village after dark.

"My boy friends and I often came across badgers and deer, and sometimes foxes made their way into the village in search of poultry, but I never came nearer to meeting a wildcat than the time of which I have just told you."

"What work did you do out of school hours?" asked Hans. The boy was thinking of the toys he had to carve.

"My mother raised canary-birds, and I used to help her a great deal. Nearly every woman in the village was busy at the same work. What concerts we did have in those days! Mother tended every young bird she raised with the greatest care. Would it become a good singer and bring a fair price? We waited anxiously for the first notes, and then

watched to see how the voices gained in strength and sweetness.

"It was a pleasant life, and I was very happy among the birds in our little village. Would you like to hear a song I used to sing at that time? It is all about the birds and bees and flowers."

"Do sing it for us," cried every one.

Herr Abel had a good voice and they listened with pleasure to his song. This is the first stanza:

"I have been on the mountain
That the song-birds love best.
They were sitting, were flitting,
They were building their nest.
They were sitting, were flitting,
They were building their nest."

After he had finished, he told about the mines in which some of his friends worked. It was a hard life, with no bright sunlight to cheer the men in those deep, dark caverns underground.

"Of course you all know that the deepest mine in the

world is in the Hartz Mountains."

His friends nodded their heads, while Hans whispered to Bertha, "I should like to go down in that mine just for the sake of saying I have been as far into the earth as any living person."

"The sun is setting, and there is a chill in the air," said Bertha's father. "Let us go home."

CHAPTER VIII

What the Waves Bring

Bertha's mother had just come in from a hard morning's work in the fields. She had been helping her husband weed the garden.

She spent a great deal of time outdoors in the summertime, as many German peasant women do. They do a large share of the work in ploughing the grain-fields and harvesting the crops. They are much stronger than their American cousins.

"Supper is all ready and waiting for you," said Bertha.

The little girl had prepared a dish of sweet fruit soup which her mother had taught her to make.

"It is very good," said her father when he had tasted it. "My little Bertha is getting to be quite a housekeeper."

"Indeed, it is very good," said her mother. "You learned

your lesson well, my child."

Bertha was quite abashed by so much praise. She looked down upon her plate and did not lift her eyes again till Gretchen began to tell of a new amber bracelet which had just been given to one of the neighbours.

"It is beautiful," said Gretchen, quite excitedly. "The beads are such a clear, lovely yellow. They look so pretty on Frau Braun's neck, I don't wonder she is greatly pleased with her present."

"Who sent it to her?" asked her mother.

"Her brother in Cologne. He is doing well at his trade, and so he bought this necklace at a fair and sent it to his sister as a remembrance. He wrote her a letter all about the sights in Cologne, and asked Frau Braun to come and visit him and his wife.

"He promised her in the letter that if she would come, he would take her to see the grand Cologne cathedral. He said thousands of strangers visit it every year, because every one knows it is one of the most beautiful buildings in all Europe.



Bertha's Home

"Then he said she should also see the Church of Saint Ursula, where the bones of the eleven thousand maidens can still be seen in their glass cases."

"Do you know the story of St. Ursula, Gretchen?" asked her father.

"Yes, indeed, sir. Ursula was the daughter of an English king. She was about to be married, but she said that before the wedding she would go to Rome on a pilgrimage.

"Eleven thousand young girls went with the princess. On her way home she was married, but when the wedding party had got as far as Cologne, they were attacked by the savage Huns. Every one was killed—Ursula, her husband, and the eleven thousand maidens. The church was afterward built in her memory. Ursula was made a saint by the Pope, and the bones of the young girls were preserved in glass cases in the church."

"Did Frau Braun tell of anything else her brother wrote?" asked her mother.

"He spoke of the bridge of boats across the river, and said she would enjoy watching it open and shut to let the

steamers and big rafts pass through. And he told of the Cologne water that is sold in so many of the shops. It is hard to tell which makes the town most famous, the great cathedral or the Cologne water."

"Father, how was the bridge of boats made?" asked Bertha.

"The boats were moored in a line across the river. Planks were then laid across the tops and fastened upon them. Vessels cannot pass under a bridge of this kind, so it has to be opened from time to time. They say it is always interesting to see this done."

"Yes, Frau Braun said she would rather see the bridge of boats than anything else in the city. She has already begun to plan how she can save up enough money to make the trip."

"I will go over there to-morrow to see her new necklace," said Bertha. "But what is amber, father?"

"If you should go to the northern part of Germany, Bertha, you would see great numbers of men, women, and children, busy on the shores of the ocean. The work is

greatest in the rough days of autumn, when a strong wind is blowing from the northeast.

"Then the men dress themselves as though they were going out into a storm. They arm themselves with nets and plunge into the waves, which are bringing treasure to the shore. It is the beautiful amber we admire so much.

"The women and children are waiting on the sands, and as the men bring in their nets, the contents are given into their hands. They separate the precious lumps of amber from the weeds to which they are clinging."

Their father stopped to fill his pipe, and the children thought he had come to the end of the story.

"But you haven't told us yet what amber is," said Bertha.

"Be patient, my little one, and you shall hear," replied her father, patting her head. "As yet, I have not half told the story. But I will answer your question at once.

"A long time ago, longer than you can imagine, Bertha, forests were growing along the shores of the Baltic Sea. There was a great deal of gum in the trees of these forests. It oozed out of the trees in the same manner as gum from

the spruce-tree and resin from the pine.

"Storms arose, and beds of sand and clay drifted over the forests. They were buried away for thousands of years, it may be. But the motion of the sea washes up pieces of the gum, which is of light weight.

"The gum has become changed while buried in the earth such a long, long time. Wise men use the word 'fossilized' when they speak of what has happened to it. The now beautiful, changed gum is called amber.

"There are different ways of getting it. I told you how it comes drifting in on the waves when the winds are high and the water is rough. But on the pleasant summer days, when the sea is smooth and calm, the men go out a little way from the shore in boats. They float about, looking earnestly over the sides of the boats to the bottom of the sea.

"All at once, they see something. Down go their long hooks through the water. A moment afterward, they begin to tow a tangle of stones and seaweed to the shore. As soon as they land, they begin to sort out the great mass. Perhaps they will rejoice in finding large pieces of amber in the

collection.

"There is still another way of getting amber. I know Hans will be most interested in what I am going to say now. It has more of danger in it, and boys like to hear anything in the way of adventure."

Hans looked up and smiled. His father knew him well. He was a daring lad. He was always longing for the time when he should grow up and be a soldier, and possibly take part in some war.

"Children," their father went on, "you have all heard of divers and of their dangerous work under the sea. Gretchen was telling me the other day about her geography lesson, and of the pearl-divers along the shores of India. I did not tell her then that some men spend their lives diving for amber on the shores of our own country.

"They wear rubber suits and helmets and air-chests of sheet iron."

"How can they see where they are going?" asked Bertha.

"There are glass openings in their helmets, and they can look through these. They go out in boats. The crew

generally consists of six men. Two of them are divers, and four men have charge of the air-pumps. These pumps force fresh air down through tubes fastened to the helmet of each diver. Besides these men there is an overseer who has charge of everything.

"Sometimes the divers stay for hours on the bed of the sea, and work away at the amber tangles."

"But suppose anything happens to the air-tubes and the men fail to get as much air as they need?" said Hans. "Is there any way of letting those in the boat know they are in trouble? And, besides that, how do the others know when it is time to raise the divers with their precious loads?"

"There is a safety-rope reaching from the boat to the men. When they pull this rope it is a sign that they wish to be drawn up. But I have told you as much about amber now as you will be able to remember."

"Are you very tired, father dear?" said Bertha, in her most coaxing tone.

"Why should I be tired? What do you wish to ask me? Come, speak out plainly, little one."

"You tell such lovely fairy-tales, papa, I was just wishing for one. See! The moon is just rising above the tree-tops. It is the very time for stories of the wonderful beings."

Her father smiled. "It shall be as you wish, Bertha. It is hard to refuse you when you look at me that way. Come, children, let us sit in the doorway. Good wife, put down your work and join us while I tell the story of Siegfried, the old hero of Germany."

CHAPTER IX

The Magic Sword

Far away in the long ago there lived a mighty king with his good wife and his brave son, Siegfried. Their home was at Xanten, where the river Rhine flows lazily along.

The young prince was carefully taught. But when his education was nearly finished, his father said:

"Siegfried, there is a mighty smith named Mimer. It will be well for you to learn all you can of him in regard to the making of arms."

So Siegfried went to work at the trade of a smith. It was not long before he excelled his teacher. This pleased Mimer, who spent many spare hours with his pupil, telling him stories of the olden times.

After awhile, he took Siegfried into his confidence. He said:

"There is a powerful knight in Burgundy who has challenged every smith of my country to make a weapon strong enough to pierce his coat of mail.

"I long to try," Mimer went on, "but I am now old and have not strength enough to use the heavy hammer."

At these words Siegfried jumped up in great excitement.

"I will make the sword, dear master," he cried. "Be of good cheer. It shall be strong enough to cut the knight's armour in two."

Early the next morning, Siegfried began his work. For seven days and seven nights the constant ringing of his hammer could be heard. At the end of that time Siegfried came to his master with a sword of the finest steel in his right hand.

Mimer looked it all over. He then held it in a stream of running water in which he had thrown a fine thread. The water carried the thread against the edge of the sword, where it was cut in two.

"It is without a fault," cried Mimer with delight.

"I can do better than that," answered Siegfried, and he

took the sword and broke it into pieces.

Again he set to work. For seven more days and seven more nights he was busy at his forge. At the end of that time he brought a polished sword to his master.

Mimer looked it over with the greatest care and made ready to test it.

He threw the fleeces of twelve sheep into the stream. The current carried them on its bosom to Siegfried's sword. Instantly, each piece was divided as it met the blade. Mimer shouted aloud in his joy.

"Balmung" (for that was the name Siegfried gave the sword) "is the finest weapon man ever made," he cried.

Siegfried was now prepared to meet the proud knight of Burgundy.

The very first thrust of the sword, Balmung, did the work. The head and shoulders of the giant were severed from the rest of the body. They rolled down the hillside and fell into the Rhine, where they can be seen even now, when the water is clear. At least, so runs the story. The trunk remained on the hilltop and was turned to stone.

Soon after this Mimer found that Siegfried longed to see the world and make himself famous. So he bound the sword Balmung to the young prince's side, and told him to seek a certain person, who would give him a fine war-horse.

Siegfried went to this man, from whom he obtained a matchless steed. In fact it had descended from the great god Odin's magic horse. Siegfried, you can see, must have lived in a time when men believed in gods and other wonderful beings.

He was now all ready for his adventures, but before starting out, Mimer told him of a great treasure of gold guarded by a fearful serpent. This treasure was spread out over a plain called the Glittering Heath. No man had yet been able to take it, because of its terrible guardian.

Siegfried was not in the least frightened by the stories he heard of the monster. He started out on his dangerous errand with a heart full of courage.

At last, he drew near the plain. He could see it on the other side of the Rhine, from the hilltop where he was standing. With no one to help him, not even taking his

magic horse with him, he hurried down the hillside and sprang into a boat on the shore.

An old man had charge of the boat, and as he rowed Siegfried across, he gave him good advice. This old man, as it happened, was the god Odin, who loved Siegfried and wished to see him succeed.

"Dig a deep trench along the path the serpent has worn on his way to the river when in search of water," said the old boatman. "Hide yourself in the trench, and, as the serpent passes along, you must thrust your sword deep into his body."

It was good advice. Siegfried did as Odin directed him. He went to work on the trench at once. It was soon finished, and then the young prince, sword in hand, was lying in watch for the dread monster.

He did not have long to wait. He soon heard the sound of rolling stones. Then came a loud hiss, and immediately afterward he felt the serpent's fiery breath on his cheek.

And now the serpent rolled over into the ditch, and Siegfried was covered by the folds of his huge body. He did

not fear or falter. He thrust Balmung, his wonderful sword, deep into the monster's body. The blood poured forth in such torrents that the ditch began to fill fast.

It was a time of great danger for Siegfried. He would have been drowned if the serpent in his death-agony had not rolled over on one side and given him a chance to free himself.

In a moment more he was standing, safe and sound, by the side of the ditch. His bath in the serpent's blood had given him a great blessing. Hereafter it would be impossible for any one to wound him except in one tiny place on his shoulder. A leaf had fallen on this spot, and the blood had not touched it.

"What did Siegfried do with the golden treasure?" asked Hans, when his father had reached this point in the story.

"He had not sought it for himself, but for Mimer's sake. All he cared for was the power of killing the serpent."

As soon as this was done, Mimer drew near and showed himself ungrateful and untrue. He was so afraid Siegfried would claim some of the treasure that he secretly drew

Balmung from out the serpent's body, and made ready to thrust it into Siegfried.

But at that very moment his foot slipped in the monster's blood, and he fell upon the sword and was instantly killed.

Siegfried was filled with horror when he saw what had happened. He sprang upon his horse's back and fled as fast as possible from the dreadful scene.

"What happened to Siegfried after that? Did he have any more adventures?" asked Bertha.

"Yes, indeed. There were enough to fill a book. But there is one in particular you girls would like to hear. It is about a beautiful princess whom he freed from a spell which had been cast upon her."

"What was her name, papa?" asked Gretchen.

"Brunhild, the Queen of Isenland. She had been stung by the thorn of sleep."

Odin, the great god, had said, "Brunhild shall not awake till some hero is brave enough to fight his way through the flames which shall constantly surround the palace. He must

then go to the side of the sleeping maiden and break the charm by a kiss upon her forehead."

When Siegfried, in his wanderings, heard the story of Brunhild, he said, "I will make my way through the flames and will myself rescue the fair princess."

He leaped upon the back of his magic steed, and together they fought their way through the fire that surrounded the palace of the sleeping beauty. He reached the gates in safety. There was no sign of life about the place. Every one was wrapped in a deep sleep.

Siegfried made his way to the room of the enchanted princess. Ah! there she lay, still and beautiful, with no knowledge of what was going on around her.

The young knight knelt by her side. Leaning over her, he pressed a kiss upon her forehead. She moved slightly; then, opening her blue eyes, she smiled sweetly upon her deliverer.

At the same moment every one else in the palace woke up and went on with whatever had been interrupted when sleep overcame them.

Siegfried remained for six months with the fair Brunhild and her court. Every day was given up to music and feasting, games and songs. Time passed like a beautiful dream. No one knows how long the young knight might have enjoyed this happy life if Odin had not sent two birds, Thought and Memory, to remind him there were other things for him yet to do.

He did not stop to bid Brunhild farewell, but leaped upon his horse's back and rode away in search of new adventures.

"Dear me, children," exclaimed their father, looking at the clock, "it is long past the time you should be in your soft, warm beds."

"Papa, do you know what day to-morrow is?" whispered Bertha, as she kissed him good night.

"My darling child's birthday. It is ten years to-morrow since your eyes first looked upon the sunlight. They have been ten happy years to us all, though our lives are full of work. What do you say to that, my little one?"

"Very happy, papa dear. You and mother are so kind! I

ought to be good as well as happy."

"She is a faithful child," said her mother, after Bertha had left the room. "That is why I have a little surprise ready for to-morrow. I have baked a large birthday cake and shall ask her little friends to share it with her.

"Her aunt has finished the new dress I bought for her, and I have made two white aprons, besides. She will be a happy child when she sees her presents."

The mother closed her eyes and made a silent prayer to the All-Father that Bertha's life should be as joyful as her tenth birthday gave promise of being.

THE END.

Our Little Armenian Cousin

Mary F. Nixon-Roulet

Illustrated by L.J. Bridgman



"Artin patted the sheep."

Preface

In the schoolroom or playground you may possibly have met your Armenian cousin — a child with dark hair and sad eyes, who is quiet and shy, and who seems almost fearful of accepting your proffered friendship.

Poor little Armenian cousin! Have you heard your parents speak of the cruel manner in which the people of his country have been treated and of the hardships they suffer in their own home?

It can scarcely be called a home, for it is ruled over by the Sultan of Turkey, who allows little happiness or freedom to the people he has conquered.

"There is no such country as Armenia," says the Turk. "That which was Armenia is now a province of Turkey, governed by Turkish laws and ruled by officers appointed

by the Sultan."

Its people are not even allowed to come and go as they choose. Nothing can be done without the ruler's permission. The smallest offence is punished in the severest manner, and many massacres of innocent people have taken place.

It is no wonder our Armenian cousins are glad to leave their native land when a chance is offered, and that many of them come to America in search of a happier and more peaceful home.

Their faces tell us they have suffered much. We must help them to forget their troubles. Our love and friendship must be strong enough to bring smiles to their faces and trust to their hearts.

The world is great and good. Here in America, if not in their native land, our Armenian cousins may yet find a real home and lasting happiness.

CHAPTER I

A Highland Winter

"Look! look! See the shower of snow," cried Artin.

"There is enough snow outside, without having any more in the house," said his mother. But she stopped her work and came out into the hall to see the strange sight.

It was early morning and Artin had just opened the door leading into the yard. The weather was bitter cold, and as the door swung open the freezing air rushed into the big building. It gave the warm air of the inside a most loving greeting. Then lo! a cloud of snow-fairies appeared and came fluttering down upon the rough floor. Artin stood watching them as if he had never seen snow before in his life.

"The world is full of wonders. But come, Artin, and help your father with his cattle. Breakfast will soon be ready."

The mother went back to her work and Artin went out into the big stable, where his father and the other men were milking.

It was a queer home, where this little black-haired boy had lived ever since he was born. The stable and the house were all together. You could hardly say, "This is where the cattle are kept, and the family live in that part."

A large part of the building was used as a stable, while small rooms for housekeeping opened out from it. And yet, the family spent a good deal of their time in the stable itself.

Artin's father received his friends here. They smoked and told stories, and talked over their business, while the oxen chewed their cuds and lazily nodded their heads.

The boy's mother often brought her sewing or knitting out here and sat with her husband.

At first, this custom of living in a stable with the cattle seems strange, but so do all fashions which are unlike ours.

