

Our Little Dutch, Belgian, and Spanish Cousins

VOLUME TWO

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Our Little Dutch, Belgian, and Spanish Cousins

Volume 2

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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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Our Little Dutch Cousin

Blanche McManus



Peter and Wilhelmina

Preface

Our little Dutch cousins have much in common with little American cousins, not so much perhaps with respect to present-day institutions and manners and customs, as with the survivals and traditions of other days, when the Dutch played so important a part in the founding of the new America.

It was from Holland, too, from the little port of Delfshaven, that the Pilgrim Fathers first set sail for the New World, and by this fact alone Holland and America are bound together by another very strong link, though this time it was of English forging.

No European country, save England, has the interest for the American reader or traveller that has "the little land of dikes and windmills," and there are many young Americans

already familiar with the ways of their cousins from over the seas from the very fact that so many of them come to Holland to visit its fine picture-galleries, its famous and historic buildings, its tulip-gardens, and its picturesque streets and canals, which make it a paradise for artists.

Our little Dutch cousins mingle gladly with their little American cousins, and the ties that bind make a bond which is, and always has been, inseverable.


Map of HOLLAND
showing places
mentioned in
Our Little Dutch Cousin
GRONINGEN
Friesland
HINDELOOPEN
ALKMAAR
Zuyder Zee
EDAM
VOLENDAM
MARKEN
ZAANDAM
HAARLEM
AMSTERDAM
SCHEVENINGEN
LEYDEN
River Rhine
THE HAGUE
DELFT
DELFSHAVEN
ROTTERDAM
River Meuse
Zeeland
Germany
Belgium

CHAPTER I

Pieter and Wilhelmina

What do you think of a country where you can pick up sugar-plums along the road? Well, this was just what Pieter and Wilhelmina were going to do as, hand in hand, they flew up the road as fast as their little wooden shoes would let them, to meet a carriage which was rapidly approaching. Behind the carriage ran a crowd of children, laughing and tumbling over each other.

"Oh! they are throwing the 'suikers' now; run faster, Wilhelmina," panted Pieter; and, sure enough, as the carriage went by, a shower of candies fell all about them. One piece dropped right in Wilhelmina's mouth, which of course was open, because she had been running so hard. But there was no time to laugh, as the children were all scrambling hard to pick up the sweets. Then they tried to

catch up with the carriage again, but it was nearly out of sight by this time, and so one by one the young folk stopped to count up their gains, and compare them with one another.

This was a wedding-party returning from church. In the carriage sat the bride and groom. The carriage sat high up on its two great wheels, and was gaudily painted and gaily decked with flowers and ribbons.

Pieter and Wilhelmina had been on the lookout for this bridal party with more than usual interest, for two relatives of the bride had come to their mother a few days before to invite her to the wedding ceremony, and the children thought these young men had looked very fine in their best clothes, with flowers stuck in the sides of their caps.

The bride had her arms full of candies, and, as was the custom, she threw them out to the children as they drove along. The little Dutch children call these candies "suikers." As you may imagine, this is a great treat for them, and accordingly the children of Holland take more of an interest in weddings than do the children of other countries.

"Put all the 'suikers' in my apron, Pieter," said

Wilhelmina, "and let us go and show them to the mother," and the children quickly ran back home.

Wilhelmina and Pieter were twins, so it does not matter whether we say Wilhelmina or Pieter first, and they looked so much alike that when they stood together in the high grass by the side of the canal which ran in front of their home, it was hard to tell one from the other if it had not been for Pieter's cap.

They both had round, rosy faces, and round, blue eyes, and yellow hair, only you would not know that Wilhelmina had any hair at all, for it was completely hidden by her cap. They both wore little wooden shoes, and it was a marvel how fast they could run in them, for they seem to be on the point of dropping off most of the time, but, strange to say, they never do.

Holland is the dearest little wee country in the world. Uncle Sam could put it in his vest pocket. It looks like a country just made to play in. Its houses are so small and trim, all set about with neat little gardens and trees, which look as if they had been cut out of wood, like the trees in

the "Noah's arks." There are little canals and little bridges everywhere, and little towns scattered here and there all over the broad, flat country. You could go to all of the principal cities of this little land in one day, and you can stand in one of the church towers and see over half the country at a glance. The only things that look big are the windmills.

What do you think of a garden gate without any fence? But this is just the sort of a gate that the twins entered when they arrived home. Instead of a fence there was a small canal which divided the garden from the road, and of course the gate was in the middle of a small bridge, otherwise how could they have got across the canal?

At the front door they both left their shoes on the steps outside, for Dutch people never think of bringing their dirty shoes into the house. Then they opened only half of the front door and went in. Many Dutch doors are made in two parts, the upper half remaining open most of the time, like a window, while the lower half is closed like an ordinary door.

"Oh, mamma, see what a lot of 'suikers' the bride threw

to us," said Wilhelmina, running up to Mevrouw Joost, who was bustling about the china cupboard in the living-room.

"And she was such a pretty bride, too, with a lovely dress; and there were flowers twined all about the carriage, and a wreath on the horse's head, and long streamers of white ribbon wound around the whip," she continued breathlessly.

"And we got more 'suikers' than any one else," put in Pieter.

"Yes, it was a gay party. I saw them pass by the house," said Mevrouw Joost, smilingly, as she ate a "suiker."

"Baby Jan must have one too," said Wilhelmina, as she went over to play with the baby who was kicking and crowing in his great carved cradle near the window. Jan was the household pet, and there had been a great celebration when he was a week old.

All the friends of the Joost family were invited to come and see the baby, a red pincushion having been hung out beside the front door to let everybody know that there was a new baby boy within. When the guests arrived, they were

given rusks to eat, a kind of sweet bread, covered with aniseed and sugar, called "muisjes," which really means "mice." Before, when the friends had come to pay their respects to Wilhelmina and Pieter, there had been two kinds of "muisjes." One had a sort of smooth white icing on the top, and that was Wilhelmina's, while Pieter's rusks had lumps of sugar sticking up all over them.

The Dutch are the neatest people in the world. They are always washing and rubbing and dusting things, and one could no more find a spider's web in Mevrouw Joost's home than they could a white elephant.

The floor of the living-room was made of tiny red bricks, waxed and polished until they shone like glass. There was much heavy oak furniture, beautifully carved; a big round table stood in the centre, and on one side was a great dresser or sideboard. The chairs were solid and big, with high backs and straw seats, and some of them were painted dark green, with curious little pictures and decorations also painted on them.

One end of the square room was filled by what looked

like two big cupboards with heavy green curtains hanging in front of them, but one of the curtains was drawn partly back and one could see that they were two great beds instead, built into the wall just like cupboards. These were the "show-beds," and were not for constant use, but mostly for ornament.

Mevrouw Joost was very proud of these beds and kept them always made up with her very finest linen, trimmed with rich lace, and her most brilliantly coloured embroidered coverlids, the whole being piled so high that the beds nearly reached the ceiling. There was barely enough room on top for the two enormous eider-down pillows, with gay covers and lace ruffles, which lay on each of the beds and completed their furnishings.

Some Dutch houses have a separate room for these "show-beds," which we should call a parlour, but Mevrouw Joost had her "show-beds" where she could enjoy their magnificence every day.

She had her "show-room," too, but kept it most beautifully and tightly closed up, so that not a ray of light or

a speck of dirt could come in, for it was only used on some great occasion.

Another side of the living-room was nearly filled by the huge fireplace, covered with square, blue Delft tiles, on each of which was a picture which told a story from the Bible. The ceiling was crossed with great beams of wood, and a wainscoting of wood went all around the room.

On the sideboard, on the shelves above the beds, and over the mantel were fine pieces of rare old Delft china, which is a beautiful deep blue. It is very rare now, and much prized by the Dutch Mevrouws. There was also a quantity of copper and brass jugs and pewter platters, while by the fireplace hung a big brass warming-pan, which is a great pan with a cover and a long handle. On a cold and damp winter's night Mevrouw Joost filled it with red-hot coals, and warmed the household beds by slipping it in and out between the sheets.

There were spotless white curtains at the tiny windows, and everything shone under the housewife's brisk rubbings.

Back of the sitting-room was the kitchen, with another

big fireplace, in which was set the cooking-stove. Around the walls were many bright copper pans and pots of all kinds.

There were big brass jugs to hold milk, and kegs with brass hoops in which they stow away their butter. The Dutch are so fond of polishing things that they put brass on everything, it would seem, just for the joy of rubbing it afterward.

Many of the commoner things were made beautiful as well. The knife-handles were carved, and on many of the brass bowls and platters were graceful patterns. One would see a little cow carved on the big wooden butter-spoon, or a tiny windmill on the handle of a fork, while the great churn that stood in the corner of the kitchen had gay pictures painted upon it. From this you may judge what a pleasant and attractive room Mevrouw Joost's kitchen was.

"Why are you putting out all the best china and the pretty silver spoons, mother?" asked Wilhelmina.

"The father is showing a visitor through the tulip-gardens. It is the great merchant, Mynheer Van der Veer, from Amsterdam. He has come to buy some of the choice

plants, for he says truly there are no tulips in all Holland as fine as ours," and the good lady drew herself up with a pardonable pride, as she polished the big silver coffee-pot, which already shone so Wilhelmina might see her face in it like a mirror.

"Can I help you, mother?" asked Wilhelmina. She would have liked nothing better than to handle the dainty cups and saucers, but she knew well that her mother would not trust this rare old china to any hands but her own, for these cups and saucers had been handed down through many generations of her family, as had the quaint silver spoons with the long twisted handles, at the end of which were little windmills, ships, lions, and the like, all in silver.

"No, no, little one, you are only in the way; go out into the garden and tell your father not to delay too long or our guest will drink cold coffee," said Mevrouw, bustling about more than ever.

Wilhelmina was eager enough to see the great Mynheer, so she joined Pieter, who had already slipped out, and together they went toward the bulb-gardens, where Mynheer

and their father were looking over the wonderful tulips.

Pieter and Wilhelmina lived in a quaint little house of one story only, built of very small red brick, with a roof of bright red tiles. The window-frames were painted white, and the window-blinds a bright blue, while the front door was bright green. There was a little garden in front, and the paths all followed tiny canals, which were spanned here and there by small bridges. In one corner was a pond, on which floated little toy ducks and fish, and it was great fun for the children to wind up the clockwork inside of these curious toys, and watch them move about as if they were alive. But on this afternoon the twins were thinking of other things, and kept on to the bulb-gardens. Here was a lovely sight, - acres and acres of nothing but tulips of all colours, and hyacinths, and other bulbs which Mynheer Joost grew to send to the big flower markets of Holland and other countries as well; for, as Mevrouw Joost had said, their tulips were famous the world over. Mynheer Joost took great pains with his bulbs, and was able to grow many varieties which could not be obtained elsewhere.

The tulip is really the national flower of Holland, so the Dutch (as the people of Holland are called) are very fond of them, and you see more beautiful varieties here than anywhere else. Every Dutchman plants tulips in his garden, and there is a great rivalry between neighbours as to who can produce the most startling varieties in size and colour.

Pieter and Wilhelmina were never tired of hearing their father tell of the time all Holland went almost crazy over tulips. This was nearly three hundred years ago, after the tulip had just been brought to Holland, and was a much rarer flower than it is to-day. It got to be the fashion for every one to raise tulips, and they sold for large sums of money. Several thousands of "guldens" (a "gulden" is the chief Dutch coin) were paid for a single bulb. People sold their houses and lands to buy tulips, which they were able to sell again at a great profit. Everybody went wild over these beautiful flowers, rich and poor alike, men, women, and children. Everybody bought and sold tulips, and nobody thought or talked about anything but the price of tulips. At last the Dutch government put a stop to this nonsense, and

down tumbled the prices of tulips.

In spite of this, the Dutch love for the flower still continued, and to-day one may see these great fields of tulips and hyacinths and other bulb-plants covering miles and miles of the surface of Holland, just as do wheat-fields in other lands.

There is a large and continually growing trade in these plants going on all over Holland, and Mynheer Joost was always able to sell his plants for as big a price as any others in the market. The principal tulip-gardens are in the vicinities of the cities of Leyden and Haarlem, and from where Wilhelmina and Pieter now stood, in the midst of their father's tulip-beds, they could see the tower of the Groote Kerk, or Great Church, of Haarlem.

Mynheer Joost sold a very rare variety, which only he knew how to grow, and which was named the "Joost;" it was almost pure black, with only a tiny red tip on each petal. It was the pride of his heart, and he often told the children that he hoped some day to be able to turn it into a pure black one; and then what a fortune it would bring them all!

So Pieter and Wilhelmina watched its growth almost as carefully as did their father.

"There is Mynheer and the father now, looking at the 'great tulip,'" said Pieter. This was the way they always spoke of this wonderful plant.

But Wilhelmina suddenly grew shy at the sight of the great man. "Come, let us hide," she said, and she tried to draw Pieter behind one of the large glass houses, in which were kept many of the rarer plants. But Pieter wanted to see Mynheer Van der Veer, the well-known merchant who owned so many big warehouses in Amsterdam, and also a tall, fine house on one of the "grachten" of that city, which is the name given to the canals.

Mynheer was a portly old gentleman, and was dressed much as would be a merchant in any great city; in a black suit and a silk hat, for the wealthy people of the big cities of Holland do not wear to-day the picturesque costumes of the country people. It is only in the country and small towns that one sees the quaint dress which often has changed but little from what it was hundreds of years ago. But the Joost

family, like many another in the country, were very proud of their old-time dress, and would not have changed it for a modern costume for anything, and though Mynheer Joost was also a wealthy man, he was dressed in the same kind of clothes as those worn by his father and grandfather before him. He had on big, baggy trousers of dark blue velvet, coming only to the knee, and fastened at the waist with a great silver buckle; a tight-fitting vest or coat, with two rows of big silver buttons down the front, and around his neck was a gay-coloured handkerchief. On his head was a curious high cap, and on his feet the big wooden shoes, nicely whitened.

Each of the men were smoking big cigars, for the Dutch are great smokers, and are never without a pipe or cigar.

Mynheer Van der Veer had finished selecting his tulips, and now caught sight of the twins, who were standing shyly together, holding hands as usual, behind a mass of crimson and yellow tulips.

"Aha! these are your two young ones, my friend; they, too, are sturdy young plants.

"You look like one of your father's finest pink tulips, little one," he continued, patting Wilhelmina's pink cheeks.

You might not think it was a compliment to be called a tulip, but you must not forget what a high regard the Dutch have for these flowers. So Wilhelmina knew that she was receiving a great compliment, and grew pinker than ever, and entirely forgot the message which her mother had given her.

"And, Pieter, some day I suppose that you will be growing rare tulips like your father," said Mynheer, peering at the lad over the rims of his glasses.

"Pieter helps me greatly now, out of school hours, and Wilhelmina can pack blossoms for the market as well as our oldest gardener," said Mynheer Joost, who thought that there were no children in Holland the equal of his twins. "But you must let the Vrouw give you some of her cakes and coffee before you leave, Mynheer," he continued as he led the way back to the house.

