

Our Little Italian and Spartan Twins, and Roman Cousin

VOLUME SIXTEEN

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Volume 16

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Libraries of Hope

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Libraries of Hope, Inc.
Appomattox, Virginia 24522

Website www.librariesofhope.com
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Printed in the United States of America

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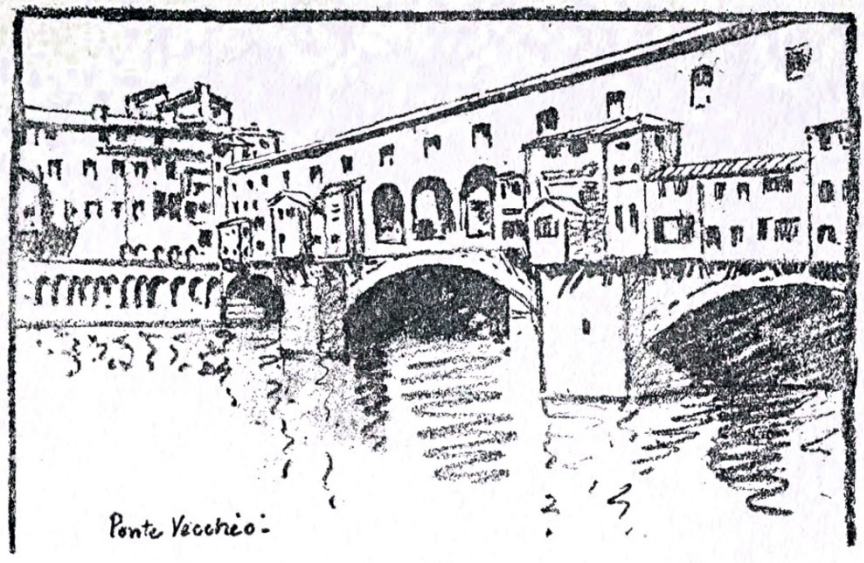
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The Italian Twins

Lucy Fitch Perkins
Illustrated by Lucy Fitch Perkins






Ponte Vecchio







CHAPTER I

Morning in the Grifoni Palace

Near the banks of the river Arno, in an upper room of the beautiful old palace of the Grifoni family, Beppina, the twelve-year-old daughter of the Marchese, lay peacefully sleeping. In his own room across the hall from hers, Beppo, her twin brother, slept also, though it was already early dawn of Easter Saturday in the city of Florence, and both children had meant to be up before the sun, that no hour of the precious holiday should be lost in sleep.

It was the jingle of donkey bells and the sound of laughing voices in the street below her windows that at last roused Beppina. Though it was not yet light, the peasants were already pouring into the city from outlying villages and farms, bringing their families in donkey carts or wagons drawn by sleek oxen, to enjoy the wonderful events which were to take place in the city on that holy day.

Beppina opened her great dark eyes and sat up in bed to listen. "I'm awake before Beppo," she whispered joyfully to herself. "I told him I should be first. I wonder what time it is!"

As if in answer to her question a distant clock struck five. "Five o'clock!" murmured Beppina, and, struggling to her knees in her great carved bed, she dipped a dainty finger in the vase of holy water which hung on the wall nearby, and crossed herself devoutly. Then, folding her hands, she murmured an Ave Maria before the image of the Virgin which stood on the little table beside her bed. This duty done, she slid to the floor, thrust her little white feet into a pair of blue felt slippers, and her arms into the sleeves of a gay wrapper, then ran across the room to the eastern windows.

As she pushed open the shutters, a gleam of sunshine flashed across the room, lighting the dim frescoes on the high ceiling, and paling the light of the little lamp which burned before the image of the Madonna. A wandering breeze, fresh from the distant hills, blew in, making the flame dance and flicker and flaunting a corner of the white

counterpane gayly in the air.

Beppina leaned her arms on the wide stone windowsill, and looked out over Florence. The sun had just risen above the blue crest of the Apennines, its level rays tipping the Campanile and the great dome of the Cathedral with light, and turning eastern windowpanes into flaming beacons. The glowing color of the sky was reflected in the waters of the Arno, which flowed beneath its many bridges like a stream of molten gold. Pigeons wheeled and circled above the roofs, and the air was filled with gentle croonings and the whir of wings.

For a moment Beppina stood drinking in the freshness of the lovely spring morning, then, stepping softly to the door of her room, she opened it cautiously and peered into the dark corridor. She listened; there was not a sound in the house except the gurgle of a distant snore.

"Ah, that Teresina!" murmured Beppina to herself. "She sleeps like a kettle boiling! First the lid rattles, then there is a whistle like the steam. Why does she not put corks in her nose at night and shut the noise up inside of her?"



She slipped silently into the hall and listened at the door of Beppo's room. She heard no sound, and was just on the point of turning the knob, when the door flew open of itself and a boy with great dark eyes like her own burst into the corridor and bumped directly into her. Beppina backed hastily against the wall, and though the breath was nearly knocked out of her, remembered to offer him her Easter greetings.

"Buona Pasqua, Beppo mio," she gasped. "I was just

going to wake you."

"To wake me!" Beppo shouted derisively. "That's a good joke. I'm up first, just as I said I should be! See, I am all dressed, and you—you have not even begun!"

Beppina laid her finger on her lips. "Hush, Beppo!" she whispered. "Don't roar so. It's only five o'clock, and everyone else in the house is asleep. Not even the maids have stirred, and as for Teresina—listen to her! She sleeps like the dead, though less quietly, yet she rouses at once if the baby stirs, and if we should wake the baby at this hour, she would be angry at us all day long."

They listened for a moment to the appalling sounds which rolled forth from the room where Teresina, the nurse, slept. Then Beppo said: "If the baby can sleep through that noise, she can sleep through anything. It sounds like a thunderstorm in the mountains."

At that moment a wicked idea popped into his head. "I know what I'm going to do," he whispered, grinning with delight. "I'm going to creep into her room like a cat and drop something into her mouth. She sleeps with it open, and I have a piece of soap just the right size!"

"Beppo!" gasped Beppina. "Don't you dare! Teresina would then refuse to take us to the piazza, and you know very well there is no one else to go with us, for the governess had a headache last night and went to bed looking as yellow as saffron."

"Oh, but just think how funny Teresina would look, choking and sputtering like a volcano pouring forth fire, smoke, and lava," chuckled Beppo, who was studying geography and liked it much better than Beppina did.

"If you do it you'll just have to spend Easter Saturday in the house and miss all the fun," warned Beppina. "Mammina would not let us go with any of the other servants."

"I don't see why she won't let us go alone," said Beppo crossly. "I hate to go out on the street with Teresina all dressed up in her ruff and streamers so people will know she's a baby nurse. I'm big enough to go by myself!"

Beppina looked despairingly at her brother. "Oh, dear!" she said, "I wish Mammina had taken us with her to the villa instead of leaving us to go later with Teresina and the governess, when she has everything ready for us. I wouldn't

mind missing Easter Saturday here if only we could be up at the villa."

"Or if only our dear Babbo had not had to go away to Rome," added Beppo gloomily. "He would have taken us with him to see all the Easter sights, and no thanks to Teresina either!"

"But they did go, both of them," sighed Beppina. "So it's Teresina or stay at home for us, and I'm sure I don't want to stay at home!"

Beppo thrust his hands into his pockets, hunched up his shoulders, and looked so gloomy and obstinate that Beppina saw something must be done at once. "Oh, pazienza, Beppo mio!" she said, giving him a little shake. "It might be worse surely. Come, let's go down to the garden and feed the pigeons. You get the crumbs while I dress."

"Hurry, then," said Beppo, brightening a little, as Beppina flung him a butterfly kiss and ran back to her room. She threw on her clothes in two minutes, fastened her long black hair with a hairpin, and appeared again in the corridor just as Beppo returned from the kitchen with a pan of crumbs in his hand.

The two children then quietly opened the door which led from the Grifoni apartment into the public hall of the old palace and crept silently down the long, dark stone stairs to the ground floor, where Pietro, the porter, lived with his wife and six children. Pietro opened the door of his own apartment and stepped into the public hall just as the two dark figures came stealthily down the last flight. Beppo was certainly in a mood for mischief that morning, for when he saw Pietro he crept softly up behind him as he was buttoning the last button of his livery, and suddenly shouted "Boom!" right in his ear!

Pietro thought it was one of his own children who had played this saucy trick. "Santa Maria!" he cried, wheeling about with his hands out to catch and punish the offender. "Come here, thou thorn in the eye!" Then, as he saw the children of the Marchese grinning at him out of the shadows, his hand went up in a salute instead. "Buona Pasqua, Donna Beppina!" he cried, "and you too, Don Beppo! Why are you about at this hour in the morning scaring honest people out of their wits?"

"Buona Pasqua, Pietro," laughed the twins. "We are

going out in the garden, and we want you to open the door for us."

No one but the gardener and the members of the Grifoni family ever went into the garden, which lay at the back of the palace, for the tenants who occupied other portions of the ancient building were not allowed to use it, and the Marchese Grifoni lived in Florence only during the winter months. The rest of the year—and the children thought much the best part of it—was spent in their beautiful vine-covered villa in the hills near Padua.

Pietro selected a key from the jingling bunch which he carried at his belt, and opened the old carved door. It was a charming sight which greeted their eyes as the door swung back on its rusty hinges. The garden was small, with a high wall all about it, over which ivy spread a mantle of green. In the middle of the space a fountain splashed and bubbled, and the garden borders were gay with yellow daffodils, blue chicory, and white Florentine lilies. There were other delights also in the Grifoni garden, for in the fountain lived Garibaldi, a turtle of great age and dignity, and in the chinks of the walls were lizards which liked nothing better



than to be tickled with straws as they lay basking in the sunshine.

The moment the children appeared, a cloud of pigeons swept down from the neighboring roofs and begged for

food. Beppina held a piece of bread between her lips, and a fat pigeon with glistening purple feathers on his breast instantly lit upon her shoulder. He was followed by another and another, until she flung up her arms and sent them all skyward in a whirl of wings, only to return again a moment later to peck the morsel from her lips.

As she was playing in this way with the pigeons, she chanced to glance up at the windows of the porter's rooms which overlooked the garden. There, gazing wistfully out at them, were six pairs of eyes, belonging to Pietro's six children. Beppina waved her hand at them. "Come out!" she cried gayly, and, wild with delight at such an unheard of privilege, the six came scrambling into the garden at once. There the eight children played with the pigeons in the sunshine, until in an unlucky moment Pietro's youngest baby fell into the fountain and was rescued, screaming with fright, by Beppina, who got her own dress quite wet in the process.

It was at this very moment, as luck would have it, that Teresina appeared in the doorway, her ruffled cap bristling and her hands upheld in horror at finding the children of

the Marchese Grifoni playing in the sacred palace garden with the dirty little children of the porter's family.

"I have been looking everywhere for you," she said with freezing dignity. "The priest will soon be here to bless the house, and you, Signorina, are not half dressed, and besides, you are as wet as if you had been swimming in the fountain! What would the Signora say if she could see you now?" She glared at the six children of Pietro as she spoke, and they instantly scuttled back into their own quarters like mice who had seen the cat. Then she thumped majestically upstairs.

The children prepared to follow, but all the brightness had gone out of the morning, and they went slowly and sullenly. Though Teresina had a good heart, she had a sharp tongue, and the twins had some reason for not loving her. It was now six months since she had first appeared before them, carrying a little red, wrinkled baby on a pillow, and had told them that it was their little new sister, and that now the Signora, their mother, would love the baby much better than she loved them, and she had laughed when she said it! Yes, believe it or not, she had laughed!

"Teresina is always spoiling things," said Beppo, kicking his feet against each step as he began to climb the stairs.

"Che, che!" said Beppina, which is Italian for "tut, tut."

"After all, it is quite true that we must be ready for the priest. What would Mammina say if she knew we were wet and dirty when he came?"

Beppo's face broke suddenly into a beaming smile. "I know what I'll do!" he cried, and disappeared into the garden again. In a moment he came back, carrying some water from the fountain in an old flower pot, and went bounding upstairs two steps at a time, slopping it all the way. Beppina followed breathlessly, and reached the top step just in time to see that bad boy give a vigorous pull at the bell.

There was a scrambling sound within before the door was thrown open by Teresina, who, supposing it to be the priest, had instantly called the other servants and flopped down upon her knees to receive his blessing, and the sprinkling of holy water which always accompanied it. Behind Teresina knelt Maria, the cook, and Antonia, the housemaid, with their hands clasped and their heads reverently bent, and it was only when they had all received

a generous dose of water which was not at all holy that they raised their heads and saw the grinning face of Beppo and the empty flower pot in his hand. Teresina started wrathfully to her feet, and if the real priest had not been heard coming up the stairs at that moment things might have gone badly with Beppo. As it was, the real priest followed the bogus one so quickly that there was just time for the children to slip to their knees before Padre Ugo, who was short, fat, and breathless, entered, followed by an acolyte carrying the vessel of holy water.

Padre Ugo was in a tremendous hurry, for he had many other places to visit that morning. He fairly ran through the rooms, sprinkling each with a dash of holy water, mumbling a prayer and raising his hand in blessing, then racing on to the next, with all the household trailing behind him like the tail of a kite. He blessed the kitchen and pantries, he even blessed the cat which was washing her face by the kitchen range. Not being a religious cat, she put up her tail and fled into the coal-hole, where she stayed until the priest had gone.

The only room in the whole house to be missed was the

one occupied by the governess. That poor lady had locked herself in with her headache, and she was a Protestant besides, so that room had to go unblessed the whole year through.

When Padre Ugo had gone, Teresina was obliged to give her whole attention to the baby, and it was not until she and the twins were ready for the street that at last she said stiffly to Beppo, "Tomorrow morning, Don Beppo, you will find that the hares have left no Easter eggs in the garden for such a naughty boy as you."





CHAPTER II

In the Piazza

The clock in the reception hall had already struck eleven, when the two children, dressed in their best, followed by Teresina, passed out beneath the carved stone arch of the palace door into the streets of Florence. Their way lay through the edge of the beautiful Boboli Gardens, where lilacs bloomed, and birds were singing as they built their nests, past churches and palaces, across the Ponte Vecchio, one of the oldest of all the old bridges across the Arno, and then on through narrow streets on the other side of the river, and it was nearly noon when at last they reached the Piazza del Duomo.

The square was a wonderful sight on that beautiful spring morning. There in front of them rose the great Cathedral, with its mighty dome, and beside it stood the bell tower, which Beppina had watched from her window

in the dawn. Here also in the square was the old Baptistery, *il bel San Giovanni*, where Beppo and Beppina, and all the other children in Florence had been baptised when they were babies.

From all the side streets entering the piazza there poured streams of people, until it seemed as if everybody in the world must be there. In that great crowd there were peasants leading donkeys, with bells jingling from their scarlet trappings; there were carts filled with black-eyed babies and women whose only head covering was their own sleek black braids; there were farmers and peddlers, noblemen and beggars, great ladies and gypsies, bare-footed monks and tourists, black-hooded Brothers of the Misericordia, and organ grinders, fruit sellers, flower sellers, old people and young, rich and poor, everyone eager for the great Easter spectacle to begin.

Teresina found a place for the children and herself on the edge of the crowd, and almost at once there appeared right before their eyes a great black car drawn by four splendid white oxen all garlanded with flowers. This strange black car stopped directly in front of the Cathedral;

then from the open door of the Baptistery came a solemn procession, headed by the Archbishop bearing a brazier filled with sacred fire. The procession disappeared within the Cathedral doors, and there was a moment of breathless silence both within the church and without, as the Archbishop lighted the candles on the high altar from the holy fire.

The instant the candles flamed, the choir burst forth in a great swelling chorus. "Glory to God in the highest," they sang, and the bells in the Campanile began to ring as if they had suddenly gone mad.

Then the wonderful thing happened for which everyone had been waiting. Out of the door of the Cathedral, high above the heads of the people, there flashed a white dove! It sped along a wire to the great black car, and the instant it touched it there was a terrific bang, then another, and another, as hissing rockets tore their way into the sky. The whole car seemed to blow up in a joyful burst of sound!

"Look! Look! the Colombina!" shouted the people, and as the mechanical dove returned along its wire to the altar, the air was filled with shouts of "Christ is risen! Buona

Pasqua! Buona Pasqua!" from a thousand throats.

The bells of the Campanile clashed and sang overhead, waking all the bells in Florence and in the hills for miles around, so that, with the singing and the ringing, there was never a more joyful noise made than was heard in the Piazza del Duomo on that Easter Saturday in Florence!

Teresina and the children, shouting like the others, had just turned with the crowd to follow the car as it moved away from the Cathedral doors, when suddenly Teresina gave a shriek of joy, and, dropping their hands, rushed to the side of a cart which was standing beside the curb in one of the streets opening into the square. It is not surprising that she forgot the children for a moment, for there in the cart sat her mother, holding in her arms Teresina's own baby, which she had left at home in order to take care of the baby of the Marchesa. Moreover, beside the cart was Teresina's husband, and in it there were also her little brothers and sisters!

The twins, thus suddenly loosed from Teresina's grasp, were swept along by the crowd, and when, a few moments later, she turned to look for them, they were no longer in



sight.

Beppina clutched Beppo's arm as they were pushed along by a fat man behind them. "We must find Teresina!" she shouted in his ear.

"We can't get back!" Beppo shouted in reply, punching the fat man in the stomach with his elbow and pulling Beppina closer to his side; "and besides," he went on in a lower key, "I'm glad to get away from her. We'll have a good time by ourselves and go home when we get ready without

being followed around by a nurse like two babies."

"What will Mammina say?" gasped Beppina.

"She isn't here, so she won't say anything at all," said naughty Beppo. Then he added with an important wag of his head; "Just you stick by me; I'll take care of you."

Beppina had her doubts, but she considered Beppo the most remarkable boy in the world, so she trotted obediently along with her hand in his, sure that he was equal to any situation that might arise.

For an hour or more the two children wandered about the piazza, carried hither and thither in the wake of the crowds. First they followed the black-cowled Misericordia Brothers as they bore away to the hospital a sick old man who had fallen in the street. Then they found a marionette show and stood entranced for a long time before it, watching the thrilling adventures of Pantalone. After that they crept into the dim Cathedral, now nearly empty of people, and watched the women who came to light their tapers at the Great Paschal Candle beside the altar. It was then that they discovered they were hungry, and, going out on the street, they refreshed themselves with oranges

bought of a fruit vendor.

If Teresina could have seen the children of the Marchesa as they stood sucking oranges in the public street, it is likely she might have fainted with horror, and been carried away to the hospital by the black-robed Brothers of Mercy in her turn; but as it was, Teresina was not there to see. After searching the crowds distractedly for



an hour, she had rushed back to the palace, hoping to find the twins there before her, and turning the whole establishment into an uproar when she found they had not yet appeared.

Meanwhile, the children, unconscious of time, were wandering about enjoying their new freedom, and growing more adventurous at every step. Though they had finished their oranges, they were still hungry, and there was a wonderful smell of roasting chicken in the air, which Beppo followed with the unerring instinct of a hungry boy, and soon the two children were standing before an open cookshop in a side street, gnawing chicken bones and smacking their lips with as much gusto as if they had been bred in the streets instead of a palace.

When they left the cookshop, with its rows of bright copper pots and pans and its delicious smells, Beppo had only a few soldi left in his pockets, and as for Beppina, there had been nothing but a handkerchief in hers from the beginning.

"Avanti!" cried Beppo, made more bold than ever by the courage which comes with a full stomach. "Let's explore!"

and, seizing the hand of the more timid Beppina, he ventured farther and farther up the narrow street. They had never been in this part of the city before in their lives. They had never even dreamed that people could live in such dark, dirty houses, more like rabbit warrens than homes for human beings, and on streets so narrow that Beppo could easily leap across them in one jump.

They made their way through groups of idle loungers, stepping cautiously around dirty babies playing in the gutters, and past slatternly mothers gossiping in shrill tones from doorsteps and open windows, quite unconscious of the fact that everyone turned to look with astonishment at the strange spectacle of two well-dressed children walking alone through the burrow-like streets of old Florence.

At the opening of a dark passage they almost stumbled over an old woman bent over a charcoal-brazier, where she was roasting chestnuts.

"She looks just like a witch," whispered Beppina, making the devil's horns with her fingers to protect herself from the Evil Eye. "Let's hurry past."

They shrank back against the opposite wall of the

narrow passage and tried to squeeze by, but the old woman swept out a bony hand and seized Beppina by the skirt.

"For the love of Santa Maria, just a few soldi, my pretty little lady," she whined, pulling the child toward her. Her smile was so terrifying that Beppina gave a little scream, and with Beppo's help tore herself free of the old woman's grasp. Then the two fled still farther up the street, followed by a storm of abuse and the laughter of the idle people they passed in their flight.

When at last they paused for breath, they found themselves in a labyrinth of narrow alleys, with no idea of which way to turn to get back to the piazza. Beppina was frightened, but Beppo said confidently, "All we've got to do is to keep on going, and we are sure to strike either the piazza or the river, and we shall know how to get home from either one, so don't you be afraid."

Inspired by his boldness, Beppina followed him from one narrow passage to another, until at last the streets began to widen again, and they saw before them an open square, and heard the sound of music. They ran joyously forward and found themselves in a beautiful but strange piazza, with a

great fountain playing in the center, and fine old buildings surrounding it on all sides.

The source of the music was hidden by a throng of people gathered together near the fountain. "It's a hand organ," cried Beppo eagerly. "Maybe there's a monkey!" and he dashed into the midst of the crowd.

Beppina followed close behind, and the two worked their way under the elbows of the grown people until they reached the very center, where they were thrilled to find a dark, swarthy man, holding a bear by a rope. The bear was dancing clumsily on his hind legs, and near by a woman with black eyes and hair and great rings in her ears was grinding an organ. On top of the organ sat a monkey in a red cap shaking a tambourine. Behind the group stood a yellow van, drawn by two donkeys gayly tricked out with scarlet nets and jingling bells.

The twins had no sooner arrived upon the scene than the music stopped, the bear dropped upon all fours, and the monkey, hopping down from the organ, began to leap about among the people, holding out the tambourine for money. Then it was wonderful to see how rapidly the crowd melted

away! In a few moments the children were the only ones left. Beppo gave his last coin to the monkey, and the woman, throwing a black look after the disappearing crowd, ground out another tune for them on the organ, while the monkey, to Beppo's great delight, leaped upon his shoulder and searched his pockets with her little black paws.

The man, meanwhile, was preparing to start away. He handed the bear's rope to his wife and, climbing to the driver's seat of the van, cracked his whip, and shouted, "Aiou! aiou! you laggards!" to the donkeys. The monkey leaped from Beppo's shoulder to the back of the bear, and, as the caravan began to move, turned somersaults on the bear's back with such wonderful agility that no boy on earth could have resisted following her. The woman said something to her husband which the children did not understand, though they did not know that it was because she spoke to him in the Venetian dialect; then she turned to Beppo and said with an insinuating smile, "Where is it that the Signore lives?"

Now here was a woman of sense! She called him Signore, as if he were already a grown man! Beppo swelled

with satisfaction and answered promptly, "In the Palace Grifoni, across the river."

"Si, si," said the woman, which in Italian means "Yes, yes."

"We are going in that direction. Would you not like to go with us and lead the bear?" Oh, if Teresina could have heard that! Here were people who thought him quite big enough to lead a live bear, while she—and Mammina, too, for that matter—thought he still should be followed by a nurse!

Beppo leaped boldly forward, though Beppina tried to hold him back, and, seizing the bear's rope, marched proudly along behind the van. The woman laughed and clapped her hands. "Bravo, bravo!" she cried. Then, turning to the panic-stricken Beppina, she said comfortingly: "The old Ugolone will not hurt him. He is very old and as tame as a kitten. See!" She gave the bear a slap and walked along beside him with her hand on his back, and Beppina could do nothing but follow.

For some time they trailed the van in this way, together with a small army of boys and girls, who were consumed



with envy for Beppo and hoped they too might be allowed a turn at leading the bear. One by one they had dropped away and returned to their homes before the twins realized that the afternoon was nearly spent and night was approaching.

"We must go home now, please," said Beppina politely to the woman.

"Si, si," said the woman, nodding her head and smiling

more than ever. "We shall soon see the river."

This assurance quieted Beppina for a time, and she trudged patiently along until they reached the very outskirts of the city, and still no bridge and no river had appeared. Not Beppina only, but Beppo too now began to be alarmed. Where were they going? Oh, if only the gray walls of the Grifoni palace would rise before them! Beppo even began to modify his opinion about Teresina. Her ruff and streamers would have been as welcome a sight to him just then as an oasis to travelers in the desert. But alas! Teresina was at that moment many miles away, and distracted with anxiety and grief. The bewildered Beppina now began to cry.

"Come, my pretty," said the woman in a wheedling tone, "you are tired, is it not so? You shall rest the weary legs." Her voice was soft, but she seized Beppina with a grip of steel, and swung her up into the back of the moving van. "You too, my brave one," she went on, taking the bear's rope from Beppo's hand, and tying it to a ring in the back of the cart. "Up you go." She gave him a shove as he scrambled up beside Beppina, and then, tossing the monkey

in after him, swung herself up beside the children.

The road now began to ascend, and the twins with growing terror watched the sun sink lower and lower behind the dome of the Cathedral, which they could see in the distance. Beppina shook with sobs, and Beppo sat pale and frightened as the tower and the dome, the only landmarks they knew in Florence, grew darker and darker against the sunset sky.

"Do not cry, madonna mia," said the woman, giving Beppina a little shake. "You have missed your way, but what of that? You are safe with us. If you have money in your pockets you might possibly find your way home even yet, though it is nearly dark, and it is very dangerous for children to go about alone."

"But we haven't any money," said Beppo. "I gave all I had to the monkey!"

"Ah," said the woman, "that is bad, to go back without money! You would spend the night in the streets without doubt, or possibly in the jail. If the police found you they would take you for vagrants. It would be terrible indeed if the police should get you! Still, if you think best you can

jump down and start back right now. I do not believe the bear would hurt you, even though he does not like to have anyone jump right in front of him!"

The children looked down at Ugolone, lumbering along behind the van. If they jumped it must be almost on top of him, and in the darkness he looked as big as a house and very alarming. Even Beppo lost his swagger, and as for Beppina, she was speechless with terror. The woman continued to cajole them.

"Soon we shall camp beside the road for the night," she said, "and you shall have something hot for your supper, and sleep in the van as cozy as birds in a nest. That is surely much better than the jail! And tomorrow—oh, la bella vita! just think, you shall grind the organ and play with Carina all day long, and there will be no lessons!"

There was no response to this alluring prospect. The children, homesick, weary, terror-stricken, clung to each other in the darkness, and shrank as far as possible from the woman, whom they now saw to be not their friend, but their jailer.

On and on through the deepening darkness lumbered

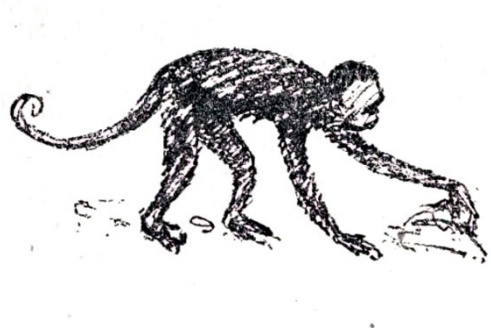
the yellow van, until it seemed to the unhappy children that it must be nearly morning. At last, however, the team turned from the highroad and stopped beside a little stream. The woman sprang out, and while her husband unharnessed the donkeys and tied Ugolone to a tree for the night, she built a fire, and hung a kettle over it. She put the monkey in Beppina's arms, and sent Beppo for water from the stream, and to gather sticks for the fire. Soon a kettleful of steaming mush was ready, and the woman, whose name was Carlotta, called Luigi, her husband, and, giving the children each a tin dish, bade them eat their supper. Even if it had been her favorite food, Beppina could not have swallowed a mouthful that night, but Beppo, though he too was homesick, could still eat, even though nothing better than polenta was offered him. He sat down with Carlotta and Luigi before the fire on the ground, while Beppina stayed in the back of the van, hugging the monkey to her lonely heart and striving to keep back the tears.

The flickering flames lit up the trunks of the trees, making them stand out like sentinels against the velvet darkness of the woods beyond, and sending dancing

shadows of the bear and the donkeys far across the murmuring stream. The moon looked down through the treetops and the nightingales sang plaintively in the shadows.

After supper, while Luigi sat smoking his pipe by the fire, Carlotta threw a heap of straw into one corner of the van, and said to the children: "Come hither, my poverelli! Here is a soft bed for you! Lie down and sleep!"

Too tired to do anything else, if, indeed, there had been anything else in the world for them to do, the children obeyed, and, clasped in each other's arms, soon fell asleep, worn out with sorrow and fatigue.





CHAPTER III
In the Mountains

They were awakened next morning by the chattering of the monkey, and, looking out from their corner, they could not for a moment remember where they were, or how they came to be there. The sun was shining brightly, the birds were singing, and Carlotta was up and stirring something in a pot over the fire. Luigi had gone with the donkeys to give them a drink, and Ugolone was standing on his hind legs beside his tree, grunting impatiently for his breakfast.

Beppina gazed at the strange scene for one blank moment, then, as memory came back, she buried her head in the straw and sobbed. Beppo tried to comfort her.

"Don't cry, Beppinella," he whispered. "Today we shall find some way of returning to Florence. I feel sure of it! It might be worse. Pazienza! We must make the best of it."

Just then, Carlotta, hearing the muffled sobs and the

murmur of his voice, appeared at the end of the van.

"Come out, little lost ones," she called to them. "The sun shines, and we shall have a fine day in the mountains. See, here is Carina waiting to greet you!" She tossed the monkey toward them as she spoke, and disappeared around the end of the van. Soon she returned, carrying in her hand a green blouse and a gay striped skirt.

"Here," she said to Beppina, "I will lend these to you. Then you can save your pretty clothes so they will be clean to wear when you return to your Mammina." She spoke so confidently of their return that Beppina thought perhaps the woman meant to take them back that very day. She reluctantly put on the queer blouse and the striped skirt, while Beppo arrayed himself in a pair of velveteen trousers which were as much too long for him as the skirt was for Beppina. Carlotta had brought these also, and she gave him a red sash to bind around his waist as well. When they were equipped in these garments the two children gazed at each other in dismay.

"You don't look like Beppo at all. You look just like a bandit," said Beppina.

"And you—you look like a gypsy girl!" gasped Beppo.

"Even Mammina wouldn't know us if she were to see us now," Beppina whispered, despairingly.

"That's just why that woman did it!" gasped Beppo, with sudden illumination. "She doesn't care a bit about saving our clothes! She wants to disguise us, so people will think we belong to them!"

"Oh, dear!" shuddered Beppina. "Let's change back again."

They seized their clothes, but just then they saw Carlotta's glittering black eyes gazing in at them from the end of the van. It was as if she knew their very thoughts.



"Avanti, avanti!" she called. "Is it that you are lazy? Come! We must be on the road!"

Not daring to linger or protest, the two strange little figures came tumbling out of the straw at once, and, after washing in the brook, sat down on a fallen log to eat their breakfast. Carina perched beside them on the log, and, when she had finished her own portion, leaped on Ugolone's back, and, leaning down, snatched away some of his breakfast from under his nose. In vain poor old Ugolone growled and slapped at her with his clumsy paws. He was always too slow to catch her.

The children were so absorbed in watching this drama that they did not notice what Carlotta was doing meanwhile, but later, when they looked for their own clothes again, they had mysteriously disappeared, and were not seen again.

When they had finished breakfast, Carlotta called to Beppina, "Come here, poverina! Your hair is full of straw. I will fix it for you." Beppina obeyed, and the woman coaxed her tangled locks into place, combing them with her fingers, and at last succeeded in plaiting them into a

number of tight braids which she wound about her head. "There," said she when this was done, "now you will no longer need your hat."

"But," said Beppina, "I want my hat! Only peasants go bare-headed." The woman gave a short laugh, and her teeth gleamed so white between her lips that Beppina thought of the wolf who tried to pass himself off for Red Riding Hood's grandmother.

"Do as you are told," said Carlotta. She smiled as she said it, but there was such a fierce look in her face that Beppina made the sign against the Evil Eye, with her hand behind her, and submitted silently as Carlotta tied a red kerchief over the braids. These preparations completed, the caravan moved on, with Luigi as usual in the driver's seat, Carlotta leading the bear, and the twins, carrying the monkey, bringing up the rear.