Artin's father is quite a rich man. Before his little son was born, he used to live in a smaller home. But his flocks of sheep grew larger, and his herds of cattle also. He said:

"I do not have room enough here."

He hired some workmen, who began to dig out the soil on a gentle slope of land which he owned. They dug out a large space of ground. It was like a cellar about five feet deep. It was a long time before the work was done.

But this was only the beginning of the home.

"You must get some stout trunks of trees and saw them into pieces ten or twelve feet long," said the farmer. "We will set them up in rows inside of the cellar. They will make strong pillars."

You can see now that Artin's home would be largely underground, but would be very strong.

When the pillars had been set up, stone walls were built around the sides of the cellar. Next came the making of the roof. The branches of the trees, whose trunks had already been used, were laid across from pillar to pillar. The twigs were tied up in bunches and spread over the branches.

Of course, the roof was not yet so close but that rain would fall through into the rooms beneath. The building of it, however, had only commenced. The men now took the

earth they had dug out of the ground when they made the cellar, and spread it over the framework of twigs and branches. They trod it down as hard as possible.

Then came another layer of earth, and more pounding and treading. Now that this was done, there would be no possible leaking for years to come.

When warm days of summer came, seeds began to sprout, and blades of grass shot up out of this earth-roof. It was soon like a fine field of grass. The children played here, and the sheep got many a delicious supper over the heads of the people below.

It wasn't a bad way of building a home, was it? Yet it does seem queer to us.

But how could the sheep get up on the roof? At first, that would seem to puzzle you.

You must remember the building was put up on sloping land. It was also partly underground. Besides this, as the loose earth was thrown up on the roof, it was left in a sort of banking from the ground to the roof on three sides of the building.

The sheep, as well as the children, could scamper up and down the banking, to and from the roof, as much as they pleased.

"But, dear me! how could the people inside of that big building see to do the work?" you exclaim. "There were no windows on the sides of the house."

Indeed, there were only three or four small openings in the roof. And these were covered with oiled paper, so they let in very little light.

If we should look closely, we should see one place in which a piece of *real glass* was set. It would be a sad day for the boy who broke that glass. It was very precious and cost a good deal of money in the part of the world where Artin lives.

His home was dark, to be sure, and he stayed in the stable a great deal of the time during the long, cold winter. But he got used to it and it did not trouble him. Indeed, after he had been outdoors for a long time, he was glad to get away from the dazzling light of the sun on the snow.

As Artin stepped into the stable, a big fat sheep ran to

meet him. It rubbed its woolly side against the boy, as much as to say, "Good morning, good morning, little master."

Artin patted the sheep and scratched its back. It was his pet out of all the flock. When it was a baby lamb, he picked it out from all the others. He taught it to follow him, and often fed it with tender grass or bits of bread.

It was an old sheep now, but was as much of a pet as ever. It often left the rest of the flock to follow Artin or his father from place to place. In the wintertime, when the animals had to spend month after month in the stable, it chose the company of the horses.

"They are wise creatures, and I like them," it seemed to think. "We are very good friends."

As soon as Artin had petted the sheep, he turned to the dogs who came jumping about him.

"Bow-wow! bow-wow! How glad we are to see you, little master," they seemed to say. They barked and waved their tails in great delight.

They made such a fuss that the chickens, who had already begun to scratch about for their breakfast, fled right

and left. They were in a hurry to get out of the reach of the dogs' feet.

The big stable was dark, of course. But it was quite comfortable, although only a small fire was kept in the family part. There were so many cows and oxen and sheep and horses that their warm bodies gave a great deal of heat.

As soon as the dogs became quiet and went back to their places, Artin felt something soft rubbing against his legs. It was a sober old cat that had come down from the platform at the end of the stable. She wished to greet Artin, too. She had left a new family of kittens, but she now hurried back to see that no harm came to them.

Artin followed her up on to the platform to her hiding-place in one corner.

"Oh, how lovely!" he cried, as he knelt down on the floor where two of the most beautiful white kittens were cuddled. They were snowy white, without a coloured hair on them. Their fur was long and fine. Their eyes were not yet open.

"What beauties they are!" cried Artin, as he tenderly

held them in his arms. Their mother looked up at him and cried.

"No, no, I won't hurt them. And the dogs sha'n't trouble them, either," said the little boy. He put them back in the corner and turned softly away.

"I believe they are even prettier than my Angora kittens." he said to himself. "They are as white as snow. The Angora kittens have long hair, too, but it is brownish. And they are not as gentle as these will be. They are fierce and ready for a battle with the dogs at almost any time."

The platform where the cats spent most of their time was the place where Artin's father received his friends. There were fine carpets on the floor and soft couches along the sides. There was a rail around it so the cattle and sheep were kept off.

The dogs had their dens beneath. The cats were the only animals that were allowed to come there.

"You are late. You ought to have been helping us half an hour ago," said his father, as the boy appeared at last among the milkers.

The farmer did not often need to find fault with his little son.

Artin was strong and healthy. He liked to work, and was seldom behind.

"Breakfast! breakfast!" Artin's sister, Mariam, called a little while afterward.

The milking had been finished by this time. Every one dropped work and followed the little girl to the room where the morning meal was smoking on the low table.

There was hot mutton in a metal dish, and curdled milk, and a plentiful amount of "losh," as Artin calls the favourite bread of his people.

His mother had made it in thin cakes. They were scarcely thicker than the blade of a knife, but were at least a yard long. The table was fairly covered with these cakes, which took the place of napkins.

While Artin sat eating, he wiped his mouth with a bit of losh. When he wished some of the curdled milk, he broke off a piece of losh and folded it up so as to make a spoon with which he fed himself. When he helped himself to some

mutton, he rolled it up in a strip of losh and made an odd little sandwich.

Artin was very fond of this queer bread, and ate large quantities of it, while he made it useful in eating the other food to which he was helped.

Artin's grandmother lived with the family. So, also, did his great-grandmother, who was a bright-looking woman a hundred years old! She was almost as spry as her daughter. She had helped to get the breakfast ready on this cold winter's morning.

"There is nothing like the fine air of our country," she often said. "How can a person help keeping well and strong if he lives here?"

Then she would sigh as she thought of those of her people who had left Armenia to live in other lands.

"It is not because they wished to go away," she had told Artin. "Oh, no, no! It was because of the rule of the cruel Turks."

She always spoke in a whisper when she mentioned the Turks. It seemed as though she feared that one of them

were listening in some corner, or that he would suddenly appear in the doorway.

CHAPTER II

The Sacred Land

"Mother, why can't I talk about Armenia as much as I wish? It is the name of our country, and it sounds like music when I say it to myself."

"Sh! sh! my child!" Artin's mother looked frightened. She always had a sad expression in her dark eyes, but now they seemed sadder than ever.

"I have tried to make you understand the reason," she said, speaking slowly and softly. "You know the Sultan of Turkey has us in his power. He rules over us as he wishes, and we are not strong enough to free ourselves.

"It is the Sultan's command that we shall not speak of Armenia. 'There is no such place,' he says. 'The land that was called by that name belongs to me. It is a province of my empire. Its people are now my people.'"

The tears fell from the woman's eyes as she said these words. "Oh, Artin, my child, I hope we shall live to see the time when other countries will come to help us. It is the only way to save our Fatherland from the Sultan's wicked power."

"But, mother, our people were not always like this, were they?" asked Artin.

"No, indeed. We once had kings of our own and we were free and happy. Just think, Artin, the first Christian king in the whole world was an Armenian.

"But our home lies here in southwestern Asia, with enemies on every hand. The Persians are on one side of us, the Turks on the other. Then, if we go north, the great country of Russia lies just across the Black Sea.

"The armies of these different peoples have met and fought their battles here in our own dear land. It has been conquered first by one of them, then by another. Our courage is gone. Our spirit is quite broken."

"Do not cry, mother. Let us ask father to go away. I should like to cross the ocean and go to the wonderful

country of America. Some of our friends are living there, you know. They write letters about their happy new home."

"I know it, Artin, I know it. But this land is the only home I can imagine. I love it with all my heart. I cannot bear to think of leaving it.

"Always remember, my dear child, this land was the cradle of all the peoples of the earth."

"You are thinking of the Garden of Eden, aren't you, mother?"

"Yes, Artin. We are only a few miles from the very spot where Adam and Eve had their first home. That is what we have been told. Our first parents lived in perfect happiness in that paradise of birds and flowers until the tempter led them into sin. They tasted the wondrous apples that were not meant for them to eat.

"Then, alas! the sorrow of the world began. Adam and Eve were driven out from the garden. They now had to work among the thorns and thistles of Armenia for their daily living."

"I don't wonder you would rather live here than

anywhere else. Who knows but what the Garden of Eden will be given back to us! I would like to be as near it as possible, at any rate," said Artin.

As his mother talked, it seemed as though he could see it all — the beautiful paradise of fruits and flowers, the birds singing happily overhead, the bright, clear sunshine all around. And in the midst of all this loveliness were two people, a man and a woman. Their faces were calm and gentle. They walked gaily, as though they knew no care. They sang merrily in company with the birds. There was no cloud in the sky. There was no shadow on the earth.

Then came the change, and sorrow entered the world because of disobedience.

"It has stayed here ever since. I wonder if the Golden Age will ever come again," thought Artin.

"There is something else for us to be proud of," his mother went on. "If you climb to the top of yonder mountain, what can you see beyond?"

"Mount Ararat," quickly replied the boy. "I'd rather be near that mountain than any other in the world."

"Of course you would, Artin. It is impossible to think of it without also thinking of Noah, who descended on the mountain of Ararat in the Ark when the great flood began to go down. When the world was overtaken by the deluge, every one was destroyed except Noah and his family and the creatures he had taken with him into the Ark."

"Why was there a deluge, mother?"

"Because the people of the earth had grown very wicked. But Noah was good and wise, and the Lord loved him. So He directed Noah to build the Ark and save himself at the time of the rising of the waters."

"What a dreadful time it must have been! I wonder if Noah wasn't frightened. And I should think so many animals in the Ark would have made a fearful noise. Just think of it! The Bible says the flood lasted forty days and forty nights!"

"It seems a long time, doesn't it? But at last the waters began to go down and the Ark rested on the mountain of Ararat. More and more land was laid bare, and Noah left the Ark and went down the mountainside. He planted a



Climbing Mount Ararat

vineyard and settled there. But first, he built an altar and made sacrifices to God, who had kept him safe."

"I know, mother. There is a village on the side of Ararat, and the little church stands where the altar was built. Father has been to the place."

"Yes, dear. I have visited the village myself. I have heard there are people in the world who don't believe there ever was a deluge. They even think Noah was not a real man. They say the story is a myth.

"Some of those who travel through our country talk like that. But we people of Armenia believe it as I have told you this morning."

At this moment the door opened and Artin's father came staggering into the room.

"Dear me! What is the matter?" cried his wife as she hurried to his side.

"I cannot see," he answered. "I am snowblind. The sunlight was very strong as it fell upon the snow. I have been three hours on the road. The way was so rough, I had to use my eyes constantly.

"At last, when I had almost reached home, my sight failed me entirely. I had to let the horse take his own course.

"Oh, how good it feels to be out of the glaring light, although I can hardly see yet."

"Your face is all blistered, father," cried Artin. "It must be very cold outside."

His father's cheeks were a sorry sight. The skin was raised in blisters, as the boy had said. The strong glare of the sun, together with the biting wind, had caused this.

"I shall soon be better. But you must not stay here, Artin," said his father. "Run out and attend to the horse."

Artin's home was high up on the table-land. Down below him on the seashore, the weather was much warmer, and snow and ice were seldom seen. But up on the high plain the winters were long and cold and the summers were short.

Artin was never sick. He had never had a doctor.

"I wonder if I shall live to be as old as my great-grandmother," he sometimes thought. "Ever so many of my

people live to be a hundred years old. Father says it is because this is the healthiest place in the world. It is the nicest and best place, anyway."

After he had gone out into the stable to take care of the horse, his sister soon followed him.

"Grandma just told me a story, Artin, and I thought you would like to hear it," she said to her brother.

She was very fond of Artin, and the boy and girl played together most of the time.

"Don't you know we were talking about geese the other day?" she went on. "You said you wondered what made the difference between wild geese and tame ones. Well, this is what the Persians say about them:

"Once upon a time there were two geese who were going to take a journey together. The evening before they started, one of them said to the other:

"'Look out, dear friend, and be ready. If God is willing, I will start in the morning.'

"'So will I,' answered the other goose, 'whether God is willing or not.'

"Early the next morning the pious goose ate his breakfast and went to a stream nearby for a drink. Then he spread his wings and flew far away.

"The goose who had talked so wickedly got ready to follow him. But, strange to say, he found he could not rise from the ground.

"He hopped and he fluttered, and he made a great deal of fuss. It was all in vain. His wings were useless.

"He looked around in despair. He saw a hunter not far away, but he could not move enough to get out of his reach.

"The hunter soon caught him and carried him away. He kept him in a yard and tamed him. But that goose never got back the power to use his wings. He became the father of all the tame geese in the world."

"Poor fellow," said Artin. "I pity him, even if he did talk wickedly. But your story makes me think of a crane I saw last summer in a neighbour's yard.

"A hunter had shot him, but it did no harm to the bird except to break a wing. He was easily caught after that. Then the hunter brought him to our neighbour's farmyard.

"He stalked about very proudly, as much as to say: 'What business have you to make me stay here with common fowls? A lordly crane like me! Shame upon you!'

"But after awhile he became quiet, and ate corn with the rest of the fowls. Of course, he had a deep jug of water to drink from, on account of his long bill. He did not have to share that with the other creatures of the barnyard, at any rate.

"I was over there one day when a flock of cranes flew by overhead. They wheeled round and round as they caught sight of their brother below, and called to him to join them. He stretched up his long neck and answered them in the most mournful way. I think he was telling them that he was a prisoner."

"I wonder if they understood him," said Mariam.

"It seemed as though they did. They flew away, and the poor prisoner was left alone. I felt sorry for him, I can tell you."

CHAPTER III

The Earthquake

Artin and Mariam were sitting by the big fireplace of a small sitting-room. They were reading. It was not very late in the afternoon, but the iron lamp hanging from the chimney-piece was already lighted.

The tiny windows covered with oiled paper let in so little light that the children could not read without the help of the lamp. Mariam looked up from her book.

"I was just reading such a funny story, Artin," she said. "It was about a little girl who lived in a house like ours. She was all alone in the kitchen one evening. Her mother had told her to watch the supper, for she had some work to do in another part of the house.

"The little girl was sitting by the fireplace and singing. The kettle was boiling away at a great rate.

"Suddenly the girl heard a sound overhead. Somebody was on the roof! It was winter-time, and dark, too. She said: 'That cannot be the sheep or dogs.'

"A moment afterward she felt sure that the flat stone on top of the chimney had been lifted off, for she felt a gust of cold air.

"She began to be frightened, for there was no one else in the part of the house where she was.

"But she was a good deal more scared when she saw a crooked stick come slowly down the chimney. It fished around till it caught hold of the handle of the kettle and slowly lifted it up out of sight.

"When it was entirely gone the child began to scream with all her might. Her mother came hurrying into the room, exclaiming, 'What is the matter with the child!' At the same time she looked at the fireplace and saw that the kettle was missing.

"As soon as the little girl could speak she told what had happened.

"'Ah, ha!' exclaimed her mother. 'Some hungry thief

has stolen my nice supper. It was easy enough, too. The chimney is so low, he did not have to reach very far. If I had been here, though, he shouldn't have had it. But stop your crying, my child. No one is hurt. And now we must hurry to get another supper ready.'"

Artin laughed. "I hope the thief didn't burn his mouth eating the stolen stew. Didn't the people ever catch him?"

"No one tried. The little girl's mother said it wasn't worth while. And when the second supper had been cooked, and the family sat down to enjoy it, everybody laughed over what had happened."

"Do you remember what I found on our chimney last spring, Mariam?"

"I don't think I'll forget it very soon, Artin. It was a stork's nest. The funniest part of it was that sparrows had built their own little nests among the sticks that formed the big nest of the storks. You know you showed it to me."

"I'd like to know what sparrows were made for, Mariam. They are such fussy, noisy little things. They scold and scold about everything."

"Yes, and they are such bold birds. They are always ready to steal the grain, as well as every other good thing they can seize in their bills. I do not wonder they dare to build their homes around the storks' nests. They dare almost anything."

Just then the children's great-grandmother entered the room.

"Won't you tell us a story? We love to hear about long ago," said Artin, as the old lady sat down.

"Dear me! What can I say that would interest you children?"

"Tell about the earthquake," said Mariam. "You said once that you remembered it as if it happened yesterday."

"And it was more than sixty years ago. What a long time that is!" exclaimed Artin.

"Yet when it happened, I was a grown woman with a family of little children," said the old lady.

"Everything seemed as usual on the morning of the earthquake. I went about my work and the children played as happily as could be. But when the afternoon came, I

began to feel strange. I could not understand why.

"The air became still and gloomy. The children came to my side with sober little faces. They felt something, too. But what was it?

"All at once I heard a low, rumbling noise. It grew louder every moment. The house trembled and shook. Dust from the plastered walls filled the air about me. I choked and coughed. The children began to cry and sob.

"'The earth is moving, mamma,' they cried. 'Aren't you afraid?'

"I could hardly speak from fear, myself, but I managed to say, 'God is everywhere, my darlings.'

"Just then there was a crash. A part of the house had fallen in.

"And now the room where we were shook and rocked to and fro, and the air was filled with a fearful rumbling and roaring. The strangest thing about it was that there was no wind outside. It seemed as though the world were stifling.

"Then came another crash, and another. It was the sound of houses falling around us. We were living in the

city of Erzeroum at that time, as I once told you.

"Should we be spared? Every moment I wondered if that part of the house where we were would fall next.

"Every moment seemed like an hour. But at last the awful noise stopped, the earth grew quiet, and we dared to move about the room and look outside.

"A terrible sight met our gaze. Houses lay in ruins on the ground all about us. All of our own house was destroyed, except the room in which we had been and the one next to it.