The Dutch are very hospitable, and are never so happy as when they are giving their visitors nice things to eat and

drink, and it would be considered very rude to refuse any of these good things; but then nobody wants to.

Mynheer Van der Veer was soon seated at the big oak table, which was covered with a linen cloth finely embroidered, and edged with a deep ruffle of lace. On it were the plates of Delftware filled with many kinds of cakes and sweet biscuits, which the Dutch call "koejes;" besides, there were delicious sweet rusks, which Mevrouw Joost brought hot from the oven. Then she poured the hot water on to the coffee from a copper kettle which stood on a high copper stand by the side of the table. The silver coffee-pot itself stood on a porcelain stand at one end of the table, and under this stand was a tiny flame burning from an alcohol-lamp in order to keep the coffee warm.

There was no better coffee to be had in all Holland than Mevrouw Joost's, and how good it tasted, to be sure, out of the dainty china cups, - real china, for they had been brought from the Far East by a great-uncle of the Joosts who had engaged in the trade with China at the time when there were nothing but sailing ships on the seas. After the coffee came

brandied cherries, served in little glasses.

"When the young people come to Amsterdam again, Mynheer Joost, you must bring them to see me," said the merchant, "and perhaps the young man will want to leave even his tulips when he sees what is in the big warehouses."

The twins' eyes shone and they pinched each other with delight at the mere thought of a visit to the wonderful city house of the great merchant in wealthy Amsterdam, the largest city in their country.

CHAPTER II

The American Cousin

Any one who saw the twins on their way to school one morning soon after the visit of Mynheer Van der Veer would know that something unusual had happened, for they were both talking away at once, in a most excited manner. Little Dutch children are usually very quiet, when compared to the children of most other countries, though they are full of fun, in a quiet sort of a way, when they want to be.

"Oh, Pieter," Wilhelmina was saying, "to think that we have a cousin coming to see us from across the seas!"

"I wonder if he can talk Dutch; if he can't we will have to speak English, so you had better see to it that you have a better English lesson than you did yesterday," said Pieter, who was rather vain of his own English.

There is nothing strange in hearing little Dutch children

speak English, French, or German, for they are taught all three languages in their schools; and even very little children can say some words of English or German.

"It is well for you to talk," said Wilhelmina, feeling hurt. "English is not hard for you to learn; as for me, I can learn my German lesson in half the time that you can."

"Ah well! the German is more like our own Dutch language," said Pieter, soothingly, for the twins were never "at outs" for long at a time. "You will soon learn English from our new cousin from America. Listen! There is the school-bell ringing now," and away they clattered in their wooden shoes to the schoolhouse.

Yesterday there had been a solemn meeting in the Joost home. You must know that it was an important occasion, because they all met in the "show-room." The "domine" (as the Dutch call their clergymen) had been invited, and the schoolmaster, too, and they all sat around and sipped brandied cherries and coffee, the men puffing away on their long pipes, while Mynheer Joost read aloud to them a letter. It was from a distant relative of the Joost family who lived in

New York City.

You know, of course, that the Dutch were among the first to settle in America, and in the present great city of New York. In those early days a great-great-grand-uncle of Mynheer Joost had gone to the island of Manhattan, and made his home, and now one of his descendants, a Mr. Sturteveldt, who was a merchant in New York City, was anxious to learn something about his family in Holland. He had heard of Mynheer Joost through a friend of his who was fond of flowers, and who had once come to Holland to buy some of Mynheer Joost's beautiful tulips.

So Mr. Sturteveldt had written Mynheer Joost many letters and Mynheer Joost had written him many letters. Finally Mr. Sturteveldt wrote and said he very much wished his only son Theodore to see Holland, and to become acquainted with his Dutch relatives. Upon this, Mynheer Joost had invited Theodore to come and spend some time with them, and this letter that he was now reading said that Theodore was to sail in a few days in one of the big steamers that sail between New York and Rotterdam, under the care

of the captain, and requested that Mynheer Joost would make arrangements to have him met at Rotterdam.

No wonder they all had to talk it over between many sips of coffee and puffs from the long pipes. It was a great event for the Joost family. As for Pieter and Wilhelmina, they could talk and think of nothing else, and Wilhelmina went about all the time murmuring to herself, "How do you do?" and "I am very pleased to see you," and "I hope you had a pleasant voyage," so as to be sure to say it correctly when her American cousin should arrive.

"How old is Cousin Theodore, mother?" asked Wilhelmina, as she was helping to give the "show-room" its weekly cleaning. "Just twelve, I believe," said her mother.

"And coming all by himself! I should be frightened nearly to death," said Wilhelmina, who was polishing the arm of a chair so hard that the little gold ornaments on her cap bobbed up and down.

Wilhelmina was short and chubby, and her short blue dress, gathered in as full around her waist as could be, made her look chubbier still. Over her tight, short-sleeved bodice

was crossed a gaily flowered silk handkerchief, and around her head, like a coronet, was a gold band from which hung on either side a gold ornament, which looked something like a small corkscrew curl of gold. On top of all this she wore a pretty little lace cap; and what was really funny, her earrings were hung in her cap instead of in her ears! To-day she had on a big cotton working-apron, instead of the fine silk one which she usually wore.

Wilhelmina and her mother were dressed just alike, only Mevrouw's dress was even more bunchy, for she had on about five heavy woollen skirts. This is a Dutch fashion, and one wonders how the women are able to move around so lively.

"Oh, mother, you are putting away another roll of linen!" and Wilhelmina even forgot the coming of her new cousin for the moment, so interested was she as she saw the mother open the great linen-press. This linen-press was the pride of Mevrouw Joost's heart, for piled high on its shelves were rolls and rolls of linen, much of it made from the flax which grew upon their place. Mevrouw Joost herself had spun the

thread on her spinning-wheel which stood in one corner of the room, and then it had been woven into cloth.

Some of these rolls of linen were more than a hundred years old, for they had been handed down like the china and silver. The linen of a Dutch household is reckoned a very valuable belonging indeed, and Wilhelmina watched her mother smooth the big rolls which were all neatly tied up with coloured ribbons, with a feeling of awe, for she knew that they were a part of their wealth, and that some day, when she had a house of her own, some of this old family linen would be given her, and then she, too, would have a big linen-press of which to be proud.

Just as Mevrouw Joost closed up the big "show-room" there came a cry from the road of "Eggs, eggs, who'll give us eggs?" "There come the children begging for Easter eggs," said Wilhelmina as she ran to the door.

At the gate were three little children waving long poles on which were fastened evergreen and flowers, and singing a queer Dutch song about Easter eggs.

"May I give them some, mother?"



"'How old is Cousin Theodore, Mother?'
asked Wilhelmina."

"Yes, one each, though I think their pockets are stuffed out with eggs, now," answered Mevrouw.

But if they already did have their pockets stuffed, the children were delighted to get the three that Wilhelmina brought out to them, and went on up the road, still singing, to see how many they could get at the next house.

The Dutch children amuse themselves for some days before Easter by begging for eggs in this way, which they take to their own homes and dye different colours and then exhibit to their friends. On Easter Day there is more fun, for they all gather in the meadows and roll the eggs on the grass, each trying to hit and break those of his neighbours.

At last the day came when Pieter and Wilhelmina were to see their new cousin for the first time. Their father had gone to Rotterdam to meet the steamship and bring Theodore back with him.

The twins hurried from school, and hurried through dinner, and in fact hurried with everything they did. Then they put on their holiday clothes and kept running up the road to see if their father and Theodore were coming,

although they knew that it would be hours before they would reach home. But of course, just when they were not looking for them, in walked the father and said: "Here is your Cousin Theodore, children; make him welcome." And there stood a tall lad, much taller than Pieter, though they were the same age, holding out his hand and talking English so fast that it made their heads swim.

Pieter managed to say "How do you do? I am glad you have come," but poor Wilhelmina - every word of her English flew out of her head, and all she could think to say was, "*Ik dank u, mijnheer*," – "Thank you, sir."

Then suddenly the children all grew as shy as could be, but after they had eaten of Mevrouw's good supper, they grew sociable and Theodore told them all about his voyage over, and Pieter found that he could understand him better than at first. Even Wilhelmina got in a few English words, and when Pieter and Theodore went to sleep together, in what Theodore called a "big box," anybody would have thought they had known each other all their lives.

The three young cousins were soon the best of friends;

and as for Theodore, everything was so new and strange to him that he said it was like a big surprise party all the time. He said, too, that he was going to be a real Dutchman while he was with them, and nothing would do but that he must have a suit of clothes just like Pieter's, and a tall cap. How they all laughed the first time he tried to walk in the big wooden shoes! But it wasn't long before he could run in them as fast as the twins.

CHAPTER III

The Land of Dikes and Windmills

Theodore wanted to learn to speak Dutch, and so every morning, after they had eaten their breakfast of coffee, rye bread, and butter, with either herrings or cheese, away he went with the twins across the meadows to the schoolhouse in the centre of the village.

After dinner Theodore and Pieter helped about in the tulip-gardens, while Wilhelmina and Mevrouw polished and dusted and rubbed things, and made butter in the great wooden and china churn.

On the weekly holiday the three children would take long walks, or perhaps a ride on the steam street-cars, or trams, which puffed through the village; or they would ride their bicycles, for this is a favourite pastime with the Dutch, whose flat straight roads are always so excellently kept.

"Where shall we go to-day?" asked Pieter, as they started out for a walk one afternoon.

"Theodore has not seen Haarlem yet," said Wilhelmina. "Let's walk there and come back on the steam-tram."

"That makes me feel as if I were at home. We have a Harlem, too, which is a part of New York City. I suppose it was named after your city. Let's go by all means, and I will take some pictures," said Theodore, slinging his camera over his shoulder, and away they went in high spirits.

The children were soon walking along a shady road by the side of the canal. As far as they could see, in any direction, stretched the bulb-gardens blazing with colour of all kinds. Dotted everywhere about were windmills of all sizes, their sails gleaming white in the sunlight as they went round and round.

On either side of the road were neat little villas, with trim gardens before them. As Pieter told them, these were the summer homes of the well-to-do people who live in the cities. Everybody who can, has one of these villas, where they can come during the hot weather, and they especially like to

have one near Haarlem, because the beautiful gardens roundabout make the country seem so gay and bright.

"This is the one which belongs to Mynheer Van der Veer," said Wilhelmina. "I think it is the most beautiful of them all." And so it was, according to Dutch taste. The young people stopped to look at it admiringly.

For a Dutch home it was very large, because it had two stories. The entire front was painted in half a dozen different colours to represent as many different coloured stones, all arranged in a fanciful pattern.

The window-blinds were a bright pea-green, and the framework a delicate pink. The door was a dark green with a fine brass knocker in the centre, and a brass railing, shining like gold, ran down on either side of the white steps. The roof was of bright red tiles, which glistened in the sun, and what do you think was on the highest point of the gable? A china cat, coloured like life, and standing with its back up, just as though it were ready to spring upon another cat! Over the doorway was painted the motto: "Buiten Zorg," which means "Without a Care."

What really amused the party most were the queer figures which stood around in the garden.

"See that funny old fellow over by the pond, shaking his head; you might think he was alive," said Theodore. "He looks like a Turk with a big turban."

"That," said Pieter, "is an automaton, which can be wound up so as to nod his head. And look, there is another figure near him, - a funny old woman, who keeps turning around, as if she got tired of seeing the gentleman with the turban. Those ducks swimming about on the pond are made to move in the same way."

The summer villa gardens are usually filled with these queer mechanical contrivances. I suppose it amuses the rich old burghers to watch them as they sit smoking their long pipes and taking their ease in their little summer-houses on the hot days. Mynheer Van der Veer was very proud of his collection and took great care of them. When a shower came up he would put an open umbrella over each one, which made them look funnier still, and when it rained very hard, he would pick them up bodily and carry them into the

house; then when the sun shone again, out would come the funny little figures too.

"Why is the little summer-house in the corner of the garden built over the canal?" asked Theodore.

"I really don't know," said Pieter; "they always are, and no villa is complete in its appointments without one. There is where Mynheer and Mevrouw sit in the afternoon and have their coffee and 'koejes.' Mynheer sits and smokes and dozes and Mevrouw does embroidery."

The flower-beds were all arranged in regular shapes; the walks were made of several kinds of coloured sands which were arranged to form regular patterns. The trees were not allowed to grow as they pleased. Dear me, no! They were trimmed in shapes and forms too, and some of the tree-trunks were even painted. But all was very clean and proper, and every leaf looked as though it was frequently dusted and washed.

"Well, I should not dare to move about in that garden for fear I should put something out of order," said Theodore. "It wouldn't do for American children to play in,

with those fine patterns in the sand and all the rest. They would certainly disappear in a short time."

"So they would here, as well," laughed Pieter. "But they are kept up only for show, and everybody uses a side-entrance except on grand occasions."

"Oh, there is a family of storks on that house!" called out Wilhelmina; "look, Pieter, aren't they lucky people who live there?"

Sure enough, on the top of the chimney was a mass of straw, and in the midst of it stood two tall storks. This was their nest, and Papa and Mamma Stork were waiting for the young Stork family to come out of their shells. Papa Stork stood on one leg and cocked his head down to the children as much as to say: "Don't you wish that we were living at your house?"; for storks must know as well as anybody how much they are thought of in Holland. The good people of that country build little platforms over their chimneys just so that a stork couple that are looking for a place to begin housekeeping will see it and say to themselves: "Here's a nice flat place on which to build our nest."

It is considered very lucky indeed for a stork family to come to live on one's chimney-top.

"We thought one was coming to live at our house last year," said Wilhelmina, "but they must have made up their minds to go elsewhere, and I was so sorry."

"And they build on churches, too," cried Theodore. "Look, there's a nest on the roof of that church. I had been thinking that it was a bundle of sticks, and wondering how it got up there."

"The storks have built there for many years, and they seem to like the highest places they can find," said Pieter. "There is a law to protect the storks, and to forbid any injury being done to them, so you see they can have a better time than most birds."

"Look, Pieter, there are big ships over there in the middle of that green meadow; how ever did they get there? Bless my stars!" said Theodore, "I do believe they are sailing over the grass."

"Oh, Theodore, you are so funny!" laughed Wilhelmina; "of course they are on the water; there is a canal over there

where you are looking."

"Well, I can't see it," persisted Theodore, who thought his eyes were playing him tricks.

"That's because our canals are higher than the land about them," said Pieter. "You must know that we are very economical with our dry land; there is nothing we prize so much, because we have so little of it; and there is no people in the world who have worked so hard for theirs as the Dutch, not only to get it in the first place, but to keep it afterward.

"Once all this country about here was either a marsh or covered by water. The land could not be allowed to go to waste like that, and so great walls of mud and stone, called dikes, were built. Canals were run here, there, and everywhere, and the waters which covered the lowlands were pumped into these canals and so drained off. The new land was practically a new area added to the small territory of Holland, and where once was nothing but salt marsh and water-flooded meadows are now cities and towns and houses and lovely gardens.