On and on they travelled, but in which direction the children could only guess. There were many turns in the road, which wound constantly upward, and with every mile the country grew more wild. Through openings between the hills they caught fleeting glimpses of quaint villages

clinging to the mountainsides, and of ancient castles commanding beautiful views across fertile valleys. At one time they saw the roofs of a great stone monastery, hidden away among olive trees. They heard the music of its bells and caught faint echoes of the chanting of the monks. It was then that they remembered that it was Easter Sunday.

"If we were at home, we should now be hunting Easter eggs and sugar lambs in the garden," whispered Beppina.

"Teresina said there wouldn't be any there, anyway," Beppo answered, winking very hard; and then neither one said anything for a long time.



All day long the donkeys plodded up the steep slopes, only stopping by the wayside for rest and food at noon. It was evident that Luigi thought best to keep to the least frequented mountain ways, so all through the sunny hours the sad little travelers walked behind the van, or climbed inside to rest their weary feet, not knowing where they were going and not daring to ask.

At sunset they reached the crest of a high hill, and, looking back, they could see far, far away in the purple distance, the twinkling lights of the city of Florence, looking like a sky full of stars fallen to earth. On the slopes of nearer hills there were other twinkling lights like chains of jewels winding in and out among the trees. The mountain villages were celebrating the Easter festival with candlelit processions and with singing. The words of the Easter song floated across the blue spaces. "The Royal Banners forward go," came the faint chant, and, mingling with the vesper song of thrush and nightingale, lulled the tired travelers to dreamless sleep.



CHAPTER IV
They Learn to Dance

It was cold in the mountains, and the children shivered as Carlotta routed them out in the early dawn of the next morning. “Come,” she said crossly, as she set up the forked sticks for the kettle, “bestir yourselves, lazy ones! We are poor people. Do you think we can afford to feed you and wait upon you like servants besides? Today there must be no more sniveling and whining. Beppo, take the pail and fetch water. You, Beppina, gather sticks for the fire.”

Her wheedling manner was now quite gone. Instead she gave her orders with such a threatening look that the children trembled with fear as they hastened to obey. At a little distance from the spot where they were encamped, a stream, fed by a mountain spring, gushed forth from a pile of rocks, and Beppo, seizing the pail, plunged into the dark pine woods to find it. Beppina followed, and the instant

they found themselves alone in the forest, the two hid behind a tree and held a hurried consultation.

"Listen, cocca mia," whispered Beppo. "I have thought this all out. They do not mean to take us back, ever! They will keep us like slaves to work for them! If we want to see our home again, we must obey everything they say, no matter how hard. Then someday, when they aren't watching, we will run away. Only not in these mountains! We should only die of hunger and be eaten by the wolves."

Beppina shuddered. "Oh, Beppo," she sobbed, "there is a lump in my throat as big as an egg! I cannot swallow it. When I think of Mammina, it seems to me I shall die!"

Beppo gave her a little shake. "But you *must* be brave," he said. "Every day we will have a word together, and soon our chance will come."

"I'll try, Beppo," said Beppina, gulping down her sobs.

"Good girl!" said Beppo, patting her approvingly, though his own lips trembled and his voice shook. "Don't you remember how it is in the fairy tales? The prince *always* kills the giants and dragons if only he isn't afraid, even if he has to pass through enchanted forests."

Beppina looked fearfully over her shoulder. "Oh, Beppo," she gasped, "I didn't think of it before, but now I'm sure. This *is* an enchanted forest, and Carlotta is a witch woman! We must pray always to the Holy Virgin to protect us. Promise me you will!"

"I promise," said Beppo solemnly; "and don't you forget about the prince either."

Just then they heard Carlotta's voice shouting at them, and, leaping apart, they fled to do their errands.

When breakfast had been eaten, and the animals fed, Luigi lit his pipe and stretched out on the ground beside the fire with the monkey beside him.

"Here we stay a little," he said. "Ugolone lies there like one dead. The donkeys are tired and so am I. We have come thirty miles from Florence."

"Ecco!" said Carlotta. "Then there is time for bean soup." She sent Beppo for more water, and, when the kettle was bubbling on the fire, called the children to her side. "Tell me," she said, "can you dance?"

"A little," quavered Beppina. "Dance, then," said the woman. Beppina reluctantly seized her skirts, and, making

a dancing school bow, took a few dainty steps and tripped over a stone.

Carlotta laughed contemptuously. "Santa Maria!" she said, "you don't call that dancing!" Then, beckoning to her husband, she cried, "But they know nothing! They cannot earn their salt! We have made a bad bargain. Come, then, and we will teach these ignorant ones the trescone!"

Luigi grunted as he rose unwillingly from his hard couch, tied the monkey's string about a tree branch, and came forward.

"Watch closely, both of you," said Carlotta to the children. "It is for you to dance like Tuscans, not like marionettes. Even old Ugolone can do better."

Once he was roused, Luigi's weariness seemed to vanish. He suddenly seized Carlotta's hands, and, holding her at arm's length, began to wheel and jump, to turn and twist in all sorts of curious figures. Sometimes the dancers' arms were linked above their heads. Sometimes they shook a lifted foot. Faster and faster they whirled, and the monkey, inspired by their example, began to leap and bound about at the end of her string, chattering wildly.

The speed of the dancers slackened like that of a spinning top, and they came to a sudden standstill. Luigi returned to Carina and his place by the fire, and Carlotta got out the hand organ. All the morning she made the children practice the figures of the dance to music, until they were ready to drop with fatigue. While she prepared the soup for their noon meal they were allowed to rest, but immediately afterwards the donkeys were harnessed again, and to the music of their tinkling bells the little cavalcade moved on.

For some time they travelled over the steep mountain roads without seeing a soul; then they met a girl driving a flock of sheep to pasture. Later they overtook some peasant women walking like queens with great loads of wood on their heads. Beyond them they passed an ox-team, and Beppo whispered to Beppina, "It's a good sign to meet oxen in the road." But alas, a moment later they met a priest, mumbling his prayers as he walked. It was a glance of despair that Beppina gave her brother then, for it is very bad luck to meet a priest in the road, as every Tuscan child can tell you.

Nevertheless, all these signs, bad and good, indicated that they were approaching a town, and a few moments later they came to a stream where women were washing clothes, and the van rumbled across a bridge and into the open square of a small mountain village. In an instant there was great excitement in the town, and all the inhabitants swarmed about the van.

Luigi climbed down from the driver's seat, with Carina on his shoulder, and loosed the bear's rope, while Carlotta brought out the organ, and gave the tambourine to the monkey.

"Balla! Balla!" cried Luigi, and Ugolone rising to his hind legs wearily began his clumsy dance. The children, meanwhile, shrank back out of sight in the van.

"She will make us dance like the bear, I know she will," moaned Beppina, "and I cannot remember the steps!" She crossed herself frantically, and said a prayer to the Virgin, but it was of no avail, for soon Carlotta's wheedling tones reached their hiding place.

"Avanti, carissimi," she called, and, not daring to disobey or even to linger, the children leaped from the back of



the van into the center of a crowd of round-eyed villagers. The children of the Marchese Grifoni dancing in company with a monkey and a bear for the entertainment of an audience of peasants! The humiliation of it was almost more than they could endure, but the twins did their best, and the moment the performance was over dived into the back of the van, and hid themselves again, while Carina leaped about among the crowd, gathering the soldi in her

tambourine.

Their stay in the village was short, for the people were poor.

"It is a town of pigs," said Carlotta angrily, as she counted the money, and to the great relief of the children she gave the order to move on into the hills beyond the village.

They stopped at one more village during the afternoon,



and here things went better. The children remembered their steps, and there were more soldi in the tambourine, even though Ugolone sat firmly down upon his haunches and refused to budge. In vain Luigi tugged at his rope and shouted "Balla! Balla!" It was as if Ugolone, seeing the children dance, had concluded that his dancing days were over, and had resigned in their favor.

To make up for Ugolone the twins had to dance again and again, and then to their great surprise Carlotta made them sing! They had voices like the whistle of song thrushes in the spring, but how in the world could Carlotta have guessed that? They were too astonished to refuse, even if they had dared, so they opened their mouths and quavered out a song about the swallow, which they had learned in the nursery at home.

This was the song:—

"Pilgrim swallow, lightly winging,
Now upon the terrace sitting,
Ev'ry morn I hear thee singing,
In sad tones thy song repeating.
What may be the tale thou'rt telling,
Pilgrim swallow, near my dwelling?

"Thou art happier far than I am;
On free wing at least thou'rt flying
Over lake and breezy mountain.
Thou canst fill the air with crying
His dear name through cave and hollow.
Thou art free, thou pretty swallow."

It was so familiar a song that all the people joined with them in singing it, and some of them danced to the music of the hand organ when it played, so that altogether the villagers had a gay time, and as a result Carlotta found many more coins than usual in the tambourine when the performance was over. She glanced triumphantly at her husband as she counted the money. "We have caught two pigeons with one pea after all," she said to him.

"As for that lazy Ugolone, he gets no supper! If he will not work, he shall not eat!"

The children heard and shuddered. "She will treat us like that, too," sobbed Beppina, "and if she's truly a witch she may even turn us into bears!"

Out through sunny vineyards and gray olive orchards beyond the town they followed the winding road, and, as night came on, the weary children saw that they were

approaching a ruined castle set high on a spur of the Apennines. The wind swept over the bare hilltop and whistled through the windows of its ruined towers, where hundreds of years before lovely ladies had watched their knights ride forth to battle.

It was a bleak and lonely spot, fit only to be inhabited by ghosts, and Beppina shivered as the wheels of the van rattled over the ancient drawbridge, and stopped in the overgrown courtyard.

"I know it's enchanted," she whispered to Beppo, and Beppo, his own teeth chattering, could only say, "Remember about the prince," to keep up their failing courage.

There was no sign of human beings about the place, and Luigi took possession as if he owned it. He tied Ugolone in the ruins of what had once been a stately banqueting hall, and let the donkeys eat their supper from the green grass which carpeted the courtyard.

Soon a fire was blazing in the ruins of an ancient chimney, and the tired travelers gathered about it for their evening meal. From the tower came the surprised hoot of a

solitary owl, and bats, disturbed by the light, swooped in great circles about the little group as they silently ate their polenta. Even the monkey seemed to feel the weird spell of the place, for she cowered in a corner by the fire, chattering to herself, while from the banqueting hall came the complaining growls of poor hungry Ugolone. It was to such music as this that the children of the Marchese at last fell asleep.





CHAPTER V
On the Road

When they awoke the next morning Carlotta and Luigi were nowhere in sight. The monkey was tied to one wheel of the van, and from the banqueting hall came the sound of human voices, quarrelling. The tones were so loud that the children could not help hearing the words.

"It is all your fault!" said Luigi's voice. "It was you who made me get the bear in the first place, and undertake this foolish trip, all because you must again see your people in Florence. If we had but stayed in Venice! The bear was old when we got him; he was already tired and sick when we left Florence, and now, per Bacco, he is dead! You would not feed him, yet it was Ugolone that we depended upon to bring in the money. A hand organ, a monkey—what are they? And now you have added those brats beside for us to feed! This comes of listening to a woman and a smooth-

tongued Tuscan at that. I could beat you!"

Carlotta's wheedling voice answered him. "Do not grieve, my angel," she said; "you will yet see the wisdom of your Carlotta. Ugolone was old and sick, it is true. A pest upon the villain who sold him to us! May his eyes weep rivers of tears! But you are wrong about the children. They are worth more than Ugolone, the donkeys, and the van, all put together. Did you not see how they pleased the people yesterday? I will teach them to sing more songs, and to dance the tarantella as well as the trescone, and we shall soon forget this sorrow. When we reach the coast, we will sell the van and the donkeys, and go back to your beloved Venice, to live in comfort on the earnings of these brats! You shall see!"

"That's more of your oily Tuscan talk," growled Luigi. "Think of the risk we run! If the ragazzini should be recognized, it would go hard with us. Their parents will lay every trap to catch us. It is safe enough in these mountain villages, but in the larger towns it will be a different story. There are the police—"

Carlotta interrupted him. "Che, che!" she cried. "You

have the heart of a chicken! I tell you, even their own mother would hardly know them now, and it will be easy to hide them in Venice. We shall be like rats in the walls of a house, where the cat cannot follow. As for traps—we are too sharp for them. Even if we were to be seen and tracked, they will not seek donkeys and a van in Venice, where there are no such things."

Luigi only grunted for reply, and Carlotta, seeing that her arguments had made an impression, boldly finished her plan.

"When we reach the coast," she said, "you remain behind to sell the van, and I will go on to Venice with the ragazzini. We shall not be pursued upon the boat. Courage! In a few days we shall be safe, and then we can live at ease, and you will say, 'Ah, what a great head has my Carlotta!'"

There was no reply from Luigi, and soon the children heard their returning footfalls on the stone flagging.

"Pretend you're asleep," whispered Beppo. "We mustn't let them think we overheard." They instantly lay down in the straw again, and when Carlotta came to the back of the van a moment later, she was obliged to call twice before she

could arouse them!

While Carlotta, looking very glum, was cooking the everlasting polenta, the children crept fearsomely into the ruined tower to take a last look at poor old Ugolone. There he lay on the flagstones, a shapeless lump of fur, and a little later Luigi skinned him, hung the pelt on the back of the van, and, leaving the bones to whiten where they lay, set forth once more upon the road. From this time on things grew harder and harder for the unhappy children. Carlotta was caressing and smooth in her manner to them when they were in the villages, calling them "my children," "carissimi," which means "dearest," and other tender names, but when they were by themselves she grew more and more harsh, while Luigi was sullen, and scarcely spoke to them at all.

It was Carlotta who made them dance until they were ready to drop with fatigue, and sing when their hearts were breaking. Everywhere the people thought them charming, and it was true, as Carlotta had said, that they brought in more money than Ugolone.

They were now passing through one of the most lovely regions in the world, but its beauty failed to comfort them



or reconcile them to their lot. The rocky ramparts and blue horizon of the mountains were but prison walls to them, from which they longed to escape. One night, as they lay shivering in the straw, with Carlotta and Luigi snoring at the other end of the van, Beppo cautiously nudged his sister.

"It sounds like Teresina," he whispered. "Don't you remember how she snored that day we left home?"

"Don't," begged Beppina. "It makes me homesick."

"I never thought I could wish to hear Teresina snore," Beppo answered, "but now it would be music in my ears." They were silent a few minutes, and then Beppina—timid Beppina—put her lips close to Beppo's ear and whispered, "Let's get out and run away."

"Where to?" Beppo whispered.

"Anywhere, *anywhere* away from here!" said poor Beppina. "I'd rather starve in the mountains than stay any longer. We could creep out without waking them."

"It's awfully dark," said Beppo, "and we'll have to climb right over them!"

"Oh, let's try," urged Beppina. They sat up cautiously and peered out. They could just see a dark mass blocking up the open end of the van. They struggled to their knees. The straw rustled, and they stopped dead, until everything was still again. Then Beppo rose to his feet, and, treading very carefully, took a step toward the end of the van. But alas, he had forgotten the monkey! She slept beside her mistress, and Beppo stepped on her tail! There was a scream as Carina leaped up in the air, and lit on Beppo's

shoulder, chattering furiously, and Beppo instantly dropped down into the straw again.

"What's the matter?" said Carlotta.

The children could see her dark silhouette as she sat up and looked into the dark interior of the van.

"Carina mia! What is the matter?"

"Lie down," growled Luigi. "She has had a bad dream. Go to sleep!" The monkey leaped to Carlotta's arm, snuggled down beside her, and quiet reigned once more. When the snores began again, the children had no courage for a second attempt, and morning found things as hopeless as ever.

They were now descending the eastern slopes of the Apennines, and Beppo, remembering his geography, knew that they were getting farther and farther from Florence. At noon that day, as they were walking ahead of the van, they rounded a turn in the road, and came suddenly upon a view stretching far across the plains of eastern Italy to where the blue waters of the Adriatic lay sparkling in the sun. The landscape was dotted with villages, and far away in the blue distance they could see the spires and towers of a large coast

town.

Beppo's spirits rose a little. "See," he said to Beppina, "we are coming out of the mountains into a region where there are many towns. Who knows? Perhaps we may find a chance to get away. It would be less dangerous here than in the hills."

But again they were doomed to disappointment, for the next day it rained, and Carlotta made them stay hidden in the van as it lumbered slowly through the villages on the road to the sea. Though it was only two days, it seemed at least a week that they lay in the straw, listening to the rumble of the wheels and the patter of the rain on the roof. There could be no fires, so their food was bread and cheese, which Carlotta bought in the towns.

At last, early on the third morning, they heard from their prison a new sound, and, peering cautiously over Luigi's shoulder, saw that at last they had reached the sea. They could hear the slapping of waves against the piles of a dock, and could catch glimpses of green water. Men with trucks were hurrying by, loading fruit and vegetables upon a large boat which was tied to the pier. There was so much

noise about them that the children could talk together in low tones without being overheard.

"I know where we are," said Beppo. "I tell you, I'm glad I studied geography! The sun is breaking through the clouds over the water, and it's early morning, so that's the east, of course. We heard Carlotta say they were going to take us to Venice, so this must be a coast town on the Adriatic. It isn't Ravenna, because Ravenna is back from the sea a few miles. The only other big port along here is Rimini, and I'll bet that's just where we are."

"Oh, Beppo, what a wonderful boy you are, to think that all out yourself!" said Beppina. "You're such a wonderful thinker! Why can't you think of a way to escape?"

"I do think, all the time," answered poor Beppo, "but Carlotta is just like a cat at a mouse hole. Her eyes never leave us, and if we should try to run, she would pounce—"

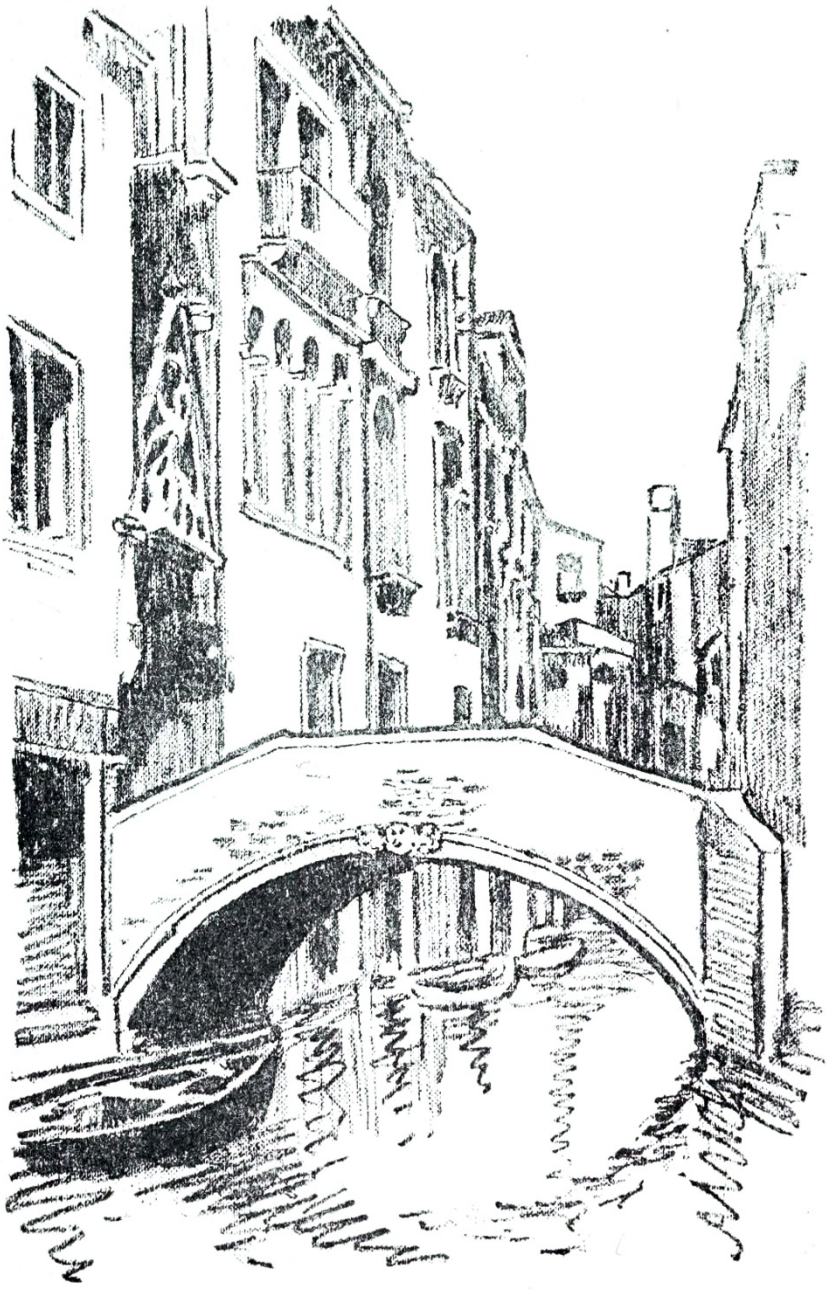
"Hush!" whispered Beppina, "there she is." There, indeed, she was, smiling craftily at them from the end of the van.

"You may come out now, my little ones," she said in her most syrupy tones. "Here we leave the van with Luigi, while

we take a nice boat ride!" She seized them firmly by the hands, and, followed by Luigi carrying the organ and the monkey, led them over the gangplank on to the boat. Once aboard, she sought an obscure corner, behind the baskets of fruit and vegetables with which the vessel was loaded, and made the children sit beside her, while Luigi piled around them numerous bundles brought from the van.

At last the rumble of trucks ceased, the sailors loosed the great hawsers which tied the boat to the dock, and in a few moments the children, looking back to the shore, saw a widening strip of green water between them and their native land.





CHAPTER VI

Venice

For two beautiful bright days they remained on the boat, as it made its way up the eastern coast of Italy, and on the morning of the third, there, rising before them out of the mists, like a dream city afloat upon the waters, was Venice! It was so lovely, with its domes, towers, and palaces mirrored in the still waters, and its hundreds of sails making spots of bright color against the blue, that for a short time the children almost forgot their grief. As the boat entered a great lagoon, and slowly made its way through the Canal della Giudecca to the landing place, Carlotta grew more than ever vigilant. The children had hoped against hope that some way of escape might appear when they reached the dock, but Carlotta remained at their elbows every moment, and under her watchful eyes they could not even speak to each other, much less to anyone else.

It was evident that she meant to make them understand how impossible it would be for them to get away from Venice, for as the boat rounded the western side of the island upon which the city is built, she pointed out to them the mainland, lying two miles away across the water, and the long black railroad bridge which is the only connection between the two.

"You see how it is, my little ones," she said. "One cannot leave Venice without a boat, a ticket on the railway, or wings! And truly, how could anyone wish to leave it? Luigi has been wretched all the time he has been away, and never wishes to desert his beloved city again. You too will feel the same."

The children made no reply. They were as helpless as caged birds, and could only follow her silently, as she loaded them with bundles, and, herself carrying the organ and the monkey, led the way across the gangplank to the dock. Staggering under their burdens, they entered the city of Venice. Oh, if they could only have entered it with their dear Babbo, or Mammina, how happy they would have been, for there, right before their eyes as they walked, were

all the wonderful things which Beppo had learned about in his geography!

There were the canals with the gondolas flitting about on them like black beetles on a pool. There were the great beautiful buildings with their façades rising out of the water, and their back doors opening upon narrow streets or tiny open squares. There were the glimpses of blossoming treetops hanging over high walls, and of balconies gay with potted geraniums and carnations in bloom. There were the beautiful stone doorways with gayly painted posts beside them, to which empty gondolas were tied.

The air was misty and fragrant with sea smells, and in every direction they looked their eyes were greeted with the lovely colors of the old buildings, reflected in the water so clearly that it seemed as if there were two cities, one hanging suspended upside down below the other. It was so different from Florence, from Rome, from anything they had ever seen before, that the children forgot even that they were hungry, and went up the streets wide-eyed with wonder, absorbed in all these marvels.

"Get on, get on!" said Carlotta crossly, behind them.

"Your eyes will pop out of your heads, and drop in the street if you stare so. Carina is hungry, and so am I, and we must earn our dinner before we eat it."

Through one narrow street after another they made their way, until at last they reached an open square fronting on the water.

"Here is the market," said Carlotta, depositing the organ in the middle of the open space, and the children, sighing with relief, also dropped their bundles and gazed about them. Drawn up to the water's edge were many boats loaded with great baskets of fruit and vegetables. Merchants swarmed about these boats like flies, and the produce was immediately purchased and placed in stalls or booths around the edge of the square, where people with market baskets on their arms were buying their provisions for the day.

It was a busy and crowded place, but Carlotta gave the children little time to look. "Dance," she commanded, as she began to grind out a tune upon the organ. Carina sprang to the top of the box, and began to hop up and down in time to the music as the children went through the wild

contortions of the trescone. A crowd immediately gathered about them, and the coins began to rain into Carina's tambourine.

When the dance was finished, Carlotta led the way to a booth in the square, where hot macaroni was for sale, and here their hungry mouths were filled with the first warm food they had tasted for several days. They ate and were comforted. Then, leaving the marketplace, they passed through narrow streets and over little bridges spanning the canals, until they reached another small open square in a crowded portion of the city. Carlotta walked faster and faster as they approached it, and the twins had almost to run to keep up with her.

As they entered the square, a small dirty boy about Beppo's size suddenly gave a shout. "It is Carina!" he cried, and, not noticing Carlotta or the twins, he seized the monkey in his arms and kissed its little black face. Carlotta gave him a playful slap.

"Ecco!" she cried to the twins. "Here we have the brave Giovanni! And he cares nothing for his godmother! He loves only the little black monkey! See, Giovanni! I have

brought two playmates for you. They were lost, and I have protected them out of charity. They will live with us."

Giovanni stared at the twins for a moment, then he ran out his tongue at Beppo. "I can lick you!" he cried. Beppo stiffened with fury. All the pent-up rage of the past weeks rose up within him, and here was someone on whom he could legitimately wreak it! He dropped his bundles, rolled up his sleeves, and roared, "Come on!"

Giovanni threw the monkey at Carlotta and instantly came on! A crowd of ragged boys and girls gathered about them, and the fight began. It did not last long, for Beppo had taken boxing lessons along with his other studies, and he met Giovanni's advance with a swift blow which sent him spinning to the ground. Then he sat upon him until he begged for mercy, while the crowd squealed with delight. Carlotta turned the organ and the monkey over to Beppina, picked Beppo off the prostrate Giovanni, and then, seizing the two boys by their collars, thumped their heads smartly together.

"Ecco!" she said. "Now you have had your fight, you can be friends." Loading them both with bundles, she marched



them across the square to the back door of a dilapidated house, with the crowd surging about them. Here she drew them into a narrow entrance and, leading them up two flights of dirty stairs, knocked at a door. It was opened by a slatternly woman, who gave a shrill cry of astonishment when she saw the group on her threshold.

The monkey evidently knew her, for he leaped from Giovanni's arms to her shoulder and began to pull her hair.

"Santa Maria! Santa Maria!" screamed the woman. "If

it is not that devil of a Carina come back again! Let go of my hair, you demon, or I'll wring your black neck!"

Carlotta laughed, and picked the monkey off of Giovanni's mother just as she had picked Beppo off of her son a few moments before.

The children, left to themselves, stared about at their new quarters, while Giovanni stared at them. The room was large, bare, dilapidated, and dirty. On the floor were some old mattresses filled with corn husks, which were evidently used as beds. There was a wooden table with some soiled dishes standing on it, and, beyond this and a few chairs, there was no furniture except two pots of geraniums on the windowsill. A door opened into a smaller room beyond, and through it they could see a stove, with a kettle standing on the floor beside it.

Giovanni had evidently made up his mind that anyone who could "lick" him must indeed be a hero, for, having finished his critical survey of the twins, he said affably, "My father is a gondolier. What's yours?"

"A Marchese," said Beppo.

"Holy Madonna!" gasped the boy. "Doesn't he do any

work?"

"No," said Beppo. "He just goes to Rome to help the King."

Carlotta overheard them. "Don't you ever say that again, you wicked little liar!" she cried fiercely. "If you do, I'll cut off your tongue." She turned again to the other woman.

"Do they look like the children of a Marchese? I ask you," she said. "They were lost, and I have taken care of them out of charity! They sing and dance to pay for their keep, but it's little enough they bring in at best! Old Ugolone is dead, and Luigi has stayed behind to dispose of the van and the donkeys. With the money he gets for them he'll buy a boat and pick up a living on the canals. We shall go no more on tours about the country. It does not pay. There are as many soldi to be found in Venice as anywhere, and with the organ and Carina we shall get along, even with two extra mouths to feed!"

Giovanni's mother winked her eye and nodded a great many times.

"Si, si," she said. "There will be many tourists in Venice

this summer, and it is not to believe the way Americans throw money about. Mario says their pockets are lined with gold!"

Sick with terror, the children turned away from Carlotta and looked out of the windows.

"See me," said Giovanni. He wanted to do something to make himself admired after his recent humiliation, so he doubled himself across the sill of the open window and leaned far out over the canal which flowed directly beneath. "Look!" he cried, waving his legs at the peril of taking a header into the water.

His mother seized him. "Madonna mia," she screamed, "that boy would rather drown than not," and, giving him a smart spank, she jerked him back into the room by a leg. Giovanni rubbed the spot and grinned sheepishly, as his mother followed up the punishment by a flow of speech which sounded to the twins much like the chattering of the monkey. "Get along with you!" she said finally, giving him a shove.

"Come," said Carlotta to the twins when this little scene was over. "Soldi grow only in the street," and, picking up

the organ, she led the way down the stairs.

The children were glad to follow, for they preferred the streets to such a dwelling, and Giovanni, thinking it advisable to remain out of his mother's sight for a while, followed them, carrying the monkey in his arms.



CHAPTER VII

Three Weeks Drift By

All the rest of that day, and for many days after, the children followed Carlotta through the maze of streets, dancing and singing in the piazzas and the marketplace, or anywhere else where crowds were gathered. Giovanni, having nothing else to do, went with them much of the time, and added his talents to the exhibition. He could turn "cartwheels" until he looked like a real whirling wheel with only four spokes, and he could walk on his hands. He was glad to display these accomplishments, for he liked being away from home, he liked Carina, and best of all he liked the twins. The three became quite friendly, and Carlotta, seeing this, smiled her sly smile, and winked knowingly at Giovanni's mother, as though to say: "You see, they are getting used to their new way of living. Soon they will forget their old home, and I shall have no more trouble with

them."

Little by little the children came to know Venice better than they had known Florence, which is not saying much, since in Florence they had so completely lost themselves. They could go from Giovanni's house to the Rialto, the largest of the three bridges which span the Grand Canal, and find their way through the maze of streets to the beautiful Piazza of San Marco. They liked best to go there, not only because it is the most beautiful spot in Venice, not even because it is said to be the finest piazza in the world, but also because the flocks of pigeons flying about in clouds, and lighting upon their shoulders, made them think of their own little garden in Florence.

Carlotta liked the piazza because it was the best place in Venice to gather in the soldi. There were always tourists in the square, walking about with guidebooks in their hands, and reading passages about its history aloud to one another. Indeed, there was no end to the wonderful things in that famous square. There was the Church of San Marco itself, with its beautiful mosaics and the four splendid bronze horses over the entrance. There was the magnificent Ducal



Palace, packed full of thrilling stories of past splendor; and, back of it, spanning the canal, the "Bridge of Sighs," which led from the palace to a dark prison on the other side. On the day she first saw that, Beppina shed tears, thinking of all the unhappy prisoners who had passed over the bridge never to return. She knew how prisoners felt.

Giovanni tried to comfort her. "Don't you fret about them," he said. "They're as dead as they can be, all of 'em, and in purgatory or a worse place, and you can't get 'em out no matter how hard you pray. Come on; let's go look at the clock."

Beppina knew that Carlotta would be angry if they

lingered, but still she crossed herself and murmured a hurried "Our Father" for the poor prisoners, on the chance of its helping them, before she ran back to Beppo and Giovanni. She found them standing before the great clock tower which rose above a high gateway over the street. It was almost noon, and a crowd had gathered to see the clock strike the hour. There was always a group waiting there on the hour, for this was no ordinary clock. The children watched with breathless interest as two bronze giants on the platform high above their heads suddenly lifted their arms and struck a huge bell twelve times, then relapsed into bronze statues again. Giovanni told the twins that at Christmastime the Three Wise Men came out of the clock and bowed before the Madonna and Child. The twins thought this could be nothing else than a miracle, but Giovanni, who was wise beyond his years, said it was just works in the clock's insides. "It's no more a miracle than a stomachache inside of you," he explained.