"Your great-grandfather came home soon after. He had been outdoors during the whole dreadful time. His life had been saved in some wonderful way.

"'What has happened?' I asked.

"'It was an earthquake,' he told me.

"'May we never see another,' I cried. And, children, we never have. And I hope you will not live to know what an earthquake is like."

"It must have been dreadful," said Mariam, tenderly patting the old lady's cheek. "Don't let's talk about it any

more, but tell us about something pleasanter, if you are not too tired."

"Would you like to hear about Armenia in Bible days? It was a free and happy country then."

"Yes, indeed," answered Artin. "Mother often tells us what she has read of those times, too."

"I think you, Artin, would like to hear about the strange boats on which the cargoes were carried down the Euphrates River to Babylon. You never saw anything like them."

"I'd like to hear, too. I know I would," cried Mariam.

The old lady went on, speaking quite slowly.

"The frames were made of willow and were quite round, like a bowl. Skins of wild animals were stretched over them. They were then filled with straw, and the cargoes were taken on board."

"What kind of cargoes did the merchants of those days carry?" asked Artin.

"Chiefly wine."

"And how did the people move the boat?" was the next

question.

"Two men had charge of each boat. They stood at their work. They rowed and pushed it along with their oars.

"No boat went on a trip without carrying a live ass. The larger boats carried more than one of these animals."

"Why in the world was the ass carried?" asked Mariam, laughing.

"This was the reason," answered the old lady. "When the merchants arrived in Babylon, the sold their cargoes and broke up their boats. Then they loaded their asses with the skins that had covered the boats, and started again for their homes in Armenia."

"But why didn't they go back in their boats, grandma?" asked Artin, with surprise.

"The current of the river is too strong for a boat to go up the stream with any ease. So that was the reason for making the boats of skins instead of wood. A great writer who lived at that time said these Armenian boats were more wonderful than anything else he ever saw, except the city of Babylon itself. And of course your mother has told



"The old lady went on, speaking quite slowly."

you that was the greatest city in the world at the time.

"But come, children, I hear your mother calling us to supper. We are to have something we are all very fond of, and we must not keep her waiting."

"I know what it is — mutton stewed with quinces. It makes me hungry to think of it, cried Artin, as he led the way to the supper-table.

CHAPTER IV

The Visitors

"May we rest here for a short time? We have just come from Erzeroum. Our friends there told us you would be most kind to us."

It was a stranger who said these words to Artin's father. Another gentleman was with him. It was plainly to be seen that both of them were Americans, and that they were very tired.

"Welcome, welcome," was the answer in their own language.

Artin's father was only a farmer, but he could speak two languages besides his own, and he spoke them readily. One of them was English.

"England is a great country," he often told his friends. "Some day she will help our poor nation and save us from

our enemies. But America is great, too. If I should be obliged to leave Armenia, I should rather make a new home in America than in any other part of the world. It is the land of brave, free people."

It is no wonder, then, that when he saw his visitors were Americans, he smiled pleasantly, and gladly led the way to the platform in the big stable. You will remember this was the place where he received his friends.

"We are very tired," said the visitor who had spoken first, and who had introduced himself as Mr. Brown. "We came on horseback to Erzeroum all the way from the northern coast. It was a rough journey, and a dangerous one."

"Yes, at this time of the year it is certainly not an easy one," answered the farmer. "But I am used to mountain climbing, and I made the journey many times when I was a young man. Do tell me how are my people on the seacoast? Are our Turkish masters as cruel as ever?"

"I fear so. There have been fresh massacres, and hundreds of Armenians have been killed. They were not to

blame, either. A few of your people have been working secretly, trying to stir up a revolution. The Turks discovered this and killed everybody, right and left. They were just as cruel to those who had done no harm, and who had never spoken a word against them, as they were to the others.

"They did not stop to find out who were innocent and who were guilty. I am sorry with all my heart for you Armenians."

Artin was helping his father when the visitors arrived. He heard every word that was said. The word "massacre" made him tremble from head to foot. Yet, although he was so frightened himself, he kept thinking, "I hope Mariam won't hear this. Poor little Mariam! I don't want her to feel badly."

His father noticed that the boy was trembling. "Run off to your pets, Artin, while I talk with these gentlemen," he said. And Artin heard no more about the sad things that had happened in his country.

The visitors stayed to supper, but they were talking now

about their journey from the seacoast.

"Up, up, up, we climbed," said Mr. Brown. "And each new mile of the road seemed harder than the one before it."

"Indeed, my hair stood on end most of the time," said Mr. Miller, the other visitor. "The road in some places was cut out of the solid rock, and it was so narrow that a misstep would have made us fall hundreds of feet over a steep precipice.

"But the views! I never saw anything so beautiful as the mountain scenery of Armenia in all my life. There we were with mountains all around us. Some seemed like babies resting beside their giant mothers.

"Yet they were all grand. As we climbed higher and higher we could look down on the peaks and slopes of some of them, while ahead and beyond us there were other and more lofty ones."

"It was a wonderful journey," said his companion. "I was filled with fear and delight at almost the same time."

Artin listened eagerly to the talk of the travellers. He had never left his home on the plateau to visit the seacoast,

but he loved to hear about the journey.

"I suppose you spent the nights in the inns at the different villages on the way," said Artin's father.

"Yes, and we found plenty of company. The houses were well-filled with drivers of camels and pack-horses who were resting on their way."

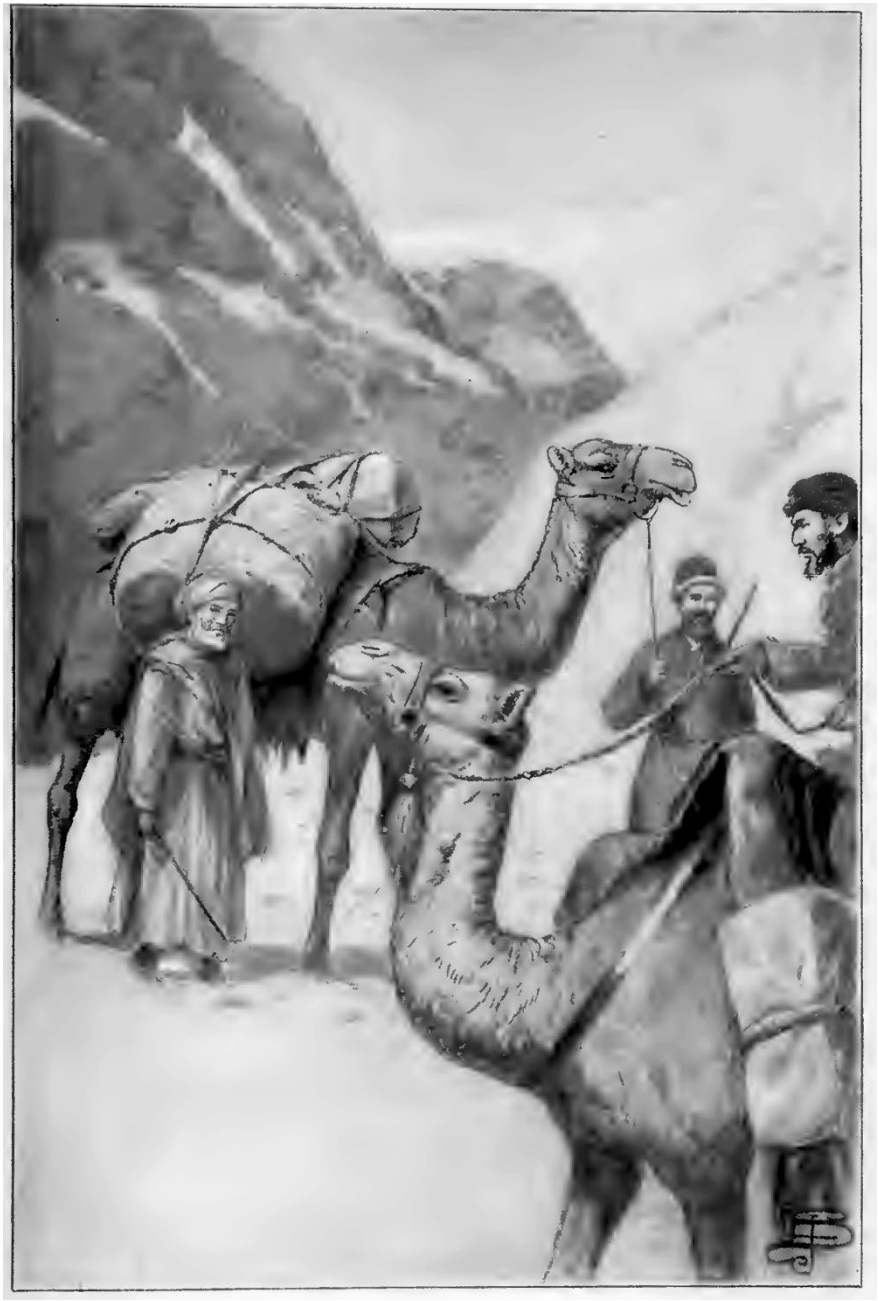
"Many caravans pass through Armenia on their way to the north. They carry goods from Asia to Europe," answered their host.

"Yes, I know. Steam-cars would seem strange in this part of the country. Even if the people wished for them, they could not build them through the dangerous passes over which we travelled."

"Sometimes we had hard work to keep warm at the inns where we rested. One night it was bitter cold. Our room was on the second floor. The lower part of the building was used for the horses and camels. We had no fireplace where we could warm ourselves. The innkeeper said:

"'I will bring a mangal.'

"We wondered what a mangal could be. Pretty soon the



"Many caravans pass through Armenia."

landlord came back into the room with a large brazen vessel. It was full of red-hot charcoal.

"He set the mangal in the middle of the room. We were glad to gather around it and feel its warmth."

"I'll tell you what seemed to me the queerest sight of the whole trip," said Mr. Miller. "It was the camels moving along over snow and ice. I had always thought of those animals as travelling over the hot sands of the desert. They did not seem to belong to cold places and mountain passes."

"I will tell you of what once happened to me," said Artin's father.

"I was passing over the same road by which you came. We had reached the middle of the most dangerous pass between the seashore and our plateau. The way was almost blocked with snow and ice. Our horses were sharp-shod, but they had to pick their way with the greatest care. I did not dare to look sideways over the steep cliff for fear of growing dizzy. Then came a turn in the road. Away ahead of us we could just see a long, moving line. It came nearer and nearer.

"It was a caravan. How were we ever to pass that procession of camels? They were heavily laden, too, and their burdens were hanging down over their sides.

"There was only one thing to do. We must keep our horses' heads to the inside of the track and hug the rocky side of the mountain. Do you understand?

"The caravan was now close upon us. We plunged our horses into the snow-drift. As I did so, my hand grazed the sharp rocks. My glove was torn and the flesh of one hand laid bare and bleeding.

"If nothing worse happened, I should be thankful indeed. Suppose my horse should take fright and make a sudden dash, I should be thrown headlong over the snow-drift. Or perhaps the heavy load of one of the camels might knock against me as he passed by. Some of my bones would certainly be broken.

"I held my breath. There! one camel had passed. Then two, three, four, five! The minutes seemed like hours, but at last we were alone and safe.

"Although the rest of the pass was almost as steep as the

side of a house, we did not complain."

"Yes, I know, I know," said Mr. Brown, "but it was the grandest part of the journey, wasn't it?"

"I should say it was. When I looked up into the deep blue sky, it seemed as though heaven could not be far away. And when I turned my eyes toward the mountain peaks around us, and saw the snow sparkling like millions of diamonds upon their sides, I could not speak. It was so very, very beautiful!"

"Gentlemen, there is no land in the world like Armenia. Tell me, is it not so?"

Both of his visitors agreed with him, and Artin's father looked much pleased.

"You have not seen Mount Ararat yet," he went on. "You have a great treat in store. It reaches up toward the sky like a mighty giant.

"It is more than three miles high. The Persians call it 'Noah's Mountain,' but we speak of it as the 'Painful Mountain.'"

"We shall not leave Armenia till we have looked at it,"

the visitors promised.

But it was growing late and every one was tired. Artin showed the Americans to their room, and was soon fast asleep in his own little bed.

What do you think he saw in his dreams that night? It was himself riding on the back of a camel. And where was he going? He was climbing up the side of Mount Ararat.

And as he climbed, he saw that the sides were covered with diamonds. He tried to lean far enough over the side of the camel to reach them, but, alas! he tumbled off. Then he waked up only to find he had tumbled out of his own bed at home.

CHAPTER V

Hunting Wild Sheep

"The spring has come! The spring has come!" shouted Artin, as he came hurrying into the house.

"Mariam, I saw a flock of birds flying northward. It was such a big flock, too. And mother, the snow is beginning to melt and is running off in streams everywhere."

"I felt it in the air this morning," said the children's mother. "The weather is certainly much warmer."

She and Mariam followed Artin to the door and looked out. Yes, the snow was melting fast, and everything seemed to say: "Spring is here! Spring is here!"

The village had been very quiet for months. All winter long the women and children had stayed indoors, and had scarcely ventured outside. The cattle and sheep had been kept shut up in the big dark stables.

But now everybody was stirring. Look! there was a man driving out a long line of cows to get the fresh air. How they winked and blinked in the bright sunlight.

And listen! there was the sound of running water, as a stream, which had been frozen all winter, was beginning to rush down the hillside. Smaller streams made by the melting snow ran to join it.

"Look out for accidents to-day," said Artin's mother, as she stood watching. "Many a child has been carried off by the mountain streams at the opening of spring."

"Now, Mariam, do take care of yourself," she went on, as the little girl started off with Artin to go to a neighbour's. "Look out, my child, and do not lose your foothold. Artin, take good care of your sister."

In an hour the two children came hurrying home as fast as the bad going would let them.

"Mother! mother! What do you suppose has happened?" exclaimed Artin. "Little Sophia was carried off by the stream before her mother could reach her. She toddled out into the street when no one was looking."

"Dear me! dear me!" cried Artin's mother. "Was she drowned?"

"No, her father got her just in time. But she lost her senses, and it was a long time before she knew anything. Poor little thing, she had a narrow escape."

"Have you learned whether any wolves have been seen near the village, Artin? They are pretty daring at this time of the year. They are so hungry they will venture almost anywhere in the hope of getting food."

"Yes, I heard one man say he saw two wolves skulking behind his house. And where there are two wolves there may be a dozen."

While they were talking they heard the two American visitors come into the next room. The gentlemen had expected to stay only one night, but Mr. Brown was taken ill. He was not a strong man, and the journey had been too much for him.

Artin's father grew very fond of him and his friend. He found they knew a cousin of his who had gone to America years ago. Even when Mr. Brown was quite well again and

able to go on with his travels, the farmer said:

"You had better stay with us another week. You are fond of hunting and you can find plenty of wild sheep among our mountains. There are foxes and gray beavers, too."

The gentlemen were much pleased. They were in no hurry to leave. They had come to Armenia to see the country and were glad to have a chance to go hunting. Now the spring had opened, they were eager for an adventure.

"The gentlemen seem quite excited," said the farmer's wife. "I wonder what is the matter."

"I think I know. They are getting ready for hunting," said Artin. "They have been down in the village to find some men to go with them. You know father doesn't care for hunting."

Artin had guessed aright. Early the next morning the party of hunters started out.

"We will bring home a wild sheep for your mother to roast," Mr. Miller promised Mariam, as he patted the little girl's cheek.

The wild sheep of Armenia are very different from tame

ones. They look more like deer than sheep. They have short horns bending backward. They are very strong. They climb nimbly about in the highest and most slippery places. They are shy and are easily frightened.

"Do you really suppose we can get within shot of them?" asked Mr. Miller of his friend.

"I hardly dare to hope so, but it will be great sport and it is worth trying. The head of the animal would be a curiosity in America. I should like to take one home very much."

Their guides led the way to the top of the nearest mountain. It was rough climbing, but the place was reached at last.

"Now we must be careful," said one of the hunters in his own language. He was not an Armenian, but was a Laz. His country is just beyond Armenia.

The Americans could not understand him very well, so he made signs to them to creep along the edges of the cliff and look down over the slopes.

Mr. Brown had brought his telescope. It would help him in discovering any signs of the wild sheep.

These timid creatures jump and frisk about on the most dangerous ledges. They seem to fear nothing in the whole world but men.

The hunters crept carefully and quietly about from place to place, looking in every direction.

"Do you see anything moving below us?" whispered Mr. Miller, after a search of fifteen minutes.

"There is not the smallest sign of a living creature," replied his friend.

Just then one of the Laz hunters pointed to a cleft in the rocks far below. Yes, there were two sheep sporting together. It almost seemed as if they were having a game of hide-and-seek.

"But it is too far off. Our shot couldn't reach them," said Mr. Brown.

The guide pointed again. He showed that the ledge below where they stood jutted out and made a little shelf. It was quite a distance down to this place, but no one was afraid.

There would not be room for all of them, however. Only



Laz Hunters

two could venture at a time.

"You may go," said Mr. Miller to his friend. "I will take the next chance."

One of the Laz guides was let down by a rope. Then Mr. Brown followed him in the same way. The others leaned over the edge of the cliff and watched.

The two men who had gone down found they were still too far away from the sheep. But they discovered still another foothold below them. They swung themselves down to this with the help of the roots of a stunted tree. They were now barely within gunshot of the sheep.

Bang! bang! went the guns. But, alas! both shots missed the marks. The sheep darted out of sight like the wind and were never seen again.

There was a new trouble for the hunters now. They could not be seen by their friends above them on account of a bend in the cliff. And when they turned to climb to the next foothold, they found the roots beyond their reach.

What was to be done now? The Laz guide made signs to the American to brace himself against the side of the cliff

so he could climb up on his shoulders.

Mr. Brown understood at once. With all his might, he pressed himself against the side of the rock. He even stuck his rifle into a crevice to make himself more steady.

The guide sprang to his shoulders, caught hold of the roots, and was soon safe on the rocky shelf overhead. Then it was an easy matter for the guide to stretch a rope down to Mr. Brown and bring him up to his own foothold.