"As one walks along many of the canal banks in Holland, one is often overlooking the roof-tops of the houses below."

"Why," said Theodore, "if we tried, we might look right down that man's chimney, and see what they are cooking for dinner; the road is on a level with the roof."

"Yes, our roads, too, are often built on dikes; this keeps them hard and dry," said Pieter. "You may judge as to how wide some of these dikes are, for on this particular one there is not only a road, but a row of trees on either side of it as well. Some are so broad that there are houses, and even villages, on top of them. The reclaimed lands lying between the dikes are called 'polders,' and thousands of acres of the richest part of Holland have been made in this way. Some day, too, it is planned that the whole of the Zuyder Zee will be planted and built over with gardens and houses."

"That is just like finding a country," said Theodore, "but hasn't it all cost a lot of money?"

"Yes, indeed," answered Pieter, "and not only that, but millions of 'gulden' have still to be spent every year to fight the waters back again."

Pieter also told Theodore that many of the great windmills which he saw were used to pump off the surplus water which drained through from the canals. So many of these canals are there in Holland that the country is cut up by them like a checker-board. They are of all sizes, from a tiny ditch to others big enough for large ships to sail upon.

There are not only these inland dikes, which protect the canals and the lands lying between, but there are great sea-walls of sand and rock to keep the sea itself in place, otherwise it would come rushing over the lowlands and drown half the country. Even that is not the end of the matter. Thousands and thousands of men have to watch these dikes day and night, for one little leak might be the means of flooding miles of country, and washing away many homes and lives. When the cry is heard, "The dike is breaking!" every man, woman, and child must go and help do their share toward fighting back the water.

"Well, I am proud of my Dutch blood," said Theodore; "they are a splendid little people to work as they do, and they have had a hard fight to keep their heads above water. I

wonder if that saying didn't first come from a Dutchman!"

"Perhaps that is the reason that we Dutch people talk so little," said Pieter; "we have to think and work so hard all the time to keep what we have."

"Well," said Theodore, "Holland is a wonderful country; it is wholly unlike any other place."

"Tell the story, Pieter," said Wilhelmina, "of the time when the people cut the dikes and let in the water to save themselves from the enemy."

"That's a long story, and we must save it for another time," said Pieter, "until after Theodore has seen Leyden, for it was there that it happened."

This talk on Dutch history came to a sudden stop as Pieter called out: "Look out, Theodore, or you will get drenched," and the children had only time to dodge a big bucket of water that a fat Vrouw was tossing up on her windows. "You have not yet learned, Theodore, that a Dutch woman will not stop her washing and cleaning for any one," laughed Pieter, as they left the angry Vrouw shaking her mop at them.

"I have seen Vrouw Huytens, our neighbour," said Pieter, "scrubbing her house-front in a heavy rain, holding an umbrella over herself at the same time."

I suppose the idea of cleanliness comes from the fact that the Dutch have so much water handy; they say that when a Dutch Vrouw cannot find anything else to do, she says, "Let's wash something."

It was Saturday, the great cleaning day, and the housewives were washing down the doors and blinds and the sides of the houses with big mops, until everything shone brilliantly in the sunlight; the white door-steps, and even the tree-trunks and the red brick walks were not forgotten. They would dip up the water from the canals and dash it over the pavements with a reckless disregard for passers-by.

As the children entered the town matters grew worse. Everywhere were happy Dutch folk of all ages, swashing clean water about over everything, until Theodore finally said: "The next time I come out on cleaning-up day I shall wear a waterproof. I wonder the Dutch people don't grow web-footed, like ducks.

"You don't know how strange it looks to me to see carts drawn by dogs," he continued. "I'm going to snap-shot one of them with my camera."

All along the road rattled the little carts drawn by dogs, for dogs are used a great deal in both Holland and Belgium in place of horses.

"Don't you have them in America?" asked Wilhelmina, in curious wonderment.

"No, indeed," said Theodore. "How people would stare to see the baker deliver his bread in one of our cites or towns from a little cart drawn by dogs."

"Most of the vegetables from the farms roundabout are brought into town in this way," said Pieter.

"And there is a man and a dog pulling side by side; what would they say to that at home, I wonder," said Theodore.

"Yes, some of our poor 'boers,' or farmers, have only one dog, and he must be helped. But there is a vegetable-cart with three fine dogs harnessed to it.

"Often there are four or five dogs to a cart," said Pieter, "and they can draw big loads, too, I can tell you; and they

are as intelligent as human beings.

"You see that big black dog knows that the brown one is not doing his share of the work, so he keeps his eye on him and gives him a sharp bite every once and again to keep him up to the mark."

"Is that a milk-cart?" asked Theodore, as he sighted a sort of a chariot with three great polished brass cans in it, all shining, like everything else that is Dutch. "See, while the master is serving his customer, the dog just lies down in his harness and rests; that is where he is better off than a pony would be under the same circumstances. Think of a pony lying down every time he stopped."

At this speech of Theodore's, Wilhelmina was much amused.

"A pony could not shield himself from the sun by crawling under the cart, either," said Pieter. "See, there is one who has crawled under his cart while he is waiting, and is taking a comfortable nap. You may be sure, however, if any stranger attempted to take anything from his cart, he would become very wide awake, and that person would be

very sorry for it, for the dogs guard their master's property faithfully."

By this time our party was well into town. They saw the "Groote Markt," or big market-place, and the Groote Kerk. Every Dutch town has a great market-place, and generally the Groote Kerk, or big church, stands in it, as well as the town hall. It is here, too, that the principal business of the town is transacted.

The children walked along the canals, which are the main streets in Dutch towns and cities, and Theodore never grew tired of looking at the queer houses, always with their gable ends to the street.

"What on earth does that mean?" said Theodore, stopping to read a sign on the cellar-door of a small house, - "Water and Fire to Sell."

"Oh," said Pieter, "that is where the poor people can go and buy for a tiny sum some boiling water and a piece of red-hot peat, with which to cook their dinner. It is really cheaper for them than to keep a fire all the day in their own houses. Peat is generally sold for this purpose instead of coal



“I’m going to snap-shot one of them with my camera.”

or wood, for it is not so costly."

By this time the young cousins were quite ready to take the steam-tram home, and were hungry enough for the good supper which they knew Mevrouw Joost had prepared for them.

CHAPTER IV

The Kermis

"Isn't it nice that Theodore has come in time for the Kermis?" said Wilhelmina, as the cousins were packing the flowers into the big baskets for the market, early one morning.

"What is a Kermis?" asked Theodore, all curiosity at once.

"It is a great fair, and generally lasts a week," said Pieter.

These fairs are held in many of the Dutch towns and cities. Booths are put up in the Groote Markt and on the streets, where the sale of all kinds of things is carried on. There are games and merrymakings, and dances, and singing, and fancy costumes, and much more to make them novel to even the Dutch themselves.

"There is to be a Kermis at Rotterdam shortly," said

Pieter, "and the father has promised to take us all."

For a time the children talked about nothing but the Kermis, until at last the great day came, and they all found themselves on the train which was taking them to Rotterdam.

As they drew near the city it was easy to see that everybody was going to the Kermis, and was thinking of nothing else. The roads were crowded with all kinds of queer vehicles and gay costumes. There were the big country wagons, of strange shapes, and painted in bright colours. In them were piled the whole family,—grandparents, mother, father, aunts, uncles, and cousins. There were the dogs, too, drawing their little carts, and trying to keep up with the big wagons, panting bravely along with their tongues hanging out, as much as to say, "We are not going to let the horses get there first, just because we are little."

There were men and women on bicycles, - the women with their caps and streamers flapping in the wind like white wings, and their half-dozen skirts filling out like a balloon, as they pedalled rapidly along.

It was just twelve o'clock as our party left the station, and the bells were ringing gaily, which was the signal for the opening of the Kermis.

"My, but isn't this a jam!" gasped Theodore, who found himself wedged in between the market-baskets of two fat Vrouws.

"It is, indeed," said Mynheer Joost, "and we must not lose sight of one another. Now, Wilhelmina, you keep between Theodore and Pieter, while the mother and I will go ahead to open the way."

There was no use trying to hurry, - Dutch folk do not hurry, even to a Kermis, - so our party just let themselves be pushed slowly along until they reached the Groote Markt.

Here things were really getting lively. All around the great square were booths or stalls, where one could buy almost anything they were likely to want. Flags were flying everywhere, and from booth to booth were stretched garlands of flowers and streamers of ribbons. In the centre of the market-square a band of music was playing, and couples were trying to dance in spite of the rough

cobblestone pavement and the jostling of the crowd which was watching them.

"You can see now, Theodore, just how your Dutch cousins really look, for there are folk here from all over the country, and all in their best holiday dress," said Mynheer Joost. "That group of little girls, with those high sleeves that come nearly to the tops of their heads, and with extra large skirts, are from Zealand."

"I see a woman with two or three caps on her head, and a big, black straw hat on top of them," said Theodore.

"She is from Hindeloopen; and there, too, are a number of fisherwomen, wearing huge straw hats, which look like big baskets."

There were other women wearing beautiful flowered silk shawls, and the sun glistened on the gold ornaments which dangled from their white caps as their owners danced up and down between the long lines of booths, holding each other's hands.

People were already crowding around the booths, buying their favourite dainties to eat, which at once reminded the

young people that they, too, were hungry.

"What will you have, Theodore, 'poffertjes' or 'oliebollen'?" asked Pieter.

"Oh, what names!" laughed Theodore. "How can I tell? Show them to me first."

"Of course Theodore must eat the 'poffertjes,' for that is the real Kermis cake," said Mynheer Joost, and led the way to a booth where a woman with a big, flapping cap and short sleeves was standing, dipping ladlefuls of batter from a big wooden bowl, and dropping them into hollowed-out places in a big pan, which was placed on an open fire before her.

As soon as they were cooked, another woman piled them nicely up, one on top of another, with butter and sugar between, and, with a smile, set a big plateful before the children, who made them disappear in short order.

"Why, they are buckwheat cakes, just like ours at home!" said Theodore, in the midst of his first mouthful; "and they are fine, too. Now let us try the other thing with the funny name," he continued.

"There they are, in that box," said Pieter, as he pointed

to some fritters, made in the shape of little round balls.

"Oh, 'oliebollen' aren't half so nice as waffles; let us have them instead," said Wilhelmina.

"I think I agree with Wilhelmina," said Theodore; "the 'oliebollen' seem to be taking a bath in oil," he continued, shaking his head doubtfully.

"Oh, try one, anyhow," said Pieter. "You must not miss any of the Kermis cakes."

"Well, they taste better than they look," said Theodore, as he swallowed one of the greasy little balls.

"How would you like a raw herring, now, to give you an appetite for your dinner?" asked Pieter, as they passed the fish-stalls, which were decorated with festoons of fish that looked, at a little distance, like strings of white flags waving in the breeze.

"Not for me, thank you," answered his cousin, "but just look at all those people eating them as if they enjoyed them; and dried fish and smoked fish, too, and all without any bread."

After the waffles had been found and eaten, the young

people became much interested in watching a group of men trying to break a cake. The cake was placed over a hollowed-out place in a large log of wood, and whoever could break the cake in halves with a blow of his stick won the cake, or what was left of it. The thing sounds easy, but it proved more difficult than would have seemed possible.

"Let us eat an 'ellekoek' together, Pieter; there they are," and Wilhelmina pointed to what looked like yards and yards of ribbon hanging from one of the booths. The children forthwith bought a length, which was measured off for them just as if it really were ribbon, and Wilhelmina put one end in her mouth and Pieter the other end in his. The idea is to eat this ribbon cake without touching it with the hands or without its breaking. This Wilhelmina and Pieter managed to do in spite of much laughter, and gave each other a hearty kiss when they got to the middle of it.

"Well," said Theodore, "I should think that a Kermis was for the purpose of eating cakes."

The market-place became gayer and gayer. A crowd of people would lock arms and form a long line, and then go

skipping and dancing along between the booths, singing and trying to capture other merrymakers in order to make them join their band.

"Look out, Theodore, or this line will catch you," laughed Pieter, who jumped out of the way, pulling Wilhelmina after him.

The first thing Theodore knew, a gay crowd had circled around him and made him a prisoner, calling out to him to come and keep Kermis with them. But Theodore was not to be captured so easily; he had not become proficient in gymnastics for nothing, so he simply ran up to a short little fellow, and putting his hands on his shoulders, vaulted clean over him, to the amazement of the crowd and the delight of the twins.

The fun lasted long into the night, but Mynheer Joost took his little party to their hotel early in the evening, for the fun was growing somewhat boisterous; besides, they had a long day ahead of them for the morrow.

Mevrouw and Jan were going back by the train, but Mynheer and the children had brought their bicycles with



At the Kermis

them, and were going to cycle back a part of the way. The children were looking forward to this with as much pleasure as they had to any feature of the Kermis. And so they went to bed and dreamed of cakes, miles long, that wiggled about like long snakes.

CHAPTER V

The Bicycle Ride

"Be up bright and early," Mynheer Joost had said the night before, and it was a little after seven when the young people finished breakfast. A Dutch breakfast is a big thing; besides nice coffee, there was rye bread and white bread, rolls and rusks, half a dozen kinds of cheeses, as well as many kinds of cold sausages cut into thin slices.

After seeing Mevrouw and Jan off on the train, the children mounted their wheels, and, in company with Mynheer, went bumping over the big round cobblestones with which Rotterdam is paved.

"Our city streets are not as good as our country roads, but we will soon be out in the open country," said Mynheer, as they turned into the "Boompjes."

"Do you remember, Theodore," he continued, "your

steamer landed you just at that dock opposite."

The "Boompjes" is a great quay alongside of which are to be seen all manner of steamships, from those which trade with the ports of Great Britain and Germany, to the little craft which ply up and down the rivers and canals of Holland, and the long barges and canal-boats with their brown sails.

Our bicycle party crossed many bridges over little and big canals. By the side of many of these canals the great tall houses seemed to grow right up out of the water, queer old houses with gables all twists and curves. At last they passed through the "Delftsche Poort," one of the old gateways of Rotterdam, and then out on to the smooth country road, still running by the side of the canal.

"Ah, this is better," said Pieter, as he gave a sigh of relief.

"No wonder cycling is popular in Holland; you have such fine, flat roads," said Theodore. "Just look at this one all paved with tiny bricks; why, it's like riding on a table-top."

"They are called 'klinkers,' and many of our roads are paved this way; but do you see that town just to the left,

Theodore?" said Mynheer Joost, as he pointed to a jumble of houses, windmills, and masts of ships not far away. "That is Delfshaven; you know what happened there once long ago, do you not?"

"Oh, it was from there that the Pilgrim Fathers sailed for America," cried Theodore.

"But I thought they sailed from Plymouth, England," said Pieter.