There was no time for further revelations on the day this happened, for at that moment Carlotta called them. She was afraid the crowd would disperse before she had coaxed

money from their pockets. Every moment that they were not dancing or singing, the children wandered about this magic place, where in every direction they looked there were wonderful stories in bronze, marble, or mosaic. One could stay there a year and not begin to know them all. If it rained, they took refuge under the arcade of the Ducal Palace or in the quiet interior of the Church of San Marco itself. Sometimes they could even step in and pray before the altar. Their prayers were always the same, that the Holy Virgin and Saint Anthony, the special guide of those who were lost, would take care of them and bring them safely again to their Babbo and Mammina and their lovely home.

Many days passed in this way, and it was the middle of May before the children ever rode in a boat, for though Giovanni's father had a gondola, it was his business to take passengers about Venice just like a cab driver in our own cities, and he did not use it for pleasure rides for Giovanni and his friends.

Then one afternoon when they returned from singing in the piazza, they found Luigi waiting to show Carlotta the boat which he had bought with the money he received for

the donkeys and the van. It was not a gondola, but a *sándalo*, a large rowboat, with a pair of oars, suited to carry either passengers or freight.

"The weather is warm now," said Luigi to Carlotta; "the tourists are already lingering on the canals for pleasure in the evenings, and I believe we should do well to let the children go about with me in the boat to sing."

Though they were weary from dancing and singing all day in the streets, it would be far pleasanter to drift about on the canal in the evening than to spend it tossing about on the husk mattresses in Giovanni's squalid house, and the children listened with eager attention to Carlotta's reply.

"As you like," she said, shrugging her shoulders; and



that very evening the plan was carried out. Luigi rowed the boat slowly about on the Grand Canal, and the sweet voices of the children, floating out over the still waters, attracted the gondolas about them, and many soldi were flung to the singers.

As the weather grew warmer, the evenings on the canal grew longer and longer. Sometimes the gondolas would join together in long chains and float about in the moonlight with everyone joining in the singing. On festival nights there were Chinese lanterns in every prow, and the boats, flitting about over the water, looked like giant fireflies at play.

In this way three weeks drifted by, and at last it was June, and still the children had made no progress toward freedom.



CHAPTER VIII
Beppo Has a Plan

One day, when they had just finished a performance in the piazza and were allowed to wander for a few moments by themselves, Beppo drew Beppina to the water's edge, and, looking up at the winged lion of Saint Mark's, said to her, "Do you remember what Carlotta said about having to have a boat, a railroad ticket, or wings to get out of Venice?"

Beppina remembered very well.

"The wings on that lion made me think of it," said Beppo, "and I've thought of something else too. There's another thing you need, and that's brains! I've got those, and I'm going to get out of this water soaked old place or die in the attempt!"

"Oh, Beppo," breathed Beppina, "how?"

"I've got it all planned," said Beppo.

"I guess Saint Anthony must have put it into your head," sighed Beppina, "for he takes care of all the lost people. Anyway, you haven't thought of anything before."

"I thought of this my own self," said Beppo, rather resentfully.

"Well," said Beppina, clasping her hands, "you think, and I'll pray. I'm going to begin a novena. I'll pray hard to Saint Anthony every day for nine days, and ask him to please, please guide us! I'm going to begin right now." She crossed herself and began moving her lips in prayer, but got no farther than "Blessed Saint Anthony," when Beppo nudged her with his elbow.

"Stop it!" he whispered, "here comes the old cat." (He meant Carlotta.) "Don't you let her catch you praying to Saint Anthony, or she'll know what we're up to. You can pray like fury, but say your prayers in your heart, and then some night if I wake you up, you just keep as still as a mouse and follow me."

Carlotta reached them just then and ordered them to go with her back to the Cathedral to sing, and all that day there was no chance for Beppo to explain his great idea.

Beppina caught him many times with his forehead all snarled up as if he were trying to think how much 9 times 7 was, or something hard like that, but just what he had in mind she could not guess.

That night when they were out in the boat, Beppo asked Luigi if he might try to row it home, and Luigi, being willing to loaf whenever it was possible, said he might. Beppo did so well that night that on the next Luigi allowed him to row as well as sing, and very soon Beppo came to know his way about the Grand Canal better than he knew the multiplication table—oh, much better!

At last one night, after they had gone to bed, Beppo lay still for a long time, until he was sure that everyone else in the room was asleep. Then he quietly woke Beppina, and the two slid from their mattresses to the floor. Here they waited a moment, for the husks rattled a little, and then, as no one stirred, they moved stealthily to the door, carrying their shoes in their hands. They had slept in their clothes, for they still wore the ones Carlotta had given them, and had not seen their own since the day she had made them change in the van.

They almost suffocated with fright as they opened the door, for it creaked and they feared the monkey would begin to chatter, but Carina was tired, too, and slept as soundly as the rest. In a moment they had quietly closed it behind them, and were feeling their way in the dark, down the stairs and through the passage at the bottom to the canal entrance of the house, where Mario and Luigi kept their oars. Beppo had noted carefully when they came in just where Luigi had placed his, and, feeling cautiously along the wall with his hands, was able to locate them in the dark. He gave his shoes to his sister, took down the oars, and managed to get them to the door without knocking anything over or dropping them on the stone floor.

Followed by Beppina, who was holding on to his coat and praying to Saint Anthony under her breath, he reached the water entrance to the house, and stood upon the landing. Luigi's boat and Mario's gondola were both tied to a red pole beside the entrance. Beppo put one oar down on the step, and with the other managed to reach the pointed prow of the boat, and draw it to the step. Then he leaped in, helped Beppina in with the shoes, took the other oar

into the boat with him, and, untying the rope which fastened it to the pole, shot out into the stream.

There was a scraping noise as the boat swung against the landing step, and Beppo used the oar to push it away. There was also the rattling of the oar-locks, as he backed round and glided out into the canal, but though he was nearly dead with excitement and fright, Beppo kept his head. Never had he managed the boat so well. It slid through the water like a fish. They had gone two or three hundred feet



and reached the point where the smaller waterway opened into the Grand Canal, when Beppina was appalled to see the dim outline of another boat a little distance behind them. "They're following!" she gasped. "Oh, Beppo, hurry!"

Beppo bent to his oars and the boat fairly shot through the water! On and on they sped, past the great palaces now dark and grim in starlight, past the marketplace, round the great curve of the canal, and soon to their great relief the black boat was no longer following.

"Do you suppose it was Luigi?" gasped Beppina.

"No," said Beppo, "he couldn't possibly have got after us so quickly, because I untied Mario's gondola too. It would drift away far enough so Luigi would have to swim to get it, and he couldn't do it in this time, I know. Maybe it was a police boat, or maybe it was someone going home late. Anyway, he wasn't after us, so I don't care who he was."

"Oh, Beppo, tell me your plan. Where are we going?" begged Beppina.

"Keep still," growled Beppo; "the less noise we make the more chance there is of our getting away."

Beppina crumpled up in the bottom and said no more,

while Beppo made the boat skim on over the dark waters. At last he turned the prow toward shore and touched at a dock where many boats were already moored. There was no sign of life about the place, as they disembarked. There was only the soft lapping of the water to break the silence.

"Stoop down," whispered Beppo. "These are the boats that cross over to Mestre on the mainland before daylight to bring fruit and vegetables back to market, and it may be that some of the men sleep in the boats. We might wake them."

For a few moments they listened, crouching down on the dock, and then, as they heard no sound, Beppo gave the sándalo a shove away from shore, and let go the rope.

"Oh," whispered Beppina, "why did you do that?"

"We don't want it anymore," answered Beppo, "and if they find it, they'll think we fell out and were drowned. Then they won't look for us."

"Oh, Beppo," said Beppina, "what a wonderful boy you are!"

"I've been planning this a long time," Beppo answered, with a little of his old swagger; "but we aren't out of our

troubles yet."

They crept along the dock on their hands and knees until they came to one of the largest flat-bottomed boats in the fleet. Here Beppo paused, and, after carefully examining to be sure it was the one he was looking for, he helped Beppina aboard, and climbed in after her. There was a pile of empty baskets and boxes at one end of the boat, and behind these the children hid themselves to wait for dawn. For a long time they crouched there, listening to the thumping of their own hearts, and the lap-lap-lapping of the water, and at last, completely exhausted with fatigue and fright, curled up on the floor of the boat and fell sound asleep.



CHAPTER IX

The Escape

Beppo awoke next morning in the early dawn, and, forgetting where he was, stretched his cramped legs. In doing so he kicked over a basket, which fell on Beppina. Beppina instantly sat up, and, blinking with sleep, said quite loudly, "Where are we?" She might well ask, for there, directly in front of her, pulling stoutly at a pair of oars, sat a short, thick-set man with brown skin and rings in his ears. The level rays of the sun, just rising over Venice, shone full upon his weather-beaten face and astonished eyes, as he gazed at the apparition before him. Just then Beppo's head appeared beside his sister's, and the man, overcome with astonishment, "caught a crab" and splashed both children with water before he burst into speech.

"Madonna mia!" he cried, "am I bewitched? How in the name of all the saints in paradise did you get into this boat?

You weren't in it when I left the dock!"

"Oh, yes, we were," said Beppo. "We were behind the baskets."

"But what are you here for?" demanded the man.

"We want to go to Mestre," said Beppo.



The man regarded them suspiciously. "Do your folks know where you are?" he asked.

"No," said Beppo. "That's why we are here. We want to get back to them."

Beppina interrupted. "We were stolen away by gypsies," she said.

Then, still staring at them, the man asked, "Where are you from?"

"From Florence," Beppo answered.

The man threw back his head and laughed. "That's a



likely story!" he roared. "From Florence! Ha, Ha! Very good, per Bacco! You are indeed clever liars! You are a pair of naughty little runaways, that's what you are, and if I had time I'd take you straight back to Venice now! As it is, I'll wait until I get my load, and then back you go, and I hope you'll get a good spanking into the bargain."

The children said nothing. They couldn't; they were crushed. But during the rest of the journey Beppo thought as he had never thought in his life before, while Beppina prayed fervently under her breath. During the weeks that they had been so closely watched by Carlotta, Beppina had grown almost to read Beppo's thoughts, so when he furtively took her hand, lifted one eyebrow, and jerked his head in the direction of Mestre, she knew he meant to try to go forward no matter what happened.

They were now nearly across the lagoon and approaching the harbor. Early as it was, the water was already swarming with craft of all descriptions, for Venice has to get all her supplies from the mainland, and many boats are required for the traffic. There was consequently a great deal of shouting back and forth as the men jockeyed for the best

positions at the dock. Their own brown boatman was so busy bawling at his competitors and shunting about that for a few moments he was unable to pay any attention to the children. At last, however, he crowded in between two other boats, and while he was explaining to their owners that they were the sons of pigs to take up so much room, Beppo seized his sister by the arm, and the two leaped into the next boat, from that to a third, and then to the dock; and before their captor realized they were gone, they were already speeding frantically up the dock.

"Stop them! Stop them!" howled the boatman, climbing out and starting in pursuit.

Two or three other men joined him, shouting, "Stop! Stop!" too, but their calls only lent speed to the flying feet of the runaways. They did not know where they were going, but they ran as rabbits run when the dogs are after them, and soon found themselves in the streets of the town. The cries of their pursuers grew fainter, and were lost altogether as Beppo suddenly dashed into a side street and they doubled on their tracks.

From a safe hiding place behind an old building in an

alley they caught a glimpse of their pursuers as they turned back to the boats, talking volubly and gesticulating like windmills. They were telling the boatman who had brought the children over what they thought of him for getting them into such a wild goose chase. Beppo actually chuckled as he watched them go, so great was his relief.

"Now, Beppina," he said, almost gayly, "we'll hurry to the other end of the town as fast as we can go, and get something to eat. I've got ten soldi in my pocket that I picked up when Luigi wasn't looking, and I'm as hungry as a bear. They won't follow us anymore, but we'll keep out of sight until the shops are open, anyway."

For an hour or more they wandered quietly about, through the byways of the town, until they found a small bake shop on an unfrequented street; and when an old woman appeared and took down the shutters, they went in and boldly asked for bread and cheese. The woman eyed them with some curiosity, but asked no questions, and they got out as quickly as possible and hid behind an empty house on the outskirts of the village to eat their breakfast.

"I'm sure of one thing," said Beppo, as he munched his



bread. "I'm not going to tell our story to anyone after this. People would only think we were lying. We'll find our own way to the villa, and earn our money as we go along. Padua is only about thirty miles from here, anyway."

"Oh, Beppo," said Beppina, much impressed, "how did you know that?"

"Geography," said Beppo proudly. "You remember how I knew about Ravenna and Rimini, and, besides, the other day I asked a tourist to let me see the map in the guidebook. Padua is almost straight west from here. We can go away

from the sun in the morning and toward it in the afternoon, and we can't help running into it. We'll dance in the villages as we go along, and when we get to Padua it will be easy enough to find the villa."

Beppina had some secret doubts. She remembered how sure Beppo was about finding his way in Florence, but she didn't say a word. She was willing to take any risk if only they could keep out of the clutches of Carlotta.

"Do you suppose they are hunting for us in Venice?" she asked.

"I shouldn't wonder," answered her brother, glancing at the sun. Then he chuckled, "I'll bet they're mad! I hope they'll never find their old boats!"

"Let's get away from here as fast as we can," urged Beppina. "They might follow us, or they might send word to the police."

"That's true," said Beppo. "We can't be too careful."

They had finished their breakfast by this time, and, taking their direction from the sun, set forth at once toward the west. Soon they were out among the suburbs. Then they passed stately villas owned by wealthy Venetians, and

beyond that came into open country. It was much easier walking than it had been in the mountains, for the land was level, or gently rolling, the villages were near together, and the highways well-travelled. Moreover, they had been hardened to much walking by their weeks of constant practice, and were able to trot along the road at a good rate of speed.

At noon they reached a village, and here they decided to replenish their little hoard of money, so, making their way to the piazza, they surrounded themselves with a crowd for whom they danced the trescone and sang themselves hoarse. They were just gathering up the few coins that were thrown to them, when Beppo saw a policeman approaching, and, not wishing to take any chances, the two children instantly disappeared like smoke down a side street, and out into the highway once more.

By suppertime they had covered ten miles, and when night overtook them, they were in open farming country, surrounded by olive orchards, vineyards, and cornfields. In a field beside the road they came upon a straw stack, and, hiding themselves on the farther side of it, they ate the

bread and ham which they had bought on the way, and then, pulling the straw down over them for covering, slept peacefully until morning.

CHAPTER X
Home Again

The next day and the next passed in much the same way. They danced and sang in the villages to earn their bread, and then passed out again to the highway, where there were signposts to guide them, or they could ask directions from fellow travelers. One night they passed in an olive orchard, under a spreading tree. Another was spent under the protection of a wayside shrine.

When he awoke in the morning, Beppo found his sister kneeling before the shrine. She turned a beaming face upon him as he opened his eyes.

"Oh, Beppo mio," she said, "I haven't forgotten once, and this is the ninth day! I've made my novena! I'm almost sure the blessed Saint Anthony means to get us to Padua this very day. If he does, I think I shall die of joy."

"What would be the good of that?" Beppo inquired,



practically. Then he added, "Anyway, I think it'll be very mean if he doesn't, after all the praying you've done, and all my thinking too."

They ate a hasty bite of bread beside the shrine, then trudged on, and, before the morning was over, actually found themselves passing through the beautiful gardens which surround the city of Padua. They entered it from the east by the Porta di' Pontecorbo, walked a short distance along a wide street, crossed a canal, and, turning to the left, saw rising before them from a great open piazza the huge church of Saint Anthony of Padua, crowned by its six domes and many spires. It was as if they had known every inch of the way, so directly had they come.

The bells of the church were pealing joyfully, and the square was full of people, all going toward the church, for it was the festa of Saint Anthony, though the children did not know it.

Passersby glanced curiously at the two queer, forlorn little figures, but no one spoke to them, and they stood for a moment uncertain what to do, or in what direction to go, when suddenly Beppina gave a shriek of joy, and, springing

forward, threw her arms about a tall, stern-looking woman in a nurse's ruff and streamers who was hurrying toward the church carrying an immense loaf of bread in her hand.

"Teresina!" screamed Beppina.

The woman looked at the child in blank astonishment, but it was not until she saw Beppo that the light of recognition dawned in her face. Then, dropping the bread and falling upon her knees, she engulfed both ragged, dirty children in a wide embrace.

"Oh, thanks be to God, the blessed Virgin, and Saint Anthony, you are found again!" she cried, her eyes streaming tears and her tongue prayers of thanksgiving at the same time. "I was just on my way to offer this bread at the shrine of the blessed Saint, and pray, as I have prayed daily since you were lost, that you might be found again! And here before I have even been to the church at all, the blessed Saint has heard my prayers, and you rise up before me as if out of the ground. It is a miracle! Ah, Madonna mia! What tears the Signora has wept for you! And the Signore your father, he has not slept for seeking you! Come, come—do not delay! We must send word to the villa at

once that they may come running to meet you even as his father met the prodigal son."

Her tongue ran so fast that the children had no chance to ask questions. A crowd now gathered about them, and when Teresina had explained the cause of the excitement and joy, sympathetic bystanders rushed to send word to the villa, seven miles away, and to spread the good news that the children of the Marchese Grifoni, for whom the police had been searching every town in Italy for two months, had now appeared in Padua.

"It is not for nothing that Saint Anthony is the patron saint of all who suffer loss," said the pious ones, and many a candle was gratefully offered on his shrine that day.

When her joy had a little subsided, Teresina gazed with horror at the twins. They were indeed a terrifying spectacle. Ragged, thin, encrusted with dirt, with their toes sticking through their worn-out shoes, it is no wonder that she did not at once recognize the children of the Marchese. Grasping them by the hands as if she would never again let them go, Teresina hurried them toward the Hotel Due Croci Bianche, which opened upon the square, followed by



crowds of interested spectators. The landlord himself, when the news reached him, came out to greet the wanderers and conduct them to a room.

Teresina went with them, giving orders right and left as she flew down the long corridor.

"It is for the Marchese Grifoni!" she cried to the bewildered servants, as she hustled the children before her to the bath. "Bring soap, bring towels, bring food, and for the love of Saint Anthony keep the wires hot to the villa. Never mind the cost, for the lost is found. They will reward you well. Tell them, for the love of Heaven, to bring clothes for the Signorina and Don Beppo, and hurry, hurry, hurry!"

Then she shut the door upon her charges, and the process of purification began. She rang the bell furiously a few moments later, and, opening the door a crack, handed the servant who answered it a bundle, hastily wrapped in newspaper.

"Their clothes," she said briefly. "The Marchesa must not see them. Burn them at once!"

For one hour or more she scrubbed and shampooed, and all but boiled the wanderers alive in her frantic efforts to get them clean before their mother should be able to reach them.

At last a carriage, drawn by a pair of steaming black horses, dashed up to the hotel, and the beautiful Marchesa, pale but radiant, sprang out and, attended by the landlord

himself, hurried to the room where her lost ones waited to embrace her! Teresina opened the door, and, stepping into the hall, left the mother and children together with no human eye to see that meeting! Red-eyed herself, and wiping her nose vigorously on her apron, she went down to tell the footman all the news, and to get the bundle of clothes for the children, which in the haste and excitement had been left in the carriage.

An hour later, the Marchesa and two very clean and happy children came out of the hotel, followed by Teresina. The coachman, grinning, as Teresina said, "like a cracked melon," greeted the children as if he were an old friend, and the Marchesa, standing in her carriage, scattered tips with a lavish hand. They drove away with the landlord bowing from the doorway, and the crowd shouting *vivas* as long as the carriage was in sight.

It was a long drive over beautiful, winding roadways to the villa, and every inch of the way the Marchesa sat with her arms clasped about her darlings telling them of their father, who was still in Florence conducting the search, of the baby, who had six teeth and was fat as butter, and

hearing from them the tale of their adventures, while Teresina beamed at them from the opposite seat.

At last they rounded a well-remembered curve in the road, and there, shining down on them from the summit of a hill overlooking the village, was their own white, vine-covered villa. The children shouted with joy when they saw it, and Beppina threw a kiss.

Then they heard a great shouting down the road. All the village had come out to greet the children of their beloved Marchesa. Old and young, they swarmed about the carriage, shouting "Ben trovati," which means "Welcome," and tossing flowers at the feet of the returned travelers. Ah, what a happy time it was!

At last the carriage stood before the loggia of the villa, and when his old dog, barking with joy, came bounding out to meet them, Beppo, who had been dry-eyed and brave through all the dreadful weeks, buried his head in Tonio's shaggy fur and gave way to tears.

After the baby had been kissed, and the servants greeted, and all the dear, familiar places visited once more, it was time for supper, and, oh, what a supper it was! The

cook, the moment the wonderful news had reached the villa, had flown to the kitchen, and there she had cooked all their favorite dishes. There were artichokes for Beppina, and *stufato* for Beppo, and a cake as soft and light as thistle-down for dessert. In the evening they received a telegram of welcome from their dear Babbo in Florence, for the good news had been flashed across the wires to him and all the servants in the Grifoni palace were rejoicing too.

When bedtime came, instead of lying down upon straw, or a husk mattress, the twins had their own mother to tuck them in their own white beds in their own dear, clean rooms, and then to sing them to sleep as she had done when they were little, little children.

Long after they were safe in dreamland, the Marchesa lingered beside their beds, and then, throwing herself upon her knees before the image of the Madonna in her own room, she poured out her grateful heart in thanksgiving to that other Mother who had lived and suffered too.



Glossary

Antonia (*än-tō´nee-a*), Antoinette, feminine of Anthony.
Avanti (*ä-vän´tee*), forward.

Babbo (*bäb´bo*), papa, daddy.
Balia (*bäl´la*), dance.
Bel, beautiful (masc.).
Bella, beautiful (fem.).
Ben trovati (*bĕn trō-vä´tee*), well found, welcome.
Beppina (*bĕp-pee´na*), Josie, the feminine diminutive nickname for Giuseppe, Joseph.
Beppinella, little Beppina.
Beppo, Joe, nickname for Giuseppe, Joseph.
Boboli (*bō' bo-lee*).
Buona Pasqua (*bwō´na päs´kwa*), happy Easter.

Campanile (*cäm-pa-nee´lā*), bell-tower.
Canal della Giudecca (*joo-dĕk'ka*), a wide canal separating the island called the Giudecca from the main part of Venice.
Carissimi (*cä-rees´see-mee*), dearest.
Carlotta, Charlotte.
Che, che (*kay, kay*), tut, tut.
Cocca (*kŏk´ka*), darling.
Colombina (*co-lom-bee´na*), a little pigeon, the mechanical dove used in the celebration of Easter.

Don and Donna, Lord and Lady, titles of courtesy prefixed to Christian names.
Duomo (*dwō´mo*), dome, cathedral.

Ecco, behold, see.

Festa, a feast, a festival.

Garibaldi (gä-ree-bäl´dee). This turtle was named for the hero of the Italian war of independence.
Giovanni (jō-vän´nee), John.

Il (*eel*), the (masc.).

La (*la*), the (fem.).
Loggia (*lŏdg´ee-a*), an open gallery.
Luigi (*loo-ee'jee*), Lewis.

Madonna, my lady, the Holy Virgin.
Mammina (*mäm-mee´na*), little mamma.
Marchesa (*mar-kā´zä*), marchioness.
Marchese (*mar-kā´zā*), marquis.
Maria (*mä-ree'a*), Mary.
Mario (*mä'ree-o*).
Mestre (*mĕs´trā*).
Mia (*mee´a*), my (fern.).
Mio (*mee´o*), my (masc.).

Misericordia (*mee-zĕ-ree-cor´dee-a*), mercy, a religious brotherhood.

Novena (*nō-vā´na*), a nine-days prayer.

Padre Ugo (*pä´drā oo´go*), Father Hugh.
Pantalone (*pän-ta-lo'nā*), Pantaloon, a conventional character in Italian comedy, an old man.
Pazienza (*päd-zee-ĕnd´za*), patience.
Per Bacco (*pair bäk´ko*), by Bacchus (a mild oath).
Piazza (*pee-ät´sa*), a square.
Pietro (*pee-ā´tro*), Peter.
Polenta, a porridge made of coarse Indian meal.
Ponte Vecchio (*pon´tā vek´kee-o*), old bridge.
Porta di Pontecorbo (*por'ta dee pon-ta-cor´bo*), Pontecorbo's Gate, a gateway to the old city of Padua.
Poverelli (*pō-vĕ-rĕl´lee*), poor people.

Ragazzini (*rä-gät-see´nee*), children.

San Giovanni (*sän jo-van´nee*), Saint John.
San Marco (*sän mar´co*), Saint Mark.
Santa Maria (*sän´ta md-ree´a*), Holy Mary.
Si (*see*), yes.
Signora (*seen-yō'rä*), lady, madam, Mrs.
Signore (*seen-yō'rā*), gentleman, sir, Mr.

Signorina (*seen-yo-ree´na*), young lady, Miss.

Soldi (*sŏl' dee*), pennies; a soldo is normally of about the value of an American cent.

Stufato (*stoo-fä´to*), a highly seasoned dish of stewed meat, much liked by Italian children.

Teresina (*tĕ-rĕ-zee´no*), diminutive of Teresa, Theresa.

Ugolone (*oo-go-lō´nā*).

Vita (*vee´ta*), life.

Viva (*vee´va*), long life to you, hurrah.

The Spartan Twins

Lucy Fitch Perkins
Illustrated by Lucy Fitch Perkins





The Spartan Twins

The Characters in this Story Are:

MELAS, a Spartan living on the Island of Salamis, just off the coast of Greece. He is Overseer on the Farm of Pericles, Archon of Athens.

LYDIA, Wife of Melas, and Mother of Dion and Daphne.

DION and DAPHNE, Twin Son and Daughter of Melas and Lydia.

CHLOE, a young slave girl, belonging to Melas and Lydia. She had been abandoned by her parents when she was a baby, and left by the roadside to die of neglect or be picked up by some passerby. She was found by Lydia and brought up in her household as a slave.

ANAXAGORAS, "the Stranger," a Philosopher, friend of Pericles.

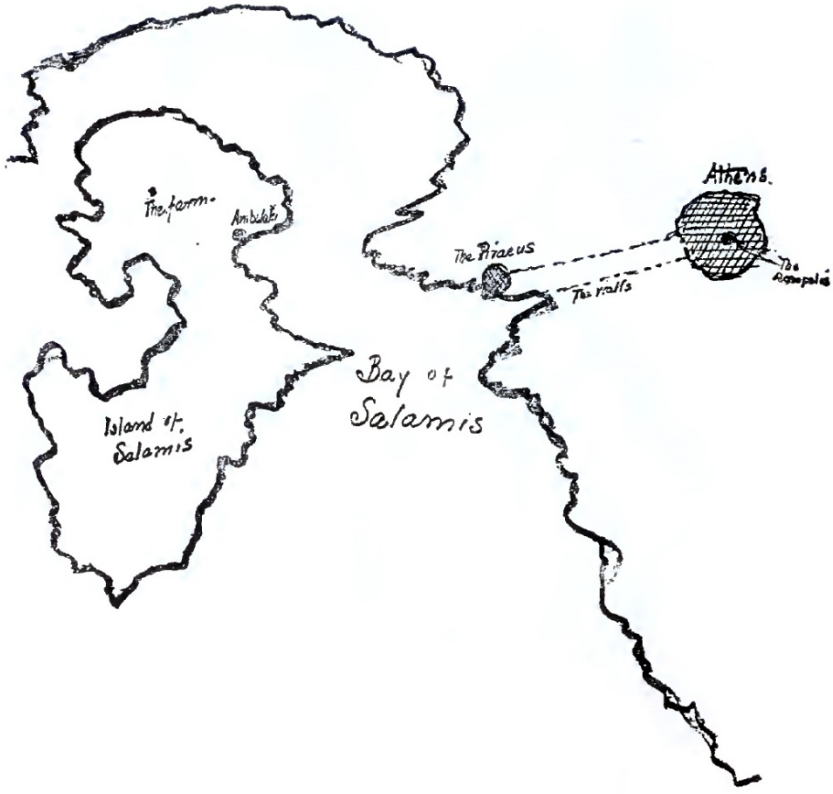
PERICLES, Chief Archon of Athens.

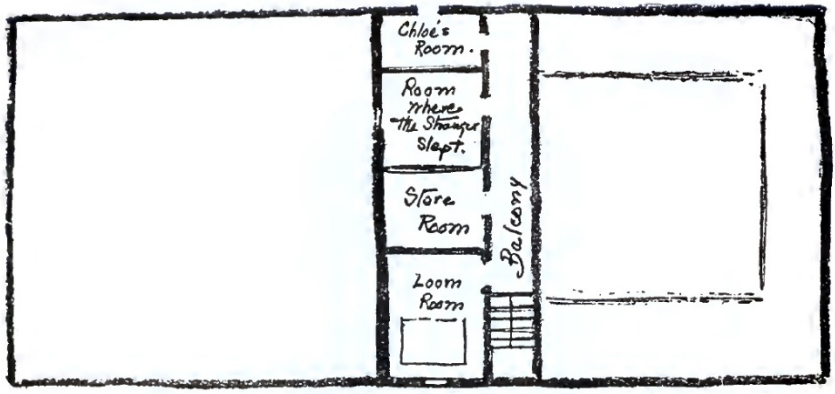
LAMPON, a Priest.

A Priest of the Erechtheum.

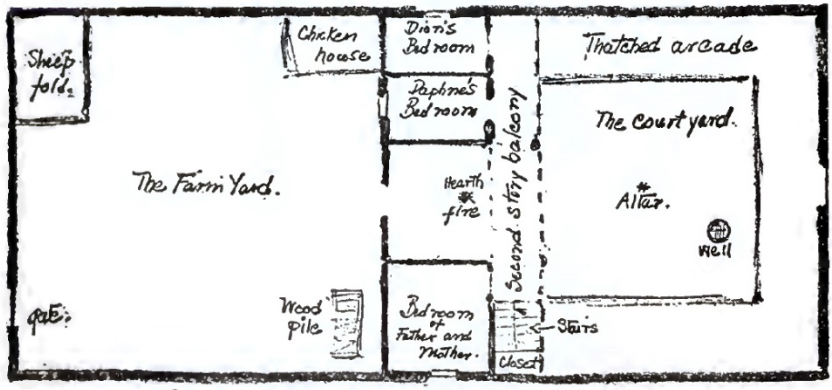
DROMAS, LYCIAS, and Others, Slaves on the Farm of Pericles.

Time: About the middle of the Fifth Century B.C.


Athens
The farm
Ambelaki
The Piraeus
The walls
The Acropolis
Bay of Salamis
Island of Salamis



Second Story



Plan of home of the Spartan Twins



CHAPTER I

Company at the Farm

One lovely spring morning long years ago in Hellas, Lydia, wife of Melas the Spartan, sat upon a stool in the court of her house, with her wool basket beside her, spinning. She was a tall, strong-looking young woman with golden hair and blue eyes, and as she twirled her distaff and twisted the white wool between her fingers she sang a little song to herself that sounded like the humming of bees in a garden.

The little court of the house where she sat was open to the sky, and the afternoon sun came pouring over the wall which surrounded it, and made a brilliant patch of light upon the earthen floor. The little stones which were embedded in the earth to form a sort of pavement glistened in the sun and seemed to play at hide and seek with the moving shadow of Lydia's distaff as she spun. On the thatch

which covered the arcade around three sides of the court pigeons crooned and preened their feathers, and from a room in the second story of the house, which opened upon a little gallery enclosing the fourth side of the court, came the *clack clack* of a loom.

As she spun, the shadow of Lydia's distaff grew longer and longer across the floor until at last the sunlight disappeared behind the wall, leaving the whole court in gray shadow.

Under the gallery a large room opened into the court. The embers of a fire glowed dully upon a stone hearth in the center of this room, and beyond, through an open door, fowls could be seen wandering about the farmyard. Suddenly the quiet of the late afternoon was broken by a medley of sounds. There were the bleating of sheep, and the tinkle of their bells, the lowing of cattle and the barking of a dog, the soft patter of bare feet and the voices of children.