The friends who were waiting at the top of the cliff could now see and help them. In a few minutes, all were together once more.

But what of the wild sheep the Americans hoped to bring home with them? They spent the day in vain, for they did not even catch sight of any others.

Artin and Mariam were watching for them when they reached the farm at nightfall.

"We don't deserve any supper, for we haven't brought back any game," Mr. Miller said, laughingly. "Next time, Artin, we must take you with us. How would you like to be let down with ropes over the sides of the cliffs? Would you

care enough for wild sheep to do such things?"

Artin was quite sure he would be satisfied with mutton from his father's own sheep. He was not like some boys, for he did not care very much for exciting adventures.

CHAPTER VI

Queer Animals

"Look, Mariam, look! that's a lemming, I do believe."

It was a bright spring morning and Artin and his sister were playing on the hillside.

"Sh, sh! I don't want it to see us. It might spring up and snap at our hands," whispered Mariam.

"Nonsense, it will let us alone, if we do not worry it. See! it is sitting up on its hind legs now and is wiping its eyes with its fore paws. Don't move or it will see us and run back into its hole."

"There is another coming out to join the first one. They like to feel the warm sunshine after the quiet of a long, cold winter. I don't blame them, Artin, do you?"

"No, indeed. They are cross little things, though, if you annoy them. I surprised a family of them last spring.

"The dogs were with me and they set upon the lemmings. Would you believe it! One of the little creatures did not try to run. He sat up in the path and bit the nose of one of the dogs that tried to seize him. It was a hard bite, I tell you, and the dog didn't enjoy it. He turned tail and ran off as fast as his legs would carry him."

"Father told me a little about their queer ways," said Mariam.

By this time the lemmings had discovered the children and run back into their hole.

"What was it?" asked Artin.

"He said that the lemmings sometimes take long journeys. A large number of them go together on their travels."

"What makes them take the journey?"

"It is probably because their food grows scarce. At any rate, when they once start out they travel in a straight line. They don't even turn aside when they reach a lake or river, but swim across it."

"Is that so? Some of them must get killed on the way, for

a good-sized fish could easily kill a lemming."

"Yes, that is what father said. Oh, but I forgot. He told me that they do turn aside for a solid rock or a stone wall, for, of course, they could not make their way through that."

"We must be on the lookout now for the cara guz and jerboas," said Artin. "They keep quiet all winter, but they begin to get lively as the days grow warmer."

"I think the cara guz is a cunning little thing. Do you remember bringing one home last year, Artin? It was so fat it could scarcely walk. It didn't seem a bit afraid of us. And how it did like almonds and raisins! It would not eat anything else so long as we fed it with those."

"It's ever so much more fun watching jerboas," answered Artin. "They are so lively and they get over the ground so fast.

"At first you would think a jerboa had only two legs. The front ones are very short, and, besides, while the little fellow is making his long leaps, he holds them close against his breast."

"I don't see how he can leap with his hind legs alone,"

said Mariam, thoughtfully.

"His tail helps him, I suppose. It is very long, and he holds it out straight behind him.

"I learned at school about the kangaroos that live in Australia. They are ever so much larger than jerboas, but their fore legs are very short, and they move with long leaps just like them. I think they must belong to the same family of animals."

"Yes, I suppose so. There is another queer thing about a jerboa that I don't believe you know, Mariam. It gets its meals in the nighttime, although it comes outdoors to bask in the sunlight in the daytime."

"It is very strong, I know that. It sometimes makes a hole through a thin layer of rock with its sharp claws and teeth. But come, Artin, I'm tired of talking about animals. Let us go home and ask grandma to tell us a story."

When they got back, they found grandma was busy helping their mother with the housework. But great-grandma sat knitting by the fireplace. She looked up with a smile as the children bounded into the room, and said:

"Well, little ones, what now?"

"Please tell us a story. We will be very quiet," answered Artin.

"Dear me! dear me! As though I could spin stories at any time out of the material in my poor head."

"But you always can. I never knew you to fail," said Mariam, putting her arms around the old lady's neck.

"Well, let me see. I can't think of anything just now, except the story of the first Christian king in the world."

"We've heard it before, but we would like it again," said Artin.

"Very well, then. We must go back to the life of the Lord Jesus and of his wonderful works among men — of his healing the leper, restoring sight to the blind, of his making the limbs of cripples straight and strong.

"His fame spread through all the country round, and when King Abgar sent envoys into the Roman Empire, they brought back word of Jesus and his works.

"King Abgar was a heathen at that time. He was suffering from a dreadful disease. There did not seem to be

any hope of his getting well. When his messengers returned to Armenia with the news of Jesus' power, he was greatly interested.

"There are legends in some of our books that Abgar wrote a letter to Jesus begging the Saviour to come to Armenia and lay his hands upon him. The legend goes on to say that Jesus directed one of his disciples to write Abgar an answer saying it was impossible for him to come.

"Then the messenger asked Jesus to allow an artist whom he had brought to paint his picture. But when the artist tried to copy the Master's beautiful face, his hand failed him. He could do nothing.

"The Master saw this. He took a towel and pressed it against his face. Then he handed it to the messenger. Lo, and behold! the likeness of Jesus' face was printed on the towel.

"It was carried to Abgar, and as he looked upon it his sickness left him.

"Of course, this is only a legend, children. We cannot say it is a true story. But our history does tell us that Jesus'

apostles visited Armenia after their Lord's death. Abgar believed in them, and so did many of his people, who gave up their heathen belief and became Christians."

"Why aren't there kings in Armenia any more?" asked Mariam.

"It is more than five hundred years, my child, since the last of our kings ruled over us. He was Levon VI, and his queen's name was Catherine. Armenia was overrun by fierce enemies. They came from Egypt, and had the same belief as the Turks who now rule over us. They were Mohammedans.

"They came in such numbers that our people could do nothing. They burned the villages and cities. They killed men, women, and children. They spared no person or thing. They made a desert of the country.

"They made prisoners of the king and his family. They carried them to Egypt. After awhile, the ruler of Spain took pity on them. He offered valuable presents to their conquerors to free them. He was successful.

"After that, Levon visited Jerusalem and different

countries of Europe. He died in Paris, and was buried with great honour. His body was clothed in royal robes of white. An open crown was laid upon his head, and a golden sceptre was placed in his hand. He was the last king of Armenia."

The old lady spoke the last words slowly and sadly. But in a moment more she smiled at the children, saying:

"We must take what comes to us with patient hearts, my dears. The Lord's will must be done. I am tired of talking, though. Run out into the sunshine and play. Watch the birds that have begun to come among us after the long winter, and see if you can find me some pretty wild flowers."

She bent down and kissed the children, and they left her alone with her knitting.

CHAPTER VII

Sights in the Great City

"Yes, you may go," Artin's father promised. "I shall be away several days, for I have a good deal of business in the city. But you have been a good boy, and you ought to have a little pleasure. So you may ask your mother to get you ready."

The next morning the bullocks were hitched to a clumsy cart with two wheels, and Artin and his father started for the city.

The little boy was dressed in much the same way as his father. He wore baggy trousers and a long, loose jacket. It was made of wadded cotton, and was quite thick. The sides were split up, making a sort of apron both in front and behind. He wore slippers on his feet, and a close-fitting cap on his head.

"He is the very picture of his father," the neighbours all said. "He is a bright boy, too, and will do well in business when he grows up."

"Good-bye, good-bye," called Mariam, as Artin waved his hand to her, and the bullocks trotted off down the rough road.

The heavy cart was seldom used, except in going about the village, so it was quite a change for the bullocks as well as for the farmer's little son.

As they drove along, the father told Artin about the different parts of the country which the boy had never seen. He told him of the rich vineyards where luscious grapes were raised. He described the gardens where melons grew to be very large.

"Why, Artin, I have seen a camel whose load was made up of only two watermelons. One family could not use the whole of such a melon as those.

"Then there are parts of our country where the silkworm feeds on the mulberry leaves, and makes its wonderful cocoon.

"We raise the best of wheat and corn, and besides all these things we have cotton and tobacco growing in plenty, without stepping beyond our borders."

"We could have everything we wish to eat and wear without asking for anything from any other country, couldn't we?" said Artin.

"Yes, indeed. But the Turkish rule is a hard one, and our people are so unhappy they do not take as much interest in their gardens as they once did."

"Papa, when you have been travelling weren't you ever afraid of brigands? I have heard the people in the village tell stories about brigands taking travellers by surprise. They robbed and killed them."

"I never had any such adventures myself, Artin. But, I must say, our mountain passes are not safe from those wicked men.

"Most of them are Kurds or Lazis. When they have nothing else to do, they leave their own homes and cross over into the borders of Armenia. They seek the lonely spots in the mountain passes and lie in wait for travellers.

They rob them, torture them, and sometimes even kill them, as I have already said."

"But the Sultan's soldiers are all through our country. Why don't they drive out the brigands?"

"The Sultan doesn't care what they do, Artin. Besides, he is probably glad if he hears of the brigands killing any Armenians. The Sultan is a bad, bad man. When I was a little boy like you he had a war with Russia.

"Before it began the Sultan called a meeting of his leading men. He asked them what they thought about such a war. They knew he wished it, so no one dared to speak against it, except one brave, wise man.

"He told the ruler this story:

"'Once upon a time there was a miser. The king was displeased with him, and gave him the choice of three things. He must eat five pounds of raw onions at one meal; and he must eat nothing else with them. Or, he must have five hundred lashes of the whip on his bare back. Or, he must pay the king five hundred dollars.

"'The miser thought it all over. He could not bear to

give up so much money. Neither did he believe he could live through such a terrible flogging. So he said, "I will eat the onions."

"'But after he had eaten a part of them, he became so sick he was not able to swallow any more. Then he made up his mind to take the whipping.

"'When he had taken about a hundred of the lashes, he began to see that the whole of them would kill him. He was forced, at last, to pay the money. So the greedy miser, who had a choice of three evils in the beginning, ended by taking all three of them.'

"Now, my son, what do you suppose the wise man's story meant? It was this:

"If the Sultan went to war with Russia, he would lose many soldiers to begin with. In the next place, he would be sure to lose a part of his empire. He would end by having to pay large sums of money to his conqueror.

"He was very angry with the wise man who had told him this story. He did not take his advice, but began the war. And it all turned out as the honest man had said.

"Did you ever hear what the people in other countries call the Sultan, Artin?" his father went on. "They speak of him as the 'Sick Man of Europe.'"

Artin and his father had now been several hours on the way and they had almost reached the city gates.

"See those children," said Artin, pointing ahead.

A mule was moving at a slow pace over the road. It was no wonder, for he had a heavy load. A woman was sitting on his back and two little children were hanging in baskets fastened on either side of the saddle.

"The road is so rough that the children cannot be comfortable," said Artin's father.

Just then the mule floundered in the mud. The baskets were jostled so roughly that one of the children tumbled out and fell head-foremost into the mud.

Artin jumped from the cart and, running ahead, picked up the screaming child. Its poor little face was black with dirt. Its hair was plastered with mud.

The mother thanked him, and, after tucking the little one into its basket, went on her journey. She was a pretty

woman, with large black eyes and rosy cheeks. But her face was almost hidden by the veil which Armenian women wear when they are outdoors.

Her bright red cloak, reaching almost to her ankles, was wrapped closely around her body. Her large baggy trousers could hardly be seen. She was dressed in the same manner as Artin's mother and all the other women he knew.

His people do not change their fashions from year to year, like their American cousins. They resemble many other Eastern people in their clothing. The style of their grandmothers and great-grandmothers is good enough for them.

By this time, the farmer and his son were entering the city.

Erzeroum was at one time a fortress, and even now it is surrounded by walls. There were numbers of people moving along the streets. They belonged to different races, for many of them had come here from Persia, Turkey, and other countries, to live among the Armenians.

Most of them were dressed very gaily, and Artin was

kept busy admiring the bright scarlet robes, the jackets embroidered with gold, and the robes of brilliant green and white.

A procession of camels with their drivers came along with slow and swaying tread. The beasts seemed very patient under their heavy burdens.

"Did you ever ride on a camel, father?" asked Artin.

"When I was a little boy about your age, Artin, I tried it. I shall never forget how sick I was after five minutes on the creature's back. Of course, you have noticed how the camel walks. He first throws forward both legs on one side of his body, then those on the other side. This makes a swinging, sideways motion which at first is unpleasant.

"The second time I tried to ride one, I did not mind it as much as at first."

"You had to be careful when you took your seat on its back. I know that," said Artin. "I have often watched camels get up from the ground. They raise their hind legs first, and they do it in such a sudden, jerky way that the rider will be thrown off unless he is used to it and on the



In Erzeroum

lookout."

"Artin, I wish you to look at that beautiful church ahead of us. Our people are very proud of it. Do you see the fine stone slabs on the roof and around the doorways?

"Cut stone is very expensive, and there are few good masons who prepare it. So it happened that our priests thought of a new way to get it. They said to the people, 'The tombstones of your dead friends do them no good. But they would be of great help in building the church. It would be a fine thing if each one of you should give us one of those tombstones.'

"The people were delighted with the idea. Many of them brought the stones on their own backs."

"It is a beautiful church," said Artin. "I think it is the finest thing I have seen in the city. I hate the sight of those Turkish mosques. I suppose the Turks think all those little towers and spires are very pretty, but I don't like them."

"There is a street writer," said the father. He pointed to a man sitting on a carpet in the shade of a house. His legs were crossed under him. He was writing a letter for a

Turkish woman who stood beside him.

"I like to watch him," said Artin. "He keeps the paper flat on the palm of his hand and writes with that pointed stick. I am glad I know how to do my own letter-writing, though."

"Yes, Artin. Our people think more of learning than the lazy Turks. I do not wish you to be ignorant when you grow up. You must study your lessons well and be faithful to them."

"I should like to be a trader when I grow up," said Artin, as he looked curiously at the storekeepers sitting by their goods.

The stores were quite different from those in America. Many of them had no fronts at all. Can you imagine the lower story of a house with no wall facing the street? Then you can picture the store where Artin and his father stopped to trade.

The shopkeeper sat on a mat with his goods all around him. If the day had been stormy he would have been wrapped up in a blanket. But the sun was shining brightly,

and the weather was warm. He was quite comfortable without any extra covering.

He was slowly sipping a cup of tea. He acted for all the world as though he had nothing to do but enjoy himself.

As Artin's father got out of the cart and came up to him, the storekeeper scarcely lifted his eyes. He did not seem to care whether he sold his goods or not.

"Another of those lazy Turks," whispered the father to his son. Then he stepped up to the trader and asked to see his wares.

The Armenian did not act hurried or anxious. Oh, no, that would not have done at all. It would have made the Turk charge too great a price for the goods. As it was, the man asked far more than the things were worth. Yes, twice as much.

Artin's father curled up his lip and turned to go. At the same time he said, "I will pay you half the sum. But I don't care very much for the cloth, anyway."

He left the store, and Artin followed close behind. When they were about to step into the cart, the trader

called out:

"Well, well, it is too little. It is too little. It will ruin me to sell my goods so cheap. But you may have the cloth at your own price."

The farmer went back and made his purchase. When they were once more on their way down the street, he said:

"That is the only way to trade, Artin. If the storekeepers think you don't care, they will sell their goods at fair prices. But if you are eager, they will make you pay too much. Yes, yes, too much altogether."

"Look, father! Isn't that a beautiful bracelet?" Artin pointed to a different-looking store from the one where they had bought the cloth. The front was closed up, and the tiny windows were covered with oiled paper.

One of the windows, however, was open, and Artin could just see a hand holding up a delicate silver bracelet in the opening. The storekeeper inside hoped to tempt the passers-by.

"I would like to take that home to mother," said Artin. "How finely it is worked."

"Not to-day, my son. We must be saving of our money. No one knows what may happen. Cruel things are being done in our country. We may yet be forced to leave it and join our friends in America. It is not the time to buy bracelets."

After he had bought whatever he needed, the farmer drove on till he came to an inn. Artin called the building a khan.

"We will put up the oxen and spend the night here," the boy's father told him. "I wish to see some of my friends in the city."

Just as they were entering the inn, they heard a strange noise a little way down the road.

"It is a caravan and it is coming in this direction," said Artin. "Camels cry in such a strange way it always startles me."

"The poor creatures are tired and thirsty. They have caught sight of a drinking-trough and are longing for water," answered his father.

The camels drew near with their driver. He was a

Persian. He was very dirty and his clothes were in rags.

As the caravan drew up in front of the khan, the driver turned and said something to the camels. They went down on their knees with a grunt. Then down came their hind legs. They had been trained to obey their master's voice instantly, and, although he spoke few words to them, they seemed to understand exactly what he wished them to do.

"They have come all the way from Bagdad," the innkeeper told Artin. "And they are going to carry their loads to the seacoast on the north. Then their burdens will be lifted from their backs and placed on board the ships that sail across the sea to Europe."

"Poor camels! They look old and tired. Their lives are hard. How wise they seem!" said the little boy, as he threw himself down on a couch and was soon fast asleep.

And what was Artin's father doing all this evening? He was going from place to place among his friends and trying to find some one who would buy his farm.

Can you guess the reason?

Ever since the visit of the Americans, the farmer and his

wife had been talking together about a new home across the ocean.

Sad things were happening in Armenia. Many men and women lost their lives through no fault of their own. And the Turkish ruler had power to do with the people as he pleased.

It was hard, very hard, indeed. Yet the more the farmer thought about it, the wiser it seemed to take his family to America.

"Artin and Mariam are so young they will not be homesick. But it will not be easy for my good wife," thought the farmer. "As for my mother and my dear old grandmother, I do not know what to do. I fear the change would kill them."

When he spoke to them about it, both of the old women said, "No, no, we cannot leave our country. No matter what comes, we will stay in Armenia. But you must go and take your wife and children. America is great and good. You will all be happy there."

Artin had an uncle who lived in Erzeroum, and it was settled that the old women should now make their home

with him.

All this time the children knew nothing of the new plans.