"They did put into Plymouth, on account of a storm, but their first start was from Delfshaven. Can't we go and see the place where they went on board ship, Cousin Joost?" said Theodore, who nearly tumbled off his wheel in his effort to see the town.

"I am afraid the spot could not be found now," smiled Mynheer. "Delfshaven has grown to be a big town since then; but you can see the church where they worshipped before they set sail."

So they turned on to the road into the town. The old church seemed plain and bare to Theodore, as he stood in it and looked at its simple white walls, and it was hard for

him to realize that the history of New England began here.

"I must write Henry all about Delfshaven; he'd give a lot to be in my shoes, now," said Theodore, as they rode away again.

"Who is Henry?" asked Wilhelmina.

"He is a chum of mine and lives in Boston. You see his people came over with the Pilgrims, just as mine came over later from Holland, and he is always talking a lot about the *Mayflower* and all that.

"But just see that woman pulling that big boat, and the two children helping her - think of it!" and Theodore forgot all about the Pilgrims in the strange sight before him.

"Those are barge-people; let us stop and rest awhile, and you can see them better," said Mynheer, who set the example by jumping off his wheel.

It did look like hard work, too, as the woman came slowly along, panting and straining at one end of a long rope. There was a loop in the rope which passed over her chest, and the other end was made fast to the prow of the barge, or "tjalk." Behind her were a little girl and a boy, not more

than ten or twelve years old, each of them, like the mother, tugging away at the heavy load.

"Think of those little children helping to move that great heavy boat! I don't see how they do it," said Wilhelmina.

"It must be hard work, but they don't seem to mind it," said her father.

It looked as if the children did not, for they were plump and round, and as they passed, they smiled shyly and said "Good morning," and kept looking back with grins of amusement.

"The father is the one who has the easy time," said Pieter; "see, he sits comfortably beside the big tiller, to which he only gives a slight turn once and again, for the canals are so straight that the 'tjalk' does not require much steering. He is quite content to let the Vrouw and the little ones tow the 'tjalk' while he smokes and dozes on deck."

"Well, it grows 'curiouser and curiouser,' as Alice in Wonderland said. Your roads are of water, and your wagons are boats, and your people do the work of horses. Why don't they use horses?" demanded Theodore.



On the Road to Delfshaven

"Well the 'tjalks' really depend upon the wind to carry them along," said Mynheer. "You see this one has a big sail, and it is only when there is no wind that they have to tow the boats. Once they used dogs for the towing, but now the people who live on board do the work, and if it is slow, why, nobody seems to mind."

The barge was painted red and blue, and in the great rounded bow there were two round openings through which the anchor-chains passed, and which looked like big staring eyes, particularly at night, when a ray of light often shot through them.

"Of course some one is washing things, as usual," said Theodore; "even the barges don't escape a continual 'spring cleaning.' And sure enough, there was another woman splashing pailfuls of water over everything, even over the drowsy Mynheer at the tiller. He was probably used to this, however, for he didn't take the slightest notice.

"Yes, indeed, the 'tjalk' owners take a great pride in the spick and span appearance of their boats," said Mynheer Joost. "You must remember that the 'tjalk' is their home.

They are born on it, and often live and die there, as did their fathers and grandfathers before them, for many of these boats are very old. The little cabin on the poop is all the house they ever have, and they are just as proud of it as if it were a fine villa like that of Mynheer Van der Veer.

"You see," he continued, "they have their little garden, too. There are tulips planted in a box before the door, and a tiny path outlined with shells."

"And a little garden-gate, too," cried Wilhelmina; "isn't it funny?"

"Yes," said her father, "they like to think that they have everything that goes with a house on land."

"There is a cage of birds, also," said Wilhelmina again, "and a little china dog sitting by the side of the tulip-bed, who seems to be watching them."

"I suppose if there were room enough in the garden there would be a summer-house, too," said Pieter.

There is no doubt but what the "bargees" enjoy their lives, and nothing would make them so unhappy as to have to live on dry land. There are thousands and thousands of

these "tjalks" in Holland, and most of the merchandise of all kinds which is transported about the country is carried by them.

"Time to be on the road," said Mynheer to his young party; and before long they were all riding into the old town of Delft.

"Listen to those bells," cried Theodore, "they are playing one of our popular American marches. Where are they?"

"Those are the chimes you hear ringing in the belfry," said Pieter. "They must be playing the march in your honour, Theodore."

Each town in Holland has its chime of bells, usually hung in the tower of the principal church. The chimes are played by means of a wonderful mechanical keyboard, and the Dutch are very fond of hearing them ring out the popular tunes of the day.

"It was in this place that long ago the famous blue and white Delftware was made, like that the mother has at home," said Mynheer. "There is Delftware made now, but it is not prized like the old kind.

"But we must not linger, children, if we are to reach The Hague for dinner," and he marshalled the young people again upon the road.

Soon they were skimming over the smooth, flat roadway, and came almost at once on to fine boulevards lined with handsome houses, so they knew they were at The Hague itself.

The twins were as interested as their American cousin in the sights of their capital city, and Wilhelmina wanted to know at once if there would be a chance of their seeing the queen. You see she was named after Queen Wilhelmina, so she felt as if she had a right to see her, even more than other little Dutch girls, though indeed they are all fond of their young ruler, who not so very long ago was a young girl like Wilhelmina herself.

Wilhelmina had among her treasures at home a picture of Queen Wilhelmina, taken when she was a little girl, and dressed in the pretty Frisian costume, one of the prettiest of the national costumes of Holland.

"I can't say," smiled her father, in answer to

Wilhelmina's question, "but we can go out to the 'Huis ten Bosch,' and maybe we shall be fortunate enough to meet her out driving in the park."

After our friends had done justice to a good dinner at one of the famous hotels of The Hague, they left their bicycles at the hotel, and took the steam-tram to the "Huis ten Bosch," which is Dutch for "House in the Wood." It is one of the royal palaces of Holland and is situated in the midst of a beautiful wood. The forests of Holland are very much prized because there are so few of them, and so this "House in the Wood" is one of the favourite royal residences.

Though Wilhelmina did not see her queen, she saw the next best thing, for they went through the state apartments of the palace, and saw the beautiful Chinese Room and the Japanese Room, each of them entirely filled with beautiful things from the Orient.

"Now shall we go to Scheveningen, or are you too tired?" asked Mynheer.

"Tired!" The children laughed at the idea. They were out

for a holiday, and were going to see as much as possible; and away they went again on another steam-tram to a fishing-town a few miles from The Hague, called Scheveningen, which is a big mouthful of a word, isn't it? This is where the fisherfolk live who go out in their stubby boats, called "pinken," to fish in the North Sea.

"I don't see the ocean," said Pieter, looking about him as they walked through the town, with its rows and rows of neat little houses of brick where the fishermen live.

"Climb up to the top of those sand-dunes and you will," said his father. "These dunes or banks of sand have been blown up by the wind and sea until they form a high wall or breakwater. There are many such all along the coast of Holland, and to keep the wind from blowing the loose sand back inland, over the fields and gardens, these banks of sand, or dunes, are planted over in many places with grasses and shrubs, which bind the sand together and keep it in place."

"There is a fish auction going on over there: let's go down and see it," called out Pieter.

A boat-load of fish had just been landed on the beach, and a crowd of fishermen and women were standing around it. The women had big basket-shaped hats over their white caps, and the men wore baggy trousers and tall caps.

The fish were being auctioned off in the Dutch fashion, which is just the reverse of the usual auctioneering methods. A market price is put upon the fish, and the purchaser bidding the nearest thereto takes them.

"What are those things on the sands over there that look like big mushrooms, Cousin Joost?" asked Theodore, pointing to a spot half a mile or so farther on.

"They do look something like mushrooms, Theodore," said his uncle, "and they come and go about as quickly. They are the straw chairs and shelters in which visitors sit when they are taking the fresh air on the sands."

These chairs are closed in on all sides but one, and have a sort of roof over them, so as to protect the occupant from the wind and rain. Scheveningen, besides being one of the largest fishing-towns in Holland, is the great seaside resort of the Dutch people. Here the well-to-do burghers and

merchants come with their Vrouws and sit in the big basket-chairs, while the children dig miniature canals and build toy dikes in the sand, modelled after those which surround their homes.

When our tourists got back to The Hague they walked around and looked at the fine houses of the city. They saw, too, the storks in the market-place, around which were many fisherwomen with their wares spread out for sale. The storks are well fed, and are kept here at the expense of the city, for good luck, perhaps.

The children thought they had cycled quite enough for one day, so they put their wheels and themselves in the train for Leyden, and were soon tooting into one of the oldest cities of Holland.

"Are we there already?" asked Theodore, amazed at the shortness of the journey.

"Yes, everything is close together in our little Holland," said Mynheer.

The Dutch are very proud of Leyden for many reasons, but especially for the brave defence the city made against the

Spaniards at the time when the sturdy Dutch were fighting to free themselves from the rule of Spain. The city was besieged for nearly a year, but the plucky burghers never gave in. The city was finally saved by cutting the dikes, and letting in the waters, so that the Dutch fleet could sail right up to the city walls and thus drive off the enemy. It is said that to reward the people of Leyden for their bravery and courage, the government afterward offered to either free them forever from all taxes, or to give them a university. They wisely chose the latter, and this same University of Leyden has always ranked among the great institutions of learning throughout the world, and many great men have studied within its walls.

"Your friend Henry would like to see Leyden, also," said Mynheer. "It was here that the Pilgrim Fathers lived for many years before they finally set sail for the New World. The city gave them a safe shelter, when they were persecuted and driven from other lands, and for this reason alone Leyden should always be remembered by our American cousins."

"Don't you feel as if you had been up two whole days?"

asked Theodore of Pieter, as he gave a big yawn; but Pieter and Wilhelmina were already fast asleep as the train whirled them on toward Haarlem.

None of the children talked much either while they ate the hot supper Mevrouw Joost had ready for them, and soon they were tucked away in their beds. But the next day you should have heard the three tongues wag, and Mevrouw and Baby Jan had to hear all the adventures over again many times.

CHAPTER VI

Where the Cheeses Come From

"What a jumble of ships and houses! I shouldn't think you would know whether you were going into a house or aboard ship, when you open the front door," said Theodore, one fine summer's day, when the cousins were strolling about Amsterdam, on their way to pay the promised visit to Mynheer Van der Veer.

Others besides Theodore might think the same thing, for Amsterdam really grew up out of the water. The houses are, for the most part, built on wooden piles; and there are as many canals as there are streets, and big ships move about between the buildings in the most wonderful manner.

They found Mynheer Van der Veer smoking his meerschaum pipe at his warehouse on one of the principal canals. He was glad indeed to see his little friends of the

tulip-garden, as he called them, and showed them all around the big establishment. They saw the big ships that were anchored right at his door, and the bales and boxes being loaded into their holds from the very windows of the warehouse itself. He showed them the coffees and sugars and spices which other ships had brought from the Dutch East Indies, which as you all know are around on the other side of the world. Holland owns some of the richest islands in the world, many of them larger than Holland itself. One of these islands is Java, where the fine Java coffee comes from, and this is one of the reasons why the Dutch always have such good coffee, and drink so much of it.

Mynheer gave them all nice spices to taste, and was amused at the faces they made at some hot peppery things they were eager to try.

After this he took them to his fine, tall house that faced on another canal, where there were long rows of other tall houses, all built of tiny bricks and as neat as pins. All of them were as much alike, in their outside appearance at least, as a row of pins, too. Here the children met the portly

Mevrouw Van der Veer in her rustling silk dress, who gave them a warm welcome.

She had just come in from a walk, and on the top of her beautiful lace cap with its gold ornaments she wore a very fashionable modern hat.

"Oh," thought Wilhelmina, "why does she spoil her fine cap like that?" But you see many Dutch ladies who combine the old and the new styles in just that way.

They all sat in Mevrouw's fine parlour, with its shining waxed floor, which was filled with beautiful things from all parts of the world. There was furniture of teak-wood from India, wonderfully carved, and rare china and porcelain from China and Japan. Exquisite silk curtains hung at the windows, and embroidered screens cut off any possible draughts.

These rare things had been brought from time to time in Mynheer's ships, as they were homeward bound from these far-off countries.

Mevrouw sat before a little table laden with silver and fine china, and poured coffee for them from a big silver

coffee-pot, and gave them many kinds of nice Dutch cakes to eat; and when she said good-bye she promised Mynheer Joost that she would come some day and see his tulip-garden herself.

"Why was that small looking-glass fastened outside of one of the upper windows?" asked Theodore, as they left Mynheer Van der Veer's house.

"Many of these Dutch houses have these little mirrors fastened before the windows at such an angle that by merely looking in it from the inside, one may see who is at the front door," said his cousin; "and then, too, the ladies can sit by the window, sewing or reading, and can amuse themselves by watching what is going on in the street below, without troubling to look out of the window."

"I should hate to have to wear a dress like that," said Wilhelmina, looking at two young girls who were passing by. It did look strange, for one half of their dress was red and the other half black.

"They are the girls from the orphanage, and this is the uniform that they all must wear," said Mynheer Joost.

"Now Theodore must see some of the pictures of our great painters," he continued, as he led the young folks toward the splendid picture-gallery, where they strolled through what seemed to them miles of rooms and corridors, all hung with beautiful and valuable pictures, for little Holland has had some of the greatest artists the world has ever known, and some day, if you care about pictures, - and you certainly should, - you will want to go there and see them for yourself.

After this they did a great deal more sight-seeing, and Mynheer showed them the "Exchange," where the business of the city is carried on, and told them that there was one week in the year when the boys of Amsterdam were allowed to use the "Exchange" for a playground.

This was a reward for the good deed of some brave boys of long ago, when the Spaniards were plotting to capture the city. The boys, it seems, first discovered the secret, and went and informed the authorities, who were thus able to defend their city from attack.

"This," said Mynheer, "was the case when I was young,

and I suppose the boys are still allowed the same privilege."

Our little folk were glad enough to take their seats on the deck of the little steamboat which was to take them to Alkmaar, the centre of the cheese-trade of North Holland.

"Whew! but we have done a lot of tramping about to-day; oh, my poor feet!" said Pieter, as he stretched himself out on a bench.

"Father, haven't you got something for us to eat in your pocket?" asked Wilhelmina, coaxingly.

Mynheer smiled, and from away down in the depths of his pocket, he drew forth a big loaf of gingerbread. The children munched away at this favourite Dutch delicacy, and amused themselves by watching the people who were making the journey with them.

There were two fat old women, sitting side by side and knitting away as if for their lives. They nodded their heads every time they spoke, which made their long gold corkscrew ornaments in their caps bob up and down, and each had her feet on a little foot-stove as if it were midwinter. There were two little girls with their father, who looked like little dolls,

in short red dresses, with dark green waists and short sleeves, and pretty aprons embroidered in many coloured silks, and many gold chains, and earrings reaching nearly down to their shoulders. They had a solid gold head-piece under their caps. The man had on velvet knickerbockers, nearly as broad as they were long, and two great silver rosettes fastened in his belt. There were big silver buttons on his jacket, and his cap must have been over a foot high.