Then there was a sudden squawking among the hens in the farmyard, and through the back door, past the glowing hearth and into the court, rushed two children, followed by a huge shepherd dog. The children were blue-eyed and

golden-haired, like their Mother, and looked so big and strong that they might easily have passed for twelve years of age, though they really were but ten. They were so exactly alike that their Mother herself could hardly tell which was Dion and which was Daphne, and, as for their Father, he didn't even try. He simply said whichever name came first to his lips, feeling quite sure that the children would always be able to tell themselves apart, at any rate. Daphne, to be sure, wore her chiton a little longer than Dion wore his, but when they were running or playing games she often pulled it up shorter through her girdle, so even that was not a sure sign.

Lydia looked from one of them to the other as the children came bounding into the court, with Argos, the dog, barking and leaping about them, and smiled with pride.

"Where have you been, you wild creatures?" she said to the twins, "I haven't seen you since noon," and "Down, Argos, down," she cried to the dog, who had put his great paws in her lap and was trying to kiss her on the nose.

"We've been down in the field by the spring with

Father," Dion shouted, "and Father is bringing a man home to supper!"

"Company!" gasped Lydia, throwing up her hands. "Whoever can it be at this time of the day and in such an out of the way place as this? And nothing but black broth ready for supper! I might have had a roast fowl at least if only I had known. Where are they now?"

"They are coming down the road," said Dion. "They stopped to see the sheep and cattle driven into the farmyard. They'll be here soon."

Lydia thrust her distaff into the wool basket by her side and rose hastily from her stool. "There's no time to lose," she said. "The Stranger will not wish to linger here if he expects to reach Ambelaca tonight. It is a good two miles to the village, and he'll not find a boat crossing to the mainland after dark. I am sure of that, unless perhaps he has one waiting for him there."

As she spoke, Lydia drew her skirt shorter through her girdle and started for the hearth fire in the room beyond. "Shoo," she cried to the hens, which had followed the children into the house and were searching hopefully for

something to eat among the ashes, "you'll burn your toes as like as not! Begone, unless you want to be put at once into the pot! Go for them, Argos! Dion, you feed them. They'll be under foot until they've had their supper, and it's time they were on the roost this minute! Daphne, your face is dirty; go wash it, while I get the fire started and see if I can't find something to eat more fitting to set before a guest."

While the children ran to carry out their Mother's orders, Lydia herself seized the bellows and blew upon the embers of the fire. "By all the Gods!" she cried, "there's not a stick of wood in the house." She dropped the bellows and ran into the court. From the room above still came the *clack clack* of the loom. Lydia looked up at the gallery of the second story and clapped her hands.

"Chloe, Chloe," she called. The clacking suddenly stopped, and a young girl with black hair and eyes and red cheeks came out of the upper room and leaned over the balcony rail.

"Did you want me?" she asked.

"Indeed I want you!" answered her mistress. "Company is coming to supper and there is nothing in the house fit to



set before him! Hurry and bring some wood. There's not even a fire!"

There was a sound of hasty footsteps on the stair, and Chloe disappeared into the farmyard. In a moment she was back again with a basket of wood, which she placed beside the hearth. Lydia knelt on the floor and laid the wood upon the coals. Then she blew upon them energetically with the bellows. Chloe knelt beside her and blew too, but not with bellows. The ashes flew in every direction.

"Mercy!" cried Lydia, "you've a breath like the blasts of

winter! You will blow the sparks clear across the court and set fire to the thatch if you keep on! Come! Get out the oven and start a charcoal fire! We can bake barley cakes, at least, and there are sausages in the storeroom. See if there is fresh water in the water jar."

"There isn't a drop, I know," said Daphne. "I took the last to wash my face."



"Was there ever anything like it?" cried Lydia. "Fresh water first of all! Run at once to the spring, Chloe. I'll get the oven myself. Daphne, you take the small water jar and go with Chloe."

As Chloe and Daphne, with their water jars on their shoulders, started out of the back door for the spring, the door at the front of the court opened, and Melas entered with a tall, bearded man wearing a long cloak.

The moment she heard the door move on its hinges, Lydia stood up straight and tall beside her hearth fire, and, at a sign from her husband, came forward to greet the stranger.

"You are welcome," she said, "to such entertainment as our plain house affords. I could wish it were better for your sake."

"I shall be honored by your hospitality," said the stranger politely, "and what is good enough for a farmer is surely good enough for a philosopher, if I may call myself one."

"Though you are a philosopher, you are also, no doubt, an Athenian," replied Lydia, "and it is known to all the world that the feast of the Spartan is but common fare for

those who live delicately as the Athenians do."

"I bring an appetite that would make a feast of bread alone," answered the stranger.

Melas, a tall brown-faced man with a brown beard, now spoke for the first time.

"There is no haste, wife," he said. "The stranger will spend the night under our roof. It is not yet late. While you get supper, we will rest beneath the olive trees and watch the sun go down behind the hills."

"Until I can better serve you, then," Lydia replied; and the two men went out again through the open door, and sat down upon a wooden bench which commanded a view of the little valley and the hills beyond.

Meanwhile, within doors, Lydia dropped the stately dignity of her company manners and became once more the busy housewife. When Chloe and Daphne returned from the spring, she had barley cakes baking in the oven, and sausages were roasting before the hearth fire. A kettle of broth steamed beside it.

"How good it smells!" cried Dion, when he came in with Argos from the farmyard. "I could eat a whole pig myself.

Do cook a lot of sausages, Mother. I am as hungry as a wolf."

"And you a Spartan boy!" said his Mother reprovingly. "You should think less of what you put in your stomach! Plain fare makes the strongest men. It is only polite to give a guest the best you have, but that's no excuse for being greedy and wanting to stuff yourself every day."

"Well, then," said Dion, "I wish Hermes, if he is the god who guides travelers, would bring them this way oftener. I'd like to be a strong man, but I like good things to eat, too, and when we have company, we have a feast."

His Mother did not answer him; she was too busy.

She sent Chloe to the closet for a jar of wine, and some goat's milk cheese, and she herself went upstairs to get some dried figs from the storeroom. Daphne followed Chloe to the closet, and for a moment there was no one beside the hearth fire but Dion and Argos, and the sausages smelled very good indeed.

"I wonder if she counted them," thought Dion to himself, as he looked longingly at them. And then almost before he knew it himself he had snatched one of the



sausages from the fire and had bitten a piece off the end! It was so very hot that it burned both his fingers and his tongue like everything, and when he tried to lick his fingers, he let go of the sausage, and Argos snapped it up and swallowed it whole. It burned all the way down to his stomach, and Argos gave a dreadful howl of pain and dashed through the door out into the farmyard. Dion heard his Mother's footsteps coming down the stair. He thought perhaps he'd better join Argos.

When Lydia reached the hearth fire once more, only Daphne was in the room. She set down the basket of figs and knelt to turn the sausages. She had counted them and she saw at once that one was missing. She was shocked and surprised, but she guessed what had become of it. Mothers are just like that. She rose from her knees and looked around for the culprit. She saw Daphne.

"You naughty boy!" she said sternly to Daphne. "What have you done with that sausage?"

"I didn't do anything with it; I never even saw it," cried poor Daphne. "And, besides that, I'm not a naughty boy. I'm not a boy at all! I'm Daphne!"

"Where's Dion, then?" demanded Lydia.

"I don't know where he is," said Daphne. "I didn't see him either, but I heard Argos howl as if someone had stepped on his tail. Maybe he took the sausage."

Lydia went to the door and looked out into the farmyard. Away off in the farthest corner by the sheep pen she saw two dark shadows.

"Come here at once," she called.

Dion and Argos both obeyed, but they came very slowly,

and Argos had his tail between his legs. Lydia pointed to the fire.

"Where is the other sausage?" she inquired, with stern emphasis.

"Argos ate it," said Dion.

"Open your mouth," said his Mother. She looked at Dion's tongue. It was all red where it was burned.



"I suppose Argos took it off the fire and made you bite it when it was hot," said Lydia grimly. "Very well, he is a bad dog and cannot have any sausage with his supper. And a boy that hasn't any more manners than a dog can't have any either. And neither one can be trusted in the kitchen where things are cooking. Go sit on the woodpile until I call you."

She put both Dion and Argos out of doors and turned to her cooking again.

"Supper is nearly ready," she called at last to Chloe. "You and Daphne may bring out the couch and get the table ready."

Under the arcade in the court there was a small wooden table. Chloe and Daphne lifted it and brought it near the fire. Then they brought a plain wooden bench that also stood under the thatch and placed it beside the table. They arranged cushions of lamb's wool upon the bench, and near the foot set a low stool. Daphne brought the dishes, and when everything was ready, Lydia sent Chloe to call her husband and the stranger, while she herself went out to the farmyard. She found Dion and Argos sitting side by side on

the woodpile in dejected silence.

"Come in and wash your hands," she said to Dion. "If you get yourself clean, wrists and all, you may have your supper with us, but remember, no sausage. You have had your fingers with your food." This is what mothers used to say to their children in those days, because there were no knives or forks, and often not even spoons, to eat with.

Lydia didn't invite Argos in, but he came anyway, and lay down beside the fire with his nose on his paws, just where people would be most likely to stumble over him.

When Melas and the stranger came in, they sat down side by side on the couch. Chloe knelt before them, took off their sandals, and bathed their feet. Then the stranger loosened his long, cloak-like garment, and he and Melas reclined side by side upon the couch, their left elbows resting on the lamb's wool cushions. Chloe moved the little table within easy reach of their hands, and Lydia took her place on the stool beside the couch. It was now quite dark except for the light of the hearth fire.

The twins had been brought up to be seen and not heard, especially when there was company, and as Dion was



not anxious to call attention to himself just then, the two children slipped quietly into their places on the floor by the hearth fire just as Melas and the stranger dipped their bread into their broth and began to eat.

It must be confessed that Melas seemed to enjoy the black broth much more than his guest did, but the stranger ate it nevertheless, and when the last drop was gone, the men both wiped their fingers on scraps of bread and threw

them to Argos, who snapped them up as greedily as if his tongue had never been burned at all. Then Chloe brought the sausages hot from the fire, and barley cakes from the oven. When she had served the men and had explained that these cakes were really not so good as her barley cakes usually were, Lydia gave the twins each one, and she gave Daphne a sausage. She just looked at Dion without a single word.

He knew perfectly well what she meant. He munched his barley cake in mournful silence, and I suppose no sausage ever smelled quite so good to any little boy in the whole world as Daphne's did to Dion just then. However, there were plenty of barley cakes, and his mother let him have honey to eat with them, which comforted Dion so much that when the stranger began to talk to Melas, he forgot his troubles entirely. He forgot his manners too, and listened with his eyes and mouth both wide open until the honey ran off the barley cake and down between his fingers. Then he licked his fingers!

No one saw him do it, not even his Mother, because she too was watching the inhabitants of the little farm. They

lived so far from the sea, and so far from highways of travel on the island, that the twins in all their lives had seen but few persons besides their own family and the slaves who worked on the farm. The stranger was to them a visitor from another world—the great outside world which lay beyond the shining blue waters of the bay. They had seen



that distant world sometimes from a hilltop on a clear day, but they had never been farther from home than the little seaport of Ambelaca two miles away.

"How is it," the stranger was saying to Melas, "that you, a Spartan, live here, so far from your native soil, and so near to Athens? The Spartans have but little love for the Athenians as a rule, nor for farming either, I am told."

"We love the Athenians quite as well as they love us," answered Melas; "and as for my being here, I have my father to thank for that. He was a soldier of the Persian Wars and settled here after the Battle of Salamis. I grew up on the island, and thought myself fortunate when I had a chance to become overseer on this farm."

"Who is the owner of the farm?" asked the stranger.

"Pericles, Chief Archon of Athens," answered Melas.

"You are indeed fortunate to be in his service," said the stranger. "He is the greatest man in Athens, and consequently the greatest man in the world, as any Athenian would tell you!"

"Do you know him?" asked Dion, quite forgetting in his interest that children should be seen and not heard.

Lydia shook her head at Dion, but the stranger answered just as politely as if Dion were forty years old instead of ten.

"Yes," he said, "I know Pericles well. I went with him only yesterday to see the new temple he is having built upon the great hill of the Acropolis in Athens. You have seen it, of course," he said, turning to Melas.

"No," answered Melas. "I sell most of my produce in the markets of the Piraeus, and go to Athens itself only when necessary to take fruit and vegetables to the city home of Pericles. There is no occasion to go in the winter, and the season for planting is only just begun. Perhaps later in the summer I shall go."

"When you do," said the stranger, "do not fail to see the new building on the sacred hill. It is worth a longer journey than from here to Athens, I assure you. People will come from the ends of the earth to see it someday, or I am no true prophet."

"Oh," murmured Daphne to Dion, "don't you wish we could go too?"

"You can't go. You're a girl!" Dion whispered back.



"Girls can't do such things, but I'm going to get Father to take me with him the very next time he goes."

Daphne turned up her nose at Dion. "I don't care if I am a girl," she whispered back. "I'm no Athenian sissy that never puts her nose out of doors, I can do everything you can do here on the farm, and I guess I could in Athens too. Besides, no one would know I'm a girl; I look just as much like a boy as you do. I look just like you."

"You do not," said Dion resentfully. "You can't look like a boy."

"All right," answered Daphne, "then you must look just

like a girl, for you know very well Father can't tell us apart, so there now."

Dion opened his mouth to reply, but just then his Mother shook her head at them, and at the same moment Chloe, coming in with the wine jar, stumbled over Argos and nearly fell on the table. Argos yelped, and Dion and Daphne both laughed. Lydia was dreadfully ashamed because Chloe had been so awkward, and ashamed of the twins for laughing. She apologized to the stranger.

"Oh, well," said the stranger, and he laughed a little too, even if he was a philosopher, "boys will be boys, and those seem two fine strong little fellows of yours. One of these days they'll be competing in the Olympian games, I suppose, and how proud you will be if they should bring home the wreath of victors!"

"They are as strong as the young Hercules, both of them," Melas answered, "but one is a girl, so we can hope to have but one victor in the family at best."

"Perhaps two would make you over proud," said the stranger, smiling, "so it may be just as well that one is a girl, after all."

Dion sat up very straight at these words, but Daphne hung her head. "I do wish I were a boy too," she said, "they can do so many things a girl is not allowed to do. They get the best of everything."

"That must be as the Gods will," said the stranger kindly. "And Spartan women have always been considered just as brave as men, even if they aren't quite as big. Anyway, some of us have to be women because we can't get along without women in the world."



Two bright spots glowed in Lydia's cheeks, and she twirled her distaff faster than ever. "I should think not, indeed," she said. "Men aren't much more fit to take care of themselves than children!"

Melas and the stranger laughed, and the stranger turned to Daphne.

"Don't you remember, my little maid, how glad Epimetheus was to welcome Pandora, even if she did bring trouble into the world with her?" he asked.

"No," said Daphne, "I don't know about Pandora. Please tell us about her!"

Lydia rose and glanced up at the stars. "It's getting near bedtime," she said to the twins; and to the stranger she added, "You must excuse the boldness of my children. They are brought up so far out of the world they scarcely understand the reverence due men like yourself. You must not permit them to impose upon your kindness."

"I will gladly tell them about Pandora if you are willing," said the stranger. "The fine old tales of Hellas should be the birthright of every child. They will live so long as there are children in the world to hear them and old fellows like

myself to tell them."

"If you will be so gracious then," said Lydia, "but first let us prepare ourselves to listen."

She signed to Chloe, who immediately brought a basin and towel to the stranger and Melas. When they had washed their hands, she carried away the basin and swept the crumbs into the fire, while Lydia filled cups with wine and water and set them before her husband and his guest. Then wood was piled upon the fire, and Lydia seated herself beside it once more with her distaff and wool basket, while Chloe crept into the shadow behind her mistress's chair, and the twins drew nearer to her footstool. When everything was quiet once more, the stranger lifted his wine cup.

"Since we are in the country," he said, "we will make our libation to Demeter, the Goddess of the fields. May yours be fruitful, with her blessing." He poured a little wine on the earthen floor as he spoke. There was a moment of reverent silence. Then while the flames of the hearth danced upward toward the sky and the stars winked down from above, the stranger began his story.





CHAPTER II

The Stranger's Story

"Long, long ago, when the earth was young and the Gods mingled more freely with men than they do today, there lived in Hellas a beautiful youth named Epimetheus. I am not quite sure that he was the very first man that ever lived, but at any rate he was one of the first, and he was very lonely. The world was then more beautiful than I can say. The sun shone every day in the year, flowers bloomed everywhere, and the earth brought forth abundantly all that he needed for food, but still Epimetheus was not happy. The Gods saw how lonely he was and they felt sorry for him.

"'Let us give him a companion,' said Zeus, the father of all the Gods. 'Even sun-crowned Olympus would be a desolate place to me if I had to live all alone.' So the Gods all fell to hunting for just the right companion to send to

poor lonely Epimetheus, and soon they found a lovely maiden whose name was Pandora. 'She's just the right one,' said Aphrodite, the Goddess of Love. 'See how beautiful she is.' 'Yes,' said Athena, the Goddess of Wisdom, 'but she will need more than beauty or Epimetheus will tire of her. One cannot love an empty head forever, even if it is a beautiful one. I will give her learning and wisdom.'

"'I will give her a sweet voice for singing,' said Apollo. In this way each one of the Gods gave to Pandora some wonderful gift, and when the time came for her departure from Olympus, where the Gods dwell, these gifts were packed away in a marriage chest of curious workmanship, and were taken with her to the home of Epimetheus.

"You can imagine how glad Epimetheus was to receive a bride so nobly endowed, and for a time everything went very happily upon the earth. At last, one sad day, a dreadful thing happened.

"Pandora had been told by the Gods that she must not open the box, lest she lose all the blessings it contained.

"But she was curious. She wished to see with her own eyes what was in it, and one day, when Epimetheus was

away from home, she lifted the corner of the lid! Out flew the gifts of the Gods! She tried her best to close the lid again, but before she could do so, the blessings had flown away in a bright cloud.

"Poor Pandora! She sat down beside the box and wept the very first tears that were ever shed in this world. While she was weeping and blaming herself for her disobedience and the trouble it had caused, she heard a little voice, way down in the bottom of the box.

"'Don't cry, dear Pandora!' the little voice said. 'You can never be quite unhappy when I am here, and I am always going to stay with you; I am Hope.' So Pandora dried her tears, and no matter how full of sorrow the world has been since, there has never been a time when Hope was gone. If that time should ever come, the world would be a desolate place indeed."

When he had finished the story, no one said anything at all for a minute, and then Daphne looked up at the stranger.

"Is that really the way all the troubles began?" she asked. "Because if it isn't, I think it's mean to blame everything on

poor Pandora."

"Why, Daphne!" said her Mother in a shocked voice; but the stranger only smiled.

"I should not be surprised if Epimetheus were to blame for a few things himself," he said, stroking his beard. "Anyway, I'm sure he felt he would rather have Pandora and all the troubles in the world than to live without her, and men have felt the same way ever since."

"Well, then," began Daphne, her eyes shining like two blue sparks, "why don't—?"

"Daphne! Daphne!" cried Lydia warningly. "You are talking too much for a little girl."

The stranger nodded kindly to Lydia. "Let her speak," he said. Daphne spoke.

"Didn't Athena say Epimetheus would get tired of Pandora if she had an empty head?"

"Yes," admitted the stranger, "the story certainly runs that way."

"And have men felt like that ever since too?" Daphne asked.

"Yes, I think so," answered the stranger. "Certainly

women need wisdom now as much as Pandora did."

"Then why don't they let us learn things the same as boys," gasped Daphne, a little frightened at her own boldness. "Dion's always telling me I can't do things or go to places because I am a girl. I want to know things if I *am* a girl. I can't try for the Olympian games and I can't even go to see them just because I am a girl." She stopped quite overcome.

Melas and Lydia and Dion were all too astonished to speak. Only the stranger did not seem shocked. He drew Daphne up beside him.

"My dear," he said, "a child can ask questions which even a philosopher cannot answer. I do not know myself why the world feels as it does, but it certainly has always seemed to be afraid to let women know too much. It has always seemed to prefer they should have beauty rather than brains."

"Yes, but," urged Daphne, "I don't see why I can't try for the games too, when I am big enough. I can run just as fast as Dion and do everything he can do."

Melas smiled. "Daphne is true to her Spartan blood," he

said. "The girls used to compete in the games at Sparta."

The Philosopher stroked Daphne's hair. "So your name is Daphne," he said, smiling, "And you can run fast and you have golden hair! Did you know it was to the fleet-footed nymph Daphne with golden hair that we owe the victor's crown at the Olympian games, even though no woman may wear it?"

Daphne shook her head. "I don't know what you mean," she said.

"I mean this," said the stranger. "It is said that once upon a time Apollo himself loved a beautiful nymph named Daphne. But Daphne did not love Apollo even though he was a God, and when he pursued her she ran away. She was as swift as the wind, but Apollo was still more swift, and when she saw that she could not escape him by flight, she prayed to her father, who was a river god, and, to protect her, he changed her form by magic. Her arms became branches, her golden hair became leaves, and her feet took root in the ground. When Apollo reached her side, she was no longer a beautiful maiden, but a lovely laurel tree. Apollo gathered some of the shining leaves and wove them

into a wreath. 'If you will not be my bride,' he cried, 'you shall at least be my tree and your leaves shall be my crown,' and that is why at the games over which Apollo presides, the victor is still crowned with laurel. It was Apollo himself who gave us the custom and made it sacred. So, my little maid," he finished, "you give us our crowns even though you may not win them for yourselves, don't you see? Isn't that almost as good?"

"Maybe it is," sighed Daphne, thoughtfully, "but anyway I'd like to try it the other way." Then she slid from the stranger's side to her Mother's footstool, and sat down with her head against her Mother's knee.

"You are sleepy," said Lydia, stroking her hair. "It is time you children were in bed."

"Oh, Mother," pleaded Dion, "please let him tell just one more story. It isn't late, truly." Then he turned to their guest. "Those were very good stories," he said, "but they were both about girls. Won't you please tell me one about a boy?"

"Very well," said the stranger, "if your Mother will let me, I will tell you the story of Perseus and how the great

Goddess Athena helped him to cut off the Gorgon's head with its writhing snaky locks! There's a story for you! And if you don't believe it is true, some day, when you go to Athens with your Father, you can see the Gorgon's head, snakes and all, on the breastplate of the Goddess Athena, where she has worn it ever since."

"Is it the real Gorgon's head?" asked Dion breathlessly, "all snakes and blood and everything?"

"No," said the stranger, laughing, "the blood of the Gorgon dried up long ago. It is a sculptured head that adorns the breastplate of Athena."

Then the twins and Chloe listened with open mouth and round eyes to another of the most wonderful stories in the world, while Lydia forgot to spin and the wine cup of Melas stood untouched within reach of his hand. Even Lydia forgot all about time, and when the story was finished, the moon had already risen and was looking down upon them over the wall. Lydia pointed to it with her distaff.

"See, children," she said, "the Goddess Artemis herself has come to light you to bed. Thank your kind friend and

say goodnight."





CHAPTER III
The Shepherds

The next morning Dion was wakened by feeling a cold wet nose wiggling about in the back of his neck. It was Argos' nose. Dion knew it at once. He had felt it before.

"Go away, Argos," he said crossly. He pulled the sheepskin coverings of his bed closer about his ears and turned over for another nap.

But Argos was a good shepherd dog and he knew that his first work that morning was to round up the twins. So he gamboled about on his four clumsy paws and barked. Then, seeing that Dion had no intention of getting up, he seized the sheepskin covers and dragged them to the floor.

"Bow-wow," he said.

Dion sat up shivering. "Good dog," said Dion, "go away from here; go wake Daphne!"

"Bow-wow, bow-wow," said Argos, and bounded off to

Daphne's room to wake her too.

Dressing took only a minute, for the children each wore but one garment, and there were no buttons; so, though they were sleepy and their fingers were cold and clumsy, they appeared in the court while the roosters in the farmyard were still crowing and the thrushes in the olive trees were in the midst of their sunrise song. Chloe had already gone out to feed the chickens. Lydia was bending over the hearth fire, and their Father was just saying goodbye to the stranger at the door of the court, and pointing out to him the road to the little seaport town.

"You will probably find a boat going over to the Piraeus sometime today," he said, "and as they usually go early in the morning, it is well for you to make an early start from here. May Hermes speed you on your way."

"Farewell," said the stranger, "and if ever a philosopher can serve a farmer, you have but to ask in the Piraeus for the home of Anaxagoras. I thank you for your hospitality," and with these words he was gone.

Melas had eaten his breakfast of bread and wine with his guest before dawn, and was now ready for the day's work in

the fields. The slaves of Pericles were already in the farmyard, yoking the oxen, milking the goats, and getting out the tools. There were pleasant early sounds all about, but the twins hovered over the hearth fire, for the morning was chill; and Dion yawned. Lydia saw him.

"Come," she said briskly, "wash your faces! That will wake you up, if you are still sleepy. And then I'll have a bite for you to eat, and some bread and cheese for you to carry with you to the hills."

"Are we going to the hills?" asked Dion.

"Yes," said Melas. "Today you must watch the sheep. Dromas has to help me plough the cornfield. You are old enough now to look after the flock and bring the sheep all safe home again at night. Come, move quickly! 'Still on the sluggard hungry want attends.'"

"They were up too late," said Lydia. "If they can't wake up in the morning they must go to bed very early every night."

When Dion and Daphne heard their Mother say that, they became at once quite lively, and were soon washed and ready for their breakfast, which was nothing but cold

barley cakes left over from the night before and a drink of warm goat's milk. When they had eaten it, Daphne put the bread and cheese which Lydia had wrapped up in a towel for their luncheon in the front of her dress and they were ready to start.

Melas and Dromas, the shepherd, were waiting for them at the farmyard gate when the twins came bounding out of the back door, Dion with a little reed pipe in his hand and Daphne carrying a shepherd's crook. The sheep were huddled together at the gate, waiting to be let out.

"Be sure you keep good watch of that old black ewe," said Dromas to the twins as he went to open the gate. "She is a wanderer. I never saw a sheep like her. She is always straying off by herself. Quarrelsome too. Argos knows she has to be watched more than the others, and sometimes when she goes off by herself and he goes after her, she just puts her head down and butts at him like an old goat. The wolves will get her one of these days, as sure as my name is Dromas."

"Are there wolves in the hills?" asked Daphne.

"Maybe a few," answered Dromas, "but they don't



usually come round when they see the flock together, and a good dog along. You needn't be afraid."

"I'm not afraid of anything," said Daphne proudly, and then the gate was opened, the sheep crowded through, and Dion and Daphne with Argos fell in behind the flock, and away they went toward the hills, to the music of Dion's pipe, the bleating of the sheep, and the tinkling of their bells.

The children followed the cart path westward for some distance, and then left it to drive the flock up the southern slope of a rocky high hill, where the grass was already quite green in places and there was good pasture for the sheep. It was still so early in the morning that the sun threw long, long shadows before them, when they reached the hill pasture, though they were then two miles from home. The pasture was a lonely place. Even from the hilltops there were no houses or villages to be seen. Far, far away toward the east they could see the olive and fig trees around their own house. On the western horizon there was a glimpse of blue sea. In a field nearer they could barely make out two brown specks moving slowly back and forth. They were oxen, and Dromas was ploughing with them. It was so still that the children could plainly hear the breathing of the sheep as they cropped the grass, and the ripple of the little stream which spread out into a shallow river and watered the valley below.

The hillside was bare except for shrubs and a few trees, but there were wonderful places to play among the rocks. Dion proposed that they play robber cave in a hollow place

between two large boulders; but as he insisted on being the robber, and Daphne wouldn't play if she couldn't be the robber half the time, that game had to be given up.

Then Daphne said, "Come on! Let's play Apollo and Daphne! I'm Daphne anyway, and I can run like the wind. You can be Apollo, only I know you can't catch me! I can run so fast that even the real Apollo couldn't catch me!"

Dion looked scared.

"Don't you know the Gods are all about us, only we can't see them?" he demanded. "Apollo may have heard what you said, and if he should take a notion to punish you for bragging, I guess you'd be sorry. Maybe he'll turn you into a tree just like the other Daphne."

"Pooh," said Daphne. "I'm not afraid. I should think the Gods wouldn't have time to listen to everything little girls say! They can't be very busy if they do."

Dion was horrified. "That's a wicked thing to say," he said. "You must never speak that way of the Gods. Oh dear! This is bound to be an unlucky day. This morning when Argos woke me, I was having a bad dream! That's a very bad sign."

"It's a sign you ate too much last night," said Daphne. She said it very boldly, but really she was beginning to feel a little frightened too, for everyone she knew believed in such signs and omens.

"Come along out of this place, anyway," said Dion. "Let's go somewhere else and play. Let's go to the brook."

The two children came out of their cave between the rocks and started toward the little stream, which was hidden from them by bushes. The sheep were all grazing contentedly along the hillside, the old black ewe browsing in the very middle of the flock. Argos was sitting on the hilltop in the sunshine, watching them, with his tongue



hanging out. The sun was now quite high in the sky and the day was warm. The children paddled in the water and built a dam, and sent fleets of leaves down the stream, and played knuckle-bones on a flat rock beside it, until at last they were hungry, and then they ate their bread and cheese.

When they had finished the last crumb, Daphne curled herself up on the flat rock with her head on her arm.

"I'm so sleepy," she said. "I can't keep awake another minute."

You see, they had been up ever so many hours then, and the sunshine was very warm, and the bees buzzed so drowsily in the sunshine!

"You and Argos watch the sheep," she begged, and was asleep before you could say Jack Robinson.

Dion came out of the bushes and counted the flock like a careful shepherd. They were all there, and Argos was still on watch.

"I'll lie down a little while, too," said Dion to himself, "but I won't go to sleep. I'll just look at the sky."

He stretched himself out beside Daphne and watched the white clouds sailing away overhead, and in two minutes

he was asleep too.

How long they slept the children never knew. They were awakened at last by a long, long howl, which seemed to come from the other side of the hill. They sat up and clutched each other in terror. There was an answering howl from Argos, and mingled with it they heard the dull thud of many feet, the bleating of sheep, and the frightened cries of lambs.

"The sheep are frightened. There's a stampede!" cried Dion.

The two children plunged through the bushes and gazed about them. The whole flock had disappeared! Their bells could be heard in a mad jangle of sound from the farther side of the hill, Argos was barking wildly.

"Come on," shouted Dion, springing out of the bushes, "We must get them back."

"Suppose it is a wolf!" shrieked Daphne, tumbling after him.

"We'll have to get the sheep back even if it is a bear," cried Dion, and he tore away over the crest of the hill and down the farther slope. Daphne followed after him, as fast

as she could run.

The sheep were already a long distance away, in a region of the hills which the children had never seen before in their lives, but they did not stop to think of that. All they thought was that the sheep must be brought back at any cost. They could see Argos barking and circling round the frightened flock, and away in the distance a huge wild creature was just disappearing into the woods.

On the children ran, over rocks and through briars, until at last they reached the sheep, whose flight Argos had already checked. Dion ran beyond to turn them back, while Daphne herded them on one side and Argos on the other. When they had the flock together and quiet once more, the children counted them.

"There's one missing!" cried Daphne, aghast. "And it's the old black ewe! What will Father say?"

"It's all your fault," said Dion. "I told you you would have bad luck if you spoke about the Gods the way you did. I shouldn't wonder if that wasn't really a wolf that we saw. It may have been Pan himself! Or it may have been Apollo, and he meant to show you that you can't run even as fast



as a sheep!"

"Anyway, the old black ewe is gone."

"Oh dear! Oh dear! What shall we do?" mourned Daphne.

By this time the sun was low in the sky, and it was late afternoon.

"The first thing to do is to get home as fast as we can," said Dion.

"Which way is home?" said Daphne.

Dion looked about him. "I don't know," he said. "Maybe Argos does. Here Argos! Good dog! Take 'em home! Home Argos! Home!"

Argos wagged his tail, and ran around behind the flock.

"Bow-wow, bow-wow," he barked, and nipped the heels of the wether. In a short time he had the whole flock moving toward a hollow between the hills. As they trotted along behind the sheep, Daphne struck her hands together in dismay.

"What else do you think I have done?" she cried. "I've left my crook in the robber's cave!"

"And I left my pipe there, too," Dion wailed.

"We can't get them tonight anyway," sobbed Daphne. "We could never find the place! And besides, it is too late. It will be dark before we get home."

They trudged along behind Argos and the sheep in dismal silence. Argos did not seem at all in doubt about the way home. He drove the sheep through the hollow between the hills and across two fields, and brought them out at last upon a roadway.