But when the business was done and the farmer started home with his little boy, he told him that the farm was sold and that he would soon leave beautiful Armenia and sail far away on a great steamer.

"It is a secret," said his father. "You must not speak of it to any one. We must get away as quietly as possible, or our rulers may prevent it."

Artin was both glad and sorry. It would be great fun to sail on the ocean which he had never yet even seen. There would be many new things in the strange country of America.

When Mariam heard the news she went up on the housetop with her brother, and both children began to cry.

"Our pretty sheep!" said the little girl. "We must say good-bye to them all!"

"And the dogs and cats," said Artin. "Father says we must leave them behind."

"But we will make new friends in that beautiful America, and I hope mother will stop looking sad and frightened there," said Mariam, drying her tears.

THE END.

Our Little Bohemian Cousin

By Clara Vostrovsky Winlow



Barbora, the Little Goose Girl

A Letter from the Author

Dear Children — If you look carefully at the map you will find Bohemia, the country in which Barbora lives, in the very centre of Europe. It is now a state of the Empire of Austria-Hungary, but was once an important kingdom in whose dramatic history its inhabitants take great pride. This little country, only the size of our states of New Hampshire and Vermont combined, is surrounded by high chains of mountains which separate it from its German neighbors. Only where it joins the Slav state of Moravia, whose history has almost always been united with its own, are there no such barriers.

Bohemians, or Čechs as they are properly called, are one of the divisions of the great Slavic race, while the Germans, as you know, belong to the Teutonic. To understand the history of Bohemia it is necessary to keep this in mind, for it is one of brave struggles, not only against religious

oppression, but also against absorption by the more powerful Germans.

In this history certain characters stand out of an alluring charm. There is the warrior, King John, representing the pattern of the chivalry of the Middle Ages, who spent most of his time, like King Richard the Lion-hearted of England, in crusades and adventures away from home, and, when already blind, met death at Crécy, bravely fighting for his friend, the King of France. When the French were retreating, and he was urged to save himself, he uttered words that afterwards became a Bohemian proverb: "So will it God, it shall not be that a king of Bohemia flies from the battle-field." When King Edward of England, against whom he fought, heard of his death, tears, we are told, sprang to his eyes and he exclaimed, "The crown of chivalry has fallen to-day; never was any one equal to this King of Bohemia."

There are many other heroes — and heroines too — some legendary and some real, as full of interest as any to be found elsewhere in the whole broad fields of history or romance.

King John's son was the Emperor Charles IV, called lovingly by the Bohemians "the father of his people." He founded the University of Prague (Praha), the first institution of higher learning in Central Europe, and made Bohemia one of the foremost countries of his time.

Then, too, we have the moral and religious reformer, Master John Huss, whose life was one of unusual beauty and high endeavor, and who, rather than swear falsely to what He did not believe, met death unflinchingly when, through the efforts of those whose evil lives he had exposed, he was burned at the stake. His death was the direct cause of the long and bloody Hussite Wars in which John Žižka, inflamed by the treachery through which Huss met death, became the leader of his indignant countrymen, and, through his genius and brilliant generalship, kept all of surprised Europe at bay.

This Hussite War was followed by the Thirty Years' War, during which, in the Battle of the White Mountain, Bohemia lost its political independence.

The country of Bohemia is one of natural beauty, with

plenty of mountains, rivers, forests, and wide, highly cultivated plains of unusual fertility. Wherever there are mountains, castles are still to be seen, many of them partly built out of the rock on which they stand, emblems of a strange past glory. There, too, are beautiful churches, ancient monasteries, and old-time fortified cities that carry one back to an age long gone by.

In appearance the people are not unlike many other European types; they are both tall and short, but with an average of more short people than has the Anglo-Saxon race; and both dark and fair, but seldom as fair as most of their German neighbors. In character they are independent, hard-headed, industrious and thrifty, with a great love for music, and considerable artistic talent.

While the hope of playing a more important part in the governing of their own country is by no means dead, they now believe that the best way to attain this is not through force of arms, but through the spread of education and industrial activity.

-Clara Vostrovsky Winlow.

CHAPTER I

Spring

It was the first warm day of spring; the grass was just getting green, and all the little goose-girls and goose-boys of the Bohemian village were out with their flocks. They had been talking of nothing else, and looking forward to nothing else, for a month past. Many of them appeared on the road at the same time, but it was necessary for each one to keep some distance away from his companions, since mama geese are apt to peck all goslings who do not belong to them.

How proud each child felt! Barbora, little Jirka and Vlasta took their stand on different sides of the biggest pond — there is always at least one pond in a Bohemian village — and they eagerly discussed the merits of their respective goslings.

Vlasta's were the smallest, but she claimed that they were the youngest and that they would weigh the most by the time that the holidays came. The discussion grew quite heated.

"Why," said Jirka, at last, pointing to one of Vlasta's flock, and making use of a popular saying, "that one there is not worth a pinch of tobacco!"

Vlasta was indignant; she retaliated with an expression often used by her father: "You know as much about geese," she shouted, "as a goat does about parsley!"

Jirka could think of nothing worse to say, and was consequently silenced.

Barbora had not interfered; she was too much interested in watching the fluffy yellow goslings. She made a pretty picture as she stood by the pond with a far-away look in her pleasing, intelligent face, which was encircled by a mass of light golden hair.

Dark-haired Vlasta was of a different type; she was only eight, a year younger than Barbora, and mischief and good nature beamed from her face. The difference in their

dispositions drew the two girls together, for, while Barbora liked to dream, Vlasta was always brimming over with lively spirits and practical good sense.

All the children were barefoot, with kerchiefs tied around their heads, and all held switches in their hands.

Poor little Marketa, who lived in a hut (chalupa) on the outskirts of the village, looked on her schoolmates with envy. If there was one thing which would have made her happier than anything else in the world it would have been to be a goose-girl. Sometimes the rich miller's wife let her tend their geese when her son was in town, but this did not happen often, and, besides, it was different from having a flock of her own. Often, very often, she begged her father and mother to buy just one goose, but they shook their heads, claiming it was too great a luxury.

After this first great day, the children were out daily with their flocks. It was not always easy work. Sometimes the geese ran away, sometimes they bit one another, sometimes they even got mixed up. Sometimes, when it rained, the goose-tenders had to run out to gather nettles to make

into a mash for them, sometimes they had to hunt for grass in the night. Then, when the young grain and vegetables began to appear in the fields, the geese had a perverse fancy for going into the wrong patch, which occasionally resulted in the offending goose being caught by the angry owner, and kept to pay for the damage done, and this resulted in scolding and whipping at home.

But, despite these drawbacks, it was a delightful life. As the geese grew bigger and the weather warmer, the children often had a chance to wade in the ponds, or to carefully throw in stones to see who could make the most water circles, "froggies" they called them. Sometimes, too, they would dreamily stand and sing to their geese, generally quaint old folk songs, but also impromptu verses of their own.

The houses of the village were built adjoining one another in irregular streets surrounding the church. Many of them were adorned with images of saints or pictures of the Virgin Mary. All were much alike, with thatched roofs which overhung; and most of them were old and had seen

many generations of children. In front and behind each of their double windows, pots of flowers were to be found, the affection with which they were regarded being shown by their luxuriant growth, which often, unfortunately, shut out much of the needed light. In most cases the entrance into the house was through a big stone gate which led into a covered court. In both sides were rooms, and there were also rooms under the rafters upstairs. Immediately adjoining the living-rooms were the storehouses and the stalls for the cattle and poultry. Back of each house, away from the road, was a small garden, with fruit trees; a few vegetables, among which chives and parsley for soup, and dill and horseradish for sauce, were seldom wanting; and flowers for a sweet smelling posy, balsam, rosemary, sage, sweet marjoram, mignonette, geraniums, asters, violets, and pinks.

Barbora and Vlasta were neighbors living near the church, and both little maidens took a great interest in Jirka, who was Barbora's cousin, and only six. They were his instructors in all the folk-lore and folk wisdom that they

knew, "Why, Jirka, you've lost the goose feather out of your cap," said Vlasta to the little fellow one day. "You'd better go back and look for it, or you'll never be a good manager."

So Jirka drove his flock back on the road until the precious feather was found and placed behind the band of his green cap. It was the very one he had lost; stray goose feathers were not often to be found, for the girls religiously gathered up every one seen as a sign of future good housekeeping.

Once, when Barbora was quite little, she had rebelled at the custom. "What difference does a single feather make?" she remarked to her mother.

"Don't you know," was her mother's reprimand, "that the biggest feather-bed is made up of single feathers; that one grain and then another satisfies the chicken's hunger; that the ocean is made up of drops of water? Learn to save little things, my daughter," she added seriously, "and you will never know want."

If Marketa could not take geese to pasture she had plenty of other work to do. There was the house to put in

order, the dishes to wash and wipe, and a little two-year-old brother to care for while her mother and father were away working in the fields. Marketa had an older brother, too, twelve-year-old Václav, who had to take their two goats out to pasture. Marketa did not envy him. To tend geese is an easy matter compared to herding goats, for the latter are of such an independent turn of mind that they do not allow one a minute's rest, and, besides, all the cowherds make fun of a goatherd and sing derisive songs about him. The villagers call goats the Devil's children, and they seem to deserve the name.

Václav generally took his goats some distance away to a little meadow just below a narrow cliff, surrounded by deep ravines, on which stood the ruins of an ancient castle. This castle probably once belonged to some robber knight, and was built so that it seemed a part of the rock itself. The bare walls, stretching up to the sky, were accessible only from the back, so that the place must have been practically impregnable.

One day, Václav drove his goats up the steep pathway

to the top, and, sitting down for a moment's rest on a piece of broken column, gazed at the grass-overgrown ruins. There was an arched passageway, still standing, which led into a courtyard; above the vaulted gate could yet be seen an ancient coat-of-arms and several letters, almost undecipherable, which no doubt gave the name of the noble family who built this stronghold. At one corner was a round watch-tower with very thick walls. Despite its crumbled condition, it still boasted three stories.

Václav recalled the tales told by his teacher of that golden age of Bohemian history to which this castle belonged, when King Charles I, known also as Emperor Charles IV of Germany, reigned. He would have enjoyed climbing up the winding tower stairs and wandering through the underground dungeons to hunt for the treasures supposed to be buried there. The year before, on the eve of St. John, he had searched for the golden blossoms, supposed to be then, and then only, found on ferns, in the firm conviction that if he picked three of them, took them to the old castle and pressed them three times

against the tower walls, the walls would open and the hidden treasure would be revealed.

"But don't speak," Marketa cautioned him, for he had taken her into his confidence, "or the rock spirits will rush out and kill you."

He escaped that danger, for the golden blossoms could not be found, which fact made him ever since pooh-pooh the superstition. To-day, there was no time for meditating on this, for the goats were already halfway down the path and he had to hasten after them.

Sunday was always a quiet day in the village. No one worked, and all appeared in their Sunday clothes. Jirka, and even Václav, had to put on stockings and heavy clumsy shoes which tired their poor feet, unaccustomed to such luxuries. Everybody went to the old church, popularly supposed to date back to pagan times, and there were still quite a number of women who appeared in the national costume, which here consisted of a pleated skirt, generally pink in color and very full over numerous petticoats, reaching only to the knees, thus showing below the thick,

brightly colored stockings, often red and green. Low shoes were worn and also a fancy apron, sometimes of flowered satin, and sometimes of richly embroidered snowy linen with two highly starched apron strings hanging down the back. One or two had white chemisettes with big puffed sleeves and long, colored kerchiefs crossed in front, around the neck, but this was by no means general, for considerable variety in the style of the waists had somehow crept in. The men had long ago discarded the national costume and appeared in modern dress.

For the children the great event of each Sunday was the dinner, which usually consisted of soup, soup meat and dill gravy, and skubanky (potato pudding) or wheat flour dumplings, made light by beating alone. The children sang a song about:

"Peas and barley,
That is stupid
And we have it every day,
But dumplings
Of snow white flour

Only come on Sabbath day."

Before the family began to eat, the mistress, or whoever served the meal, never forgot to wish those present "A good appetite." Not to do this would be not only discourteous, but might, they believed, result in a spoiled stomach!

On Easter Sunday, Marketa's father and mother being at home, she was able to join some of the other girls for a walk. This Sunday the weather was delightful and they felt sure that they would find many wild flowers as they went singing and dancing along.

"Here's a seven beauty!" cried Marketa, picking a daisy.

"And here's another!" cried Jirka, who was with them. "Let's make a wreath."

So they sat down under a big linden tree, which is the beautiful national tree of Bohemia, and made a long daisy chain with which they afterwards decorated the image of the Virgin Mary at the cross roads. Then they gathered more flowers, for which they had all kinds of quaint names.

As they were crossing a brook, little Jirka fell down and bruised his knee.



Ready for Church

"Never mind, little Jirka," said Barbora, soothingly, "we will find a May bug and he will cure you."

Then all started on a hunt for a May bug. Marketa knew just where to look, and led her companions to the meadow where they found him under a stone and applied some of the bitter matter, which he ejects from the knuckles of his foot, to the wound. It must have had some strange power, or else Jirka forgot all about his bruise, for he did not mention it again!

Then they hunted for other little creatures. They found the black musician, *tesařík* — which means carpenter's apprentice — in an old log and promised him that if he would sing to them they would sing to him.

Suddenly Barbora called out joyously, "Oh, here, here is God's little sheep," and she pointed to a ladybird, who is very, very dear to Bohemian children. They all ran quickly up and gazed at the pretty beetle, and then began to call it by all the numerous pet names they have for it: coronet, sunlight, God's little cow, God's little sheep, and many others.

Then Barbora held it in her hand and asked, "Where, oh, where shall we go, God's sheep?" They watched to see where the ladybird flew, and then followed it as best they could. "If you are ever lost, Jirka," Barbora said to her cousin, "hunt for a ladybird and ask it to show you the way home."

For several days before this Sunday the children had helped to prepare the Easter eggs, which were boiled in onion water, or coffee, and then had designs scratched on them with a sharp knife or needle. Some of these were really artistic and beautiful.

Marketa and her baby brother joined the poorer children who went from door to door singing, "If you have no red eggs, give at least some white ones." All returned home with baskets well filled.

The young men in the meanwhile made switches of braided willow, with which they visited their sweethearts, whom they playfully whipped until they were induced to stop by being presented with beautifully embroidered handkerchiefs filled with brightly colored eggs.

Shortly after Easter, everybody began to get ready for May Day. For a week before it came, all careful housewives had to keep a close eye on their brooms or they would mysteriously disappear, every boy of the village considering it both a privilege and a duty to gather as many as he could to keep the witches from riding away on them. On May Day Eve the brooms were brought together on an adjoining hill, dipped into tar or rosin, lit, and then thrown into the air with a shout loud enough to frighten away any one.

Once Jirka was threatened — or so his comrades thought — with great danger, for he accidentally pointed his finger at a burning broom. "Put it down, down," shouted his friends excitedly. "Don't you know that the witches can shoot it off?"

The older boys, it is true, laughed as they said this, but the younger were quite serious, and one little fellow in his excitement fell over Jirka and they rolled down the hill together.

Before this great day, too, there was a general house-cleaning. The men cleaned the stalls and granaries, the

women the chicken coops, and cellars, and the house.

As the latter swept out the dust they repeated:

"From corner to corner,
From corner to corner,
From corner to corner,
And out from the chimney!"

At these last words, piling the dust carefully on the fire with as much reverence as if they were offering a sacrifice on an altar.

In the meantime, the older daughters tidied up the courtyards, sweeping into a neat pile the inevitable manure, which is highly valued for the sake of the richer yield it brings to the fields and meadows. "Manure in the yard, gold in the field," is a popular saying.

When all was clean and orderly, Barbora's grandfather, a tall, smooth-faced smiling man with a long porcelain pipe always in his mouth, went to the woods himself to cut a branch of the birch tree and then planted it in the manure before the cow sheds, so that the witches, who are said to

come around on the first of May, could not bewitch the cows and spoil their good milk. But, before he did this, he took the precaution to count all the leaves on the branch which he planted. Then, to still further protect himself from their ill offices, he made circles on the doors with consecrated chalk.

Barbora's father laughed heartily over these ceremonies, but Barbora, herself, who watched her grandfather attentively as she followed him about, was much impressed with it all. To her the witches were very real and she would not have been at all surprised to have seen one any moment come riding along in a tall peaked cap.

On May first the village had quite a holiday air. The young men had gone to the woods in the night, each to select a fine May tree, which he planted before the window of his sweetheart. As a sign of the high regard in which he held her, he selected only one that was straight and strong, with a well-rounded crown, to which he attached garlands of bright red ribbon.

Besides these trees, almost every window was decorated

with a green branch, and the children, dressed in their Sunday finery, were on the streets with birch branches, with which they tapped each other on the back, repeating: "Here's good luck to you!"

A band of hired musicians played on the streets to the great joy of all who heard them, and, here and there, groups of the young people burst into song and even started a dance or two.

CHAPTER II

Summer

It was wash-day and women were gathered around the village ponds, with their skirts tucked up, finishing the weekly wash. Some, who were very particular, however, took their clothes to a pond, a half hour's distance away, where the grass was greener and the clothes would bleach to a purer white. Among these were Vlasta's and Barbora's mothers.

The two little girls accompanied their parents with their flocks of geese, and enjoyed the novelty of new quarters. When they returned home, they found a wire-worker *(dráteník)*, from Slovak land, with a bundle of wire on his arm and a string of wire mouse traps over one shoulder, going along the street. Barbora's mother called to him, and had him wire some of her pots and kettles, which he did

with great ingenuity, so that they were stronger than when new.

The weather was now quite warm, and in the evenings the family would come together under the linden tree in the courtyard and listen to the father playing on the violin.

The Bohemians (Čechs) are natural musicians. Hans Andersen says that they can produce melodies on one string alone.

Sometimes, too, the family joined in singing the pleasing folk songs, or the beautiful national hymn "Where is my Home?"