The little girls were very shy, but when Wilhelmina offered them some of her gingerbread they soon made friends, and the three were soon chatting away like old acquaintances.

"Aren't they gorgeous?" whispered Pieter. "They are from the little island of Marken, near here, in the Zuyder Zee, and have on all their holiday clothes."

The island of Marken is like a big bowl, Mynheer told them, for all of it but the rim is lower than the waters which surround it. The rim is a high stone wall which was built to keep the water out. Everybody who lives there keeps a boat tied to their gate or door in order that they may have some

means of escape if the wall should ever break.

"Just think of it! I should never sleep nights, if I lived there, for fear of waking up and finding myself floating about in the water. I should think the Dutch would be the most nervous people in the world, instead of the most placid," said Theodore.

"That danger does not often happen," said Mynheer. "But look how beautifully carved their shoes are. The men do it themselves during the long winter evenings, and take great pride in their work."

The little steamer puffed along the North Sea Canal, by which the big ships come right up to Amsterdam. All kinds of queer tublike boats, with big brown sails, tanned to preserve them from the damp, passed them, and soon they turned into the river Zaan.

"There is Zaandam," said Mynheer; "they say that most of the people who live there are millionaires. It is a wealthy little town."

"You would not think so from the looks of the houses," remarked Pieter; "they seem mostly to be small brick

cottages of one story, with a tiny yard in front."

As the steamer glides along, between green meadows as flat as one's hand, they could see on all sides innumerable windmills. The boys tried to count them, but soon gave up the task. It is said that there are over six hundred of them in this one short stretch of country.

"Why are some of the windmills built on top of the houses?" asked Theodore.

"For the reason that they are made to turn the machinery which is situated in the buildings below," said Mynheer; "not all the windmills are used for pumping water, by any means."

They were now in the midst of the cheese country, one of the richest sections of Holland. There were everywhere to be seen trim little villas and neat farmhouses, while the meadows were full of the curiously marked black and white cows called "Holsteins." These are the favourite cows throughout Holland for furnishing the milk for the famous butter and cheeses of the country.

They were at Alkmaar before they knew it. The two old

women, who had never stopped knitting for a moment, picked up their little foot-stoves and waddled off; Wilhelmina bade her little Marken friends good-bye; and Mynheer's party hurried off to a little inn on the market-place, for the sun was setting and the children said they were nearly starved, in spite of the gingerbread which they had eaten.

Outside the inn was a row of fat, sleepy-looking old men sitting on a long bench, watching a game of "skittles" which was going on in the square, for both "grown-ups" and children usually play their games in the village square. Each had his long pipe and a glass of "schnapps" just under his part of the bench, and when he wanted a drink all he had to do was to reach down and get it. Not one of them said a word; they just sat there and looked, and smoked and drank.

In a cosy room, with a floor of red bricks, neatly covered with sand, a rosy-cheeked girl soon set out a real Dutch supper for our hungry little travellers.

There was cold sausage, potato salad, fresh herrings, and a strange dish made of buttermilk and buckwheat-flour, all

boiled together and flavoured with green herbs. The Joost family thought it delicious, but Theodore said that it would take him some time to get used to it, and preferred the big loaves of rye-bread filled with raisins. As for cheeses, there was no end to the different kinds - and all of them excellent; while to wind up with, there was a delicious hot gingerbread and good coffee. Did it keep them awake? No, indeed, they dropped off to sleep in a moment, inside their big cupboard-beds, that had doors to them, instead of curtains, which made them look more like boxes than ever.

"Just come and look out the window, Theodore," said Pieter early the next morning. He was at the window and Theodore was out of bed in a moment and beside him.

"Why the whole square is filled with cheeses," he cried. So it was, for this was market-day, when the farmers - "boeren," they are called - from all the country roundabout bring in their cheeses to sell them in the market-place.

The boys scrambled into their clothes, and in a few minutes were walking among the great piles of cheeses. There were all kinds and shapes and sizes -- cheeses that

looked like great red balls, yellow cheeses, white cheeses, green cheeses, flat, round, square and all sizes.

"I didn't suppose there were as many cheeses in the world," said Theodore, looking around him. "And the wagons, too, aren't they fine; they look as gay as circus wagons."

And so they did, for they were painted every colour under the sun; some of them even had flowers painted upon them; and they were all shapes, too; some were curved like shells, and others looked not unlike a boat on wheels.

"Let us see what is going on over there, where there is such a crowd of people," said Pieter, as he led the way to the other side of the square.

Here was the Weighing-House, where the cheeses were being weighed on funny old-fashioned scales, which looked as though they had been in use hundreds of years. The buyers, too, were testing the cheeses. They would taste a cheese and cut a small plug out of it to see if it were of good quality, and then they would put the plug back in place again, when the cheese, to all appearances, looked as it did

before.

The bargaining over the cheeses took a long time, for the farmers are very careful to make a good deal for themselves, and they will not be hurried; and generally, when they are on their way home again, they look very well satisfied with themselves, and as contented as the portly Vrouw sitting beside them, or the "kinder," as they call the children, playing about in the bottom of the wagon.

"I don't suppose you boys have given up eating breakfast," a voice behind them said, and turning they saw Mynheer Joost.

"Wilhelmina and I have already had ours, so hurry up with yours, and then come down to the canal; we are going to see the cheeses loaded on to the boats."

Along the canal were drawn up the boats, with their brown sails, and steamers and barges and all kinds of craft. When the boys appeared again, they all stopped to watch a pile of round, red cheeses which were piled up like shot, ready to be loaded.

A man picked one up in either hand and tossed them to

another man, who was standing beside the ship's hatch; and he, in turn, tossed them to another who was down in the hold and who was stacking them up in neat rows.

"I'd like to play that kind of ball; it looks as easy as can be," said Pieter.

"It's not as easy as you think," said his father; "just pick up one of these cheeses, and try its weight."

Pieter tried and so did Theodore; but they thought better of it as a game, and the cheese man himself laughed at their unsuccessful efforts to grasp a cheese in one hand.

"Just look at our hands," exclaimed Theodore, after they had finished handling the cheeses; "they are quite red."

"That is the red colouring matter which is put on the outside to preserve them," said Mynheer.

"Now we will take a walk around the town, and then make our way back to Amsterdam," said Mynheer Joost; "and we will stop by the way at Edam, and you can see the little town which gives the name to these red cheeses."

During the dinner at Edam, a happy idea struck Mynheer Joost. "Children," he said, "how would you like to have a

ride in a 'trekschuit,' or passenger barge? There is one leaving here for Volendam in half an hour, the landlord of the inn tells me, and if you are ready, we will go out and hunt it up."

"Oh, that will be great fun," cried the twins in one breath.

There are few of these old-time conveyances left in Holland, and it was as much a novelty for them as for Theodore.

You will see from the picture what an odd sort of a passenger craft the "trekschuit" really is. There is one man pulling it, while another walks behind and steers it by the big tiller, which he handles from the shore in the same manner that he would if he were on board.

The children stood in the bows among the big brass milk-cans and butter baskets of the market-women, and said they knew just how comfortable the fat Dutchmen feel, as they sit on their "tjalks," and let their women and children draw them about.

The next day found our little friends home again,

planning other good times.

Soon the time came, however, when Theodore must leave his Dutch cousins and go back to America. The twins were nearly broken-hearted at the very idea of it; for they had become as fond of Theodore as if he were a brother. Wilhelmina wept, and said she didn't see why Theodore could not stay for St. Nicholas; and Pieter himself had to wink hard to keep back the tears.

But Theodore consoled them by telling them that he would come again and spend a winter with them, so as to see a real Dutch Christmas, which, strange to say, is celebrated on the feast of good St. Nicholas, which comes on the sixth of December. Then they would have skating and all kinds of winter sports together, which, to tell the truth, are the favourite amusements of our little Dutch cousins.

THE END.



“The children stood in the bows.”

Our Little Belgian Cousin

Blanche McManus



"'Good morning,' he called out smilingly."

Preface

Our little Belgian cousins are, of all our European cousins, perhaps the most difficult for strangers to become acquainted with. As a race they resemble, in parts of their tiny country, as much the French as they do in other parts the Hollanders. In no way are they an unsympathetic people, but they have been so surrounded on all sides by other nations that they have, in a way, many of the characteristics of the manners and customs beyond the frontiers.

Our little Belgian cousins, boys and girls, are, on one side, like our little Dutch cousins, and, truth to tell, their dress in many cases is not far different. Elsewhere they are much like our little French cousins of Normandy and Picardy, making due allowance for the fact that the conditions of life are harder in Belgium, which is a small country compared to France, and in its relations with the

outside world even more circumscribed than Holland.

Nevertheless our little Belgian cousins are very human little people, and the Flemish and Walloons, and those that speak Dutch, and those that speak French are one and all delightful friends, and little American cousins should take much pleasure in knowing intimately these hard-working but pleasure-loving folk.

At all events their country is a most historic one, and their industry has made the Belgians one of the great little nations of the world.

All little American cousins will appreciate the sterling character of Gerard, the little musician, and of Helda, the little lace-maker, who became such good friends in the quaint old Flemish city of Ghent.



Showing Places Mentioned in "GERARD, OUR LITTLE BELGIAN COUSIN"

CHAPTER I

The Little Lace-Maker

"Good-by, my child, be a good girl, obey your Aunt Ursula in all things, and be sure that you do not lose your ticket."

Helda's mother, as she spoke, gave her little daughter a hasty kiss as she lifted Helda into the waiting train which was to carry her away on a visit to her Aunt Ursula. In another minute the chugging engine was pulling the train out of the little Belgian wayside station which was very near Helda's home.

Helda blinked hard to keep back the tears as she leaned out the car window and waved her handkerchief to her mother standing alone on the platform. When her mother was actually out of sight Helda let a big wave of tears roll down her cheeks until she suddenly remembered that she

had on her best Sunday dress; then she promptly dabbed her eyes dry and soon appeared quite a self-possessed little girl.

Helda's best dress was very fine indeed, and being Belgian was quite different from that usually worn by little English or American cousins. It was made of a rich, black cloth, very full and so long that it nearly touched the ground. The trimming was of black velvet, and over a bodice of the same material there was a kerchief of pale blue and green silk, while the skirt was nearly covered up by a blue silk apron with real lace at the pockets and hem. In addition, a string of gold beads circled Helda's neck, and on her head was a white cap with deep flaps framing in her rosy cheeks and flaxen hair. Her round little face was usually wreathed in smiles, but, on this occasion, her blue eyes were very, very red, though in spite of her sadness Helda was as pretty as a little Belgian maid could possibly be.

The car seats were of plain varnished wood and Helda sat uncomfortably on the very edge, not daring to lean back for fear of mussing up her stiffly starched bonnet. She clasped her ticket tightly in one little hot hand and felt as

timid and miserable as only a little girl can feel when away from home alone for the first time.

Helda was really a little Flemish girl. She lived in that part of modern Belgium which was formerly known as Flanders. The country covered just about half of the Belgium of the present time, and Helda, like all the people of Flanders, was much more proud of being called a Fleming than a Belgian.

Tears welled up in Helda's eyes once and again despite all her efforts, and just as they were about to overflow again she felt such a tweak at her hair that she gave a frightened little jump and looked around only to find a rosy-faced baby crowing in its mother's arms in the seat behind, and reaching out its chubby little fingers to play with one of Helda's stray curls. Instead of crying Helda laughed, and the baby's mother, a kindly peasant woman, asked Helda to come and sit with them, for she saw that the little girl was very lonesome. She gave Helda a ginger cake from the big basket beside her, and asked many questions about her home and was so kind and pleasant that Helda was soon at

her ease, chatting away as if she had never been the least homesick.

Helda told the woman that the little station where she had taken the train was just on the edge of her father's farm, and that you could see the red roof of their house far away over the flat fields. She told her that there were only her mamma and papa and a big brother at home, and that there was no baby, but that she wished there was — one just like that which sat crooning in its mother's lap.

"Are you going far, little one?" asked the baby's mother.

"I am going to Ghent," replied Helda, "to stay with my Aunt Ursula and learn how to make lace. Aunt Ursula is a Beguine," Helda said proudly. "She makes lovely lace, and is going to teach me how while I am staying with her in the Beguinage."

The baby's mother was very much impressed when she learned that Helda's aunt was a Beguine, and said she was sorry that she and the baby were not going to Ghent, too, that they might be company for Helda all of the way.

"But it is not far and you will soon reach there," the

woman told Helda as she and the baby left the train a station or two beyond.

In spite of this good news Helda could not help feeling lonely again when the woman and the baby had gone. Suppose Aunt Ursula was not at the station to meet her when she arrived, thought Helda. What ever would she do? And would Aunt Ursula be glad to see her? Of this there was really no reason to doubt, but Helda stood rather in awe of her relative for, after all, she did not know her very well. Her aunt could rarely leave her work at Ghent to visit Helda's parents, and the last time that she had done so Helda was quite a baby.

You will wonder, perhaps, just what Helda meant when she said her aunt was a Beguine. Well, a Beguine is a good woman who occupies herself in doing all she possibly can for others. The Beguines of Ghent lead simple lives and do all the good they can by devoting their strength and talents to helping the poor, nursing the sick, and giving good counsel to any who may be in trouble or want. The Beguines live together in a little community, or settlement, of tiny

dwellings, which is called a Beguinage. The society of Beguines has been known and recognized for the good works of its members for many hundreds of years and all of them are much respected and looked up to. From this you will readily understand just why it was that Helda was so proud in being able to say that her aunt was a Beguine.

As the train rolled swiftly on its way houses began to dot the landscape much more thickly until finally it came to a stop in the great glass-roofed station at Ghent. Before she knew it Helda found herself standing on the platform in the midst of a crowd of people, still tightly holding the basket in which she had her belongings, and feeling very much alone, indeed, quite lost, for she saw no one that she knew.

Just at that moment a loving arm was put about her and a gentle, sweet voice said: "I am very glad to see my little Helda again." Helda looked up and saw a tall, sweet-faced woman dressed all in black bending over her. All of Helda's homesickness vanished in a flash at the sight of the kindly face framed in its becoming white cap.

Aunt Ursula, for it was Aunt Ursula, sure enough, took

Helda by the hand, and putting the basket over her own arm led her little niece out into the open square before the station and to a street car, or tram, as they are called all over Europe.

"We have not far to go," said Aunt Ursula. "But you must be tired after your journey."

As they were riding along she asked Helda all about the home folks and about herself and her life in such a kindly way that by this time Helda was quite convinced that no little girl ever had an Aunt Ursula quite as nice as hers.

They soon left the tram car and turned down a quiet little street paved with great, round cobble stones and as clean as a swept floor, crossed a bridge over a canal and finally passed through a great stone gateway which opened into a courtyard surrounded by a number of buildings.