"This must be the road that goes by the house," cried Dion joyfully. For answer Daphne pointed toward the east. There some distance ahead of them was Dromas driving the oxen home from the day's ploughing.

Daphne clapped her hands for joy. "I knew Argos would find the way!" she cried.

The bright colors of the sunset were just fading from the sky when they reached the farmyard gate. Dromas had gone in before them with the oxen, and Melas himself was waiting to let them in and to count the sheep.

"Where is the old black ewe?" he said sternly to the twins, when the last sheep had passed through the gate.

"We don't know," sobbed Daphne. "We lost her. We lost the crook, and Dion's little pipe, too. A wolf frightened the flock, and they ran away, and—"

"*Maybe* it was a wolf," said Dion darkly.

Then the twins told the whole story to their Father. Melas did not say much to them. He was a man of few words at any time, but he made them feel very much ashamed. And when Lydia heard the things Daphne had said about the Gods, they felt worse than ever, at least Daphne did.

That night, before the family went to bed, Melas kindled a fire upon the little altar which stood in the middle of the court and offered upon it a handful of barley, and prayed to Pan and to Apollo that Daphne might be forgiven for her wicked words.



CHAPTER IV
Sowing and Reaping

The children were not allowed again to take the sheep to the hills. “They are not to be trusted,” said Melas. “They are the sort of shepherds that go to sleep and let the wolves find the flock. They are not real Spartans.”

Dion and Daphne felt this as a terrible reproach. Dromas now had to go with the sheep, and so could no longer help with the other farm work, and the ploughing and sowing of the cornfield had to be finished by Melas himself. The twins did their best to help. When Melas scattered the grain, they followed with rakes and scratched a layer of earth over the seeds. The crows watched the planting with much interest.

“Look at them,” cried Dion to his Father one afternoon. “There are five of them on that tree yonder, and the minute we got to one end of the field they begin to scratch up the



grain at the other."

"We'll fix them," said Melas shortly.

He sent the twins to the house for sticks and straw and his old worn-out sheepskin cloak and hat, and when they came back, Melas stuck two long sticks of wood in the ground and bound a cross piece to them with strips of leather. Then he wound the sticks with straw, and made a round bundle of straw at the top. He tied it all securely with thongs. Then he dressed it with the sheepskin and put on the hat. When it was done, it was the scariest looking scarecrow you ever saw!

"I guess that will frighten the crows!" said Dion, as he gazed at it admiringly. "It just about scares me."

"Caw, caw, caw!" screamed a crow.

A crow was flying right over his head! Dion shook his fist at him. "You old thief!" he cried.

"I know one more thing we can do," said Daphne. "Lycias told me about it." She got a small piece of bark and made a little amulet of it. She punched a hole through one end and put a leather string through it. Neither she nor Dion could write, so when she had explained what must be

done Melas himself took a sharp stone and scratched a curse upon crows in the soft bark. When it was done Daphne hung it about the neck of the scarecrow. "There," said Melas grimly, "I don't believe he'll go to sleep on the job. He's a Spartan scarecrow! Now let's go home to supper, and tomorrow we'll see how it works."

The next morning the very first thing the twins did was to rush out to the field and there, right on top of the scarecrow were three black crows, and more were on the ground eating up the seed!

"After all we did, just look at them!" cried Dion.

"Caw, caw," screamed the crows.

"You don't suppose Father made a mistake, and wrote a blessing instead of a curse on that amulet?" said Daphne anxiously. They ran back to the house as fast as they could go. Melas was just coming out of the farmyard with a pruning hook in his hand.

"Oh, Father," cried Dion, "the crows are roosting all over the scarecrow. Maybe he wasn't a Spartan scarecrow after all."

"Anyway, he seems to have gone to sleep on the job,"

added Daphne.

Melas stared at the crows in angry silence. "You children will have to get your clappers then, and just drive the old thieves away," he said at last. "You will have to spend the day in the field watching them. I've got to work in the vineyard. The vines must be pruned."

The twins had not yet had their breakfast and they were hungry. So they ran to the kitchen, seized some barley cakes and a little jar of milk, and in a few minutes were back again in the field. They sat down with the wooden clappers beside them, and ate their breakfast in the company of the scarecrow. All day long they watched the grain and rattled their clappers, or threw clods at the black marauders. It was lively work, and although they did not like it, they remembered the black ewe and stuck faithfully at it all through the long day.

When the sun was high overhead, Lydia brought them some figs and cheese and a drink of goat's milk. She also brought a message. This was the message. "Father says you are to stay here until after dark. You are to hunt around until you find a toad, and when you find it, you must be



sure not to let it get away from you. He is going to put a magic spell on the field to keep the crows away, but the spell will not work except in the dark. So you must stay here until he comes."

Between keeping off the birds and hunting for the toad, the twins spent a busy afternoon. And after the toad was found it was no joke to try to keep it. It was a wonderful hopper and nearly got away twice. At dusk the crows flew away to their nests, and the children were alone in the field until the twilight deepened into darkness. Owls had begun to hoot and bats were flying about, when at last they saw three dim, shadowy figures coming across the field.

The shadowy figures were Melas, Lydia, and Chloe. Lydia bore a jar, which she placed beside the scarecrow in the middle of the field. Melas took the toad in his hand, formed the others in line, and then solemnly headed the procession as the five walked slowly round the entire field, carrying the toad. When they got back to the scarecrow again, Melas put the toad in the jar and sealed it. Then he buried the jar in the middle of the field, beside the scarecrow.

"There," said Lydia, when it was done, "that's the very strongest spell there is. If that doesn't protect the corn, I don't know another thing to do."

Whether it was the scarecrow, or the curse, or the spell,

I cannot say, but it is certain that the corn grew well that summer, and when harvest time came, Melas was so proud of his crop that he decided to have an extra celebration. So one day in late summer everyone on the entire farm rose with the dawn and hastened to the fields. It was the twelfth day of the month, which was counted a lucky day for harvesting, and everyone was gay, as, with sickles in hand, slaves and master alike entered the field of ripe grain. Melas and two other men led the way, cutting the stalks and leaving them on the ground to be gathered into sheaves and stacked by others who followed after.

Meanwhile Lydia, Chloe, and the other women prepared an out-of-door feast. A calf had been killed and cut up for cooking, and in the afternoon a huge fire was built. Lydia had charge of the cooking. She set great pieces of meat before the fire to roast, and told the children to sit by and turn them often to keep them from burning. Dion and Daphne also brought wood for the fire, while the slave women mixed cakes of meal and baked them in the ashes, or went to the spring for water, or carried refreshing drinks to the workers in the field.



It was sundown when the last sheaf was stacked and Melas gave the signal to stop work. Chloe at once brought cool water from the spring to the tired harvesters, and when they had washed their hot hands and faces, Melas made a rude altar of stones, kindled a fire upon it, and, calling the people together, offered upon it a handful of the new grain

and made a prayer of thanks to Demeter, the Goddess of the fields, for the rich harvest. When this was done, the feast was ready. The meat and cakes and wine were passed to the men by the women, and when they had been well served, the women too sat down under a tree and ate their supper. It was a gay party. After supper there were jokes and songs, and Dromas played upon his shepherd's pipe, until the night came on and the moon showed her round face over the crest of the hills.

Then Lycias, the oldest slave of all, began to tell stories. He had seen the battle of Salamis, and he told how he had watched the Persian ships go down, one after another, before the victorious Greeks. "And the King sat right on the high rocks north of the Piraeus and saw 'em go down," he chuckled. "It was a great sight."

When Lycias had finished his story, Dromas told the tale of how the God Pan had appeared to a shepherd he knew, as he was watching his sheep along on the hills. "It's all true," he declared, as the story ended. "I knew the man myself. All sorts of things happen when you're out alone on the hillsides."

The fire, meanwhile, had died down to a heap of brands and gleaming coals, and Melas told the twins to bring some wood to replenish it. They had been gone only a short time on this errand when the group around the fire was amazed to see them come darting back into the circle, all out of breath and with eyes as big as saucers.

"What is it?" cried Lydia, springing to her feet.



"We don't know," gasped Dion. "It's big—and black—and there's two of it. It's right out by the brush pile."

"We were just going to get an armful of brush," added Daphne, "when all of a sudden there it was—right beside us! We didn't wait to see it anymore. We just ran like everything!"

Lydia poked the coals into a blaze and peered out into the surrounding darkness.

"It was wolves, I'll go bail," cried Lycias, and he started at once to climb a tree.

"Wolves!" shrieked Chloe, and got behind her mistress. The twins were already holding to her skirts.

"Wolves!" howled the slaves, "a whole pack of them!" and as there was nothing for them to climb, each hastily tried to get behind someone else. In the struggle Dromas got crowded back and sat down on a hot coal. He hadn't many clothes on, so he got up very quickly, and the next howl he gave was not wholly on account of wolves. Only Lydia and Melas stood their ground beside the fire. Melas waved a burning brand in the air and shouted at the top of his lungs, "Fools! Rabbits! Don't you know wolves won't

come near a fire?" but nothing soothed the frightened slaves. Something was coming, and if it wasn't wolves, they thought it was likely to be a worse creature. They could see two black figures bounding along in the moonlight, and behind them came a huge dog, barking with all his might. Bang into the row of cowering slaves they ran, and the biggest black thing roared "baa," and the little one bleated "maa," right into Dromas' ear. The "whole pack of wolves" was just the old black ewe and her little black lamb. Argos was chasing them and when he came tearing into the circle about the fire and saw the sheep safe with Dromas, he sat down panting, with his tongue hanging out, and looked very much pleased with himself. Dromas seized the lamb in his arms.

"It's a fine young ram," he cried, "and it's nothing short of a miracle that the wolves haven't got it, and its mother too, long before this!"

"I always said that old ewe was bewitched," quavered Lycias. "It's magic, I say. And the lamb is as black as Erebus too. No good will come of this!"

"Come, come! We must take them up to the farmyard

at once," said Melas, "before the old sheep takes it into her head to run away again. Dromas, you and Argos attend to her, and I'll carry the lamb myself."

"We will all go," said Lydia. "It is time for bed anyway." So the remains of the feast were gathered up, the fire was put out, and the whole company trailed back over the hill to the farmhouse, Melas at the head of the procession, carrying the lamb in his arms. When the old sheep was corralled once more with the flock, and the slaves had gone home to their huts, Melas came in from the farmyard with the lamb. He seemed strangely excited.

"Light the fire on the hearth, wife," he said to Lydia. "There's something queer about this lamb."

Lydia uncovered the coals, laid on some wood, and blew the fire to a blaze. By its light Melas examined the lamb carefully. Then he said to Lydia, who stood near with the twins, "This ram has but one horn!"

"It can't be!" gasped Lydia. "Whoever heard of a ram with only one horn?"

"Feel it," said Melas briefly. Lydia felt it.

"By all the Gods," she cried, "here is a strange thing!"

"Let us feel," begged Dion and Daphne. They both felt. There was only one little budding horn to be found, and that was right in the middle of the lamb's forehead.

"What does it mean?" cried Lydia. "Is it a miracle? Is it a portent? Does it mean good luck or bad luck?"

"I don't know," said Melas. "Only a priest could tell that."

"Then take it to a priest," said Lydia.

"It is not my sheep," said Melas. "It belongs to Pericles."

"Then you must take it to him and let him decide what shall be done with it," cried Lydia. "And go soon, I beg of you. I don't wish to have the creature in the house. It may be bewitched. It may bring all kinds of bad luck to us."

"It is just as likely to bring good luck as bad," said Melas.

"Is Father really going to take the lamb to Athens?" asked Dion.

"Yes," answered Melas, with surprising promptness, "tomorrow."

"Oh," cried Dion and Daphne at the same instant, "*please* let me go too."

"No," said Lydia at once, but Melas said, "Not so fast,

wife. Seek guidance of the Gods. The children would learn much from such a journey, and their chances for learning are few. We should be gone but two days, if the sea is calm."

Lydia was silent for a moment while the twins stood by breathless with suspense. At last she said, "Well—if the Gods so will—we will seek an omen. You could spend the night at the house of my brother, Phaon, the stone-cutter, I suppose. I have seen him but seldom since he married his Athenian wife, but no doubt he would make you welcome for the night."

She rose slowly as she spoke, and threw a handful of grain upon the family altar, at the same time praying to Hermes, the God of travelers, for guidance. Then she ran round the court with her hands over her ears, and as she came back to the group beside the hearth, suddenly uncovered them again. The twins were talking together in low tones.

"Oh, do you suppose they will let *me* go?" Daphne was saying to Dion, and just at that moment Lydia took her hands from her ears. "Go" was the first word she heard.

"The omen is favorable," cried Lydia. "You are to go! I

prayed to Hermes, then closed my ears, well knowing that the first word I should hear when I uncovered them would be the answer to my prayer. That word was 'Go.' Hasten to bed, my children, for you must make an early start tomorrow."

Daphne could scarcely believe her ears. Not a word had been said about her staying at home because she was a girl! She flew upstairs to bed lest someone should suddenly think of it.



CHAPTER V

The Twins Go to Athens

In the gray dawn of the following morning Lydia stood in the doorway of her house and watched the three figures disappear down the road toward the little seaport town of Ambelaca. Melas walked ahead, carrying the lamb wrapped in his cloak, and the twins followed, bearing between them a basket in which Lydia had carefully packed two dressed fowls, some fresh eggs, and a cheese, to be taken to the home of Pericles, besides bread and cheese for Melas and the children. The twins were so excited they would have danced along the road instead of walking if it hadn't been for the basket, but every time Daphne got too lively, Dion said, "Remember the eggs," and every time Dion forgot and skipped, Daphne said the same thing to him.

They had gone nearly a mile in this way, when the road took them to the crest of a hill, from the top of which it



seemed as if they could see the whole world. Just below them lay the little seaport town of Ambelaca, and beyond it the blue waters of the bay sparkled and danced in the morning breeze. On the farther side of the bay they could see the white buildings of the Piraeus, and beyond that in the distance was a chain of blue mountains over which the sun was just peeping. That sight was so beautiful that the children set down their basket, and Melas too stood still to gaze.

"Those blue mountains beyond the Piraeus are the hills of Athens," said Melas. "The one with the flat top is the sacred hill of the Acropolis. And right down there," he added, pointing to a white house on a nearby hilltop, overlooking the sea, "is the house of Euripides, the poet. He has come from the noise and confusion of the city to find a quiet refuge upon Salamis."

"Does he write real poetry?" asked Daphne.

"They say he does," answered Melas, "though I never read any of it myself."

"I wish I could write," sighed Daphne, "even if it wasn't poetry! Even if it were only curses to hang around a

scarecrow's neck. I'd like to write!"

"Girls don't need to know how to write," said Melas. "It doesn't make them any better housekeepers. I don't even see how Dion is going to learn. There are no schools in Salamis."

"Oh dear!" thought Daphne, "there it is again." But she said nothing and followed Melas down the hill and into the village street.

Soon they found themselves at the dock where the boat was tied. There were already passengers on board when the twins and their father arrived. There were two farmers with baskets of eggs and vegetables, and there was an old woman with a large bundle of bread. Next to her sat a fisherman with a basket of eels. They were all going to the market in the Piraeus to sell their produce. Melas with the lamb in his arms climbed in beside one of the farmers and sat facing the fisherman. Dion sat next to him with the basket on his knee, and Daphne had to sit beside the fisherman and the eels. The eels squirmed frightfully, and Daphne squirmed too every time she looked at them. She was afraid one might get out and wrap itself around her legs. They did look



so horribly like snakes, and Daphne felt about snakes just as most girls do. However, she knew it was useless to say anything. There was no other seat for her, and so she remembered that she was a Spartan and tried not to look at them.

When they were all seated, the rowers took their places on the rowing benches, the captain gave the signal, and off they went over the blue waters toward the distant shore. For a time everything went smoothly. There was no sound but the rattling of the oarlocks, the chant of the rowers as they dipped their oars, and the rippling of the water against the sides of the boat. Up to this time the black lamb had

lain quietly in Melas' arms, but now something seemed to disturb him. He lifted his head, gave a sudden bleat, and somehow flung himself out of Melas' arms directly into the basket of eels! Such a squirming as there was then! The eels squirmed, and the lamb squirmed, and if his legs had not been securely tied together he undoubtedly would have flopped right into the water, and then this story would never have been written.

The fisherman gave an angry roar. "Keep your miserable lamb out of my eel basket," he shouted.

Melas had not waited to be told. He had already seized the lamb, but it struggled hard to get away, and between the lamb and the eels there was a disturbance that threatened to upset the boat.

"Sit still," roared the captain. "Have you no sense? Do you all want to go to the bottom?"

"May Poseidon defend us!" cried the old woman with the bread. "I've no wish to be made into eel bait."

"Nor I," said one of the farmers angrily. "You'd better kill your lambs before you take them to market," he said to Melas; "it will be safer for the rest of us."

"The lamb is not for market," Melas answered. "I would not dare kill it. It bears a portent on its brow!"

"A portent?" gasped the old woman.

"May all the Gods defend us! What portent?" Melas pointed to the horn. "It has but one horn," he said.

They all became still at once. They all looked at the lamb. They all felt of his horn. Their eyes grew big.

"There was never such a thing known," said the farmer.

"Whose is the lamb?" asked another. "Is it yours?"

"No," said Melas, "it belongs to Pericles the Archon. It was born on his farm. I am taking it to him so that he may decide what to do with it."

"A portent on the farm of Pericles?" cried the old woman. "I'll warrant it will be read as favoring him, since he already has a world at his feet. May the Gods forgive me, but it seems to me they are often more partial than just."

"Hush, woman," said one of the farmers. "Speak no ill of the Gods, not until we are safe on the land at any rate."

The woman snapped her mouth shut. The farmers and the fisherman settled themselves as far away as possible from the twins and Melas, and nothing more was said until

the boat touched the other shore, and all the passengers scrambled out upon the dock. The farmers and the fisherman and the old woman all hastened away to the marketplace, and when they reached it, they must have kept their tongues busy, for as Melas and the twins passed through it on their way to Athens a few moments later, they were followed by a crowd of curious people who wanted to see the lamb and who had a great deal to say about what such a miracle might mean.

Melas paid little attention to them, but hastened on his way, and soon they reached the eastern edge of the town and started along the paved road which ran from the Piraeus to Athens proper. This road was nearly five miles long and ran between two high walls of stone some distance apart. The curious crowd left them at this point and the three walked on alone through olive orchards and past little vineyards, toward Athens.

"Nobody could get lost on this road," said Dion to his Father, "not even if he tried! He couldn't get over the walls."

"What are the walls for?" asked Daphne. "It seems silly

to build high walls like this right out in the country."

"Not so silly when you think about it," answered Melas. "These walls were built by Pericles, so that if any enemy should make an invasion, Athens would always have a safe access to the sea. Without that she could be starved within her own walls in a very short time."

"Pericles must be almost as powerful and wise as the Gods themselves, I should think," said Daphne.

"He does all these things by the help of the Gods, without doubt," said Melas.

When they were halfway on their journey to the city, Dion suddenly let down his side of the basket with a thump.

"Remember the eggs!" cried Daphne sharply, but Dion did not seem to hear.

"Look! Look!" he cried and pointed toward the east. There against the sky, on the top of the sacred mountain, stood a gigantic figure shining in the sun.

"What is it?" cried both children at once.

"That is the bronze statue of Athena, the Goddess who gives protection to Athens," said Melas.

"Did Pericles make that too?" asked Daphne.

Melas laughed. "No," he said; "you must not think Pericles made everything you may see in Athens. Great as he is, he is not a sculptor."

"Oh, oh," cried Dion, "I want to see the Gorgon's head with snaky locks. Don't you remember the stranger said it was on the breastplate of the statue?"

"Ugh," said Daphne, shuddering. "I don't believe I'd like it. It must look just like eels."

"Come, come," said Melas. "At this rate you won't have a chance. The day will be gone before we know it."

The twins picked up the basket, and the three marched on toward the city, and it was not long before they had entered the gate and were passing along closely built-up streets to the home of the greatest man in Athens.

"This is the place," said Melas at last, stopping at one of the houses.

"This isn't Pericles' house, is it?" cried Daphne. "Why, I thought it would be the biggest house in Athens, and it looks just like the others."

"Pericles does not put on much style," said Melas, as he lifted the knocker on the door. "He is too great to need

display. He cares more about fine public buildings for the city than about making his neighbors envious by living better than they do. Just get the idea out of your head that greatness means wealth and luxury, or you are no true Spartans, nor even good Athenians."

As he said this, Melas let the knocker fall. The door was immediately opened by a porter, who looked surprised when he saw Melas and the twins.

"What brings you in from the farm?" he said.

"I wish to see your mistress, the wife of Pericles," said Melas, with dignity. "I have business of importance."

"Come in, come in," said the porter, grinning good-naturedly; "and you, too, little boys," he added graciously to the twins, and led the way into the house. Dion was just opening his mouth to explain that Daphne wasn't a boy, but Daphne poked him in the ribs and shook her head at him. "Let him think so," she said, jerking her chiton up shorter through her girdle.

They were ushered through a passageway into the court of the house, and there the porter left them while he went to call his mistress. The house, though little different from



the other houses of well-to-do Athenians, was still much finer than anything the twins had ever seen. The floor was of marble, and the altar of Zeus which stood in the center of the court was beautifully carved. The doorways which opened into the various rooms of the house were hung with blue curtains. A room opening into the court at the back had a hearth fire in the middle of it, much like that in the children's own home. Soon a door in the back of the house opened, and Telesippe, the wife of Pericles, appeared. She was a large coarse looking woman, and with her were three boys, her own two and Alcibiades, a handsome lad, who was a ward of Pericles and a member of his family.

Melas approached her and opened his cloak.

"Why, Melas, what have you there?" cried Telesippe in amazement, as she saw the little black rain.

"A portent, Madam," said Melas with solemnity. "This ram, born on your husband's farm, is a prodigy, it has but one horn. I have brought it to you, that the omen might be interpreted. I trust it may prove a favorable one."

Telesippe looked at the lamb and turned pale. She struck her hands together. The porter and another slave at

once appeared.

"Go to the temple and bring Lampon, the priest," she said to the slave; and to the porter she added, "and you, the moment the priest arrives, call your master."

The slave instantly disappeared, and the porter went back to his post by the entrance. Although Telesippe was evidently disturbed and anxious about the portent, she now turned her attention to the basket, which Dion and Daphne had placed before her, and when their luncheon had been taken out, she called a slave woman and gave the fowl and the eggs and cheese into her care.

The three boys, meanwhile, crowded around Melas and the lamb and asked questions of all sorts about it and about the farm. It seemed but a short time when the porter opened the door once more and ushered in the priest. The twins had never seen a priest, since there were none on the island, and they looked with awe upon this man who could read omens and interpret dreams. He was a tall, spare man with piercing dark eyes. He was dressed in a long white robe, and wore a wreath of laurel upon his brow, and his black hair fell over his neck in long, straggling locks.

No sooner had he entered the court and taken his place beside the altar than the blue curtains of a door at the right parted and a tall noble-looking man entered the room. Dion and Daphne knew at once that it must be Pericles. No other man, they thought, could look so majestic. Their knees shook under them, and they felt just as you would feel if you were suddenly to meet the President of the United States. Pericles was not alone. A man also tall, and wearing a long white cloak, followed him through the curtains and joined the group about the altar.

"The stranger!" gasped Daphne to Dion in a whisper. "Don't you remember? He said he knew Pericles!"

The stranger spoke to Melas and laid his hand playfully upon the heads of the twins.

"These are old friends of mine," he said to Pericles. "I stayed at their house one night last spring."

Pericles had already greeted the priest. Now he smiled pleasantly at the children, and spoke to Melas.

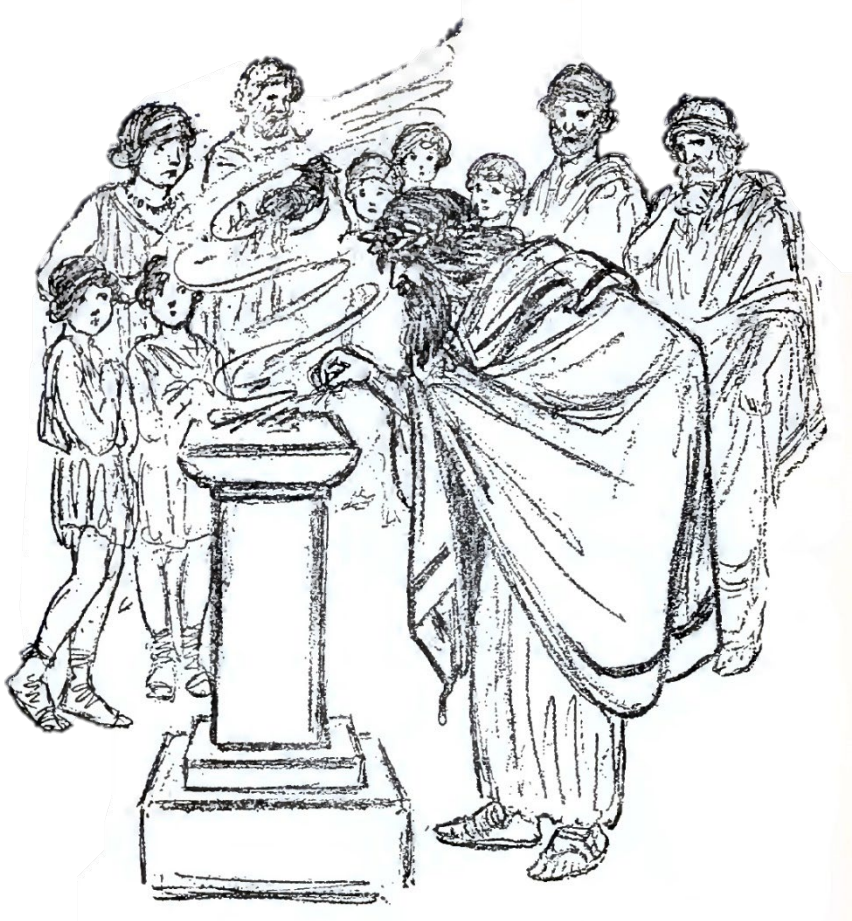
"I hear a miracle has occurred on my farm," he said.

For answer Melas showed the lamb, which now began to jump and wriggle in his arms.

"There can be no doubt that the portent concerns the Great Archon," said the priest solemnly. "See how the ram leaps the moment he appears!"

Pericles beckoned to the stranger. "What do you think of this, Anaxagoras?" he said, smiling.

"I am no soothsayer," answered the stranger, smiling too. "The priest is the one to expound the riddle."



Lampon now came forward, and, with an air of importance, pulled a few hairs from the lamb's fleece, and laid them upon the live coals of the altar. He watched the hair curl up as it burned and bent his ear to listen. "It burns with a crackling sound," he said; "the omen is therefore favorable to your house, O Pericles. Instead of two horns, the animal has but one! Instead of two factions in Athens, one favorable to Pericles, one opposed, there will henceforth be but one! All the city will unite under the leadership of Pericles the Olympian."

"The Gods be praised!" exclaimed Telesippe, with fervor.

The priest clapped his hands and bowed his head, and Dion saw him peer cautiously through the tangled locks which fell over his face to see how Pericles had taken this prophecy. The Great Archon was standing quietly beside Anaxagoras, and neither one gave any sign of being impressed by the oracle. The priest scowled under his wreath.

"What shall be done with the ram?" asked Telesippe, when Lampon again lifted his head.

"Let it be sent to the temple as an offering. Since it is black it must be sacrificed to the Gods of the lower world," answered the priest.

Telesippe at once called a slave. Melas gave the ram into his hands; the priest received a present of money from Pericles, and, followed by the slave with the ram, disappeared through the doorway.

"You did well to bring the ram to me at once," said Pericles to Melas when the door closed behind the priest. "Take this present for your pains," and he placed a gold piece in Melas' hand. "And these little boys," he added, smiling pleasantly at the twins, "they too have done their share in bringing the portent. They must have a reward as well." He gave them each a coin, and, when he had received their thanks, at once left the house, followed by Anaxagoras. The twins and Melas then said goodbye to Telesippe and the boys and took their leave.

When they turned the corner into the next street, Melas said with a sigh, "There, that's off my mind. And I hope there will be no more miracles for a while."

"If it would take us to the house of Pericles every time,



I'd like them at least once a week!" cried Dion, looking longingly at the coin Pericles had given him.

"So would I," Daphne added fervently. "Even if Pericles didn't give us anything at all, I'd come to Athens just to look at him! He looks just like the Gods. I know he does."

Melas laughed. "You're just like the Athenians," he said,

"They call him the Olympian because they feel the same way about him. Give me your coins," he added. "I will put them in my purse for safekeeping."

"Anyway," said Daphne, as she and Dion gave their father the money, "I'm glad the portent was favorable to Pericles. The old woman on the boat was right. She said it would be."



CHAPTER VI

The Festival of Athena

The day had begun so early that it was still morning when Melas and the twins left the house of Pericles and took their way toward the Agora, which was the business and social center of Athens. Here were the markets where everything necessary to the daily life of the Athenians was sold. The twins had never dreamed there were so many things to be found in the world. Not only were there fruits, meats, fish, vegetables, and flowers, but there were stalls filled with beautiful pottery or with dyed and embroidered garments gorgeous in color, and even with books. The books were not bound as ours are. They were written on rolls of parchment and were piled up in the stalls like sticks of wood. Around the marketplace there were arcades supported by marble columns, and ornamented by rows of bronze statues. In the center stood a magnificent altar to

the twelve Gods of Olympus, whom the people of Hellas believed to be the greatest of their many Gods. There were temples opening on the Agora, and beyond the temples there were the hills of Athens, with the Sacred Mount of the Acropolis, the holiest of all holy places, bounding it on the south.

Melas had seen all these sights before, but to the twins it was like stepping right into the middle of an enchanted world. Melas took them each by the hand, and found an out-of-the-way corner near a stall where young girls were selling wreaths, and there they ate their luncheon, while they watched the people swarming about them.

The flowers sellers, the bread women, and some flute girls were almost the only women in sight, but the whole Agora was full of men. There were fathers of families buying provisions for the day. Each was followed by a slave with a basket, for no Athenian gentleman would carry his own packages. There were always slaves to do that. There were grave men in long cloak-like garments with fillets around their heads who walked back and forth talking together. There were boys, followed by their "pedagogues," old slaves

who carried their books for them, and saw to it that their young charges got into as little mischief as possible, as they went about the streets.

Suddenly at some signal which neither Melas nor the twins saw, the whole crowd began to move toward the south.

"Where are they going?" asked Dion.

"Listen to that little Spartan savage," said one of the wreath sellers, laughing. "He doesn't even know it's the regular festival of Athena. Run along, bumpkin, and see the sights."

Melas gave the girl a black look. He didn't like to have Dion called a "Spartan savage," nor a "bumpkin" either, but he knew very well Spartans might expect scant courtesy in Athens, so he said nothing, but he rose from his corner at once and, telling the children to follow, started after the crowd.

They reached the steep incline which led up to the Acropolis, and, still following the crowd, had gone part way to the summit, when there was a mighty pushing and jostling among the people, and loud voices cried, "Make

way for the sacred procession." The crowd parted, and Melas and the twins were pushed back toward one side, but as they were lucky enough to be on the border of the crowd, instead of being pressed farther back, they were able to see the sacred procession of the Goddess Athena as it mounted the long slope and disappeared through the great gate.

In one of the oldest temples on the Acropolis, called the Erechtheum, there was an ancient wooden statue of Athena which the Athenians believed had fallen from heaven. It was very sacred in their eyes, and every year they celebrated a festival when the robes and ornaments of the statue were taken off and cleaned. This year the maidens of Athens had embroidered a new and beautiful robe, and it was being carried in state to the temple to be offered to the Goddess and placed upon her statue.

The twins had never seen so many people in all their lives before. The procession was headed by some of the chief men of Athens, and foremost among them the children recognized Pericles. Near him walked Anaxagoras the philosopher, with Phidias, the great sculptor, and Ictinus, the architect of the new temple of which the

stranger had told the twins on the spring evening so long before. There were also Sophocles the dramatist and Euripides the poet. Melas recognized them all, for they were known to everyone and he had seen them at the house of Pericles or walking about the Agora on previous journeys. He pointed them out to the twins.

"That queer snub-nosed man back of Sophocles is Socrates the philosopher," he said. "He is a friend of Pericles also, though he is poor and queer, and is always standing about the marketplace talking to anyone who will listen to him."