"Where is my home?
Where is my home?
Waters through its meads are streaming,
Mounts with rustling woods are teeming,
Vales are bright with flow'rets rare,
Oh, Earth's Eden, thou art fair!
Thou art my home, my fatherland!
Thou art my home, my fatherland!

"Where is my home?
Where is my home?
By the towers of God 'tis bounded;
By the noblest sons surrounded;
True and light of heart are they,
Firm and bold in deadly fray,
Offspring grand of dear Bohemia,
Thou art my home, my fatherland,
Thou art my home, my fatherland."

If Vlasta or Jirka came over to see Barbora, the children would amuse themselves with little games of their own. Now and then they would repeat, "Tři a třicet stříbrných křepelek letélo přes tři a třicet střibrných střech" (three and thirty silvery quail flew over three and thirty silvery roofs). This is a difficult sentence to say in the original, like our "She sells sea shells; if she sells sea shells, where are the sea shells which he sells?" And how they did laugh at those who failed in this by no means easy ordeal. Often they added to the difficulty by insisting that it should all be repeated in one breath.

Václav now found the work of herding the goats a still harder task. He generally tried to take them to the edge of the woods, where he could get a bit of shade. There were big forests on the hills back of the village, mostly of silver fir and other evergreen trees, and there were rare treasures to be found in them.

Marketa used to trundle her little brother out, in a rude home-made cart, to gather berries, of which there was a great abundance, or mushrooms, which add an important article of diet to the plain food of the village folks. There were many kinds and she could tell the wholesome from the poisonous at a glance. In gathering mushrooms she never picked the first that she found, leaving that one for "luck." And she insisted that there was no use hunting for them when it was new moon, that they didn't grow. She tried to teach her baby brother, who could talk very little yet, to beg, "Oh, mushrooms, little mushrooms, come jump into my lap," claiming they like to be addressed in that fashion. Often, too, instead of berries and mushrooms she gathered twigs and branches, an immense bundle of which she

managed to carry home on her back.

Occasionally Marketa saw Václav from a distance and shouted a greeting to him. Václav was always necessarily alone, but he, too, managed to find amusement. For instance, when lunch time arrived, he had a game which he played with himself. Holding a piece of bread in his hand, he would repeat: "Adam, Eve, who is there? Jacob, Esau, Abraham," and at the syllable *ham* he would quickly take a bite, repeating this until the food was gone. But Václav was only twelve, and would have preferred hunting berries and mushrooms with his sister; or lying under the trees and listening to the short song of the blackbird, or to the jay, screaming like an angry, cross old granny; or watching the yellow thrush, as it flew over the young forest and planted acorns so as to have a store for winter. There were other thrushes in the forest, also, who imitated all the songs of the other birds and sometimes at night one could hear the inimitable song of the nightingale.

One day, Marketa found a bird's nest at the edge of the woods, and every day she visited it and looked at the

speckled eggs, but carefully, without touching them, so as not to disturb the mother bird. She confided her secret to no one but Václav, and great was her pleasure one day when, instead of eggs, she saw a nestful of little birdies, all head and throat.

There was much hard work to be done in the summer, and whole families were daily in the fields, leaving the grandmothers and grandfathers, if there were any, to carry on the housekeeping. But the people did not seem to mind the hard work; there were songs and jokes, especially among the unmarried. The white shirts of those cutting the grain, the glitter of the sickles and scythes, the wide rakes with which the women, with free graceful movements, raked over the grain to dry it, made a pretty sight. When the time came, the older children, also, helped to tie the grain into sheaves, and the smaller ones carried around water to the workers and brought dinner to those whose fields were too far away for them to go home. For the children it was a merry time, and they were not backward in joining in the shouting and laughter. Barbora and Vlasta

helped in the meadows and proved the strength of their young shoulders by carrying home on them immense sacks of freshly cut grass.

On the last day, those who had helped Barbora's father piled into the wagon filled with grain and rode to his home for a big meal of the national cakes, called kolace, and coffee; afterwards a harmonica was brought in, the floor cleared, and dancing indulged in until long past midnight. Barbora was especially happy, for she was allowed to sit up until eleven and help pass around the second helping of coffee and cakes.

After this the grain was thrashed out with hand flails, and in this work men, women, and even children helped. This was really hard, dusty and unpleasant toil, and hands and shoulders often ached at the close of day.

Then, when the potatoes ripened, and all went to work digging in the vegetable patches, the children got considerable enjoyment in making little bonfires in which they baked potatoes for their lunch, eating them afterwards with the burnt skin and all, and in consequence raising many a

laugh because of their blackened faces.

Barbora also helped so diligently in drying mushrooms at this season that her mother had a big store of them to add to the winter food supply.

As the summer advanced some of the children had to assume the role of watchmen, guarding the fruit on the trees planted in single file along the main roads. Marketa observed them as they built little huts of straw in which they could hide as well as sleep at night. Six-year-old Jirka, who liked to imagine himself fully grown up, begged his father to allow him to stay till morning with his brother in one of them. His father laughingly consented. "Now be sure that you keep good watch!" he called after him as he left for home. Jirka thought it great fun to lie on the straw piled on the floor of the hut until it grew dark, and to listen while his brother told him stories. The first for which he begged was an old favorite. Jan good-naturedly granted his wish and related the following:

Story of a Hen and a Rooster

"Once a rooster and a young hen went together into the

woods to gather berries. The rooster proposed that they divide equally everything that they found, and the nice little hen gladly agreed. The hen discovered the first berry, and she gave half to her companion, as she had promised, then the rooster found one, and, in his eagerness to eat it all before the hen saw it, swallowed it whole, and it stuck in his throat and he fell over like dead.

"The little hen was frightened and ran to the spring and begged of it: 'Oh, spring, please give me some water that I may take it to the rooster. He is lying on the ground with his feet in the air and I fear he will die.'

"But the spring would not do so unless she brought it some leaves from the linden tree. The linden tree, however, wanted a handkerchief from a dressmaker; and, when the hen reached the dressmaker, she found that the latter wanted shoes from a shoemaker; the shoemaker, in turn, wanted a bristle from a Pig—

"'Oh, pig,' begged the hen, 'give me a bristle, that I may give it to the shoemaker, that the shoemaker may give me shoes for the dressmaker, that the dressmaker may make

me a handkerchief for the linden tree, that the linden tree may give me some leaves for the spring. Then the spring will give me some water and I will take it to the rooster who is lying on the road with his feet in the air, and I fear he will die.'

"But the pig wanted milk from a cow; the cow, in turn, wanted grass from a meadow; the meadow wanted some dew.

"The poor hen looked in despair at the sky and sent up a fervent prayer for help. The sky felt sorry for the good little creature and let fall some dew. Then the meadow gave the hen grass for the cow; the cow gave her milk for the pig; the pig gave her a bristle, she gave the bristle to the shoemaker; the shoemaker gave her some shoes, and she gave them to the dressmaker; the dressmaker made her a handkerchief and she gave it to the linden tree; the linden tree shed down some leaves and she gave these to the spring. Then the spring let her have water, with which she filled her mouth and throat, and then ran to where the rooster was lying on the road with his feet in the air. As

soon as she poured the water into his throat the berry slipped down and the rooster jumped up and shouted 'Cock a doodle doo!'"

Little Jirka also jumped up and laughed. In his pleasure at this comfortable story he forgot how late it was getting; but, after Jan's next story of the Hastrman, a terrible water sprite, he was well aware it was night time. "Oh, Jan," he said, "I want to go home."

"But, Jirka," expostulated Jan, "they will laugh at you if you do!"

Jirka was standing at the opening into the hut. The moon was shining bright and clear on the road leading to his home. He looked longingly at it, and suddenly, before his brother knew what was happening, was running down the road, casting frightened glances back.

"Why, here is Jirka," said his mother, opening the door for him. "Just as I expected; but why did you run so fast?"

Jan teased him the next day, when he brought him his lunch, and wanted to know if he was not going to help him keep watch. Jirka accepted Jan's mockery with stolidity,

only shaking his head. He had had enough of the one experience.

As July drew to a close the children, as well as their parents, began to get ready for a great festival of the Čech Sokols (Gymnasts). These Sokols have played an important part in Bohemian history, especially in binding together the Čech people. They had a political significance in the beginning, their organization, at a time when the government frowned on meetings of all kinds, being possible only because physical improvement was apparently their sole object. They still play a very important role, and everywhere, but particularly, perhaps, in the small villages, they stand for progress, their program including not only gymnastics but everything tending to the improvement of the nation. The young people of the village wore the falcon feather in their hats (*sokol* is the Bohemian for falcon), and all were looking forward to the celebration which was to take place in a neighboring town.

When the day came the sight was an unusually bright one. The Sokols, men, women, and children, paraded the

streets, attired in the old picturesque national costumes of Bohemia, of its sister state, Moravia, and of the other Slavonian states in Austria-Hungary. Later came the gymnastic feats, many of them in the open air. In the evening, they danced the charming national dance of Bohemia, the Beseda, with its Slavonic combination of slow, graceful, minuet-like figures and quick, passionate movements. Throughout it all there was a spirit of good-fellowship present, and only one simple greeting, "Na zdar!" (Success to you!) was exchanged by the members. Those who did not belong regretted it and were eager to join the ranks as soon as possible. For weeks afterwards Barbora and her village friends called themselves Sokols and risked breaking their necks in striving to perform gymnastic feats similar to those that they had seen.

The last great event of the summer was the pilgrimage to the Church on the Sacred Mountain. Whole families went, some riding, others walking, the latter as a rule carrying their shoes in their hands, both because those clumsily made articles were uncomfortable and also to save

them from the wear and tear to which they exposed their feet. Those who wore long skirts had them carefully tucked up.

It was still early when they gathered before the church door, waiting for the priest to welcome them. The pilgrimage was not purely a religious affair, but a social one as well. Old and young came, not only to be benefited and cured, perhaps, if they were ailing, but to meet others and to talk over the news of the day. The young people, arrayed in their gayest clothes, looked forward especially to this. To the children it was a wonderful treat. To eat of the delicacies offered, particularly of the gingerbread hearts and figures, pasted over with brightly colored pictures and inscriptions, and of the brilliantly colored, unhealthy looking candies, temptingly displayed in the numerous stalls; to spend their hoarded hellers for fragile toys, even though greatly inferior to those which they themselves helped make at home; to live for a short while in a whirl of new excited feelings; was something which broke the monotony of village life.

Little Jirka steadfastly drew his grandmother towards a

stall in which the shopkeeper played on an old harmonica and shouted to its music: "Come, gracious lady, make a choice, or you'll regret it when you reach home." But grandmother was more interested in the sacrifices for sale near by, which represented wax hands, feet, etc., by buying and offering which the pilgrims hoped to benefit themselves and those ailing at home.

Innumerable beggars followed the pilgrims and fared well. Some were blind, others lame; many were horribly deformed; they certainly looked repulsive and miserable enough to excite commiseration.

And how much there was to talk about when one came home, with a picture of some saint hung on his neck, or a ring, that had been blessed, or an image, to remind him of this long remembered pleasure!

CHAPTER III

Autumn

The children were now looking forward to the opening of school, but, before it began, Barbora was to have a great treat. She was to go for a few days' stay with an aunt in Prague, the beautiful historic capital of the ancient kingdom of Bohemia. Barbora had never been in Prague — Praha, the Čechs call it — and her eyes opened wide at the big city; she felt frightened at the noise and bustle, and kept tight hold of the hand of her father who accompanied her. She was somewhat reassured, however, when she looked at the faces and saw so many laughing eyes and smiling lips.

Her aunt lived in an apartment on Mala Strana (Little Side), in one of the ancient palaces to be found in Prague. It was just below the beautiful terraced gardens of the Fürstenberg palace, above which towers the uninhabited

Royal Castle, once the seat of the distinguished rulers of Bohemia, overtopped by the magnificent Cathedral of St. Vitus, with its cupola, and numerous steeples, pyramids, and turrets. Opposite her aunt's home were the walls of the extensive palace built in the seventeenth century by the great general in the Thirty Years' War, Count Albert of Waldstein, a strange, powerful personage who, to this day, is spoken of as a mystery. Her aunt, who came to meet them, pointed this and other things out, and told her some of the stories handed down about this great leader; of how, after the battle of the White Mountain, which signalized the end of Bohemian independence, he had had twenty-three houses levelled to the ground that this palace might take their place; how devoted the soldiers were to him, and how the mere mention of his name excited terror in the ranks of the enemy, who believed that he had made a compact with the evil one; and how everything in the palace seemed most fitting for one whose power was so great that it was nearly equal to that of the emperor.

She used words altogether new to Barbora when

speaking of the *Sala terrena*, the largest known in Europe, with its fine gallery, more splendid even than the famous "Loggia dei Lanzi" in Florence. In this gallery are frescoes representing scenes from the Trojan war, but with the heroes clothed in the costumes of Waldstein's time and Waldstein himself represented as the God of War. She also spoke of the grotto, which was formerly used as a bathroom, with its hidden staircase leading to the astrological observatory in which Waldstein, unsatisfied with the great successes life had already offered, passed many nights with his astrologer, Ceni, trying to learn of something still greater awaiting him in the future.

Barbora would have liked to go right in to see these wonders with her own eyes, but her aunt led the way across the street and through an arched passageway upstairs to her own rooms, where the usual *svačina* (afternoon lunch) of coffee, rolls, rye bread and sweet butter was served.

After Barbora parted with her father a new era dawned in her life. She seemed to be living in a past age, an age full of great and exciting events. She recalled the stories which

her teacher had told his class of the time when Bohemia played an important role in the history of nations. She felt dazed at living in the midst of the reflection of so much ancient grandeur, and yet important to think that she belonged in some degree to it all.

Her aunt was wise enough not to take her sight-seeing until the next day, when they went up to the Hradcany (Castle Town). From here, through the blue mist and smoke, they had an excellent view of the whole of picturesque Prague, separated into two parts by the wide band of the Vltava (Moldau) River, one of the most beautiful cities of the world, with its mixture of old time and modern buildings, and numerous quaint, brightly colored roofs and steeples and spires. There was an excellent view here, also, of the hills of Prague, covered with parks and gardens, and even of the country beyond of forests and plains.

Through the beautiful porch, and the first courtyard of the Royal Palace, they passed into the second courtyard, which is dominated by the Cathedral of St. Vitus, through the building of which the great Emperor, Charles IV, who

successfully strove to raise Bohemia to the rank of one of the great powers of Europe, expressed his religious aspirations. The Cathedral is still unfinished.

There was much of interest to be seen at Castle Town; they looked into some of the enormous banquet halls, and at the Lion Court, which is the scene of Schiller's "The Glove," and then walked in the midst of mediaeval fortifications, bastions, and towers.

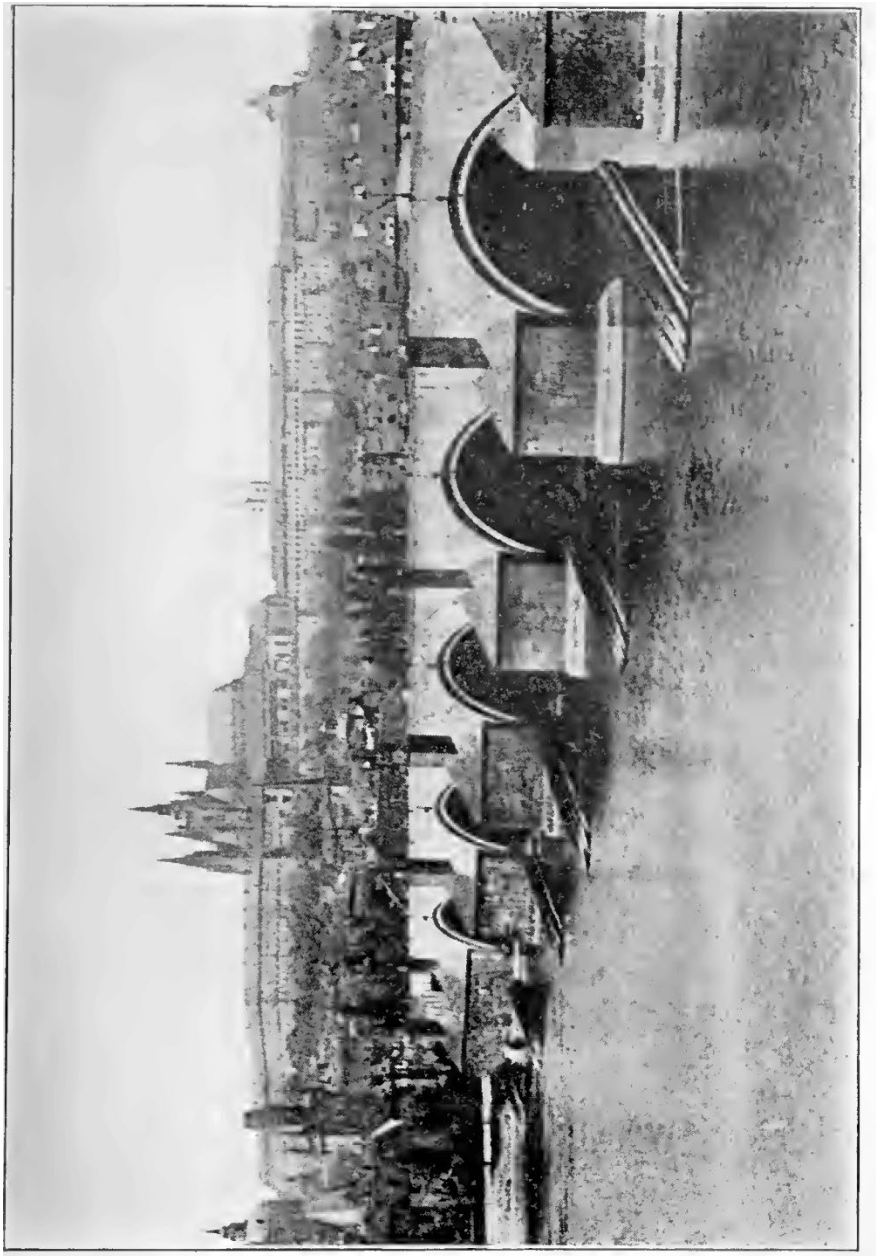
There seemed to be legends and stories connected with every inch of the ground. Barbora was most interested in the old dungeon and tower of Daliborka, where the knight Dalibor was imprisoned because he had seized the lands of a neighbor whose serfs had revolted. Stories of all kinds had spread regarding him, many of them unfounded. It was said that the neighbor was exceedingly cruel and that Dalibor had sided with the serfs because he was opposed to bondage, which was foreign to the ancient customs of the land. The most popular legend attributed to him a marvellous playing on the violin, which attracted people to the tower from far and near. In return they sent up food and gifts to

his cell. The music that he produced is supposed to still haunt this tower.