Some of these curiously built houses were large and some were small, but all were beautifully kept and set about with great trees. All was so spotlessly clean, so quiet and so far removed from the noise and bustle of the great city that Helda felt quite relieved to have come to such a calm and

peaceful spot.

"This is the Beguinage, and yonder is my house," said Aunt Ursula as they crossed the courtyard. They stopped in front of one of the smallest of the houses and Helda's aunt took from the deep pocket of her gown an enormous key with which she unlocked the door.

It was a very tiny dwelling, one of a row all just alike, built of a dark grey stone with a steep roof of red tiles. The doorway was very low and arched, and so were the two small windows around which was carved a stone decoration which was really very beautiful. Over the doorway was carved the name of Helda's aunt; simply the word URSULA, this being the name by which she was known to all in connection with her good works. All of the other good women who lived in the Beguinage were also known by their first names, as had been the custom since the institution was founded some hundreds of years ago.

As they got inside Helda began to look curiously about her. How different it all was from everything at home, she thought. There were but two rooms, one a kitchen and

living-room, and the other her aunt's bedroom. The rooms were as neatly kept and as clean as they could possibly be, with bare, whitewashed walls, and, on one side, a stove which could be used for both cooking and heating. This stove was partly made of blue porcelain tiles and entirely filled what had once been a great hooded chimney.

There was not much furniture, a cupboard that held some dishes and cooking utensils, a table and several high-backed chairs, a chest of drawers and a few religious pictures hanging on the wall. Helda noticed, too, by the window, a little work-table, covered carefully with a white cloth, and wondered what was under it.

"Here is where you will sleep, little Helda," said Aunt Ursula, as she pointed out a small bed beside her own. "Unpack your basket and hang up your things in this cupboard," she continued. "I hope you will be happy here, my dear. Now I will busy myself in getting you something to eat, and you shall help me, but first put on your every-day frock."

"Oh yes, I always help mamma at home to prepare the

meals," said Helda, slipping off her dress. In a moment she was clad again in a dark blue homespun, which was almost entirely covered by a big apron.

"Now I am ready," she said, and Aunt Ursula showed her where the china was kept in the old oaken cupboard. Helda took out the curious blue plates and a big bowl for the soup which her aunt served from a big earthenware pot which stood on the back of the porcelain stove where it had been simmering all the morning. There is always a big pot of some kind of soup bubbling away in every Belgian kitchen, for soup often makes the biggest part of the dinner with the people of Belgium.

Helda remembered how hungry she really was as she sat down to the thick, savory vegetable soup with which her aunt filled her blue bowl. There were big slices of bread and butter to go with it, and afterwards a salad and some cheese. Then Aunt Ursula opened a tin box and brought out a loaf of gingerbread, rich and brown, with blanched almonds stuck all over the top. Helda thought it was quite the best gingerbread she had ever eaten, and any one would have

thought the same, for the gingerbread of Ghent, as indeed that of all Belgium, is considered the best in the world. It was a simple little dinner, but good and satisfying, and as much as a Belgian family usually has for its midday meal.

"Is there where you make the lace?" asked Helda, timidly pointing to the little work-table by the window.

Aunt Ursula smiled and rising lifted off the cloth and showed Helda the big pillow on which the lace is made covered with a forest of pins with their bobbins hanging from their threads in all directions. Aunt Ursula was just now engaged on an elaborate piece of lace intended to be used for the christening robe of a royal baby. She explained it all to Helda and showed her the little roll of finished lace, and pointed out to her how slow the work was and how long she had already been engaged upon this particular piece. It had occupied her spare time for many weeks and it would take as many more before the robe was completed. It surprised Helda very much indeed to learn that it took a day to make one of the tiny flowers, and she naturally thought it was the loveliest lace she had ever seen.

"Oh, may I not begin to learn to make lace at once. Aunt Ursula?" Helda exclaimed. "And how long a time will it be before I can do as beautiful work as that?"

"No, my child, you must not think of undertaking to commence your lessons to-day," replied Aunt Ursula. "You are too tired from your journey. To-morrow you shall have your first lesson, and, dear child, though it will take much patience and hard work, I hope that some day you will be able to make as fine lace as any one; it all rests with yourself."

"Now we will get ready and make a little visit to the Beguinage," said Aunt Ursula, after Helda had helped her clear away and wash the dinner dishes.

"Why, the Beguinage is a little city in Itself," was Helda's first exclamation after she and her aunt had strolled about a few minutes. And so it really was, just like an old-time, mediaeval city. There were streets and winding alleys, and tree-shaded squares and a little church. All around the settlement was a high wall, and the big gates by which one entered were closed at night.

Most of the Beguines whom Helda saw were dressed in

the same simple costume as that of her aunt, a long black cloth gown with a very full skirt, wide sleeves and a white headdress that fastened under the chin and fell around the shoulders like a cape.

Aunt Ursula had a smile and a word for every one that they passed. "Those women to whom you spoke just now were dressed differently from the others," remarked Helda.

"Yes, my child, they are new-comers; they all live together in that large building yonder, and, after a while, they too will wear the real Beguine dress, and then, if they choose, they may come and live in one of the little houses. That young girl over there has just come to live in the Beguinage," Aunt Ursula added, as she pointed out a young girl with a wreath on her head.

Helda thought it looked very odd to see any one walking about with a wreath on their head and wondered how she would like it.

Helda was taken to see the Groot Jufvrouw, which means "the Great Lady." She was at the head of the Beguines. In the Groot Jufvrouw's room was a glass case full of the most

beautiful lace which had been made by the Beguines, and which was kept there to sell to visitors, for many strangers from all parts of the world come to visit the famous Beguinage of Ghent. Helda thought all the lace marvellous; some of it seemed as fine as a cobweb and some of it, too, was the work of her aunt. When the good Jufvrouw heard that Helda had come thither to learn the art of lace-making she patted her on the cheek and said that she hoped that she would learn to make as fine a quality as that of her aunt.

"Oh, Aunt Ursula," cried Helda, as they were on their way back, "I am going to be a Beguine all my life and live in a little house like yours and make beautiful lace." Aunt Ursula only smiled and told her to wait until she was older before attempting to decide so great a question. But at the time Helda was quite sure that she would never change her mind and already had begun to wonder how she would look if she too had one of the young Beguine's wreaths bound about her head.

You may be sure that little Helda was tired after such a change from her quiet life in the country, and after her

supper of a bowl of milk and rye bread she was very willing to curl up in her little white bed and fall asleep before It was really dark.

Helda awoke the next morning with a start and looked about wonderingly when her aunt called her. Her aunt's good-morning kiss brought it all back to her quickly enough, and she dressed quickly, remembering that she was to go to church, and at five o'clock was on the way with Aunt Ursula to the pretty, old Beguinage church. It was the custom in the Beguinage to go to church twice each day, once in the early morning and once in the afternoon.

As they came back Helda saw a milk cart standing before their door, and beside it a buxom country woman. This woman wore the usual work-a-day dress of the country women of Flanders, consisting of a full skirt of rough cloth, a black bodice with a colored cotton handkerchief crossed over the shoulders and a white linen cap covering the head. On her feet she wore heavy wooden shoes, or *sabots*.

"I wonder why the Vrouw Maes is here this morning; it is usually her little son who brings the milk," said Aunt

Ursula. "Where is Gerard this morning?" she asked, as she greeted the milk-woman. Vrouw Maes explained that Gerard had sprained his wrist by lifting a very heavy milk can. "Yes," she said in further explanation, "it is heavy work for Gerard, but he must do his part." She went on to say, too, that there was never a cause of complaint with Gerard, that he was a good boy and always ready to do his share, and that he was very much worried by the fact that he was forced to be idle for a time. The good Vrouw talked on and on as she measured out Aunt Ursula's milk.

"He grieves, too, I dare say," said Aunt Ursula, "that he can not play his violin."

"Ah, yes, the boy is music mad," exclaimed his mother.

Aunt Ursula was truly sorry to hear of Gerard's accident for the little boy was a great favorite of hers, as he was of every one, so, when the Vrouw was ready to leave, she brought out a remedy for the sprained wrist and told her if she rubbed the liquid well into the sprain that the wrist would soon be well again.

"Now for our first lesson in lace-making," said Aunt

Ursula when they had finished their breakfast of coffee and rye bread. "You see I have all your materials ready for you," she said as she went over to the great chest of drawers and took out a lace-maker's pillow, a set of bobbins and the necessary thread. "You may always keep them here, and I will also give you a white linen cloth in which to wrap them, for the first thing to learn about lace-making is to take great care to keep the work clean. Now wash your hands well and we will begin by winding the bobbins."

"Oh," said Helda, as she sighed with delight and sat down on a low stool beside her aunt's chair, her lace pillow on her knee and the polished wooden bobbins and the spools of thread beside her in a box.

"Now your best plan, my child, will be to watch me work this morning," said Helda's aunt, after she had wound all her bobbins. "I will show you just how the bobbins are to be used," and she uncovered her own pillow with its piece of lace already begun and sat down to work.

It fascinated Helda to watch her aunt's nimble fingers fly around among the bobbins. "Click-clack, click-clack," went

the bobbins; it was indeed like magic to one who knew nothing about the work to see how deftly and rapidly the bobbins and their threads were moved about among the pins stuck in the pillow.

While the bobbins danced about, Aunt Ursula explained that the christening robe of the royal baby had been entrusted to the Beguines to make and was considered a great compliment; all their best lace-makers were at work on it at the present time, each doing a certain part.

It was real "rose-point," as the finest Belgian lace is called, and Aunt Ursula was making the fine net foundation as well as the flower design, and she explained to Helda that this was such a very costly method of making lace that but very small quantities were actually made in this way to-day.

This variety of lace is called "Brussels lace," because so much of it is now made in Brussels, the capital city of Belgium.

"Once upon a time," went on Aunt Ursula, "all of this lace was made by the workers in their own homes, as we are making it here to-day in the Beguinage, but now there are

thousands of women and girls working in big, noisy factories, instead of quietly and comfortably in their own houses, and the lace is cheapened in quality and price because the owners of the great factories are anxious to produce and sell large quantities in order to make money fast. Not much of the modern lace is as well made as when I first learned the art, at an age," continued Aunt Ursula, "considerably less than yours, Helda."

"Nobody's lace could possibly be lovelier than yours, Aunt Ursula," said Helda warmly.

"Ah, well," answered her aunt, modestly, "it is true that my lace has had much praise, and I may tell you, my dear, without being too proud, that the biggest factory in Brussels wanted me to come to them and take charge of all their work-women, and I could have made, oh, I don't know how much money, but I would not leave my dear Beguinage to go and work in a factory for all the money in Brussels!" And with this Aunt Ursula settled herself back in her chair with a determined air.

After the midday meal Aunt Ursula pinned an easy little

pattern on Helda's pillow, and the little girl began her first lace-making lesson in earnest. Poor little Helda's troubles now commenced. What seemed so easy with her aunt's deft fingers became a hopeless tangle when she tried to accomplish the same thing. The bobbins and threads seemed to mix themselves up into knots and tangles of themselves and again and again Helda had to search out the way to unravel them. The day wore on and Helda had not even made the beginning of her design.

"Oh, Aunt Ursula, I shall never, never learn," cried Helda, very nearly in despair after a dozen trials.

"Patience, my dear child, patience; it is only by patience that you will ever learn; you must try again," said Aunt Ursula more than once as she helped Helda straighten out the knotted threads.

Just then another of the Beguine women came to the door and called her aunt away on some business and poor Helda was left alone with her troubles. Her cheeks burned and she felt as if her fingers were all thumbs and the tears were ready to fall from her eyes. Finally she gave a violent

jerk and all the pins in her pillow marking the pattern went flying on to the floor. This was the last straw. Helda flung her pillow across the room and dashed out of the house upsetting her box of threads as she went.

Fearful that some one might stop and question her Helda slipped into an alley and just ahead spied a gateway which led out on to the canal bank. There was no one in sight and she threw herself down on the grassy bank, pulled her apron over her head and cried as if her heart would break. She knew this was very wrong, too, for she had been told by her aunt never to leave the Beguinage alone, or unless she was sent for, but now she did not care in the least. She hated Ghent, she hated the Beguinage, and, above all, she hated lace-making. She really could not bring herself to thinking that she hated her good, kind Aunt Ursula, but she did think that she had been cruel to her by making her work so hard. She knew she was a wicked little girl, but she liked being wicked, at least so she tried to make herself believe.

Oh, what a wretched day it had been. Oh, why had she ever left her dear home and her kind papa and mamma who



"Oh, Aunt Ursula, I shall never, never learn,"
cried Helda.

thought that there was no one like their own little girl? She would tell her aunt that she must go home to-morrow, and at the thought of home she buried her face deeper in her apron and wept more bitterly than ever.

Just then Helda heard a mocking laugh and felt something strike her. She threw off her apron from her head and saw a great ball of mud on her nice clean dress, and across the canal was a big boy with a fishing rod in his hand who was laughing at her and just getting ready to throw another missile.

Much frightened Helda jumped up and crept back to the Beguinage. How late it was! Had her aunt missed her? Perhaps she would think that her little niece had fallen into the canal and was drowned. Helda almost wished she had. This had been the hatefulest day in all her life.

As she made her way back to the house Helda tried to rub the mud on her dress, hoping all the time that her aunt had not returned. But Aunt Ursula was already at the door, peering anxiously up and down the little street. Helda saw her as soon as she turned the corner.

"My dear child," cried Aunt Ursula, opening her arms wide, "I should not have left you alone in the house; it was all my fault." There was not a word of blame for her from her aunt, not a question as to where she had been, even. Helda threw herself sobbing into her aunt's arms, and all she could say was that she was a very naughty girl.

Aunt Ursula took the child indoors, and sitting in her high oak chair by the window she held her on her knee and soothed her as if she had been a baby. Aunt Ursula knew well enough that it was only an attack of homesickness and the strangeness of everything about her that had so upset the little girl. She well remembered how she herself had felt the first time she left home to go among strangers, and she remembered that, after all, she was practically a stranger to the little girl.

When Helda's tears were dried she was persuaded to eat some of the tempting little supper which Aunt Ursula had prepared. There were big strawberries, such as one finds in Belgium where the strawberries are famous, and a nice cream cheese flavored with tiny green herbs, which though

new to Helda was thought by her to be quite a delicacy, as indeed it was.

After swallowing a few mouthfuls of her supper Helda began to feel much better and her tears were quite over by the time she had finished.

After supper Aunt Ursula took her again on her knee and told her of her own early struggles learning to make lace. Many a good cry she had had over her many blunders. "And a strict teacher I had, too," she said. "You may think your old aunt cross, my dear, but teachers were much more strict in the old days than now."

"I remember," continued Aunt Ursula, smiling to herself, "that sometimes my teacher used to prick my fingers with one of the lace pins when I tangled up my threads."

"Oh, how cruel," cried out Helda, "you could never, never do a thing like that, dear Aunt Ursula."