"Are there two philosophers in Athens?" asked Dion. "I thought Anaxagoras was the philosopher."

Melas laughed. "Philosophers are as thick in Athens as bees in a hive," he said, "and poets too."

The beautiful embroidered robe, borne on a chariot shaped like a ship, now appeared in the procession, and the crowd breathed a long sigh of wonder and admiration as it passed. Then came a long row of young girls bearing baskets and jars upon their shoulders. They were followed by older women, for women were allowed to take part in this

festival. After them came youths on horseback, and then more youths leading garlanded oxen for the sacrifice. The procession was so long that the end of it was still winding through the streets below some time after the head had reached the top of the incline. Right up the steep slope it streamed, between the gaping crowds massed on either side, and when the very end of it had passed out of sight, the people closed in behind it and swarmed over the level height of the sacred hill.

Melas and the children pushed their way with the others, but the crowd was so great and the movement so slow that when at last they got near the sacred altars before the Erechtheum, the ceremonies were over and the air was already filled with smoke and the smell of roasting meat.

It was late afternoon before the feasting was over, and, meanwhile, the entire hilltop of the Acropolis was covered with moving crowds. As a part of the festival, there were all sorts of games and side shows. Dion and Daphne were so busy watching sword swallowers, and tumblers, and men performing all sorts of strange and wonderful tricks, they almost forgot entirely the Gorgon's head with the snaky

locks, which the stranger had told them about, and which Dion so much wished to see. Daphne was the first to remember it.

"I'm going to see the new temple that Pericles is building over there. Don't you want to see it, too?" said Melas to the



twins.

"Where?" said Dion. Melas pointed to a great heap of marble blocks toward the southern side of the Acropolis. It was then that Daphne thought about the statue.

"Dion wants to see the Gorgon's head," she said.

"Well, then," answered Melas, "hurry up about it, for it is getting late and we must soon be starting for your uncle's house."

The two children trotted away toward the great bronze statue near the entrance without another word, and it was not until they were quite out of sight that Melas remembered he had not told them where to meet him.

"I shall find them by the statue anyway," he said to himself, and went on examining the foundations of the Parthenon.

Meanwhile the children ran round to the front of the statue and gazed up at the breastplate of the Goddess, upon which Phidias had carved the Gorgon's head. There it was with its staring eyes and twisting locks, looking right down at them.

"Ugh! I don't like it a bit better than I thought I should,"

said Daphne, covering her eyes. "It's worse than eels."

"I'd rather see the man swallowing swords any day," answered Dion. "Let's go and see if we can't find him again," and off they went toward a crowd of people gathered about a little booth beyond the Erechtheum.

It was not until they had seen him swallow swords twice and eat fire once, and the conjurer had begun to pack his things to go away that the twins thought at all about time. When at last they woke up to the fact that the sun was setting behind the purple hills, and looked about them, there were very few people left on the Acropolis, and their father was nowhere to be seen. The two children ran as fast as they could go to the place where the Parthenon was building, but there was no one there. Even the workmen had gone. Then they ran back and looked down the long incline up which the procession had come in the morning, but Melas was not to be seen. The twins returned to the statue of Athena, but no one awaited them there. The Gorgon's head looked down at them with its dreadful staring eyes, and Daphne thought she saw one of the snaky locks move.

"Oh, let's run," she cried.

"Where?" asked Dion.

"I don't know," said Daphne. "Anywhere away from here! Let's go back to the Erechtheum. Perhaps Father will be there looking for us."

They went all round the old temple, which was partly in ruins, and when they found no trace of their father, sat down miserably upon the steps of the great porch of the Maidens on the southern side. It was called the Porch of the Maidens because, instead of columns of marble, statues of beautiful maidens supported the roof. Daphne looked up at them.

"They look strong, like Mother," she said. "It doesn't seem quite so lonesome here with them. Maybe we shall have to stay here all night."

"Don't you think we could find Uncle Phaon's house by ourselves?" asked Dion.

"Oh," cried Daphne, shuddering, "never! We couldn't even by daylight, and now it is almost dark."

"Anyway," said Dion, "we're safer being lost here than anywhere else in Athens. It's where the Gods live. Maybe



they'll take care of us."

"We might sacrifice something on an altar," said Daphne, "and pray, the way Father does."

"We haven't a thing to sacrifice," answered Dion. "We haven't anything to eat even for ourselves."

They were so tired and hungry and discouraged by this time that they didn't say another word. They just sat still in the gathering darkness, and wished with all their hearts that they had never come to Athens at all.

They were startled by hearing footsteps above them on the porch. The stone balustrade was so high, and the children were crouched so far below it near the ground, that they could not be seen by people above unless they should lean over the balustrade and look down. The twins snuggled closer together in the darkness and kept very still. Suddenly they heard voices above them; there were two men on the porch talking together in low tones. One was the voice of Lampon the priest; the children both recognized it at once.

"Look over there," it was saying. "Pericles is building new temples in Athens, to the dishonor and neglect of the oldest and most sacred of all. Pericles does not fear the Gods, even though they have raised him to his proud position. He is a traitor to our holy office, and I hate him."

"You speak strongly," said the other voice.

"It isn't only that he neglects the old temples and refuses to restore them, but he actually builds a new one before our eyes on this holy hill," went on the voice of Lampon. "It is not only an impiety in itself, but an affront to you and your holy office. I myself saw his scorn and indifference this very day. I was called to his house by his pious wife to see a

prodigy. A ram was brought from his country estate that had but one horn—a marvel, truly!"

"How did you read the portent?" asked the other voice.

"As favorable to him, of course," answered Lampon. "What else could I do with Pericles himself watching me, and with that old fox of an Anaxagoras by his side?"

"The Gods punish people who do not believe in them," said the other voice, "and we are the priests of the Gods. Should we not do all we can to bring such wicked men to justice?"

"Yes, but," said Lampon, "the people adore Pericles. They would not believe evil of him. We must act carefully, lest we ourselves receive the blow that we aim at him."

"I have found out that he went to the boat race at the Piraeus this afternoon," answered the voice of the other priest, "and after that he goes to a banquet at the house of the rich Hipponicus, and will return late to his home. If we could waylay him and make him angry, he might say something blasphemous to us, not knowing we were priests. He might even offer us violence! Disrespect to a priest is disrespect to the Gods, and no man in Athens, not even

Pericles, can insult the representatives of the Gods and live."

"A good idea, truly, and worthy of the priest of Erechtheus," said the voice of Lampon.

"We will doff our priestly robes and appear as men of the people. Pericles must not suspect who we are, or of course he will be too clever to allow himself to speak the insults we know only too well he would like to offer us as priests. We can each be witness for the other; and he cannot deny our report."

If Daphne had not sneezed just at this moment, everything that happened after that would almost surely have been quite different. But she did sneeze! The air was damp and chill, she was sitting on a cold stone step, and a loud "kerchoo" suddenly startled the two plotters on the porch. The children were so frightened they could not move, but they rolled up their eyes, and over the edge of the balustrade they saw two shadowy heads looking down at them.

"Who's there?" said the voice of Lampon.

The children were too frightened to answer.

"Bring a torch," cried the voice of the other priest, and soon the two heads were again hanging over the balustrade and a torch in the hand of Lampon threw light on the upturned faces of the twins.

"Who are you?" said the priest of the Erechtheum, "and what are you doing here at this hour, you miserable little spies?"

"Oh, please, we aren't spies at all," cried Dion. He didn't know what a spy was, but he thought it safe to say he wasn't one. "We are lost."

"Come up here at once." It was Lampon who spoke.

The children, half dead with terror, went round to the other side of the porch, climbed the steps to the entrance, and stood trembling before the priests. Lampon lifted his torch and looked at them carefully.

"Didn't I see you this morning at the house of Pericles?" he asked sternly. The twins nodded.

"Who sent you here?" he asked.

"Nobody sent us. We're lost," cried poor Daphne.

"Humph!" said the other priest. "That's a likely story."

"Did you hear what we were talking about?" asked

Lampon. He took Dion by the shoulder, and as he did not answer at once, shook him.

"Come, yes or no," he said.

"Ye-e-es," stammered Dion.

The two priests looked at each other, and Lampon said:



"They are the children of the farmer who brought the lamb to Pericles. They live on his farm."

"It will be a long time before they see the farm again," answered the other shortly. "They say they are lost. Very well, we will see to it that those words are made true. What do you say to shipping them to Africa? They would make a pretty pair of slaves, and a ship sails for Alexandria tomorrow. It can easily be arranged. I know the captain."

"A good idea!" said Lampon. "Since these children are in a sense wards of Pericles, they are for that reason the more likely to be enemies of the Gods. It would be an act of piety to send them where they could do no harm by betraying the secrets of the temple."

The children were speechless with fright. Their two captors pushed them roughly before them into the temple and drove them through the great gloomy interior, lighted only by a few torches, to a small closet-like room somewhere in the rear. As they walked, huge black shadows cast by the torch of Lampon danced grotesquely before them. At the closet the two priests stopped to unlock the door.



"Here is a safe harbor for you for the night," said Lampon, as he pushed the children into the closet. "Tomorrow we may find a yet safer place for you," and with these words he locked them in.

The children were so exhausted by hunger and fright that, even though they were Spartans, they sat down on the cold stone floor and wept in each other's arms.

"Oh, Mother, Mother," sobbed Daphne, "why did we ever leave you?"

"Don't you remember," said Dion, struggling with his

tears, "that the signs were favorable? It must be all right somehow, for the word Mother heard was 'Go.'"

"If I only hadn't sneezed!" sobbed Daphne.

"But a sneeze is always a good sign," said Dion.

"Well, anyway," said Daphne bravely, though her voice shook and her teeth chattered, "crying won't do any good. Let's feel around and see if there is anything in this room."

It was dark, except for a gray patch of dim light from a window high up in the wall. Dion and Daphne kept close together and went carefully round the room, feeling the wall with their hands. Dion stumbled against something. It was a chest where the priests' robes were kept.

"Do you suppose we could move it?" whispered Daphne. "If we could, maybe we could look out of the window and see where we are."

They both got on the same side of it and pushed with all their strength. The chest moved a little and made a horrible screeching sound on the stone floor.

"Sh-sh-sh," whispered Daphne, as if the chest could hear. They held their breath to listen for footsteps. There was no sound outside. They waited a little while and pushed



again. Again the chest screeched, and again they stopped to listen. After many such efforts it was finally moved under the window, and the two sprang up on the top of it to look out. By standing on tiptoe they could just see over the sill. There was no glass, for there was no window glass anywhere at that time, and the cool night air blew in on their faces. The Acropolis was bathed in moonlight. There was no sound outside, and no one in sight anywhere. Apparently the world was asleep. Suddenly the stillness was broken by the hoot of an owl, and they could see the great bird flying toward them.

"It's Athena's own bird," whispered Dion, "and it's flying from the east. That means good luck. Oh, maybe we can get away from this dreadful place after all!"

"Let's pray to Athena," quavered Daphne. "We can't sacrifice, but maybe she'll hear us just the same."

The two little prisoners spread their hands toward the sky, and Dion whispered, "Help us, O Athena, just the way you helped Perseus kill the Gorgon."

"Give us wisdom to get out of this place and to save Pericles from these wicked men," added Daphne.

"Sh-sh," whispered Dion, "they're priests."

"They are wicked, anyway, whatever they are, to want to kill Pericles," said Daphne stoutly. Then she added: "Maybe that's why we're here! Maybe we could warn him about the priests if we could just get out. Anyway, we're Spartans, and we've got to stop crying and do our best."

Dion put his hands on the windowsill and gave a jump.

"I believe I could get up here if you'd give me a boost," he said.

"But how shall I get up?" asked Daphne. "There'll be nobody to boost me."



"I'll pull you," said Dion.

"You might fall out backwards, or fall in head first doing it," said Daphne.

"Let's try, anyway," said Dion.

Daphne boosted, and Dion climbed, and in another minute he was sitting on the windowsill with one foot hanging down outside and the other firmly braced against



the side of the window. He held on with his left hand and, leaning over, was able with his right to clasp Daphne. She hooked her left arm on his, put her hand on the sill and leaped. The next instant she was lying on her stomach over the sill, and Dion was helping her to a sitting position.

"It isn't so very far to drop," whispered Dion. "I've dropped from the balustrade into the court lots of times at home."

"All right," said Daphne, "You drop first, and I'll follow."

Dion turned, stuck his head out as far as possible, and looked in every direction. Then he let himself down from the sill, hung to it for a moment by his hands, and dropped like a cat to the ground. He flattened himself against the wall of the temple, and in another moment Daphne was safe beside him.

"Now," whispered Dion, "we'll run like everything around behind the temple to the statue of Athena."

Hand in hand through the moonlight they sped, and were soon in the shadow of the great bronze statue.

"Let's wait here a minute and look around," whispered

Dion.

They crouched down in the shadow and looked back. Their hearts almost stopped beating when they saw two cloaked figures emerge from the temple, and they recognized Lampon and the priest of the Erechthcum. The two men passed so near the statue that the children could plainly hear their voices, though they spoke in low tones.



"We will wait at the head of the street of the Amphorae," they heard Lampon say. "He is sure to pass that way. It will relieve my tongue to tell him some things in the guise of a common ruffian which I could not say as a priest."

"You did well to recognize those brats," said the priest of the Erechtheum. "They might have upset all our plans if we had not kept them safe."

The two brats behind the statue shook their fists at the retreating figures. They waited until the sound of footsteps had died away, and then they made a quick dash from the shadow and flew down the incline up which the procession had come in the morning. In a moment they were at the bottom. They could just see the dark figures of the priests disappearing toward the north. The children shrank back again into the shadow.

"What shall we do next?" said Daphne. "We don't know our way anywhere at all. We don't even know where our uncle lives."

"What was the name of that rich man at whose house they said Pericles was going to the banquet?" asked Dion,

with a sudden inspiration.

"Oh, dear," said Daphne, "I can't think. Let me see. Hip— Hip—"

"Ponicus," finished Dion, "that's it! Surely any Athenian would know where a rich man like Hipponicus lives. We must just go along until we meet someone we can ask."

"Suppose we should meet Lampon!" shuddered Daphne.

"We shan't," said Dion; "they've gone off that way. They are going to the street of the Amphorae. We should recognize that street. It has the long row of vases, don't you remember? We went through it this morning."

"If we can find the house of Hipponicus and warn Pericles about the priests, I'm sure he'll take care of us," said Daphne.

Encouraged by this thought, the two children passed boldly out of the shadow and ran westward. They passed a few people, but for the most part, the street was deserted, and they met no one they dared speak to. At last they came to the city wall and a gate.

"Now what shall we do?" murmured Daphne. "We can't go any farther this way."

"Why, I know this place," Dion whispered joyfully. "It's the gate that opens into the paved road to the Piraeus. It's



the very gate we came through this morning! The luck is surely with us now."

"Let's stay here and speak to the first person that comes along," said Daphne. "I'm sure it will be the right one."

The two children waited with beating hearts. A tall figure now appeared walking toward the gate, followed by a slave carrying a torch. As the man drew near, the children went boldly out to meet him.

"Can you tell us the way to the house of Hipponicus?" asked Dion politely.

The man stopped, and the slave held the torch so his master could see the faces of the children.

"By all the Gods," said the man, "what are you children doing out here at this time of the night?"

"The stranger! Anaxagoras!" cried Daphne. "Oh, I knew Athena would help us!" and the two children threw themselves into his arms, so great was their relief and joy.

They told him the whole story of their adventure on the Acropolis and why they wanted to find the house of Hipponicus.

"Well," said Anaxagoras, when they had finished, "I live

in the Piraeus. I was on my way home, but now I shall go with you to the house of Hipponicus, and you shall tell your story to Pericles himself."



CHAPTER VII

Home Again

Under the guidance and protection of Anaxagoras and the slave, the children were soon ushered into the court of the richest house in Athens, and then Anaxagoras sent a message to Pericles, who was dining with a group of men in a large room opening off the court. When the slave opened the door of the banquet room, the children caught a glimpse of men reclining on couches, with wreaths about their heads, and heard for an instant the sound of laughter and gay voices. The smell of food came also, and the twins sniffed the delicious odor hungrily. Soon Pericles appeared, wearing a wreath upon his brow, and, as Daphne thought, looking more like a God than ever. Anaxagoras told him the story which the twins had told to him.

"A very neat plot! Is it not?" said Pericles gravely, when Anaxagoras had finished.

"They said something about you too," said Daphne, lifting her eyes to Anaxagoras.

"Indeed!" said Anaxagoras. "So I am in it, too! What did they say?"

"They said you were an old fox," said Daphne. The two men laughed.

"I trust I may live up to their opinion of me," said Anaxagoras.

Then Pericles looked at the children and laid his hand gently upon their tousled heads.

"So you ran alone through Athens at night to warn me, did you?" he said. "And you have been in great danger for my sake? I shall know how to deal with those two pious old serpents of the Acropolis. Thanks to you, I shall not fall into their coils. And Pericles does not forget an obligation. Now, my little Spartans," he added, tipping up their chins and looking at their pale and pinched faces, "it's time you had something to eat!"

He clapped his hands and a slave appeared. "Say to Hipponicus that two friends of Pericles are in the court, and he begs that they may be served there with the best the

house affords."

The slave disappeared and soon returned bringing such a feast as the twins had never tasted in their whole lives before. Pericles waited, talking quietly with Anaxagoras, until their hunger was partly appeased, and then he spoke to them again.

"Now, my brave Spartans," he said, "since you have been so considerate of my safety, it is well that I should look after yours. Have you any idea where your father may be found? He is probably searching the town for you."

"We were to spend the night at the house of my Uncle Phaon, the stone-cutter," said Dion, "but we don't know where he lives."

"Phaon," said Pericles, stroking his beard. "Is he not a workman in the shop of Phidias the sculptor? He has a stone-cutter of that name, and, now I think of it, he is called Phaon the Spartan."

"That must be my uncle," said Dion, "but I don't know where he lives. I have never been to Athens before, and Uncle Phaon does not come to the farm."

"We can find out from Phidias," said Anaxagoras, and,

turning to his slave, he said, "Run quickly to the house of Phidias and say to him that Pericles the Archon wishes to know where to find the house of Phaon the stone-cutter."

The slave sped away and returned in a short time with the message that Phaon lived near the northwest gate. "And I know the way there," added the slave.

"Very well," said Anaxagoras. "We will take these children there. Then I will await you at your house, Pericles, for I wish to hear the end of the story, and to know how you deal with those two old traitors."

"Now that I know their purpose," said Pericles, "it is easy to defeat it! I shall return no word to their abuse. When I reach my house, I shall politely offer my assailant the escort of my slave, to light him home with his torch."

Anaxagoras laughed heartily.

"Good," he cried, "and humorous as well. A torch to light up their evil faces is the last thing in the world they would wish to have. You could not devise a more perfect plan to foil their wicked schemes."

"I wish all plots might be as easily frustrated," said Pericles gravely. Then, turning to the children, he added

kindly: "You have nothing further to fear. My good friend Anaxagoras and his slave will see you safely to your uncle's house, and he will surely know where to find your father."

"You won't let Lampon catch us and sell us for slaves, will you?" begged Daphne, shuddering. "They said they would sell us in Alexandria."

Pericles' brow darkened. "They threatened that, did they?" he exclaimed. "The wretches shall not lay a finger on you! Pericles the Archon has said it. And now you must hurry away. Your father will be torn with anxiety until he sees you again. Tomorrow morning I shall send a messenger to your uncle's house with a package for you, which you must not open until you are safe at home again. And when you grow up to be strong, brave men, I shall expect you to be generals in the army of Athens at the very least."

"I can't grow up to be a strong, brave man," said Daphne in a very small voice. "I wish I could. But I'm a girl."

"A girl!" cried Pericles in amazement, "and so brave! Surely then you will at least be the mother of heroes sometime. But after this stay more quietly at home, my child. Women should have no history." And he

disappeared through the door into the banquet hall.

When the twins, accompanied by Anaxagoras and the slave, finally reached the house of their uncle, they found the door open and people hurrying excitedly to and fro, carrying torches in their hands. In the court of the house stood Melas, talking with Phaon and his wife.

"I have searched every nook and cranny of the Acropolis," Melas was saying. "I do not see how they could have escaped me."

"It's a punishment of the Gods," said the wife of Phaon. "You should not have let Daphne run the streets like a boy. It's against nature. No decent Athenian girl would be allowed to. I never put my nose out of my Mother's house except on the days of women's festivals until I was married."

"But, my dear," said Phaon mildly, "you forget the Spartans are different."

"I should say they were!" snapped the wife of Phaon, "and now they may see what comes of it. It's my opinion these wild children have fallen off the cliffs on the north side of the Acropolis."

Melas shuddered, sank down upon a stool, and hid his



face. Just at that moment there was a sudden rush of feet behind him and he felt four arms flung about his neck. Spartan though he was, Melas trembled, and his eyes were wet as he clasped his children in his arms, Anaxagoras stood in the doorway a moment smiling at the happy group,

and then gently slipped away without waiting for any thanks.

Early the next morning a basket addressed to the "brave children of Melas the Spartan, from Pericles the Archon," was delivered by a slave at the door of Phaon. The twins had been eagerly expecting it, and when it arrived they were no less eager to start for home, since Pericles had told them not to open it until they were under their own roof once more. Their aunt, the wife of Phaon, was filled with curiosity to know the contents. Moreover, since she had learned the whole story of the night before and knew that the children had won the favor and were now under the avowed protection of Pericles, her respect for them and for Spartans in general had greatly increased.

"Let us see what gifts the great Pericles has sent you!" she cried, when the package came.

"No, no," said Daphne hastily. "He said we should not open it until we got home."

"Very well, then," said the wife of Phaon, sulkily, "only then I shall never see what's in it."

"Well," said Daphne piously, "you remember about

Pandora, don't you? I wouldn't dare open it until the time comes!"

To this the aunt could make no reply, Melas, too, had no wish to linger in Athens after the experience of the day before. The children were in terror of meeting Lampon, and Melas himself felt it would be a great load off his mind to get them safely back to their quiet house on Salamis once more and into their Mother's care. So they bade Phaon and his wife goodbye and started before noon for the Piræus.



At the dock they found the boat ready for its return journey across the bay. Nearby was the large black hull of an African ship, bound for Alexandria. Dion pointed to it.

"Suppose we were on that this minute," he said to Daphne, and Daphne covered her eyes and shook with horror at the mere thought of it.

It was nearly night when the three weary wanderers climbed the last hill and turned from the roadway into the path which led to the old farmhouse. Lydia was standing in the doorway with Chloe behind her, smiling, and Argos came bounding out to meet them, wagging his tail and barking for joy.

It was a happy party that gathered around the hearth fire that night. Lydia had prepared a wonderful feast to greet the travelers. There were roast chicken, and sausages too, and goat's milk, and figs. They opened the basket by firelight, and if all the Christmases of your whole life had been rolled into one, it couldn't have been more wonderful to you than the gifts of Pericles were to Dion and Daphne. There was a soft robe of scarlet for each of them, with golden clasps to fasten it. There was a purse of gold coins

and two beautiful parchment books—all written by hand, for of course there were no printed books in those days. There were gifts for their father and mother, too, and, best of all, a letter written with Pericles' own hand and addressed to "Euripides the Poet, of Salamis." With it came a note to Melas, saying he might read the letter, as he wished him to know its contents. This was the letter:

"Pericles the Archon to Euripides the Poet, Greetings.

"The bearers of this letter are friends of mine who have rendered me a great service. By their timely warning I was enabled to foil a plot to make me appear to the public as an enemy of the Gods. As sufficient recompense I commend them to your friendship. No greater service can be rendered Athens than to raise up noble and patriotic defenders. To this end I commit these children to your guidance, the girl no less than the boy. Give them, I beg, the benefit of your wisdom, since they have proven themselves worthy of such honor, and Athens shall one day thank you for this service."

And so it was that Dion and Daphne, the Spartans, not only mastered the learning of their time, but also became

the friends of Pericles the Athenian and of Euripides the Poet, and perhaps now wander with them in the Elysian Fields.

Our Little Roman Cousin of Long Ago

Julia Darrow Cowles
Illustrated by John Goss


MARCUS

Preface

The story of Marcus is laid during the closing days of the Roman Republic, when conservative members of the nobility still held to the sturdy habits and to the simplicity of worship of earlier times. Every incident of the story has an authentic basis in Roman history and custom.

If the story serves, in later years, to make the impor-tant study of Roman history more vital and real to its readers, the purpose of its author will have been accomplished.

Acknowledgment is hereby made to the authors of the following books, for the foundation upon which the story of Marcus rests: "Private Life of The Romans," by Harold Whetstone Johnston; "Private Life of The Romans," by Harriet Waters Preston and Louise P. Dodge; "Roman Education," by A. S. Wilkins, Litt. D.; "Education of Children at Rome," by George Clarke, Ph. D.; "Story of The Roman People," by Eva March Tappan; "City of The

Seven Hills," by Caroline H. Harding, A. B., and Samuel B. Harding, Ph. D.; "Social Life At Rome," by W. Warde Fowler, M.A.

CHAPTER I
Going to School

"Come, Marcus; come, Lucius; no more sleep this morning, or the cocks will be crowing before you are in school."

Marcus turned, and bounded quickly from his couch to the floor.

"I wish the cocks did not crow so early in the morning," yawned Lucius, sleepily.

"Come, come," said his mother, "a boy that is old enough to go to school, is old enough to waken early."

Lucius sat up quickly. The great regret of Lucius' life was that he had not been born on the same day as his brother Marcus, instead of six years afterward. Marcus could do so many fine things that he could not. But this year he had entered the school to which Marcus went, and he was very proud of the fact.

Slipping over the edge of the high couch upon which he had been sleeping, Lucius dropped to his feet with a thud. Marcus never used the stool—which stood beside each high Roman bed—and Lucius did not intend to either, now that he was big enough to go to school.

The two boys were quickly dressed, for they had only to slip into their tunics, which were like extra-long sweaters without sleeves.

They were soon in the atrium, or main living room, of the home. There they found Glaucon, the tall Greek slave who always accompanied them upon the street.

"Be sure, Marcus, to stop at the little bake shop and buy some cakes for your breakfast," said Gaia, their mother, as they started off.

It was still dark, and the boys carried lanterns to light them along the way.

All up and down the streets of Rome, bobbing, sputtering little lights showed that many other boys were on their way to school.

"Good, here is Tullius!" cried Marcus, as he met, at a corner, the boyfriend whom he liked best of all.

Behind Tullius was Aulus, the slave, or pedagogue, who always accompanied him upon the streets, as Glaucon did Marcus.

The three boys went on together and the two slaves followed. When they reached the bake shop the boys bought a light breakfast, to eat at school.

Glaucon and Aulus were glad to be together. Although slaves, they were both educated men who had once been free citizens of Greece.

After a battle with the Greeks, Glaucon and Aulus were taken captive and brought to Rome. There they were sold in the slave market of the city.

Gaius, the father of Marcus and Lucius, paid a large sum of money for Glaucon, for he learned that he was an educated man, and a man of good character. Quintus, the father of Tullius, bought Aulus for the same reason.

Every Roman boy of good birth had a special slave who went with him to and from school, and to all public places of the city. If well educated, this slave also helped him with his lessons outside of school. For this reason he was called the boy's pedagogue.

The pedagogue held a very important place in a Roman household. Marcus and Lucius were fond of Glaucon, and Tullius was fond, too, of Aulus.

As the boys hurried along the streets with their lanterns, Marcus saw a big notice posted upon the wall of a house.

He held up his lantern to read.

"It is a notice of the chariot races that are to be held in the Circus Maximus," he said. "There will be six drivers, and each will drive four horses. It will be a fine race."

Tullius was now reading the notice, too. "One of the drivers has won more than two thousand victories!" he exclaimed. "My, what a lot!"

"I wish I could see a chariot race," said Lucius. "You have seen more than one, haven't you, Marcus?"

"Yes," answered Marcus, "and you will see one some of these days, too."

"We had better hurry on," cried Tullius suddenly, "or we shall be late for school."

"And the master may flog us," said Lucius.

"But, even at that," said Marcus laughingly, "we do not have so hard a master as the school boys of Falerii."

"Is it a story, Marcus? Oh, do tell it to us," begged Lucius, for Marcus was a famous storyteller among the boys.

"Well," said Marcus, as they started on, "there was a great battle many, many years ago between the Romans and the Etruscans. The Romans had taken many towns belonging to the Etruscans, but the town of Falerii stood upon a high cliff with great ravines on each side.

"Camillus was the general in charge of the Roman army. His soldiers had gone into camp and were wondering day after day how they ever were to conquer a city built upon such a site as that.

"But one morning, while the officers were planning and the soldiers were talking, they saw a strange company making its way down the cliff and straight to the door of Camillus' tent. The company was made up of a group of boys with one man apparently in charge of them.

"When Camillus came out to greet them, the man stated that he was a schoolmaster in Falerii, and that the boys were his pupils.

"'They are sons of the foremost men of the town,' he said, 'and I have come to deliver them into your hands. For

you may be sure,' he added, 'that when their fathers learn what has become of these boys, they will surrender their city to you, rather than let their sons be carried away as slaves.'"

"Oh, what a horrible schoolmaster!" exclaimed Lucius.

"Yes," said Marcus, "he thought that he would be given a great prize for his act. But Camillus was a true Roman general, and he would not stoop to anything so low as that.

"'Here,' he cried, turning to a soldier who stood near, 'tie this traitor's hands behind his back, and give every boy a rod.' Then, turning to the frightened boys, he said, 'Take the rods and drive him back to your city, and tell your fathers that I do not fight with boys. If I cannot win bravely, I will not win at all.'

"The boys did as Camillus told them, and when the men of Falerii heard Camillus' message they said, 'We are willing to surrender to so just a man as that.' And they became subjects of Rome."

"That is a fine story, Marcus," said Tullius. "I wish I had as good a memory as you. But here we are at school, and just in time, at that."

CHAPTER II

Lessons

"Are you sure my tablet and stylus are in the box, Glaucon?" asked Marcus, as they reached the school.

"Yes," answered Glaucon, "and your reckoning stones, too," and he handed to Marcus the box which he had been carrying.

Tullius took his box from Aulus, and the three boys entered the open building which was their school.

This building, which was called a pergula, had only a roof resting upon pillars, with no side walls. The boys had no books, for this was nearly two thousand years ago, and a printed book had never been seen.

"I understand that Faustus, who lives next door, has complained of the noise of our school, and says that we waken him too early in the morning," said Tullius to Marcus.

"If he would keep earlier hours at night, he would not mind wakening early in the morning," replied Marcus with a laugh.

"But cock crowing is pretty early in the morning," exclaimed Lucius with a shake of his head, as he set down the lantern which he had carried and tried to make its sputtering wick burn more brightly.

"If we lived in a northern city," said the master, who had heard Lucius' remark, "we should not need to rise so early, for then we could play or work all through the day. But here in Rome, where it is so hot that everyone must rest through the middle of the day, we should not have time to learn much if we did not get to school before daylight."

Marcus and Tullius, who were thirteen, took their places with the older boys. Lucius, who was only seven, sat with the beginners, for this was the age at which the boys of Rome entered school.

There were no desks in the room. The teacher, or master, sat in a chair upon a raised platform. Each of the boys had a bench, with a stool for his feet so that his knees could be used for a desk.

After all were in their places, the master left his chair and, going from one pupil to another, wrote a maxim at the top of each boy's tablet.

The tablet was not a block of paper, for no one had heard of paper in those days. It was very much like a slate, with a light wooden frame, but the part inside the frame was covered with smooth wax.

Writing was done by cutting letters in the wax surface with a stylus. The stylus was long and slender in shape, pointed at one end and flat at the other. The writing was done with the pointed end. When a mistake was made, or a lesson was to be erased, the wax was rubbed smooth with the flat end.

As they had no books, the boys studied both reading and writing from their tablets.

"Marcus, the son of Gaius, may read his maxim," called the master, when all the copies had been written.

Marcus arose and read, speaking distinctly and carefully.

"Very good," said the master. "Marcus will be able to speak before the Senate when he is a man."

Marcus flushed with pleasure, for no greater praise than

this could be given him. He, like every Roman boy of good birth, hoped that someday he might occupy a seat in the Senate, and so he was careful to speak correctly and distinctly at all times.

After the reading lesson was finished, the pupils made many copies of the maxim upon their tablets. The form of the letters which these Roman boys used, so long ago, was the same as our English letters, but the language used was Latin.