Before Barbora and her aunt left they stepped into Zlatá Ulice, a street of very quaint, tiny, brightly colored houses, just on the edge of the deep moat (Jelení přikop — the stag's ditch) surrounding the castle. They were built for the alchemists who thronged the brilliant court of the deposed emperor, Rudolph II, and hence the name, Zlatá Ulice, which means Street of Gold.

From here they made their way down a steep and sunny street, bordered by unusually high houses, with massive roofs, high-peaked gables and projecting balconies. Before them, and below them, spread the endless succession of parks and gardens, with the famous "Wall of Famine," built by Charles IV that starving men might have employment, while high above all of these soared the rich monastery of Strahov.

It was already getting dark when they reached Little Side. Here and there, on the streets grouped about public drinking pumps, were servant girls, with water pitchers in



Castle Town and Charles Bridge

their hands, bare-headed or with kerchiefs on their heads, glad of a moment's gossip with acquaintances. They met several chimney-sweeps, also, blacker than the blackest negro, their heads covered with tightly drawn caps, and brushes, ropes, and ladders in their hands. Barbora was firmly persuaded that they never lived anywhere except in chimneys. After they reached home, and had the late supper customary in Bohemia, Barbora fell asleep to dream of the big empty palace she had seen, of princes, chimney-sweeps, alchemists and beggars.

The next morning, Aunt Anna sent Barbora, in charge of one of the servants, to visit a distant relative who lived in the Old Town (Staré Město). They made their way over the remarkable old stone bridge, built by Charles IV in the fourteenth century, and later decorated with many statues. The servant, an intelligent young woman, named Fanny, from the neighboring state of Moravia, told Barbora the tradition that the strength of the bridge had come from the fact that the whites of eggs, instead of water, had been mixed with the mortar used in its construction.

"As there were not enough eggs in Prague and the vicinity for this purpose," she related, "King Charles ordered all the towns in the Bohemian kingdom to send a certain number of eggs. As wagon after wagon arrived, the eggs were broken into the lime. A full wagon also came from the town of Velvar. When the workmen began to break the eggs, they stared in amazement, and then began to laugh. Soon all Prague was laughing with them, for the eggs sent by the good people of Velvar were all hard-boiled!"

They had passed over the bridge when the servant finished her story. She now pointed out to Barbora a whole mass of projecting steeples and towers, which made it easy to understand why Prague has received the name of the Hundred Towered City. Among these are the two unique slate belfries of the Týn Church, which was for two centuries the temple of the followers of Huss.

Then they walked through crooked winding streets, which often passed through houses and courtyards, under the numerous arcades, which are a characteristic feature of the old buildings in Bohemian cities, with their stalls, and

piles of pots for sale, until they came to the Týn Square, once the centre of commerce not only of Prague but of the whole of Central Europe, and later the witness of the bloody scenes which extinguished the Protestant cause.

A few steps further, and they were in the Old Town Square (Staroměstské náměstí) and before the curious ancient Prague clock, on the tower of the old town hall, the delight of every passer-by. It was just a quarter after ten, and they had to wait twenty minutes for the clock to strike — for it does not strike exactly according to our present measure of time. When it did so, two little windows above the dial opened, and Barbora saw the twelve disciples of Christ walk past and bow with dignity to the people. On each side of this clock are movable statuettes — of Death, who rings a bell; of a Turk, who shakes his head; of a miser, swinging a purse; and a spendthrift, holding a looking glass. After the last stroke a cock, placed above the dial, crows.

Barbora was not alone in admiring all these things. Next to her stood an old granny with short skirts and a kerchief on her head. On the other side were an elegantly attired



Entrance from Little Side to Charles Bridge

man and woman, holding a little girl by the hand. In the crowd was also a baker's apprentice, a soldier gaily decked out in blue and red, a bare-headed servant girl, a farmer, and two ladies out on a shopping tour.

"Now we must go on," said Fanny, after Barbora had stood for ten minutes longer admiring the figures and carvings, "for we must reach Mrs. Novotny's house by eleven, the proper time for a morning call."

They had not far to go, and were warmly greeted. Mrs. Novotny was a dear, motherly person and at once brought forth some of the round Bohemian national cakes called *koláče,* filled with prune-butter, ground and sweetened poppy seed, and sweetened cottage cheese. Nothing would satisfy her but that Barbora take a slice of each. Barbora's appetite was an unfailingly good one, and she did not refuse the tempting sections. She had very little to say, however, the impressions crowding on her brain were too numerous. She had never dreamed that so many wonders could be gathered into one spot.

Before they started for home, Mrs. Novotny put on her

own hat and coat and took them to a large store where she selected a warm winter hood for Barbora and a beautiful silk head kerchief for Barbora's mother as a present from herself. They also went with her to the big open market-place, where she bought fresh unsalted butter, cottage cheese, and also honey and poppy seed. "All for more koláčký," she remarked to Barbora.

Barbora spent the afternoon at home, for in the evening — it was some sort of a gala day — they were to go to the National Theatre to hear Smetana's beautiful opera of "Libuše," which, according to the composer's wish, is only presented on special occasions. As they sat in the pleasant sitting-room, looking out towards the pavilions of the Fürstenberg Garden, Barbora's aunt told her the story of the great artist's sad life and also the story of "Libuše," that she might better understand and appreciate the opera.

"Libuše," said her aunt, "was, according to a tradition of that far away, misty past, the founder of the city of Prague, and an unusually upright and amiable queen, whom all loved. Once, however, she had to judge in a disagreement

between two brothers — noblemen — as to how certain property, left to them by their father, was to be divided. The one against whom she decided remarked in her hearing that Bohemia was the only country that endured the shame of being ruled by a woman. She felt so grieved over this insult that she called her people together and begged them to choose a man strong enough to govern them. They insisted, instead, that she should select a husband and reign jointly with him.

"It is said that she answered: 'Beyond those distant hills is a small river on whose banks is a village called Stadíce. Near this village is a farm, and on the fields of that farm is your future ruler, Přemysl, ploughing with spotted oxen. Follow my white horse; he will stop before your future king.' They did so, found the peasant, conducted him in his rude dress and rough shoes to the palace of Vyšehrad where he married Libuše."

"Where is Vyšehrad?" asked Barbora. "Is it a real place?"

"Yes," responded her aunt, "it is a rocky cliff on the opposite side of the river, with remains of old fortifications,

and I regret that, since you will leave to-morrow, you will not have time to see it. But never mind, you are to come again, and it is only one of the many interesting things to be seen in this wonderful, historic old city."

"But, aunt," Barbora begged, as her aunt arose to leave the room, "please, please tell me some more about Libuše. Did she always live at Vyšehrad?"

"Not according to the old stories," replied her aunt, seating herself for a few moments again. "Libuše is credited with having been a seeress, as well as a very wise ruler, and the legends relate that one day, while standing with Přemysl and a group of elders on the rock of Vyšehrad, she was suddenly inspired and, shading her eyes, she pointed into the distance towards the blue woods on the dim river banks, and exclaimed in a voice of prophecy:

"I see a big city, whose glory will reach to the skies. In the woods surrounded by the River Vltava, and the stream of Brusnice, you will find a man who is building the threshold of a house. There erect a castle and call it Praha' (the Bohemian for threshold is *práh*).

"The people went where she had directed and found her vision true. A castle was erected on the spot where Praha (Prague) now stands."

The next day was Saturday and Barbora returned to her village home. How proud she felt and how much she had to relate to her companions, with whom she was a great favorite, and who crowded around her, brimming over with questions. She pleased them all by humming some of the airs from the opera which she had heard and repeating some of the words. It was not only the big things that had made the deepest impression on her.

"Why, girls," she said, addressing a group of classmates, "Praha is so big that you have to ride a great deal in the cars, and, do you know, it costs lots of money, for every time you make a trip you must give one or two hellers " (a heller is one-fifth of one cent of our money), "besides the fare, as a tip to the street-car conductor. I saw everybody doing it!"

"I wish that I were a conductor," said Jirka, turning a somersault. "Wouldn't I be rich! And I'd let you all ride without paying."

"Be quiet, Jirka," said Vlasta, "you don't know what you are talking about! I want to know if Praha is really as beautiful as they say."

"Oh, yes," answered Barbora. "It is, indeed. There are many parks with big trees and flowers and such smooth grass! But they won't let you pick the flowers," she added, "or go on the grass, and the walks are gravelled and raked over so carefully that they won't let children mark on them. I saw two little boys getting scolded by one of the caretakers because they had made some figures with a stick on the walk. They were only about four or five years old, and I felt angry at the man's talking to them as if they had done a lot of damage."

"One day, as we were going to the Staré Město (Old Town)," she remarked on another occasion, "I suddenly saw hundreds of big open umbrellas in a square. I couldn't imagine what it meant until we came nearer and I found that it was a flower market. All sorts of beautiful flowers were for sale there."

Jirka was so glad to see Barbora that he became

unusually boisterous.

"It's a good thing that you live in the country, Jirka," Barbora said to him. "You wouldn't be allowed to shout so loud in Praha; the people there are always saying 'Hush!' to the children, and the janitors of the houses won't even allow them to sing in the hallways!"

On Monday school opened, and, just as the children had longed for vacation, so did they welcome the return to their studies. The school-teacher, an earnest young man of about twenty-six, was a very important personage in the village, and the children all had great respect for him. As soon as the teacher enters the schoolroom all Čech (Bohemian) children stand up to greet him. Politeness and religion are two important subjects taught at school. Greetings play an important part in all the affairs of every-day Bohemian life, whether one enters a store to buy a heller's worth of salt, or a post-office to buy a stamp, or a street-car for a ride down town. Our blunt habit of simply stating our demands or needs to strangers, without any salutation, would be considered a sign of almost

inconceivable ill-breeding in Bohemia.

The greetings taught to village school children are particularly long. Little Barbora had to repeat "Praised be the Lord Jesus Christ!" every time she met an older acquaintance, and it would have greatly surprised her had she not received the answer, "Forever and forever, Amen!"

Little Jirka was very happy at being old enough to enter school. He had on a new, high, green peaked hat which his father had bought for him at a fair, and of which he was very proud and conscious. As soon as Barbora and Vlasta came he ran up to them, shouting, "See my new hat; mama told me not to get it dirty." Some of the older children laughed at him, for which they were sharply reprimanded by Vlasta; but, later in the day, she could not help joining in the general laugh when the little boy suddenly arose from his seat in the schoolroom, while one of the older classes was having a recitation in reading, and, walking up to the teacher, said in a voice loud enough to be heard in every corner, "My grandmother is going to bake kolače to-morrow."

On the front wall of the schoolroom hung a large map of Europe, in the literal centre of which Bohemia was clearly outlined; so too were the high chains of mountains separating it from the neighboring German countries of Prussia, Saxony, Bavaria, and Austria, which give it a geographic independence and make one understand easily why it has proved possible for it to remain a Slavic state despite all efforts to Germanize it. On a blackboard near were a list of the principal exports, which, among other things, comprise sugar, hops, navy beans, gloves, Bohemian glass and garnets, porcelain, human hair, and mineral waters (the Carlsbad, Marienbad, etc.). On another portion of the board were a list of the Slavic nations of the world (which includes the Russians and the Poles), among which the Bohemians (Čechs) take a high rank. The teacher was an ardent patriot and always had something of interest to tell or show the children. To-day he had a large picture of the great Moravian educator Comenius (Komenský) and a copy of his book, "The Orbis Pictus," the first picture reading book ever used in school. The children were amused at

its rude wood-cuts and quaint language. He also had a copy of the Bohemian artist Brožík's famous picture of "Komenský teaching at Amsterdam," representing a scene in the great educator's life when exiled for religious reasons from his native land.

The children bent over their school tasks with a will, and at recess likewise entered with spirit into their games, for, during the summer their numerous duties, like tending geese, goats, or sheep, or helping in the fields and meadows, had kept them a good deal apart.

"Let's play Blind Granny," said Marketa, as soon as they entered the yard, and so one of the girls began to count out, just as American children do, to see who was to be "it." There is no more sense in their counting-out rhymes than in our "Eeny, meeny, miny, moe." They said, "Aneda, fimfeda, aneciky, cvanciky, sosoda," which doesn't mean anything at all!

The lot fell to Vlasta, and one of the children tied a handkerchief over her eyes, and the others made a ring and circled around her.



Komenský's Farewell to His Native Land

Then she was led a short distance away, and asked: "Blind Granny, where am I leading you?"

To which she answered: "Into a corner."

"What do you see there?"

"A rooster."

"What else?"

"A shoe."

"What's in the shoe?"

"A ball" (of yarn).

"What's in the ball?"

"A needle."

"What's in the needle?"

"Thread."

The questioner now called out. "Then catch me, Blind Granny!" All let go hands and ran while the Blind Granny tried to catch some one. After a while Barbora was caught, tapped on the back, "One, two, three," and she was "it."

After this first day many other games were played, a favorite being "Hide and Seek," like our own. Another game, introduced by a little schoolmate whose family had

lately moved from Moravia into their village, was "Wolf." In playing this the children formed two sides and counted out who was to be "Wolf." This "Wolf" then stood between the sides and called out,

Wolf: "Come home!"

Children: "We daren't."

Wolf: "Why?"

Children: "Because of the wolf."

Wolf: "Where is the wolf?"

Children: "In the woods."

Wolf: "What is he doing there?"

Children: "Watching for us."

Wolf: "Come home."

As soon as the second "Come home" was uttered the two divisions exchanged sides, while the "Wolf" tried to catch one of them who was then to be "Wolf."

A quieter game, preferred at certain seasons, was "The Witch's Ring," in which lines were drawn or stamped with the feet on the ground. The players were obliged to stay on the lines, with the privilege, however, of jumping from one

to another, while the "Witch" tried to catch them. Whoever was caught became "Witch."

After school hours the children had home tasks to do.

Those who tended geese now used to take them to the stubble fields to grow fat on the dropped grain. The geese were not always satisfied and, when they found a chance to get at the gathered and piled up grain, would not hesitate to do so. Each goose girl or boy now claimed that his geese were the fattest, and not a day passed without a friendly squabble over this momentous question.

The fields had become bright with flowers and, when the children could, they would stop to weave garlands of the bright red poppies, Bohemia's national flower, found in great quantities on the hillsides and fields and along the banks of rivers; or to decorate themselves with the bright blue corn flower which was nearly as great a favorite.

The first of October was a lively day in the village. The place was trying the experiment of having a public fish pond and the water was to be let out. Everybody came to see and buy, for the fish were to be sold at a nominal price. Big

vessels, filled with water, had been prepared, into which the fish were to be put as soon as taken out, for the Bohemians have a prejudice against buying any but live fish. As the water began to go out there was quite a contest among the children as to who would see the fish first.

"I see one," cried Jirka, whose imagination was very vivid.

"No, you don't, really, do you, Jirka? But I think I do," cried Vlasta, not to be outdone.

Barbora was too honest to claim anything not really true, for, as a matter of fact, none were to be seen until half of the water was out.

The pike were the first to be caught, for they are very sensitive to dirty water. As the children were examining them, and wondering at the size of their heads, Barbora exclaimed, "I wonder what kind of teeth they have!"

Jirka at once put his finger into the mouth of one to examine it. The next minute he was running up and down, along the edge of the pond, crying and holding his hand to his mouth, for the fish had bitten him so hard that the blood

came.

His teacher came up and, tearing off a piece of a clean linen handkerchief, bound it around the hand, saying as he did so, "In another minute, Jirka, I'll show you a fish without any teeth."

And sure enough, the very next fish taken out was a carp, whose funny, immense head with its tiny mouth made even Jirka laugh. When the teacher fearlessly opened its mouth no teeth were to be seen.

"How can he live without teeth?" asked Barbora, with her arm around Jirka's neck.

"It feeds only on tiny insects for which no teeth are needed," answered the teacher. "As to our savage friend here," pointing to the pike, "what will you say when I tell you that he has teeth not only on his palate but also on the tongue, and very sharp ones, too, as Jirka knows. The pike eats everything it can get hold of — fish half its size, frogs, mice, and even little goslings."

At this a murmur of anger arose from the children. "I'd like to see one of them eat my baby geese!" threatened

Vlasta.

Just then Jirka gave another scream, for a big crab had crawled out and caught hold of one of his bare toes. It was easily loosened, and the boys began to help gather up others that were appearing out of the mud. None of the girls, except Marketa, would touch them. Instead, they gave little screams whenever the boys came near with one.

At last the pond was empty and all started for their homes with full pails. For many days afterwards fish was the chief article of food; the mothers also potted considerable quantities to be used as luxuries on special feast days during the winter.

A month later, as Barbora and her grandfather were out digging the last crop of potatoes, they saw a flock of storks, with necks far outstretched, flying towards the woods.

"Ah," remarked the grandfather, calling the little girl's attention to them, "see! it won't be long now before cold weather is here."

And the very next day, sure enough, a light fall of snow lay on the ground, which indicated not only a change of

season but also a change in occupation and in almost the whole manner of life.

CHAPTER IV

Winter

Winter came early and it was not long before snow-balling frolics became a matter of course. As soon as the ponds were frozen over they were filled with merry, rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed boys and girls. When the cold began to get too severe, their hands went under their armpits and they stamped their feet, but no one thought of returning home until the village bell sounded the angelus hour.