"No," said her aunt, and she laughed softly to herself. "Perhaps that was carrying things a bit too far, but I must have been a trial to the dear old lady who taught me; I had a temper in those days; it runs in our family, as you see," she

continued, with a twinkle in her eye.

Helda's head drooped. How horribly ashamed of herself she had become.

The next day things went much better and little by little Helda learned to use her bobbins without snarling them up until soon her daily task over her lace pillow became the pleasantest duty of the day. Her troubles were not wholly over by any means, but she was learning patience and perseverance as well as lace-making under the loving care of Aunt Ursula. And now, at last, more than ever, she was glad that she had come to Ghent.

CHAPTER II

Gerard's Dog Team

It was Helda's duty each morning, when the tinkle-tinkle of the bells of the milk wagon were heard, to go to the door with a stone jug for the milk. Little girls in America would think it very strange to have the milk brought to their doors by a cart drawn by dogs. Dog carts are used in Belgium for many trades. There are milk carts, vegetable carts, laundry carts, bakers' carts and many others which are drawn over the cobbled streets of the towns and over the country roads as well, sometimes for great distances, by dogs. The dogs are harnessed in much the same way that a pony would be at home. The dogs almost entirely take the place of horses for light work of this kind, especially in Flanders.

One morning, after Helda had been nearly two weeks at the Beguinage, she opened the door as she heard the bells

of the milk cart and saw a little boy sitting jauntily on the side of the cart calling out to one of his dogs who was seemingly trying to turn around in his harness. The boy wore a grey linen blouse, belted in at the waist, black knee trousers, tied at the knee with black ribbons, and coarse, grey, knitted stockings covered his sturdy calves while big, yellow, wooden *sabots* took the place of shoes.

"Good morning," he called out smilingly, jumping up when he saw Helda, and touching his high peaked cap with a sort of military salute — that is, he said what is Flemish for good morning.

"You are the little girl from Bruges, I suppose."

"And you are the little boy who sprained his wrist," ventured Helda, with a glance at his wrist, which was still bandaged.

"Little! Pooh! How many boys of twelve are as big as I?" cried the boy, broadening his shoulders and standing on tiptoe. "Why, I am taller than Hubert," he continued, "and he is fourteen."

"And I am almost ten," answered Helda proudly. And

then feeling that the acquaintanceship was not beginning happily she added politely, "I hope your wrist is better."

"Oh, it's nearly well now," said the boy, as he took his measure, which hung beside the brightly polished brass milk jugs, and filled it with milk, which he poured into Helda's pitcher. "You see I am obliged to begin my rounds again because my mother is too busy to do the work herself, and besides I am the man of the house, and my mother depends upon me."

"Ah! there is Gerard; I wondered why the milk was so slow in arriving this morning. You little folks are chatting away as if there was nothing else to think of," said Aunt Ursula as she appeared at the door. She gave a look at Gerard's bad wrist, and told him to be careful for some time yet, and bade him leave his cart and come inside and have a cup of coffee and some bread with them.

"Here is something for the dogs, too; you may give it to them, Helda," said her aunt as she took a bowl of scraps from a shelf.

"They are looking for it already, the rascals; they know

that they are never forgotten here," laughed Gerard, pointing to the dogs who had turned and dragged the cart almost through the open door. The milk-cart dogs of Flanders are usually well treated at the houses of their customers, so they naturally look forward to the morning round with pleasure in spite of their hard work.

"Watch Bouts, the younger dog, the one on the outside," said Gerard to Helda. "Hugo, the old dog, has taught him his place, and that he must wait his turn."

Bouts had jumped forward as if he hoped to free himself from his harness, but Hugo only had to show his teeth once and give a low growl when he quieted down as meekly as a lamb and waited until the older dog had taken his choice, when he was allowed to have what remained.

"Bouts is only a year old, while Hugo is almost as old as I," explained Gerard. "Poor old Hugo, he is getting almost too old to work, but we must keep on, old fellow," continued Gerard.

Gerard was a universal favorite and his customers were all glad to see him back again.

"Gerard comes a long way," explained Aunt Ursula, "and has to rise every morning at four o'clock."

Gerard and Helda, as may be imagined, became great friends. He told her all about his life on the farm just outside of Ghent, and how he milked the cows and helped with the vegetable garden, for his mother also grew vegetables in great quantities for the city markets. His mother brought these vegetables herself to market on certain days of the week and worked very hard, while Saskia, Gerard's little sister, did her share, too.

"Saskia is only eight, and is at school every day, but next week, when she has a holiday, I will bring her around to see you," said Gerard to Helda.

In return Helda told Gerard about her own home and her papa and mamma and her big brother Dirk, who was in Antwerp at the Commercial Institute studying so that he might become a great merchant.

Helda's papa was a flax-grower and sold his flax to the great factories in Ghent, where they made it into fine linen, for in Ghent, and many other towns in Flanders, was made

some of the finest linen cloth known to the world.

Helda thought that hers was the prettiest house in Flanders, sitting as it did in the midst of the flax fields. It was built of red brick and had a blue slate roof and heavy wooden shutters painted a bright green.

Helda and Gerard thus exchanged confidences every morning. But it was about his band of boy musicians that Gerard talked more than anything else. Next to his mother and little Saskia Gerard most loved music, and the band which he had organized was the pride of his life. Each little Belgian boy and girl can play on some instrument or sing, and more often than not can do both, and each little Belgian village has its own bands and orchestras and singing classes.

Gerard played the violin very well indeed. At first the school-master had taught him what he knew, but Gerard soon outdistanced him. After practising at home alone for a time Gerard finally got several of his boy friends in the neighborhood to meet at his house that they might practise together, each helping one another with good advice, though it was easy to see that it was Gerard who was the real

leader.

After the formation of the band the next step was to choose a name, for all the bands, or "circles" as they are called in Flanders, have a name.

After many suggestions they decided to call themselves the "Circle Leuw van Vlaanderen," which is Flemish for the "Lion of Flanders." This was a big-sounding name and that is one of the reasons why it was taken, and also because the lion is the emblem of Belgium.

Gerard confided to Aunt Ursula and Helda that it was the dream of his life to become a great violinist, and how he would like to study at some great Conservatory of Music, but that he could not leave his mother, for since his father had died he had to be the "man at home."

Helda sympathized with his ambitions and told him in turn about the singing classes of boys and girls to which she belonged, and how they met every Thursday afternoon at the school-house for practice, and how every little while they would give a concert and invite their home folks.

The following week Gerard brought his sister to the

Beguinage. She was a chubby, round-faced little girl, so shy and stiff in her holiday dress and white cap that she looked almost like a jointed wooden doll. But after Helda had showed off her lace-work, and Aunt Ursula had cut her off a big slice of gingerbread, she felt more at home and acted quite naturally so that when she left she invited Helda to come out to the farm and see her white guinea pigs.

In the days that followed Helda would carry her aunt's basket as she went about on her charitable works, and would often take some simple toy or a bouquet of flowers to some sick child herself.

Aunt Ursula, on their walks, would tell Helda stories of old Ghent, and point out to her many celebrated old buildings. She told her that Ghent was once famous for glove-making, and that the name Ghent (or Gand) meant glove, and how to-day the glove-making industry had fallen far behind those of linen and fine lace.

Helda saw the great bleaching grounds where the manufactured linen was whitened by the sun and dew, and wondered very much if any that she saw was made from her

father's flax.

When the chimes rang out from the tall town belfry Helda would recall the tale told her by her aunt of how these forty-four big bells used to ring out in the old days to call the people of the city to arms, or to let them know of a victory for their soldiery.

The belfries of Flanders are famous; there is one to be found in all the old cities and towns. The most celebrated is at Bruges, which Helda had seen and heard its great bells peal, but she did not know what every little American cousin ought to know, that the poet Longfellow wrote some beautiful verses about it called "The Belfry of Bruges."

"I must take some things to a sick person and you can help me carry them, and we can stop at Vrouw Maes on our way," said Aunt Ursula to Helda one bright morning.

They took the tramway near the great gate of the Beguinage and had soon left the city behind and were following along by the side of the open road. The country roundabout was perfectly flat, there were no great forests and not many single trees, only a few grouped here and there

about the scattered farmhouses. Flanders is very much like Holland, which is its next door neighbor, as you will know if you have read "Our Little Dutch Cousin." There are long, sluggish canals crossing the country in every direction, crossed by many little bridges which can be turned to allow the canal-boats and barges to pass.

"Here we are at last at the lane leading to Vrouw Maes," said Aunt Ursula as they got off the tram, and turned off the highroad towards the farm.

"And here is Saskia," cried Helda, as the little girl came running up to meet them.

Saskia slipped her hand in Helda's and the two little girls skipped on before Aunt Ursula. Saskia had just come from school and pointed out the school-house to Helda across the fields. Really it was not far away, but by the road it was at least two miles, and Saskia walked there and back every day and did not mind it in the least.

Saskia chatted with Helda about her school, and the singing class and how she was being taught to sew. When not at school she helped her mother about the house and in

the vegetable garden, and she told Helda that when there was nothing else to do she was in the habit of taking one of the cows out to graze by the roadside, leading it on a rope that it might not stray into the neighboring fields.

CHAPTER III

Life on a Flemish Farm

Aunt Ursula and Helda found Vrouw Maes in her vegetable garden hard at work gathering peas.

"Do not stop, I beg of you," said Aunt Ursula, as the good Vrouw came forward to greet her visitors. "I know you are busy gathering your vegetables for the market tomorrow. I will leave Helda here with Saskia and call for her on my way back after I have finished my errand."

"I will have a bowl of fresh milk ready for you then," said the Vrouw, putting down the heaping basketful of vegetables which she had been carrying.

"Let us find Gerard," said Saskia, as Aunt Ursula disappeared.

Vrouw Maes' house was like most of the farmhouses of Flanders, so very low and flat that one could hardly see more

than its red tiled roof above the level of the field until quite close. It was of red brick, covered with a yellow plaster, and with the dairy and cow-shed it surrounded a little courtyard which was paved with cobble stones. Here, in the courtyard, Gerard was busy mending the dogs' harness, while the dogs themselves lay near him half asleep. Gerard jumped up surprised and pleased to see his little friend of the Beguinage, and the dogs also leaped about and wagged their tails in welcome, for they, too, recognized a friend in Helda.

"I am getting my harness in good shape for the inspection," said Gerard. "Everything must be in good order then, you know."

"Where is the inspection to be?" asked Helda.

"In the Kooter, at six o'clock in the morning, just a week from to-day," answered Gerard.

"I should like to see it," said Helda. "I wonder if Aunt Ursula would take me."

There is one day in the year when all the milk carts of a certain district are inspected by the government officials and all milk jugs and dog-carts, you may be sure, are made to



Life on a Flemish Farm

look their best on that day.

Helda was shown all about the place. She saw the little white guinea pigs in their hutch in one corner of the courtyard, and fed them carrots which Gerard gave her. She visited the long, low building where the cows were sheltered, each in a stall by itself, all whitewashed and kept very clean with plenty of fresh straw on the floor.

Helda visited the dairy, too, which was built partly underground. Here were the big crocks of milk standing in a sort of stone trough, with running water around them to keep the milk cool and fresh, while the brass jugs which were carried on the cart mornings were all standing in a row, with a polish as bright as hard rubbing could give them.

Gerard showed Helda where his band met for practice up in the low attic of the house, close under the red tiles of the roof, with great wooden beams overhead and only one small window in the gable.

Here were some heavy wooden benches and some roughly made stands to hold the music, and near the window, two old weather-stained sea-chests with rope

handles, which had belonged to Gerard's great-uncle, who had been a captain of a fishing vessel that hailed from Nieuport, a little town on the Belgian coast, just over the border from France.

One end of the attic was curtained off and behind the curtain was Gerard's sleeping room. His cot stood in a corner under the eaves, and near it was a shelf that held the prize books which he had won at school, while above hung a tiny looking-glass of the kind that makes one's face look zig-zag. There were two or three fishing rods, a ball and the usual belongings which lumber up a boy's room.

Since there was no wash bowl or pitcher it is well to know that Gerard ran down in the morning and washed his face and hands by the side of the old stone well in the courtyard, and when he wanted a bath he took a swim in the canal which ran before the house.

Gerard's Sunday and holiday suit of clothes was kept carefully packed away in one of the sea-chests, and on top of the other rested Gerard's beloved violin.

"Oh, do play for us," cried Helda, as she spied the

instrument.

"Yes, do play, brother," chimed in little Saskia, "you know Helda has never heard you."

Gerard took his violin tenderly from its case and slowly drew the bow across the strings once or twice and gave a turn or two to the keys when there suddenly burst forth a wonderful melody which echoed and re-echoed back from the rafters overhead.

Helda listened in amazement. She had never dreamed that Gerard Maes, who brought the milk each morning to the Beguinage, could play like that!

"Well done, Gerard," said a voice at the door as Gerard finished. "I am proud of you, and I prophesy great things for you some day," said Aunt Ursula, for it was she, having finished her errand, who was at the door. Gerard flushed with her praise, for he had a very high opinion of all that Aunt Ursula said.

"It is true, Gerard plays even better than did his father, but he must not neglect his work for his music as I am afraid he does sometimes," said Vrouw Maes, shaking her head.

"But of course you would like to have Gerard become famous," continued Aunt Ursula.

"Yes, truly, if it were possible," answered his mother. "He dreams night and day of going to the city to study, but I can not spare him from the farm just yet."

Gerard put away his violin with a sigh, and they all went down to the big front room of the house which was kept more for show than for use. There is always one room of this class in a Belgian house, and here all the best things are kept and visitors entertained.

A big, hooded chimney filled one side of the room and above it on the mantel there were some old china plates and bowls with queer painted landscapes. On the dresser and around the walls were a number of platters and jugs of finely embossed and polished copper.

Vrouw Maes brought in a jug of fresh milk, warm from the cow, and a dish of cakes, which are called the *conques* of Dinant, a sort of gingerbread cookie made only at Dinant in Belgium, or by folk who had formerly lived there, as had Vrouw Maes.

When Aunt Ursula and Helda left Gerard and Saskia walked with them as far as the tram. As they turned into the main road a big boy passed them, driving a cart loaded with vegetables and drawn by two dogs. There was not only as heavy a load as the poor dogs could stagger along with, but the boy had perched himself on top of all and was beating the poor dogs, who looked very thin and ill-kept, into a gallop.

"Oh! what a cruel boy, to beat his poor dogs like that," exclaimed Helda. "Oh! it is the boy who was fishing in the canal." She stopped suddenly and bit her lip.

"Stop that, Hubert," called out Gerard to the boy, his eyes aflame. "It's a shame for a great boy like you to ride on top of a heavy load like that and beat your dogs, too."

The boy only laughed until Aunt Ursula reproved him too, when he slid sulkily off his cart. Then catching sight of Helda he pointed his finger at her mockingly and called out:

"Hello, cry-baby."

"Why, where have you ever seen Hubert before?" asked Gerard, surprised.