Before the lessons in reading and writing were finished, the sun arose, and the sputtering lights of the lanterns were put out.

Then came recess, and the boys played games, and ate the breakfasts that they had brought with them.

After recess the pupils took their reckoning stones from their boxes, ready for the lesson in arithmetic. This was a hard study for a Roman boy, because of the Roman numbers which were used.

You will see some of the Roman numbers at the beginning of the chapters of this book, and you probably know that V means five, X means ten, L means fifty, and C means

one hundred. In order to write the number one hundred and twenty-four, instead of writing 124, Marcus had to write CXXIV. Now, if you will try to subtract thirty-seven—which is XXXVII—from CXXIV, you will begin to see why Roman arithmetic was such a hard study.

The pupils began the study of arithmetic by using the reckoning stones. These were smooth stones which were counted up to the number given by the master. This number was then divided by separating the stones into groups; or it was added to by placing other stones with the number first given.

As the boys grew older, they learned to solve quite hard problems by mental arithmetic. They also had a curious way of using their fingers to help themselves when figuring.

"I am glad I do not have to study arithmetic with my fingers," said Lucius, on the way home from school. "I cannot understand that, at all. But it is great fun to count with the reckoning stones."

CHAPTER III

Marcus' Home

When Marcus came home from school, he did not toss his cap into a corner, and then have to hunt for it the next time he went out; but perhaps this was because he had no cap to toss. Roman boys always went bareheaded, although the sun was hot in Italy.

They generally wore shoes when upon the street, although their arms and legs were as bare as their heads.

The home of Gaius was a beautiful one, but from the street all the houses of Rome looked very much alike. The front doors all opened directly upon the street, and the yards or gardens were at the back of the houses, and were surrounded by high walls.

As Marcus and Lucius came in from school, they saw a very pretty sight. The atrium, or main living room, was very large, and in the center of the room there was a beautiful

fountain. Beside this fountain sat their little sister Livia, playing with two of her favorite doves.

"How pretty she looks, Lucius!" said Marcus, and in a moment he had tossed her, doves and all, high in the air.

"Oh, I am so glad you are here!" cried Livia, hugging Marcus and Lucius in turn with her dimpled arms.

From the atrium, which was separated from the other rooms of the house only by pillars and curtains, the boys could look out into the garden. This also had a fountain, with graceful statues about it, and many sorts of beautiful flowers.

Gaia, their mother, was in the garden, and Lucius ran to her, picked a scarlet blossom on his way, and when she stooped to kiss him, tucked it lovingly in her hair.

"Where is Terentia?" asked Marcus, as he, too, came into the garden with Livia.

"I am coming," called Terentia, the sister who was between Marcus and Lucius in age. "Mother has been teaching me to spin the wool for weaving," she added, "and I have tried to make my thread as smooth and even as hers."

"And did you succeed?" asked Marcus.

"No, not yet," answered Terentia, "but I mean to keep on trying."

"That is the way to succeed," said a hearty voice behind them, and the children turned quickly, for it was the voice of Gaius, their father, who had come in unobserved.

"Isn't it almost time for dinner, Mother?" asked Lucius, looking at the shadow which the sundial cast, in the garden.

"Yes," said Gaia, "I think it will be ready very soon."

"That reminds me, children," said Gaius, "of a curious invention that I saw today in the home of Quintus. It was called a water clock, and it marks the time, as the sundial does, but it is better, because the dial can only tell us the time when the sun is shining, while this water clock tells the time on cloudy days, and also at night."

"What was it like, Father?" asked Marcus with interest.

"It consisted," replied Gaius, "of a vessel filled with water. A scale was marked upon the vessel, and the water dripped from a small opening, so that just a certain amount could escape each hour. The vessel is filled with water each morning, and by looking at the scale, at the level of the

water, one can tell the hour of the day. Do you understand it, my son?"

"Yes," replied Marcus, "I think that I do. It seems quite simple, and yet it is curious, too. I must see it the next time I go to visit Tullius."

"I wish the slaves would hasten dinner," said Lucius impatiently, "for school makes me very hungry."

"You must learn to be patient, even though hungry," said Gaius, placing his hand upon Lucius' shoulder. "If you do not, you will never make a good Roman citizen or soldier. Do you remember the story of Mucius?"

"No, Father," said Lucius, who was always ready for a story. "Please tell it to us."

"Caius Mucius," Gaius began, "was a young Roman of noble birth. Lars Porsena, a powerful enemy of Rome, was camped with his army outside the walls of the city, and he had been there so long that the citizens had no food left. But, hungry and weak as they were, the Romans were not ready to surrender, so Caius Mucius made his way into the enemy's camp, determined to kill the king. However, by some strange mistake, he killed the king's secretary instead.

"He was captured and brought before Lars Porsena, who condemned him to be killed. Then Caius Mucius drew himself up and exclaimed, 'There are three hundred more Roman youths ready to do what I have tried to do and failed! And, to show you that we do not fear any punishment, or any pain that you may condemn us to, I will suffer my right hand to be burned in your presence.'

"With that he extended his hand and held it in the flame that was burning upon an altar in the king's tent. His brave countenance showed no sign of suffering as he continued to hold his hand in the flame.

"Then Lars Porsena exclaimed, 'If all Romans are as brave as this, and can endure hardship without flinching, as this man can, I would rather have them for friends than for enemies.' And he straightway offered the city terms of peace.

"After that Caius Mucius was known as Scasvola, which means the left-handed."

"Ah, he was brave!" exclaimed Lucius. "And he saved Rome by it, too, didn't he?" And he continued to look thoughtful as they all went in to dinner.

CHAPTER IV
At Dinner

The Romans did not use chairs when at the table, but reclined upon couches. They rested upon the left arm, leaving the right hand free.

As soon as Gaius and his family had taken their places about the table, one of the slaves removed their sandals, for a Roman would not think of eating in a private house with sandals upon his feet.

When the dinner had been served, Gaia, turning to Lucius, asked, "And what did you do in school today?"

"Oh," replied Lucius, "I had such a nice way of learning my letters. The master gave me a set of letters cut from ivory, and, after I had learned their names, I made words from them, by laying them on my tablet. I played that each ivory letter was a boy, and it was much easier to remember their names that way.

"The master praised Marcus, today," he added, turning to his father.

"What did he say?" asked Gaius, and Marcus answered with a flush of pleasure, "I read my maxim so well, that he said I should someday be able to address the Senate."

"That is praise, indeed," said his father, and then he added, "I think you have your mother to thank for that. Ever since you learned to talk, she has been careful about your speech, and your mother uses the purest Latin."

Gaia flushed with pleasure at her husband's praise, while Marcus replied, "I know that that is true."

"I hope," Gaius continued, "that you will gain as much by Glaucon's teaching, for he is a good Greek scholar, and can teach you to speak the Greek language as well as you speak the Latin. We are fortunate in having such a pedagogue as Glaucon."

"Glaucon is teaching me to speak in Greek, too," said Lucius eagerly, "and he says that I do very well."

"That is good," said Gaia, smiling approvingly at her younger boy.

"Father," said Lucius after a pause, "one of the boys in

school was flogged today."

"What had he done?" asked Gaius.

"He wanted to go to an exhibition at the circus, and so he took cumin to make him look pale."

"Aha," said Gaius; "and so the master saw through his trick?"

"Yes," replied Lucius, laughingly, "and he gave him an exhibition of flogging, instead."

"He was smarting from it afterward," added Marcus, "and Glaucon told him not to mind; that flogging was what made good men and women."

"Glaucon is probably right," said Gaius. "The rod is needed when boys and girls choose to be unruly."

"Father," said Terentia, speaking for the first time, "I hear that girls attend some of the schools."

"Yes," replied her father, "it is true, but I think no good will come of it. The daughter's place is in the home, and I believe it is better for her to be educated there. A girl should know how to read and write, and keep simple accounts, as you are learning to do; but the most important lessons for her to learn are how to care for a household, how

to spin and weave, and above all, how to hold the love and honor of her family.

"I know that my ideas are beginning, in some places, to be looked upon as old-fashioned," added Gaius, "but they were held by our ancestors, and they lived worthy and honorable lives."

"We had a new fashion set us at school today," said Marcus with a laugh. "Titus, the son of Faustus, was brought to school in a litter carried by six slaves."

"I am afraid," said Gaius severely, "that Faustus will someday be sorry for his foolish following of these new Greek fashions. Certainly Titus is able to walk, and need not be carried to school by slaves as though he were a great noble, or a lame old man. Children should be taught to be self-reliant, strong, useful, and honorable. Being carried about, needlessly, by slaves, does not teach them any of those things.

"My children," added Gaius, earnestly, "let us keep to the old Roman ideals, which make strong, manly men, and true, honorable women: let us avoid idleness and empty show, and foolish fashions, which will make us weak in

body, and weak in character as well.

"I think you all know the story of Cincinnatus," Gaius continued, after a pause, "but it will do no harm for you to hear it again."

"No, indeed, Father," said Terentia. "We always love to listen to your stories."

"*I* don't remember about Cincinnatus," said Lucius. "Who was he?"

"His name was like your own," answered Gaius. "It was Lucius Quintus, but he was called Cincinnatus because of his crisply curling hair.

"He was a brave and noble man, and a good soldier, but he lived upon his farm outside the city, and tilled the ground with his own labor.

"At the time of my story, some of the people with whom the Romans had made a treaty of peace, had broken their treaty, and were going through the Roman provinces killing the people and burning their houses.

"The Romans reminded them of their promise of peace, but they would not listen, and they defeated the soldiers who were sent out against them, and kept them captive.

"Then the Romans saw that they must choose a very wise man as well as a good soldier, and must make him Dictator, and place him in charge of the entire army.

"They decided that Cincinnatus was the man who was needed, and messengers from the Senate were sent to bring him.

"They found Cincinnatus plowing in his field, but he wrapped his toga about him and listened with dignity to all that they had to say.

"He went with them at once to Rome, and took command. He ordered every Roman in the city who was old enough to enter the army, to be ready to go with him that night. Each one was to carry his arms, sufficient food to last five days, and twelve wooden stakes.

"No one understood what the stakes were for, but all were ready to obey his commands.

"That night, under his orders, they marched to the spot where the enemy's troops were encamped, and surrounded them. Then each man dug a trench before him and drove in his stakes; and when the enemy was aroused by the shout of the Romans, they found themselves surrounded and

captured.

"Then Cincinnatus had two spears set upright in the ground, and a third fastened across their tops, and he made all the defeated army pass through, in sign that they placed themselves under the Roman yoke. After that he let them go to their homes.

"When Cincinnatus returned to Rome he was given every honor that could be shown to a victorious general, but a few days later he laid aside the office of Dictator, knowing that his work was done, and returned to his little farm.

"We need not all be farmers, as Cincinnatus was, but we should all imitate the simplicity and the dignity which made Cincinnatus one of the heroes of Rome.

"The Greeks, whose ways so many Romans are copying," Gains added, as he finished his story, "have among them the best artists and poets in the world. I wish to give them all the credit possible for their art and their literature. It is only the idleness and the luxury of the Greeks that I am sorry to see the Romans imitating. It will not prove good for Rome."

CHAPTER V
The Vestal Offering

"Come, little sister, we must hurry, or we will be late at the altar, and you know Father does not allow that."

Terentia took Livia's hand and they ran together to the atrium.

Gaius and Gaia, Marcus and Lucius, and the household slaves, were all in the room, for it was the time of the early morning offering at the family altar.

The Romans did not know the one true God, but believed that there were many gods. They thought that one watched over the household; that another had charge of the fields, and another of the flocks; while still others protected the sailors at sea, and the soldiers in battle.

Vesta was called the goddess of the home, and in every Roman house there was an altar to Vesta at one end of the atrium.

When all the household was together, Gaius laid an offering of salt upon the altar, and prayed that the affairs of the home might be blessed. The ceremony was a very simple one, but it marked the beginning of each day in the Roman home.

"Oh, Mother," said Terentia, after her father and Marcus had gone, "am I to learn to weave today? I am so eager to begin."

"Yes," replied Gaia, "I shall begin today to teach you how to weave. You have learned to spin so well."

Gaia's loom stood in the atrium, and Terentia felt very proud and happy as she stood before it. Her mother showed her how to wind the wool upon the shuttle, and then how to thrust it back and forth through the warp of the loom. In a little while Terentia was able to manage the shuttle alone.

"Isn't it strange," she said to her mother, "how we can make just these woolen threads into cloth to wear! I shall try to make mine as smooth and even as possible, for then Father will praise me."

Gaia smiled as she said, "That is right, my daughter. It is only by trying that we can do good work, and your father

will be pleased if your cloth is smooth and even."

Livia stood by and watched Terentia with a great deal of interest. The shuttle flew back and forth, back and forth, and the bit of cloth in the loom grew steadily.

"Mother," said Terentia, as she worked, "I heard you say yesterday that our cousin, Cornelia, had been chosen to be a Vestal Virgin. Please tell me just what it means."

"I think you have seen the Temple of Vesta, near the Forum," Gaia said, "and, of course, you understand that the goddess, Vesta, cares for our homes. That is why there is an altar to Vesta in every house."

"Yes," replied Terentia, "I understand about that; but what do the Vestal Virgins do?"

"Inside the Temple of Vesta, there is, of course, an altar, and the fire upon this is kept burning day and night. It is never allowed to go out. The Vestal Virgins care for this fire, and although they have other duties connected with the service of the temple, this is their chief care.

"Those who are chosen, as our cousin Cornelia has been, are greatly honored, for no Roman girl can be called to a higher service. Cornelia is not yet ten years old. For the

next ten years she will be learning the duties of the temple; after that she will care for the sacred fires upon the altar for ten years; and then for the ten years following she will teach those who have been newly chosen for the service."

"And must she leave her own home for all of that time?" asked Terentia.

"Yes," her mother replied, "she gives up everything else to serve the goddess Vesta. But it is so great an honor that very few of the Vestal Virgins ever return to their homes, even after their time of service is over.

"Your father was telling me yesterday of an interesting incident. A prisoner was being hurried along the street, when he and his guard met one of the Vestal Virgins. The prisoner dropped to his knees, and the Vestal Virgin granted him pardon."

"Can the Vestal Virgins do that?" cried Terentia. "How happy the poor man must have been."

Terentia worked thoughtfully for some time, and then her glance fell upon Livia, who had grown tired of watching the busy shuttle, and was now playing with her beloved clay dolly.

Presently Terentia turned to her mother and said, "Oh, Mother, may I have this first piece of cloth to use as I like?"

"Perhaps," her mother answered with a smile. "What would you choose to make from it?"

"Oh, a dear little tunic for Livia," said Terentia eagerly.

"That will be very nice indeed," Gaia answered. "I could not ask you to put it to better use."

It took many, many days of weaving before the piece of cloth was long enough for even the little tunic, for sometimes there were mistakes which had to be undone. But at last the soft woolen cloth was taken from the loom, and Terentia looked at its pretty folds and held it almost lovingly.

"I can hardly believe that I made it," she said with a happy laugh.

CHAPTER VI
A Roman Girl

The little tunic was very simply made, but it was new work to Terentia.

"Are you sure it will be nice enough for Livia to wear?" Terentia asked her mother, anxiously.

"Yes," replied Gaia, "I am sure it will be if you make it as carefully as you wove the cloth."

"What makes you smile at me so often?" questioned Livia, looking up from her favorite clay dolly, which she was drawing about the room in its little cart.

"Oh, by and by I shall have a surprise for you," said Terentia, "but you must wait and ask no questions."

Livia looked as though she would like to ask a great many, but she said no more.

Presently she asked, "Mother, may I go into the garden to play?" And Gaia answered, "Yes, and Terentia has sewed

long enough now. She may go with you."

The children loved to be in the garden with its beautiful flowers and its sparkling fountain.

"Let us play with the ball," said Livia, and then she added, "Oh, here comes Lucius. Perhaps he will play, too."

After a while Livia grew tired of running after the ball which her little hands found it hard to hold, so she sat down by the edge of the fountain and called her doves, who came and perched upon her shoulder.

"Oh, see," laughed Livia. "The dove is trying to eat the beads of my necklace."

"There, there, naughty dove," said Terentia, "those are not good to eat. They are to keep the evil eye away from our little Livia."

The necklace, at which the dove kept pecking, was made from odd and beautiful beads. Some were in the shape of coins, some were tiny images, others were shaped like axes and swords, while the most beautiful were in the form of half-moons, or of flowers. These quaint little objects were made from many kinds of metal and stone, and they were strung and worn as a necklace.

The beads had been given to Livia when she was eight days old. At that time she had been named, a sacrifice had been offered to the gods, and there had been great rejoicing and merrymaking.

While she was a baby, the little objects had pleased her by their bright colors and by the noise they made when jingled together. Now that she was older, she still wore them, as they were looked upon as a charm which kept the evil eye of the gods from her.

A little later Gaia came into the garden, and Livia soon climbed upon her lap.

"I wish you would tell us a story, Mother," said Terentia.

Gaia thought for a moment and then she said, "Your father has told you the story of Scaevola, the Left-Handed, and it has reminded me of another story connected with Lars Porsena; but this one is about a girl.

"Do you remember the statue of a girl, mounted upon a horse, that stands at the top of the Sacred Way?"

"Yes," replied Terentia, "and her name is Cloelia, but I do not know the story about her."

"Cloelia," said Gaia, "had been taken from home, with

many other girls and boys, by Lars Porsena. He had been fighting against the Romans, and had defeated them. Then he had made some of the noblest of the Romans give up their sons and daughters as hostages of war, before he would take his soldiers away from their city. He thought that if he took these boys and girls away with his army, the Romans would not dare to offend him, for fear that he might be cruel to their children.

"Lars Porsena went into camp some distance from Rome, on the opposite side of the river Tiber. Then it was that Cloelia formed a daring plan. She, and several of her companions who were strong and brave, swam across the river at night, and made their way back to Rome on foot. The current of the river is swift, and it required great endurance to carry out their plan, but they reached Rome safely.

"However, the brave girl and her companions were to meet with a bitter disappointment, for the Romans decided that, although they admired the courage which they had shown, they must be sent back to Lars Porsena's camp, for they had agreed with the king that he should have these

boys and girls as hostages of war, if he would take his army away from Rome."

"Oh, what a pity!" exclaimed Terentia.

"It did, indeed, seem so," said Gaia, "but the Romans knew that it would not be honorable to keep them, and so they were taken back to Lars Porsena's camp.

"But our story turns out well, after all," she added, "for when Lars Porsena saw how just and honorable the Romans were, and how courageous Cloelia and her companions had proved themselves, he called before him all the Romans that he had taken as hostages. Then he told Cloelia that she might choose one-half of their number, and he would send them back to Rome, free.

"Cloelia was as wise as she was brave, and she chose the younger half of the Romans, and they returned to the city with great honor.

"At the close of the war, the statue which you have seen in the Sacred Way, was erected in memory of Cloelia's brave deed."

"That is a splendid story, Mother," said Terentia. "I am glad that there are brave Roman girls, as well as brave

Roman boys."

"Come here, Livia," called Terentia later that afternoon, and when Livia came she slipped off the little tunic which Livia had been wearing, and put on, instead, the new one which she had just finished.

"It is for you, little sister," she said happily. "I made it all myself, from the soft, white wool of the sheep."

Livia hugged Terentia, and then danced about to express her delight, and when her father returned to the house she ran to him and showing him the soft, new garment, she exclaimed, "Terentia made it for me; every bit herself!"

Gaius smiled and praised Terentia, till she blushed with happiness.

"You will be a Roman matron like your mother one of these days," he said. And Terentia felt that he could give her no greater praise than that.

CHAPTER VII

The Funeral Procession

"The funeral of the general, Antonius, takes place tomorrow, Marcus," said Tullius, as the two boys were walking home from school. "There will be a great procession; suppose we watch it together."

"Call for me in the morning and I will be ready," said Marcus, as they parted at a corner of the street.

The funeral occurred very early. A public crier first went about the streets of the city calling aloud in these words: "The general, Antonius, has been surrendered to death. For those who find it convenient, it is now time to attend the funeral. He is being brought from his house."

Tullius, followed by Aulus, was quickly joined by Marcus and Glaucon, and they took their places beside the roadway.

"We shall not have long to wait," said Marcus, as they

heard the strains of music in the distance, and soon the procession came in sight.

First there was a band of men playing upon musical instruments, and following the band came a company of singers. The songs which the latter sang had been written in praise of the dead general, telling of his brave deeds in battle.

Next, strange as the custom now seems, came a group of men who were hired to laugh and jest, and make merry speeches to those who stood by.

"Now, look," cried Tullius to Marcus; "here begins the fine part of the procession: here come the ancestors of the general."

Now, in order to understand Tullius' remark, we must know that whenever a man who had done his country a public service died, a wax mask of his face was made, and this was very carefully kept by his family. It was placed in a cabinet made especially for it, with a written record of all his public deeds. For hundreds of years this custom had been kept up, so that some families had a very large number of these cabinets of ancestors. The greater number they

had, the greater honor was given the family, because it showed that they came of a long line of men who had served their country honorably.

At the funeral of a great man, these wax masks were taken out of the cabinets and each one was worn by a man who dressed just as the one whose mask he wore had been in the habit of dressing on great occasions.

As these strange figures passed before Marcus and Tullius, the boys looked at them with the greatest interest. It was like seeing the great men of Rome for many centuries past, walking by in the order in which they had lived and served their country. As the figures passed, Glaucon and Aulus told the boys many interesting stories about the different men who were thus pictured; of the battles in which they had fought, or of the public cause for which they had stood.

It was like a picture lesson in Roman history. When the last figure passed, Marcus exclaimed, "I know better, now, what Father meant when he said I could learn a great deal from the procession, if I thought of what I saw."

"Now see!" cried Glaucon. "You know the general



"Followed by the family, the slaves of his household, and friends."

came home in great triumph from the war, a few years ago. Here we have a picture of his entry into Rome."

The boys looked eagerly. Before them pranced beautiful horses, followed by chariots of war, heaped with the richest treasures.

After the chariots came a long line of slaves to represent the captives that had been taken in battle. Glaucon and Aulus looked grave as they watched these slaves file past, for in just such fashion they had been brought captive to Rome.

After the slaves, came the body of the general, carried upon a high couch, and followed by the family, the slaves of his household, and friends.

Last of all came the torch-bearers, with flaming torches, even though it was day.

When the procession had passed, the boys turned toward the Forum, where a speech in honor of the general was to be given by Quintus, the father of Tullius.

CHAPTER VIII

The Gift of a Book

There were no book stores in Rome two thousand years ago. There had been but few books made, and each one of these had been written by hand for some special person. The writing was done upon sheets of papyrus which were rolled into the form of a scroll. A book written in this way was not only highly valued, but it made an expensive gift.

"I have received many favors from the Consul, Crassus," Gaius said one day at dinner, "and I should like to prove to him that I am grateful for them." Then turning to Gaia, he added, "I think I will have a copy made of the book of Greek poems which was recently sent to you."

"It would make a beautiful gift, I am sure," said Gaia.

"I shall want the best sheets of papyrus that can be found in Rome," Gaius continued. "I think it will be well for Glaucon to go to the shop and select them. Would you boys

like to go with him?"

"Yes, indeed," replied Marcus and Lucius.

"How is papyrus made, Glaucon, and what is it made from?" asked Lucius, as they were preparing to go to the shop.

"Papyrus," replied Glaucon, "is a reed which grows sometimes twice as high as a man's head. The stem is not round, but has three sides, and it is four or five inches thick. The outer covering of the stem is dark, but the inner part, or pith, from which the sheets of papyrus are made, is white.

"When I was in Egypt," Glaucon continued, "I visited a very large papyrus factory, and it was interesting to see how the sheets were prepared."

"Do tell us about it," said Marcus.

The boys knew that Glaucon had travelled in other countries besides Greece, before he had been taken captive and made a slave.

"The factory," responded Glaucon, "was in a large building with open courts. Tanks of water stood in each court, and great bundles of papyrus stems lay beside them. The stems were first dipped in the water to soften them,

then they were taken inside the building, where the dark outer covering was peeled off. After that the white pith was cut into very thin strips with a sharp knife.

"When these strips had been dried," Glaucon continued, "they were laid upon tables, side by side, and other strips were laid side by side across them, and pasted down. This made them into large sheets. After being pasted the sheets were pressed, bleached to make them very white, and trimmed to the same size."

"Where does the papyrus grow?" asked Lucius.

"In Egypt," replied Glaucon, "and the largest factories are in that country."

Gaius was pleased with the fine, smooth sheets that Glaucon brought with him from the shop. He called for the slave who did his writing, and who, like Glaucon, was an educated Greek. This slave's name was Drusus.

To Drusus he gave the sheets of papyrus and the book of Greek poems. "I want an exact copy made," he said, "for it is to be a gift to the Consul."

Drusus was well pleased with the task, and went about the work at once. Terentia and even little Livia, as well as

Marcus and Lucius, stood by while Drusus sharpened the reed pens and split their points carefully. He then filled the inkstands, one with black ink, the other with red, after which he took Gaia's book from its case and carefully unrolled the first page. The headings and ornaments at the beginning of the book were made with red ink, and the writing which followed was done with black.

"How queer the Greek letters look," said Terentia. "They are not at all like the Latin letters. Can you name any of them, Marcus?"

"I know the names of only a few," replied Marcus, "but next year, when I enter the grammar school, I shall learn to read and write Greek. I think that will be fine."

"I am learning to speak Greek from Mother," said Terentia, "but I do not want to learn to write such queer letters."

One after another Drusus unrolled the pages of the book, and copied them upon the fine sheets of papyrus. The work went on rather slowly, for he took care to form each letter perfectly, so that the book should be as beautiful as possible.

After many days the last page was copied, the ornaments at the end were carefully made in red ink, and the writing was completed.

"Come, Terentia," called Marcus, who was watching Drusus at the time, "you will want to see the book put together."

Very carefully Drusus laid the pages side by side, lapped the edges one over the other, and pasted the many sheets of papyrus into one long strip. Then he added light wooden rods to the ends of the strip, and the book was ready to be rolled and placed in the case which had been made to hold it.

It had taken a long time to complete the work, but when Gaius examined it and saw how clearly and perfectly the letters had been formed, and how carefully the ornaments and headings had been made, he was very much pleased.

"It is quite as beautiful as my own book," declared Gaia, and Gaius added, "I think that it surely will please the Consul."

CHAPTER IX

In the Senate

The lessons which a Roman boy learned in school were only a part of his education. Every boy was trained to be a soldier, and much about the government and the politics of Rome was learned by listening to speeches in the Forum. Sons of the Senators were frequently taken to the Senate, that they might listen to the best speakers and orators of the time. This formed an important part of the education of the Roman boy of good birth.

Marcus was not surprised, therefore, when his father said to him one morning at breakfast, "I want you to go with me to the Senate today. These are troubled times for Rome, and there are likely to be important speeches by the Senators."

Marcus was ready promptly. He liked to go to the Forum, which was the busiest place in all the great city, and

they must pass through the Forum to reach the Senate.

The Forum was a large, open building with beautiful carvings and statues, and it was between two of the seven hills upon which Rome was built. The men of the city gathered there every day to learn the latest news from the war, to listen to political speeches, or to attend to any public business, and it was always a bustling, noisy place.

"Has the army been defeated?" asked Marcus, as he and his father were on their way. "You spoke of trouble," he added.

"No," replied Gaius, "I fear that we have even greater trouble than that on hand. Some of the citizens are trying to stir up rebellion in Rome itself. Listen well to all that is said today."

At the entrance to the Senate they met Tullius, and the two boys, as sons of Senators, were allowed to enter the building. They took seats together, where they could hear all that was said.

Presently one of the Senators arose. "It is Cicero," said Tullius eagerly. "Now we shall hear him speak!" For Cicero was one of the greatest orators of Rome, and his writings

and orations are studied in schools and colleges today.

It was very quiet in the Senate when Cicero began to speak, for all seemed to realize that he had important matters to bring before them. And they were not mistaken. He told them that there was treason in their midst: that traitors were seeking to destroy and betray their city and overthrow the government: and then, raising his right arm, he pointed to one of the Senators named Catiline, and exclaimed, "In the name of the gods, Catiline, how long will you abuse our patience?"

There was a great outcry at this, for Catiline tried to defend himself, but Cicero had learned of his plot, and boldly told the assembled Senators that Catiline was a traitor.

Then there were shouts of "Enemy of Rome," and in the midst of the confusion Catiline left the room and hastened away from the city.

Marcus and Tullius were greatly excited over all this uproar in the usually dignified Senate, and on their way home they denounced Catiline as fiercely, if not as eloquently, as Cicero had done.

That afternoon a group of boys gathered in the garden of Marcus' home. They were all excited over the wars, which were being carried on in the country between the Roman army and the army of an Eastern king. Now they were more than ever excited over Cicero's speech against Catiline.

"I wish I were old enough to fight for Rome," exclaimed Marcus.

"So do I!" shouted the other boys in chorus.

"Since we are not, suppose you whet our appetites, Marcus, by telling us some of your famous war stories," suggested Tullius.

"Yes, yes," echoed the boys. "Tell us some stories, Marcus." And, after a moment, Marcus began:

"About two hundred years ago, Rome had her first battle with Carthage, you will remember. At that time Carthage ruled nearly all the cities that surrounded the Mediterranean Sea, and so the people of Carthage said proudly, 'The Mediterranean is only a lake which belongs to Carthage. No one can so much as wash his hands in it unless he receives permission from us.'

"Of course when the Romans heard this they determined that the Mediterranean should belong to them, or, at least, that Carthage should be made to take back her boast, and war was declared between the two nations.

"I am not going to tell you the history of this war," Marcus continued, "but a story which is part of that history, and which shows the sort of stuff that Romans are made of.

"Rome had no naval fleet to speak of, and her soldiers would not have known how to manage a fleet if they had had one. But the people of Carthage had a big fleet of vessels, and knew how to handle them, too. Their vessels had sails, and besides the sails they had five banks, or rows, of oars, one bank above another, the whole length of the ship. The oars were moved together in perfect time by slaves, who had been trained for this purpose.

"But Roman soldiers are not to be discouraged," said Marcus proudly, "and since they knew that they must fight some of their battles on the water, they began studying how they were to do it.

"The gods always favor the brave, and one day a disabled ship floated ashore close to the Roman camp. Then the

army went to work. They studied the ship to see how it was built. They cut down trees in the forest and hewed them into timbers and planks. And that they might have men to manage the ships when they were ready, they set soldiers in banks upon the hillside, who practiced the motion of rowing with even strokes.

"At the end of sixty days," declared Marcus, "the Romans had a fleet of vessels ready to sail, and men trained to row them. That was the beginning of the Roman navy, which is now the finest in the world."

"Good, good," cried the boys, when Marcus had finished his spirited story. Marcus flushed with pleasure, and when he looked up, his father stood beside him.

"I am glad to see you boys so well occupied," said Gaius. "And I have some good news to tell you. Word has just been received that our army is victorious, and that the king who has fought against us for so long is dead. Now, indeed, Rome may rejoice."

The boys jumped to their feet and shouted lustily.

"I suppose Pompey will soon return," exclaimed Tullius eagerly, for Pompey was the general in charge of the army,

and the return of a victorious general was one of the finest sights to be seen in Rome. It meant a magnificent procession, merrymaking, feasting, and rejoicing.

"Good! Good!" exclaimed the boys again and then they scattered to spread the news.

But the boys of Athens were not to see Pompey's triumph quite so soon as they hoped.

CHAPTER X
On the Farm

School had closed, and Gaius had taken his family for the summer months to the large farm which he owned. The children were pleased at the change, and were interested in all the affairs of the farm, which was so different from their home in the city.

The farm was managed by a trusted slave, and the work was done by slaves, belonging to Gaius.

"It is like a farm, here, and like a city, too," said Lucius one day.

"Why do you think that?" asked his father.

"Because," replied Lucius, "there are olive orchards, and vineyards, and fields of grain; and there are presses for making oil from the olives, and wine from the grapes, and stones for grinding the grain. And that is all like a farm. But there are as many people here as in a small city, and there

are great stores for all kinds of food, and there are big ovens for baking, like those in the city."

"Yes," said Marcus, "it is interesting to watch the men at work, too. Some of the slaves are tool makers, and make the tools that are used for building the houses and sheds, and those for taking care of the grain."

"I like best to watch the sheep, and to see them sheared," said Terentia, "though the poor things look so strange when their heavy fleece is off.