Indoors, outside of school hours, there was plenty to do. Barbora's home was quite cozy. The floors were of wood and brick, the walls roughly plastered and stencilled. In the living-room there was a stove of green tiles, ornamented with birds, with a big oven, the top of which served as Barbora's bed at night. Three big steps led up to this bed, and Barbora would not have exchanged it for any other

sleeping place.

The most important piece of furniture in the room was the table, which was of natural oak with carved legs. This was a heavy piece of furniture and was never moved. Whenever the priest or schoolmaster visited them he was seated at the table to signify the respect in which he was held. Ordinary guests generally sat on the benches around the stove. There were also benches, with carved backs, around the wall, and three old, hand-carved chairs, which generally stood next to the bed, being placed by the table only at meal-time. This bed was piled during the day almost up to the ceiling with feather-mattresses and pillows, the pride of every Bohemian housewife. How would you like to sleep in a semi-sitting position, with three big pillows under your head? That is what Barbora was supposed to do.

Above the table hung a lamp, while in one corner, near it, was a crucifix, on both sides of which, way up by the ceiling, arranged side by side in a very straight row, were several pictures of saints in simple dark frames. Chief among these was Václav, the patron saint of Bohemia.

There was one other picture in the room, that of the beloved patriot, Karel Havlíček, poet, journalist and editor, who suffered for freedom's sake.

Besides these, the walls were also decorated with a clock and a rack of gaily painted dishes, while, from the rafters, were suspended bunches of herbs to be used for medicinal tea in case of illness. The most interesting piece of furniture, however, in Barbora's eyes, was an old chest which had belonged to her great-great-grandmother. It was painted with big blossoming trees, surrounded by many brightly colored birds, red roses, and red, yellow, and blue flowers. Barbora thought it beautiful. Inside, it was no less interesting, for on the cover were pasted pictures of saints brought home from many pilgrimages.

Sometimes Barbora accompanied her grandfather to the woods in search of firewood. It was possible now to catch glimpses of the deer, who lost much of their shyness under the influence of cold and hunger. The little crested wren was to be seen on the trees untiringly flitting about, and close to the edge of the woods was found its near relative,

the hedge sparrow, quite as little and leading the same kind of life. Sometimes, in a pine tree, they came across the warm nest of the cross-bill, pasted over with rosin, and with a very narrow opening to keep out the cold from the little winter birdies. Then, by the ice-bound brook, which ran through the woods, they saw hundreds of green finches, attracted by the nutfilled cones on the alder trees bordering it — store-houses so well filled as to last all winter. These nuts must have had a fiery taste, for the birds descended in clouds to a little fall of the brook, where they drank greedily.

This brook ran into the mill stream, where Barbora always looked for a water sprite (Vodník). Her grandfather told her that the miller's great-grandfather had once seen a sprite looking into the mill by the light of the moon; that he was of medium height, with his tail always wet, and that he was grimacing sourly.

There was much frost and snow that month, and the next, but, according to Barbora's grandfather, it was a good sign. "When there is frost and snow in December," he

would say, "the coming year will be fruitful."

Many of the people added a little to their small incomes by all the members of the family helping in the making of toys. In Barbora's they made only doll cupboards, chests, and other tiny household furniture; in Vlasta's, wooden dishes; the specialty in Jirka's home was animals. All of these were often stained and painted. In Marketa's family they devoted most of their spare time to the making of St. Nicholas and the devil, in both of which the children of the country believe. During the holiday season they realized quite a little from their sale. Marketa herself used to make the beard and hair of St. Nicholas out of cotton, while Václav was quite clever in making a devil out of dried fruit, the body of prunes and the head a dried pear or apple. In one hand he held a fork and a bundle of switches, while a chain of paper was fastened to one leg.

There were other duties, too. The older daughters had their sewing, for each endeavored to have ready, as her dowry, a good array of linen clothes, neatly embroidered with her initials in one corner.

Then there were goose feathers to be picked for the feather beds universal throughout the country. Sometimes for this latter work neighbors would come to help each other, and then it was not work at all, but play enlivened by stories and songs. The children heard some of the stories many times, particularly those connected with the old castle and the neighboring woods. The favorite story in regard to this last was about the "Fiery Man." Old man Spalek used to delight in relating it.

The Story of the Fiery Man

"I know it from my own grandfather," he would begin. "Long ago, this forest extended far beyond what it does now, and in it, for many years, lived the Fiery Man. Sometimes he appeared like a fiery barrel, sometimes like a burning sheaf, and sometimes like a burning man. And in this last shape he was awful to behold, for he complained with such bitterness that all who heard him were seized with terror. Nobody would go through the wood at night, no matter how much time could be saved in doing so. Once, a peasant, whose name was Moták, went to a

neighboring town to make some purchases. He stayed very late with comrades and when he started for home, it was so dark that he couldn't see where he was going, and lost his way. Thus he came into the deep forest. Hardly had he entered it than he heard loud complaints and lamentations, and, suddenly, right before him stood the Fiery Man. Flames were flashing forth from all sides and cinders were flying. On his shoulders the creature carried a huge boulder; he wailed: 'Where shall I put it? oh, where shall I put it?'

"As soon as the peasant heard the human voice he lost all fear: 'Why, put it,' he said, 'where you got it!' and started to leave.

"'Thank God, you have been my salvation!' sighed the Fiery Man with relief, and, as he spoke, the boulder rolled off of his shoulders and a white dove flew out from his body. At the same time the Fiery Man disappeared and was never seen again."

Mr. Spalek always ended his story here, and Jirka's grandmother, whenever she was present, invariably added:



Picking Goose Feathers

"You must know, good people, that this Fiery Man was supposed to be a peasant who died during a lawsuit with a neighbor, who claimed that he had removed a boulder which separated their properties in order to lay claim to more land than was really his. I think it is true, and it is certainly no wonder that he was punished so severely. I have, also, always heard that he was not freed until he had carried the stone to the true boundary line, which sounds more probable than that it merely rolled off of his shoulders."

Mr. Spalek always expected this addition and pretended to be asleep during its recital. The children listened with mouths wide open to stories such as this. Barbora's father, however, a very well-informed peasant, used to laugh at them and call them "stuff and nonsense." He preferred that the children hear of Bohemia's great heroes; of the pure life of the great religious reformer and martyr, John Huss; of Karel Havlíček, whose picture hung on his wall; of Joseph Kajetán Tyl, author, actor, and theatrical manager, who had once visited their village with his travelling theatrical

company, a patriotic organization mainly for the presentation of stirring historical plays which would remind the people of their brilliant past and help keep alive national sentiment; and of the wonderful general, one-eyed Žižka.

His neighbors sometimes shook their heads over his heretical tendencies, but, nevertheless, they liked very well to listen to him, and shared his pride in the nation's heroes.

"Now, father," Barbora often begged, "tell us about Žižka!" And then her father would describe how, in the wars following close on the burning of Master John Huss, in Constance, the great leader, already blind in one eye, with untrained soldiers, chiefly peasants and tradesmen, conquered the bravest knights and greatest warriors in Europe.

"He taught his followers how to fortify themselves strongly with the aid of the battle wagons alone, and how to fight with weapons with which they were familiar — clubs, short spears, and flails. These flails were terrible weapons; they consisted of long staffs at the end of which were shorter staffs bound with iron and spiked. Another

fearful weapon for hand combat, called the morning star, was a long stave with a spiked iron ball near the sharp end. The battle wagons were covered with iron and the best marksman was placed next to the driver in each of them. These marksmen through the certainty of their aim invariably spread terror in the ranks of the enemy.

"Žižka's skill and inventiveness was extraordinary," he would continue. "He mastered every difficult or unusual situation. He made use of every possible stratagem. Thus, at one time, when the enemy had to cross water to get to him, he had the women place some of their garments and veils in the soft mud at the bottom, so that the horses and followers of the Hungarian king were entangled in them. When all was confusion he charged and drove back the forces with great loss. At another time, when encamped on top of a hill and threatened by a superior force, he had the wagons filled with stones, and, as the enemy were about to charge, sent these wagons down pell-mell, smashing into the mounted soldiers and entirely demoralizing them. Then, just at the right moment, he again charged. Some-

times he misled the enemy by putting the horses' shoes on backwards; sometimes he had three-cornered hooks, with sharp points, scattered over the ground; these entered the feet of the enemy's horses, which became frightened and uncontrollable, so that Žižka easily won the day."

"I would like to have seen him!" Old Man Spalek would exclaim, with eyes flashing. "My son has a picture of him in a book, riding on a white horse, with a flap over one eye. Ah, he looks every inch a general! And to think that he was still able to command when he lost the use of his other eye."

"How was that?" asked Barbora.

"It was in 1421," answered her father, "when he was besieging a castle. Here, some people say, his sound eye was injured during the shooting by the glancing of an arrow from a pear tree. The injury was so serious that he was not expected to live. He was obliged to go to Prague for treatment. There the doctors managed to cure him, but could not save his sight. He was now blind in both eyes, and could not lead his forces any longer on horseback; nevertheless,

he still directed them. He would sit high on a wagon surrounded by a select few who described everything minutely to him, and according to these descriptions he gave orders, and continued to win battles. He has the unusual record of never having lost a battle in his life. For years after his death, Hungarian mothers used his name to frighten their children. Many of them firmly believed that he had been possessed of fiendish powers. Would that we had such men today!"

When stories were not told, or the beautiful touching folk songs sung, Barbora and the younger folk liked to amuse themselves with riddles:

"What is it that falls into water and makes no splash?"

Answer — Shadow.

"It's red when it's living and black when it's dead."

Answer — Coal.

"When does a chicken have the fewest feathers?"

Answer — In the baking pan.

Barbora was very fond of this one: "Two fathers and two sons caught three rabbits and each received one. Explain

the division."

Answer — They were grandfather, father, and son.

And also, "A brother and a sister, and a husband and a wife, were journeying together. They were given three apples, which they divided so that each person received one apple. Explain."

Answer — They were brother, sister, and the sister's husband.

Sometimes, when they were home alone, and Barbora would beg for a story, her father would tell her a teasing one about Red Riding Hood, in just the same way as it had been told to him by his own father when he was a child.

"I will tell you a story about Red Riding Hood," he would begin, seriously. "Now, pay close attention so that you will remember the story of Red Riding Hood, about whom a great many stories have been told. One person told a story about Red Riding Hood, another told a story about Red Riding Hood, a third told a story about Red Riding Hood, and each told a different one. And, do you know why Red Riding Hood was called by that name? Everybody called her

that, nothing else. Everybody shouted after her, 'Where are you going, Red Riding Hood?'"

And Barbora's father would continue this rigmarole until Barbora would beg for the promised story, when he would say: "Why, Baruška," Baruška being his favorite diminutive for Barbora, "that's so, I promised to tell you about Red Riding Hood; then, listen!" and he would repeat the whole thing from the beginning until Barbora's patience would be exhausted and she would insist on a real story.

Sometimes he would vary this by telling about a herdsman who had three hundred sheep and several rams.

"This herdsman," he would begin, "always took his flock to pasture over a certain river which had spanning it a bridge so narrow that only one sheep could cross at a time. Now, imagine that he has reached this bridge; one sheep is crossing, but it has to go very slowly so as not to fall in," Then her father would become silent.

Barbora would wait a while and then urge him to continue.

"Now it is near the bank; it will soon be over — ah, now! it is in the pasture. It is time for the second to start, but that one is especially slow."

"Well, what happens when they all get over?" Barbora would ask, when the silence remained unbroken.

"Ah, but only two are over," her father would reply, with a very serious face, "you must wait until all have reached the pasture." He would then continue with the third and the fourth; but generally, by that time, Barbora would place her hand over his mouth and declare that she wouldn't be teased any longer.

The most exciting time of the year in the little village was on December sixth, the day on which St. Nicholas makes his yearly visit. A few days before this holiday Barbora received the following letter from her aunt:

"Brno, Moravia, Dec. 3.

"My dear little Niece: Here I am in Brno (the Germans call it Brünn), the capital and chief city of our sister land, Moravia. Today I wished that you were with me for I was taken all through a delightful girls' school, thoroughly

Slavonian in character. How would you like to go to boarding school? The dormitory is charmingly furnished, the old Moravian and Bohemian styles of furniture having been carefully reproduced. The pretty artistic coverlets on the beds were designed and embroidered by the Slovak peasant women here, and the walls were also painted by them.

"Almost every Slavonian country is represented in the pupils: besides many Bohemians and Moravians, there are several Slovaks from Moravia and Hungary, one girl from Croatia, two Serbians, one Dalmatian, and one Ruthenian and two Polish girls from Galicia. They all look happy. The teachers are not only enthusiastic in their work but full of ardent love for their country's history and hope for its future. When you finish your home school we must consider sending you here.

"I am to spend St. Nicholas Day in the country near Olomouc, the ancient capital of Moravia, where I am hoping to renew my acquaintance with the Moravian dialect, and to see some of the old, picturesque national



Slavonian Girls:
(From left to right) Bohemian, Moravian, Silesian

costumes. I did see a tall, slender Moravian at the railroad station when I arrived, who had on a white shirt, a very short bright waistcoat embroidered with red and gold, and over these a dark sleeveless jacket with, oh, so many shining rows of buttons. His low crowned hat was decorated with a bunch of rooster feathers.

"How full our country is of interesting historical material! Yesterday, in the little Protestant village of Vanovice, the pastor showed me a building in the cellar of which the people used to meet to read the Bible at a time when their being discovered doing this meant arrest and punishment. Worthy followers of Huss!

"Here, in Brno, the streets are now gay with people and the confectionery stores are filled with figures of St. Nicholas and the devil which remind me of those made by some of your village friends.

"Give my hearty holiday wishes to your dear father and mother and accept many for yourself. May St. Nicholas be good to you!

"Lovingly, Aunt Anna."

On the eve of St. Nicholas the children were all in a state of great expectation and the younger ones were not a little afraid. Barbora's grandmother spent the evening with them, and related how St. Nicholas comes down from the sky in a carriage of gold, attended by an angel with a bag of gifts, to reward the good, and by a devil with a bundle of switches, for the naughty.

The parents had all agreed on the teacher playing the part of St. Nicholas, for he was well acquainted with the little folks and would know just whom to reprimand and whom to praise.

At seven o'clock it was already dark, and, shortly after, there was a clatter of chains outside of Barbora's door and then a loud knock. Barbora's cousin, Jirka, who had come with grandmother, crept behind her chair and hid in her skirts. But he managed to peep out when St. Nicholas, in bishop cap and gown, came striding in, accompanied by an angel, all in white and silver, carrying a bag, and a terror-inspiring devil, hoofed, horned, and tailed, with a big bundle of switches. This devil jumped about and tried to

catch some of the children, but was prevented by Santa Claus, who held him firmly by a chain.

St. Nicholas seemed to know everything that had happened that year. Barbora's record was good, on the whole, although St. Nicholas did not omit to mention the time when she forgot her geese to wade in the pond, and they strayed into a neighbor's vegetable patch. Little Jirka gradually came out and lost his fear of the devil. He laughed merrily when the angel emptied the bag of goodies on the table.

Then St. Nicholas and his company disappeared, and those remaining sat down to feast on the sweets before bedtime.

The excitement of St. Nicholas Eve had hardly died away when Christmas was at hand. Barbora helped her mother pick and clean the Christmas goose, which was to be served with sour-kraut and potatoes. It was a big, fine, fat one at which the mother rejoiced, for the rendered fat would serve instead of butter, on bread and potatoes for a long time to come. Two or three pieces of Bohemian glass

— family heirlooms — were taken down from the wall to receive an extra polish for the occasion.

The day before, the whole family fasted, the children in the firm expectation of seeing the "Golden Pig," which always proved to be, to the disappointed youngsters, only the reflection of the candles on the ceiling. But there was a big supper, served on a table cloth of red roses on a white background, of fish soup, carp, boiled barley and mushrooms, and several varieties of Christmas bread, filled with nuts and raisins. Then came the Christmas tree, with the main gifts of the year. Barbora's aunt remembered her with a beautiful bound book, "Babička" (The Grandmother), a story of country life in Bohemia, by Božena Němec, the favorite and best work of that great authoress.

The poor of the village were never forgotten on this day. The miller's wife sent Marketa's mother the half of a goose, so that Marketa could feast on goose, even though unable to tend one. Barbora gave her an apron which she had made with her own hands. The cattle and poultry were likewise not forgotten, but received their share of holiday

cakes.

Barbora always strove to be good on Christmas Day, for it had been firmly impressed on her that that day was to determine every day of the following year; that, if she were cross and naughty, she would be cross and naughty all the year; if good, that she would be good all the year. Her father laid great stress on no one in the family being late for meals, that all might be orderly throughout the year.

After Christmas, for a while there were other great doings in the village, the most important in the eyes of Jirka and Václav being those of the Three Kings. The two boys, together with a schoolmate, with white shirts over their clothes and their heads ornamented with crowns of stiff gold paper, went from house to house, singing a song, and begging for donations.

Jirka, with his crown ornamented by a star cut out of red paper, walked first; while Václav, with a blackened face and a dish of burning incense in his hands, came last. When the door was opened in answer to their knock, they greeted the assembled family with "Blessed be the Lord," and then sang

their song. At each house they received something, whether Christmas cakes in the form of hearts, birds, or wreaths, or an apple or an orange, and rarely a heller or two. If permitted, they swung the incense through the rooms, which they sprinkled with holy water. Before leaving they never failed to write on the outer door the letters K + M + B — the initials of the three wise men who came from the East to adore the infant Jesus — Kaspar, Melchior, and Balthazar, and these were suffered to remain until erased by sun and rain.

The evening before the Three Kings, the young people of both sexes gathered at Barbora's home to tell their fortunes. A large quantity of lead had been provided, and this was melted by each of those present and poured into a pan of water. As soon as cool the forms assumed by the melted lead were studied to foretell the future. This was accompanied by much joking and laughter, all sorts of amusing fates being seen. When all had had their turn supper was announced, after which they departed for their various homes.

And so the vacation time passed quickly until school reopened and studies began again.

THE END.