"But it is fine then to see how the wool is washed and made ready to be carded and spun and woven into cloth, as we spin and weave it at home," she added.

"I like to see the bees," exclaimed Livia, "because I know that they make the nice honey for my bread."

"You must be careful not to be upon too friendly terms with the bees," said Gaius, "or they may sting you."

"Yes," Livia answered. "Terentia told me about that, and I stand very still when I watch them."

"And do you like the bees better than the pretty doves, or the saucy chickens?" asked Terentia.

"I like the doves and the chickens," answered Livia, "but

the bees make such good honey."

"The little ones all like sweets," said Gaius with a smile. "And what has interested you?" he asked, turning to Gaia.

"I think," replied Gaia, "that I have been most interested in the work of those who weave the baskets and who make the rope. Their work is so new and strange to me."

"A Roman farm, like ours," said Gaius, "is a complete community, as you children have discovered. If we were suddenly to be cut off from all other people and places, we could go right on living comfortably here, for we make our own tools and our own buildings, and we produce all that we really need to eat and to wear."

The tools that were used on a Roman farm would seem very few and very simple to a modern farmer, even though so many kinds of work were carried on. Nearly all the labor was performed by the slaves, by hand, although oxen were used to draw the plow and to turn the stones for grinding grain.

There were large numbers of cattle on Gaius' farm, and some of the milk was used for making cheese, but Marcus and Terentia never had tasted butter, for no one knew how

to make it in those days. Olive oil was used in its place, and large groves of olive trees were grown on every farm.

No one ever had heard of sugar at that time, either. Honey was the only sweetening known. But aside from butter and sugar, Marcus and his brother and sisters ate very much the same kinds of food that we have today.

Each day the children found something new to watch on the farm. One day the boys stood by the stone quarry and saw the slaves quarry stone and shape it for building. At another time they watched them hew down trees, and make them into rough lumber, and on still another day they were on hand to see them sift great quantities of sand for cement, for a great many of the Roman buildings were made of cement. It was convenient to have all these materials on the farm, for new buildings were often needed for storing grain, or for sheltering the great number of slaves.

Several festivals and holidays took place while the children were on the farm.

"Tomorrow," said Gaius one morning, "we celebrate the Ambarvalia."

The children knew that in the country this was the most important religious festival of the year, and they were eager for the next day to come. They would walk in procession, and carry great sheaves of flowers in their arms, and what could be more delightful than that? No work would be done by the family or by any of the slaves, and after the ceremony the day would be a holiday for all.

Early in the morning the slaves were brought together, and a very large company they made. The children looked at them in surprise, for although Lucius had said there were as many people on the farm as in a small city, they had seen the slaves only as they were scattered here and there at their work. Now it seemed to them that they formed a small army, as they were brought together for the celebration of the Ambarvalia.

Gaius, with Marcus and the other members of his family, headed the solemn and reverent procession. They were followed by the overseer and the members of his family, and all the slaves of lesser importance.

They bore great sheaves of flowers in their arms, and Gaius carried purifying water, while Marcus waved fragrant

incense.

Young animals from the best of the farm's flocks had been chosen for a sacrifice to the gods of the fields, and these animals had been gaily decorated and were led in the procession.

All about the fields the procession moved slowly, even Livia holding fast to her mother's hand, and stepping gravely beside her. She understood what it was all intended to mean, for Gaia had told her that they wanted to thank the gods who watched over the fields, for all the good things which the earth gave them, and to ask that the fields might continue to give them abundant harvests.

Marcus, too, had been taught by his father what the sacrifice meant, and how all the ceremony was to be carried on, for someday, when he was a man, he would take the place that his father did today, and offer the sacrifices himself.

After the fragrant incense had been waved, the sacrifices had been made, and the purifying water had been sprinkled, the ceremony was finished, and then they all walked reverently back to the house.

After that the day was given up to rest or to merry-making, for the slaves were free to do as they liked, and so the holiday of the Ambarvalia was enjoyed by all.

"I suppose we shall soon be going back to Rome," said Marcus one morning to his father.

"Yes, my son," replied Gaius. "I am planning to send a letter to the city tomorrow, so that everything may be ready for us at home. We shall return very soon."

Glaucon, Drusus, and a few of the household slaves had gone with the family to the farm, and Gaius now sent for Drusus to write the letter for him.

"May I watch Drusus write the letter, Father?" asked Lucius.

"Certainly," replied Gaius.

Drusus first took two tablets such as Marcus and Lucius used in school, but each of these tablets had only one waxed surface. He fastened the two together by lacing cords through holes in one edge of each frame, so that the two waxed surfaces were inside.

Then Drusus took his stylus and wrote the letter as Gaius told him. After it was finished, he bound the double

tablet about with a cord, so that nothing could mar the inner surfaces upon which the letter was written. He then fastened the ends of the cord with wax, which he stamped with Gaius' seal.

The next morning a foot-runner was called and the letter was given to him to take to Rome.

CHAPTER XI
The Return to Rome

"The farm is nice, but it will seem good to be at home again," said Terentia to her mother, as they entered the carriage which stood waiting.

It would take two days to make the journey back to the city, and they were to stop over night at the home of Perseus, a friend of Gaius, as they had done on their way to the farm.

Perseus, with his family, always stayed at the home of Gaius when in Rome, and the exchange of visits was enjoyed by all.

The children were quite excited at the novelty of the journey. Gaius and Marcus were to ride on horseback. Lucius was to ride in the carriage with his mother and sisters, but he wished with all his heart that he were old enough to mount a horse and ride beside his father and

Marcus.

The carriage had no seats, but was supplied with many soft pillows upon which they were to recline.

The family goods were made up into packs, which were carried on the backs of mules. Altogether, they formed quite a little caravan, and the children thought it almost as good as one of the gay processions of the city.

Lucius, who liked to "make believe," declared that his father was a great general returning from war. Marcus was his chief officer, the family slaves were those that had been captured by Gaius in a great battle, while the mules with their packs bore the spoils that had been taken—the gold and silver vessels, the rich silks and embroideries, and the massive armor of the conquered generals.

"And what are we?" asked Terentia laughing.

"We? Oh," added Lucius readily, "Mamma is a noble princess that Gaius, the general, met and married; you girls are her handmaidens, and I—oh," ended Lucius with a laugh. "I am her slave," and he flung his arms impetuously about her neck, while Gaia gathered him into her arms.

"Slaves don't do *that!*" said Terentia.

The road that they travelled that day was a quiet one. Now and then a foot-runner, or a messenger on horseback would meet them, or they would be passed by a two-wheeled cart with a high seat and a single horse to draw it.

After several hours of travelling, the children grew tired, and then Gaia read a story to them, and played games with them.

At noon it was like a delightful picnic, for then they all rested beside the road, while the slaves served the food which had been prepared at the farm.

Late in the afternoon, they passed one of the roadside inns or taverns, which had a sign in the form of a stork hanging before the door. In the doorway stood the keeper of the inn, who called lustily to Gaius to stop over night with him, and promised all sorts of comfortable beds and board, for a reasonable sum.

But Gaius paid no attention to the innkeeper, for the taverns of that day were used mostly by foot-runners and messengers, and they were neither comfortable nor clean.

The home of Perseus was but a little farther on, and at his door the family caravan halted.

Perseus bade them welcome, and in a little while the children of the two families were playing together about the beautiful fountain in the open court, and talking of games, and of school, which would so soon begin again.

Gaia and the wife of Perseus talked of household affairs, and of the life upon the farm; while Gaius and Perseus discussed the recent wars, and the grave affairs of the state.

The home of Perseus was very large and very beautiful, but although he was a man of wealth and had many slaves, he chose to live outside the city, and to carry on his own farm.

Gaius and his family were so pleasantly entertained, that all were sorry when the time came for them to resume their journey the next day.

CHAPTER XII

On the Appian Way

On the second day of their journey, the children had little time to grow tired or restless, for they had entered the Appian Way, which was always thronged with people, riding, walking, or being carried in litters.

This Appian Way was the main road leading to Rome, and it was the oldest, the best known, and the finest road in all the world.

"Notice, children, what a wonderfully fine road this is," said Gaia. "It was built by Appius Claudius for the Roman armies to march over."

The children looked at the road, which was of stone and very broad.

"I have heard father say," remarked Terentia, " that it is made from great blocks of stone, fitted so carefully together that it is not possible to tell where they are joined."

"That is true," said Gaia. "See, it looks like one great stone. It is a wonderful piece of work."

Just then the attention of all was drawn to a party of men on horseback. The men wore medals and badges, which showed that they had been honored by the government. The horses were richly decked, and their shoes, which were of leather, were tipped with silver, which glistened as they stepped.

"What beautiful horses," said Lucius. And then he added quickly, "Oh, see!" for following at a little distance from the horsemen came a two-wheeled cart, drawn by mules. It had an arched cover, to protect the occupants from sun or rain, and two ladies reclined within it upon a pile of gay cushions. The covering of the cart, the cushions within it, and the trappings of the mules were rich with embroidery, and were of the most costly fabrics.

"Who are they, Mother?" asked Terentia, as Gaia exchanged greetings with the ladies.

"They are the wives of the Consul, Crassus, and of the general, Galba," she replied.

A moment later there was a hurried clatter of hoofs on

the road, and a government courier dashed by on horseback. He led a second horse.

"What man is that?" asked Marcus of his father, when he could speak above the din of the clattering hoofs.

"That is a government courier," replied Gaius. "He bears some government message, and he must ride with all haste. These couriers often cover one hundred miles in a day. That would be impossible," Gaius added, "if the roads about Rome were not so well made."

"Why does he lead the second horse?" asked Marcus.

"At the rate that he travels, he will soon tire the first horse. He will then jump upon the second horse, leaving the first to rest at some inn or government station."

Marcus turned to watch the dashing rider, but he was soon out of sight.

"Is there likely to be another war, Father?" asked Marcus. "I hear talk of it, when you and your friends are together."

"It is not certain yet," replied Gaius, "but it is likely. Rome has had many wars, and the Roman armies are well drilled, so that we may count upon success if this war is

undertaken."

"I wish I were older," said Marcus.

"You will soon enter the grammar school," replied his father, "and then your training for war will begin. You will learn how to ride, run, box, and swim, as every Roman boy does, for you must be ready to serve your country if there is a call to arms."

Marcus' eyes shone. He was eager to begin this training, as was every Roman boy.

"See, Mother," said Livia, "see all the carts loaded with vegetables."

"Yes," replied Gaia, "the drivers are taking them to the markets in Rome, so that we may have fresh vegetables to eat."

As the occupants of the carriage looked at the loaded carts, a litter was borne swiftly past them, carried by eight slaves who ran swiftly, keeping perfect step. The cover of the litter was richly carved, and the curtains were of beautifully embroidered fabrics.

In spite of all the interesting sights, Livia's head began to nod. But Gaia soon called to her, "Wake up, little girl,

for we are close to the walls of Rome, and now you must walk. See, we shall soon be at home again."

Livia opened her eyes, for the carriage had stopped, and her father was ready to lift her out.

They were just outside the walls of Rome, and here they must dismount and walk to their home, for at that time no one was permitted to drive in the streets of the city.

Gaius' letter had been received, and everything was in readiness for them. As they reclined about the table a little later, Lucius said, "It is nice to go away, but I believe it is even nicer to be at home again." And all the family agreed that he was right.

CHAPTER XIII

Marcus Enters Grammar School

After their return from the farm, Marcus, still attended by Glaucon, entered the grammar school.

This school was quite different from the elementary. The walls of the room were decorated with marble tablets; busts of authors were placed here and there; and lutes, to be used in studying music, were hung upon the walls.

When Marcus first entered this school, he looked about the beautiful room, and then at his book, the first one that he ever had owned. It was "The Odyssey," a poem of the Trojan War, written by the Greek poet, Homer. Marcus' heart filled with pride, and he determined to do his best to win the praise of his new master.

Because of Glaucon's careful teaching, Marcus could speak the Greek language well. But now he would learn to read and write it, also.

In Rome, every boy was expected to be ready for the duties of a soldier, so that he could serve his country well in time of war. This was made a part of the training of the grammar school.

Every day, Tullius and Marcus went together to the Campus Martius, where they were given lessons in riding, wrestling, running, leaping, and boxing. They also had lessons in swimming, for a Roman soldier never knew when he might have to swim a stream that lay across the army's line of march. The river Tiber, which flows through Rome, bounded the Campus Martius on two sides, and gave the boys a fine place for swimming.

The Campus itself was a large, level, open space between the Tiber and two of the seven famous hills of Rome. It was a fine place for all kinds of athletic exercises and military drills, and it was called the playground of Rome.

The schoolboys enjoyed this part of their military training immensely, and groups of citizens often gathered to watch them at their exercises.

"Oh, I wish I were old enough to drill as Marcus does," sighed Lucius one day.

"You will learn to be a soldier quite soon enough, my son," said Gaia. "And, besides, you can begin even now to practice being a soldier."

"How can I do that?" asked Lucius eagerly.

"By being brave, and manly, and obedient," said Gaia. "A soldier, you know, obeys commands instantly. A very small boy can practice that."

"Yes," replied Lucius, "I will try to do that; but I wish I could ride, and swim, and run, and wrestle, too."

"Would you like to go to the Campus Martius, someday, and watch Marcus and Tullius at their exercises and athletic drills?" asked Gaius.

"Oh, yes, indeed, Father," cried Lucius eagerly.

"Very well," said Gaius, "I will take you with me to see them."

Lucius ran to tell Terentia, for this would be almost as nice as taking part in the exercises themselves.

"Oh, Marcus," he called, when Marcus came in to dinner, "Father has promised to take me to the Campus to watch you and Tullius drill."

"That will be fine," said Marcus, "but I hope my horse

will not throw me when you are there, as he did today."

"Were you hurt?" asked Lucius. "How did it happen?"

"He had not been ridden for a day or two and was feeling pretty good, and I was perhaps a bit careless in handling the reins. No," Marcus added, answering the first question last, "I was not hurt, but I had a pretty good shaking, which I can feel in my bones yet."

"What did the riding master say?" asked Lucius, who was as full of questions as boys of his age usually are.

"Fortunately," replied Marcus with a laugh, "he did not see the tumble.

"I wonder if dinner is ready," he added. "My shaking up has given me an appetite."

"Father is not here, yet," said Lucius. "Won't you tell me a story while we wait for him?"

"I think," said Marcus, "that I have told you the story of Romulus, who founded Rome."

"Yes," replied Lucius, "but I want to hear it again. I hope," he added, "that when I am older I can remember the Roman stories as well as you do."

"Then this is the first one for you to know," said Marcus,

"so listen well, and I will tell it to you very briefly:

"Romulus and Remus were twin brothers who were born in Italy before there was any such city as Rome. But while they were little babies they were thrown into the river Tiber to be drowned, because the king of the country was afraid that when they grew up, they would take his throne from him. He knew that he had no right to the throne, and that the grandfather of these boys should have been king instead.

"But the boys, who were in a wooden cradle, floated ashore instead of drowning, and a she-wolf heard them crying. She went to them, and because the gods were protecting them, she nursed them instead of harming them.

"In this way the boys were kept alive until they were found by a shepherd, who took them home to his wife.

"When they had grown to be men, Romulus and Remus helped to restore the throne to their grandfather. They then determined to build a city upon the spot where they were saved from the Tiber, and so they founded the city of Rome. In order to decide which one the city was to be named after, the brothers each went to the top of a hill and

waited for some sign from the gods. Remus saw a flight of six vultures, but Romulus saw a flight of twelve, so the city was named after Romulus, and called Rome."

"Ah, here comes father," exclaimed Lucius, as Marcus brought his story to an end. Then he added, "I shall surely try to remember that story."

CHAPTER XIV
The Festival of Violets

The mild Italian winter passed, spring came, and with it the season of violets: beautiful fragrant violets which grow so freely in Italy.

"Come, little sister, today is the festival of violets," cried Terentia as she wakened Livia early one morning.

Livia opened her eyes. She did not know just what Terentia meant, but she thought it must be something nice, for she loved the violets, and besides, Terentia looked so eager and happy.

The girls were soon in the atrium, and there they found Gaia and her maidens busily at work making wreaths from the beautiful flowers.

Terentia was soon helping, and Livia, too, for she could hand the blossoms to her mother as she fashioned them into wreaths.

When Gaius came in, with Marcus and Lucius following, the morning offering was made to Vesta at the family altar, and immediately after breakfast the ceremonies of the festival began.

On one side of the atrium of Gaius' home were the cabinets of ancestors. These cabinets were of carved and polished wood, the doors of which were usually closed. But on the morning of the festival of violets they were opened, and the children stood before them with a feeling of reverence, mingled with curiosity.

The cabinets held the wax masks or images of Gaius' ancestors. Each mask was fitted over a carved bust, so that they were very much like the sculptured busts of great men that we see in the art stores of today, only that the mask of wax looked more lifelike than one of stone or clay.

The family stood before each cabinet as it was opened, and Gaius told them of the life and deeds of the man before them; of the debates that he had led in the Senate, or of the brave deeds that he had performed in battle.

Then one of the members of the family crowned the bust with a fragrant wreath of violets.

Many of Gaius' relatives and friends had been invited to the house. Each one was furnished with great bunches of flowers, and after the busts had been crowned with violets they all set out for the family tomb, which was outside the gates of the city, on the Appian Way.

The Romans had great reverence for their dead, but these festivals were looked upon as holidays and not as a time of mourning.

"Come, let us look inside," said Marcus to Terentia, when they had reached the tomb.

"It is beautiful," said Terentia, stepping in and looking about her.

The inner walls were tinted in soft colors, beautiful lamps were burning, and artistic vases were placed about. It looked like a quiet, stately room.

"See," said Marcus, "here are the weapons of the general, our uncle," and he bent to examine a richly wrought sword.

"And, look," added Terentia, "at the ornaments and combs and mirrors of his wife, our aunt.

"And, oh," she added, a moment later, "I suppose these

belonged to their little girl," and she turned to a table upon which were arranged a doll, a string of beads similar to those Livia wore, and several toys.

Among the weapons, the ornaments, and the toys, Marcus and Terentia laid lovingly the bunches of fragrant violets which they carried. Wreaths had already been hung about the tomb by Gaius, Gaia and their friends, and offerings of food were placed upon a table.

"Come, children, the feast is ready," called Gaia.

Outside, the guests were seated upon the green grass, and Marcus and Terentia took their places near Gaia. Then all were served to a supper of bread and wine, vegetables and eggs.

"Have you had a nice time, Livia?" asked Terentia, as they walked home.

"Oh, yes," said Livia. "The violets are so sweet."

"I liked it better than the Ambarvalia at the farm," said Terentia.

"It is nice to have a feast like this," said Marcus, "but I like the Ambarvalia better, with its sacrifice of many animals."

"The feast days are all fine," said Terentia, "but I love the festival of violets best of all."

CHAPTER XV

Marcus, the Torchbearer

"I have a bit of news for you, Marcus," said Gaia one day as Marcus came in from school. "Our cousin, Lucilla, has chosen you to be torchbearer at her wedding."

"Oh," cried Marcus, "do you mean that I am to carry the white thorn torch?"

"Yes," replied Gaia. "That is what Lucilla wishes."

"There will be a great wedding, I suppose," said Marcus. "That will be fine."

As soon as he could find Tullius the next morning, Marcus told him the news.

"Oh, how good," said Tullius. "What fun we will have together, for I have been chosen to bear the basket of offerings for the altar."

"Good, indeed!" exclaimed Marcus. "The wedding is to be a grand one, and we will have a great feast, too."

The home of Lucilla's father was a beautiful one, and on the day of the wedding it was decorated with flowers, with branches of trees, and with woven hangings of rich colors.

Before sunrise the guests began to arrive.

Marcus and Lucius were standing beside one of the pillars of the atrium when the bride and groom entered.

After them came Tullius with his basket of offerings. These were laid upon the family altar. The bride and groom sat before it, and prayers were made to the Roman gods.

The ceremony was a very simple one, but the feast which followed it lasted for many hours. It was not until evening that the guests arose from their couches about the table.

Tullius turned to Marcus. "Now," he said, "it is your turn to take part in the ceremonies."

A procession was formed by the guests to take the bride from her father's house to the house of the groom. First there were torchbearers, and following these were flute players. Then, directly in front of the bride, came Marcus, bearing the wedding torch of flaming white thorn.

Lucius was sure that no one of all the guests was so

honored as Marcus. He felt quite certain that he would rather be Marcus than the groom himself!

The procession was a merry one, and there was music and the sound of happy laughter. Crowds of citizens stood along the way, for the Romans loved a procession of any sort, and a wedding procession was the merriest of all.

When they reached the home of the groom, Lucilla wound bands of woolen cloth about the pillars of the doorway, and then the invited guests entered the new home.

A fire had been laid on the hearth, and Marcus handed the white thorn torch to Lucilla, who lighted the hearth fire with it. Then turning, she tossed it, still burning, among the guests.

There was a merry scramble to catch it, as there is today to catch a flower from the bride's bouquet.

"Ah," cried Tullius. "See! Terentia has caught the torch. 'Tis a sign that she will be the next bride."

There was a bright flush upon Tullius' cheeks as he spoke. To be sure Terentia was but thirteen years old, but most Roman girls were married at the age of fourteen.

CHAPTER XVI

The Chariot Race

"I saw the horses and the chariots that are to take part in the races," cried Marcus as he came in from school. "They were just coming through the gates, into the city, as I was on my way to the Campus."

Lucius' eyes shone. "Oh, I wish I had been there!" he exclaimed. "But what do you think? Father says we are all to go and see the races tomorrow."

"Did he?" said Marcus, and away he ran to see if Terentia had heard the good news.

The Roman races were held in the circus, which was a very large uncovered space, with rows of raised seats along the sides. The seats held many thousand people, for the Romans were very fond of sports which were dangerous and exciting.

When Gaius and his family took their places, the seats

were already crowded, and for some time the children found plenty to interest them in the big assembly of people who were laughing, talking, and greeting friends.

After Gaius had spoken to friends who were near, he turned to the children. "You see the gates at the upper end of the circus," he said. "Those close the stalls where the horses and their drivers are waiting for the signal to begin the race.

"Notice, too," he said, "the pedestal near the stalls. There are seven balls upon its top. The chariots will be driven seven times around the course, and each time one ball will be taken from the pedestal."

Suddenly the talking and laughing stopped, for the signal for the race had been given.

The doors of the stalls flew open. Lucius' eyes shone, for this was the first chariot race he ever had seen. He looked eagerly at the gay trappings of the prancing horses, at the handsome chariots, and at the drivers standing erect and holding firmly the reins of the restless horses.

"How strangely the drivers are dressed," he said to Marcus, for he had noticed that each man wore a close

fitting cap, that leather cords bound the short tunic about the body, and that the shoulders, hips, and legs were protected with heavy leather coverings.

"That is to keep them from being too badly hurt, if they should happen to be thrown from their chariots," said Marcus.

Lucius' eyes opened more widely still, but there was no time then for further questions, for, at that moment, the starting signal was given, and the chariots, each with its four horses abreast, began their wild race.

Many times it seemed as though the wheels of the chariots must lock, or crash together, as the horses plunged ahead, and each driver tried to secure the shortest turn.

"I hope the red will win," said Marcus, watching eagerly the four black horses which bore his favorite color.

Six balls had been taken from the pedestal, and the last lap of the race was being driven. The black horses were ahead; their driver was strong and daring, and with a cry of triumph, which was echoed by thousands of the people, he crossed the line. The red had won!

The other horses and chariots were driven into their



"The last lap of the race was being driven."

stalls, but the victor, standing very erect, drove once more down the length of the circus. But he drove slowly this time, and as he passed, the people threw flowers and gifts into the chariot, until he reached the end of the course and passed out through the arch of triumph.

"That was a fine race," said Lucius, as the boys made their way through the throng. "I am glad none of the drivers were thrown out."

"Ho," scoffed a boy who was near them. "You are no true Roman. There should have been at least one chariot smashed to make it really exciting.

"Have you never seen a fight of gladiators?"

"No," answered Lucius, "not yet."

"Well," replied the boy, "after you have seen a fight between gladiators and wild beasts in the arena, you will think a chariot race like this a pretty tame affair."

CHAPTER XVII

The Victorious General

There was excitement in the city of Rome. The Senate had decreed that Pompey was to be given a magnificent triumph. Though it was two years after his great victory which Gaius had announced to the boys, he was now about to return to the city.

It was hard for the boys of Rome to go to school during the days that followed, and harder still for them to give attention to their lessons. They listened to every noise outside, and when at last the messengers on horseback dashed into the city to announce Pompey's return, the whole populace of Rome poured into the streets, and school and all else was forgotten.

Such a triumphant procession had never before been seen by the boys. It was two days in entering the city.

Marcus and Tullius hastened early in the morning to the

Arch of Triumph, through which a victorious general always passed into Rome.

"They are coming," shouted Marcus, for the noise of trumpets, of tramping horses, and of clanking armor could already be heard. And as the long procession passed through the great arch and into the city's streets, the boys watched with increasing wonder and amazement.

First there came a throng of people from all parts of the known world, followed by wagons piled with all the trophies of war. Some of the wagons were filled full of gold coins, others were piled with silver, and still others held the armor of the defeated army.

"What are those?" questioned the boys, as still more wagons came into view, loaded with strange looking objects.

"Those," answered a soldier who was standing near, "are the beaks of ships which were captured and destroyed."

"My!" exclaimed Tullius, "there must have been a whole fleet captured. Look at the wagons still coming! What curious figures they had on their ships. I should like to see such a fleet on the water."

When the wagons had all passed, there followed troops of captives that Pompey had taken in his battles. Some of these were pirates, some were soldiers, some were seamen, while among them were conquered generals and even kings, who walked among the captives in token of their submission to Rome.

"Look, look," exclaimed Marcus, when these had passed, for there now appeared a monstrous image of the conquered king, who had killed himself rather than surrender. The image was nearly twelve feet tall, and was made of solid gold.

Then came figures representing battle scenes, with images of the enemies that had been slain, and last of all, in a magnificent chariot studded with flashing jewels, and attended by his generals, came Pompey himself.

It took two days for all this procession to pass through the Arch of Triumph, but, tired as they were when the first night came, the boys were too excited to sleep long, and early on the second morning they ran to the Forum, in order that they might see the last sights of all this wonderful triumph.



"There followed troops of captives that Pompey had taken in his battles."

"I suppose the captives will all be slain," said Marcus, as they reached the Forum. For even the boys of Rome were so accustomed to violence and bloodshed, that they thought but little of having hundreds of captives put to death.

"No," answered Tullius, "Father says that Pompey has given orders that, after the celebration, the captives shall be returned to their homes, but the kings will, of course, be put to death."

"Of course," assented Marcus. And then he added, "I am glad the others are to be sent back, instead. Father says Pompey has proved himself a wise general. My!" he added, "what loads and loads there were of gold and silver. He must have conquered a rich country, and it will add greatly to the strength and glory of Rome."

"Yes," added Tullius, "and did you notice the throne and couch of the conquered king? I am glad we have no king in Rome."

"So am I," said Marcus. "I am glad that the conspiracy of Catiline was discovered, and the traitors put to death."

The Forum was crowded with people, but the boys

managed to find places where they could view all the sights of the great celebration. Glaucon and Aulus accompanied them, as usual.

"The place is so full of people that they even stand in the Curtian Lake," said Marcus with a laugh.

"What gave that little pool of water its name?" asked Tullius. "You know all the old Roman stories. Can you tell me that?"

"Why, yes, indeed," replied Marcus. "It was named after a Roman warrior, Marcus Curtius. A terrible chasm opened in the Forum at one time, and the Romans did their best to fill it with earth; but the earth disappeared as fast as it was thrown in. Then they appealed to the gods to help them, and the oracle said that the chasm would never close until the dearest thing in Rome was thrown into it. After that the city would be secure forever.

"Then Marcus Curtius came forward, dressed in rich armor, and riding the horse which had carried him into many successful wars. 'The warriors of Rome are her dearest possession,' he exclaimed, 'and I offer myself as a sacrifice for the city.' With that he rode his horse into the

chasm, and disappeared from sight.

"The chasm closed, and the little pool which was left to mark the spot has been called the Curtian Lake ever since."

"Ah, that was fine," cried Tullius. "Such stories make one proud to be a Roman!"

At last the great procession was ended; the two captive kings were put to death; sacrifices were offered to the gods, and the tired people of Rome returned to their homes.

"Was there ever so great a triumph in Rome before?" Marcus asked his father the next morning at breakfast.

"Only once," replied Gaius, "and that was when Scipio conquered Carthage. That triumph lasted three days. Instead of there being a golden image of the conquered king, the great King Perseus himself walked in the procession, dressed all in black, and his children were among the captives, while the quantity of golden treasure was almost as great."

"What wonderful conquests Rome has made!" exclaimed Marcus.

"Yes," said his father, "it well deserves its name of 'Capital of' the World.'"

CHAPTER XVIII

Marcus, the Man

Several years had passed, and Marcus was now seventeen years old. His birthday was always celebrated by the family, but never as it would be this year, for he had reached the age at which the boys of Rome put aside boyish affairs and became citizens of the Republic.

Marcus could hardly wait for the great day to come, for then he would put on, for the first time, the toga, the garment which only a citizen of Rome might wear: then he would take his place among the men of Rome.

Gaius sent invitations to all the relatives and friends, asking them to celebrate the feast with him, for he wanted Marcus to be shown as much honor as possible.

Very early in the morning the ceremonies began. After the company had gathered, Marcus took his place before the family altar, and laid upon it his boyhood emblems. For

the first time since he was eight days old, he took from his neck the bulla, or locket of gold, which his father had placed there when he was named. This he laid upon the altar, and beside it he placed his white tunic, with its purple stripe, which showed him to be of noble birth; and Gaius then offered a sacrifice upon the altar.

The signs which had marked him as a boy had been put aside, the sacrifice was ended, and Marcus stood with flushed face and sparkling eyes, ready to be clothed with the toga, the emblem of manhood and citizenship. He drew a deep breath, as his father draped its graceful folds across his strong, young shoulders.

Lucius was almost as eager as Marcus, and as he looked at the brother whom he admired so much, he said to himself, "Marcus is no longer a boy; he is a man: a citizen of our great Roman Republic."

Then Marcus and Gaius, and all the members of the family, with the relatives and friends, and all the slaves of the household, formed in procession. It was a gay and happy procession, and a very large one as well.

They left the home of Gaius and made their way



"Marcus stood with flushed face and sparkling eyes, ready to be clothed with the toga."

through the streets of the city to the great Forum. Here Marcus' name was entered in the public records as a citizen of the Republic, and then the friends and relatives crowded about him and offered him their best wishes, while Marcus—feeling very much like a boy, yet—smiled and blushed, and was very happy indeed.

But this was not the end of the ceremonies. The procession formed in order once more, and from the Forum they went up to the temple of Liber—from which we get our word "liberty." The temple was built upon one of the seven famous hills of Rome. Here an offering was laid upon the altar, and then the procession turned back toward the home of Gaius.

The day closed with a splendid feast.

"How fine Marcus looks in his toga," said Terentia to Lucius, during the feast.

"Yes," answered Lucius, but he said it with a sigh, for never before had he envied Marcus as he had on this day.

"And Tullius looks fine in his toga, too," Lucius added, for Tullius had put on the toga of manhood a month before.

Terentia blushed brightly at Lucius' speech, and Lucius

suddenly asked, "When are you and Tullius to be married, Terentia?"

"In another month, little brother," Terentia replied with a happy smile.

After all the processions, the sacrifices, and the feasting of the day were over, the family was left alone in the big atrium. Marcus looked about him with a heart full of happiness and contentment. Gaius stood near the family altar, Gaia sat near him holding Livia in her lap, for the little girl was tired after all the excitement of the day. Terentia and Lucius stood by the fountain.

"Only one thing remains," said Marcus, "to make this the happiest day of my life."

Gaius smiled, for he understood what Marcus meant. He spoke to one of the slaves, and a moment later Glaucon entered the room.

Then Marcus stood erect, and looking very tall and manly, he turned to his faithful pedagogue and said: "Glaucon, I have been so very happy today, that I want to give a lasting happiness to someone else. My father has granted my wish, and shares it. Tomorrow prepare yourself

to go with us to the Forum, and there you shall receive what you well deserve to have—the gift of freedom."

It was several moments before Glaucon could trust himself to speak. Then he said, with grave dignity, "The gift shows the heart of Marcus—a citizen of whom Rome may well be proud."

THE END.