Helda blushed; she could not bear to think of that disgraceful day, and merely said that she had seen him fishing in the canal near the Beguinage.

"He is a bad boy," went on Gerard. "He treats his dogs so badly that he has had trouble with the officials more than once, and has already been fined."

"He does not like you, brother, one bit," said Saskia.

"No, I know he doesn't," answered Gerard, "and I am sorry, for he is a member of our band."

"How does that happen?" asked Helda, surprised. "If you do not like him why did you take him into your band?"

"Well, he is one of our best musicians, and he was one of our crowd, so you see he could not well have been left out," explained Gerard. "But none of us like him, he is so overbearing. Besides he has a grudge against me; I know it. for I made him stop ill-treating his dogs one day and the officials heard of it and got after him. I did not tell on him, though. I am not a tell-tale. But he thought I did, and has never forgotten it.

"The real reason is that he is jealous of you and wants to

be the leader of the band himself," said Saskia wisely.

"I am sure he could not lead the band as well as you; he does not look as though he could do anything as nice as play the violin," said Helda, recalling the mud with which he had bespattered her dress.

"Well, for some reason, he has got a grudge against me, and I am afraid he will do me an ill turn some day," sighed Gerard, who was the least quarrelsome boy in all Flanders, and who would have liked to be friends with every one.

There was a tram awaiting when they got to the main road, and bidding good-by to their little friends Aunt Ursula and Helda were soon back to the Beguinage.

CHAPTER IV

The Milk Inspection

"Gerard, my son, you know you must get up an hour earlier to-day," called out Vrouw Maes one morning from the foot of the ladder-like stairs which led to Gerard's attic.

"Yes, mother, I hear you," answered Gerard, sleepily, as he tumbled out of bed and began to dress.

He rushed with his breakfast, swallowing his coffee while it was still very hot, and munching his rye bread spread with cold goose-grease (which took the place of butter), hurriedly.

To-day the milk carts and their wares were to be inspected. The laws which govern the sale of milk in Belgium are very strict, and the officials were also expected to report on the general appearance of the carts, particularly with respect to the dogs and their harness. Almost all Belgian dogs work, and you will see how very good the

people are to their animals when you know that they are inspected and cared for by government officials. In Belgium there are very few dogs kept merely as house pets, and little Saskia and her school-mates always looked upon one little girl in their class with awe because at home her people had a dog which had nothing to do but sleep on the door mat and bark at strangers.

There were of course many dogs that were not treated as well as those of Gerard. Some dogs, like Hubert's, were often beaten and given loads too heavy for them to draw without injury to their health, but, as a general thing, the dogs that drew the milk carts had a very good time of it.

Hugo and Bouts came bounding up at Gerard's whistle as he crossed the courtyard, and were soon harnessed up and hitched to the cart. The harness buckles were nicely polished, and Gerard had repainted the cart, the body bright yellow and the wheels red.

Vrouw Maes and Saskia filled the two big, brass milk-jugs with fresh, creamy milk and gave them a final rub which made them so brilliant that little Saskia could see her face

in them as in a looking-glass.

The dogs and their cart looked very jaunty as they trotted off, Gerard running beside them cracking his whip, while Hugo and Bouts, their red tongues hanging out of their mouths, took great pleasure in setting the pace.

The Kooter, or public square, was the liveliest place you could have found in Ghent that morning. It was full of carts and brass jugs, all brilliantly sparkling in the morning sun, and dogs were leaping about and tangling themselves up in each other's harness in most confusing fashion, barking, biting and yelping across at each other and making such a noise that one would have thought it was a dog show that was going on instead of a milk inspection.

The dogs' owners were having a busy time of it, too. Women and girls in their bright dresses and shawls and white caps, and boys in their grey blouses and their queer wooden shoes were trying to separate their dogs and keep them from fighting.

At last all the carts had arrived and the inspectors began their march down the lines. They would look into the jugs

and taste the milk to find out if it was sweet and had not been watered. They looked to see that none of the harness chafed the dogs, and that they were well cared for, and were very particular that each cart carried a piece of carpet for the dogs to lie on when resting, so that they should not be obliged to lie on the cold, wet ground or stones. Besides this each cart was obliged to carry a bowl from which the dogs might have a drink from time to time. From this you will see that the Belgians really do take great care of even their working dogs.

Gerard watched the inspectors as they came down the line with a light heart; he knew that his little outfit was in good condition. The inspectors scolded a few of the dog owners, showed others where their harness was badly arranged and told still others that their dogs looked a bit thin and overworked, but no one was actually fined.

Gerard was nearly at the end of the line and as the inspector came up he touched his cap politely.

"Ah, everything looks all right here, my little friend," said the chief inspector, glancing appreciatively at the spick and



“Mevrouw Maes and Saskia filled the two big, brass milk-jugs.”

span little team, and giving a good-natured nod, for he always remembered Gerard's bright face.

"We'll just give a look in," the inspector continued, and uncovering one of Gerard's jugs he tasted the milk.

As Gerard watched him he saw him frown. He tasted again. "Humph," said the Inspector, "this milk is watered, my little man."

Gerard felt as if the whole Kooter and all that was in it was whirling around and around.

"Oh! Mynheer; it can not be so; we would never do such a thing; ask anybody who knows me," cried Gerard, looking wildly around for one friendly face.

The Inspectors whispered together; they were sorry for they had never before made any complaints against the milk from Vrouw Maes' dairy. Finally they told Gerard that they must fine him, no matter how much they might hate to do so. It might well have been an accident, to be sure, but it would be unfair to the other milk-dealers for them to pass it over. They would, however, make the fine a small one as the reputation of his milk had hitherto been so good. They felt,

too, that whatever may have been the reason for it that it would never happen again.

Poor Gerard could only protest. He could not possibly imagine how water could by any means have got into his milk; he had seen his mother bring it directly from the cows and pour it into the jugs. More than all it was the disgrace which hurt Gerard so much. He felt that he should never be able to hold up his head again, and for such a thing to have happened on the crowded Kooter before everybody was almost too much for him to bear.

"I have no money with me," stammered Gerard, miserably conscious that everybody was staring at him.

"I am sorry, my little fellow; then we must take possession of your cart until you can bring us the money for the fine," said the inspector, kindly but firmly.

"I will pay the fine. How much is it?" said a voice close at hand. It was Aunt Ursula who, just observing Gerard and overhearing the conversation, had come to his rescue. She and Helda had seen from a distance that something was wrong and had made their way through the crowd to

Gerard's aid.

"Oh, Jufvrouw, tell them I did not do this thing," cried Gerard, his heart bounding again with hope at the sight of his friends.

"Of course you did not, Gerard; everybody knows that you would not do such a thing," exclaimed Helda, who felt almost as badly as did Gerard himself.

Aunt Ursula paid the fine and spoke seriously to the inspector, warmly praising Gerard and his mother and declaring her belief in their innocence. Other customers of Gerard now began to come up, and they took the little milkman's part, saying that the milk from the Maes' dairy had always been found good and pure.

Gerard, half choking with tears, thanked his good friend, the Beguine, again and again for her kindness, and told her that he would pay her back the money next day.

"No, it is a little present which I make to you. I was going to make you a gift at Christmas, but, instead, I will give it to you now. It is the same thing, is it not? So do not thank me again, dear boy, but hurry home and tell your mother not to

worry either, for every one must know it was not of your doing."

It was a sorrowful little group that gathered around the Maes' supper table that night at the farm. No one had any appetite. It was Saskia who suddenly remembered that she had seen some one slip behind the dairy as she crossed the courtyard at dusk the evening before. She thought at the time that it was one of the band who had just come down from the practice room.

"It was Hubert. I am sure it must have been Hubert. It was just his height. Mamma, he may have slipped into the dairy and poured water into the empty jugs as they stood on their shelf," exclaimed Saskia, springing up from her chair.

"Gently, my child, gently, you must not accuse any one without knowing, but I do recall now that I left the dairy open while I was feeding the cows in their shed and any one might have gone in, it is true."

The children said no more, but Gerard felt in his heart that it was Hubert, and no other, who had done them this injury.

However, the next day when Hubert met Gerard he seemed so sorry to hear of Gerard's trouble that the latter was ashamed of his suspicions and told Saskia she must have been mistaken. How the water got into the jugs was still a mystery.

CHAPTER V

The Band Competition

Gerard had a happy smile on his face one morning soon after the adventure in the Kooter. It was the first time since that unhappy day. He had great news for his friends at the Beguinage. There was to be a "concours," or competition, of bands from all over the country to be held at Ghent, and prizes had been offered by the Burgomaster, and Mynheer Porbus, the great musician, had offered one for the best boys' band.

Gerard had already called a meeting of the "Leuw van Vlaanderen" to decide what was to be done. Among those present was fat, red-faced Karel, who blew the big horn, and Bernard, the trombone player, and little Boons, who beat the big drum. Hubert was also there, and a number of others who were just ordinary, good-natured little Flemish boys. All

the members of the band were for entering the competition, save Hubert alone, who mocked at the idea.

"Why, Jan Trynk's band has a better chance of winning than we," he said contemptuously. Now every one knew that Jan Trynk's band was the worst in the whole neighborhood and Gerard and his fellows became very indignant.

"Why, ducks couldn't keep time to their music," said Bernard, jealous of their own fine playing.

"If each will only do his best and always be on hand for the practising I don't see why we shouldn't stand as good a chance of winning the prize as any other of the boys' bands," declared Gerard, valiantly.

The boys knew that this was largely meant for Hubert, who could really play well, but was too lazy to work hard and shirked his practice every chance he could.

Finally it was decided that the Leuw van Vlaanderen should compete for the prize offered the young people's bands. There was a chance to win not only a medal but a sum of money as well. Never did Gerard work so hard. He was up at the earliest gleam of daylight so as to be able to get

his regular duties over the sooner that he might have an extra hour for practising. He drilled and drilled his little company with untiring energy and patience. He hunted up laggards and would take no excuses for absence. Twice a day they must meet for practice, after the midday meal, and again in the evening when the day's work was done.

"Gerard will be the death of us," gasped little, round fat Karel, the hornblower, one afternoon. "I am blown to pieces," he added, wiping his hot perspiring face.

"He will make himself ill, I fear, if he goes on like this," Vrouw Maes said to Aunt Ursula at market one morning, as she was sitting under a big umbrella with her baskets of vegetables piled up around her and Hugo sleeping on his piece of carpet beside the cart.

"Gerard is ambitious. It is a good sign in so young a lad. He is healthy and strong and I think he will continue to do his work as well as before, and even if he does not get the prize for his band the stimulus of having tried for it will be of use to him in the future," said Aunt Ursula by the way of encouragement to Gerard's mother. Aunt Ursula was a good

friend to Gerard and always stood up for him.

"I know he will win the prize," exclaimed little Helda, who really thought no one could play like Gerard, and had great faith in his leadership of the band.

Helda and her aunt had just come from the flower-market, and Helda carried a lovely basket of blossoms. They were intended to help decorate the church of the Beguinage on the following Sunday. There are most beautiful gardens around Ghent, and acres of green-houses where rare flowers are grown under glass.

At last the great day came. Gerard's band was to meet in the Kooter of their little village and take the tramway into Ghent. Long before the appointed hour the boys were all in their places, scrubbed and brushed until their little, round faces fairly shone, and dressed in their Sunday best with their instruments all nicely polished. The village folk shouted good luck to them as they left.

At the Beguinage Helda was almost as excited as if she were to play in the band herself. She and Aunt Ursula started early for the Kooter in order to get good places.

The stands on which the bands were to play had been erected in the middle of the square and nearby there were seats for the Burgomaster and the Judges. Everywhere Belgian flags were flying and garlands of flowers and bright colored streamers were hung from the trees which bordered the square.

Helda and her aunt found good places in a row of chairs nearest the band-stand. It was great fun for Helda to watch the crowd as it gathered. Every one was in his best holiday suit and wore his, or her, best, smiling, holiday countenance.

Around the edge of the Kooter there were many little booths, all gaily decorated, which sold cold drinks and sweets and food of various kinds.

Soon the various bands began to gather. They marched up with banners and flags flying in the breeze, and fifes and drums making a terrific noise. As the friends of each particular band would recognize it they would set up a great Hip! hip! hurrah! in Flemish, cheering until they were hoarse.

Soon the young people's bands began to arrive on the scene. Helda was craning her neck in every direction trying to find Gerard's band among them. "Child, you will tire yourself out before the music begins," chided Aunt Ursula, though actually she was almost as excited as Helda herself.

"Here they come!" cried Helda, jumping up on her chair that she might see better.

The little band was marching bravely across the Kooter, its standard bearer at the fore, holding aloft their yellow banner, which, as it waved in the breeze, showed a big red lion and the words: "Leuw van Vlaanderen" in big letters.

"Oh! are not Gerard and the boys splendid?" cried Helda, clapping her hands.

The crowd in the Kooter gave an extra cheer as Gerard and his band came up, for the boys were the youngest of any who were to compete that day. The boys of our little band, too, were mostly poor boys and were not able to have nice bright uniforms like many of the others. All they could afford in the way of a decoration was a sash of ribbon of the Belgian colors, red, yellow and black; but they all wore well

polished shoes, in place of their every-day *sabots*.

The members of some of the other bands smiled rather contemptuously at the get-up of Gerard and his allies while one set of young fellows, all rigged out in fine new green uniforms with red facings and gold buttons, snickered and nudged one another significantly. This particular boys' band had a long row of medals hung from the top of their banner, which they had won in previous competitions.

The little "Lions of Flanders" did not care a bit for the sneers. "Wait and see who can play the best; that will be the real test," they said to themselves over and over again. What difference did it make if there was but one silver medal hanging from their banner (that which they had won from Jan Trynk's band) there was room for all the more. Gerard felt that they had put their very best efforts into the practising and that they would surely win unless something went wrong; and when little boys and girls feel that way about a thing they are usually right.

The Burgomaster and the Judges took their seats on the platform and the Kooter was so crowded with people that



"The little band was marching bravely across the Kooter."

one could scarcely breathe freely. Some one got up and made a long speech, and, finally, the Burgomaster rose and gave the signal for the music to begin.

Band after band in gay uniforms mounted the platform in turn. There was a great blowing of trumpets and beating of drums, followed by a great clapping of hands and "bravos" in Flemish as each band finished its performance.

Gerard's band being the youngest, came last, but, in a way, this was to their advantage. They looked a fine lot of sturdy little fellows in their grey linen blouses and peaked caps as Gerard marshalled them into place, their Lion of Flanders flag in their midst.

They gave a military salute to the Burgomaster and Judges and began tuning up. Most of the boys were a bit nervous and Karel blew out his horn so many times that Bernard nudged him and told him to stop or the people would think he was a bellows.

At last Gerard gave the signal with his baton and with a triumphal burst the band began to play one of the most popular Flemish airs. Never had they played better. Never

had Gerard led his band with such a fiery determination. Such a round of applause as greeted them when they had finished; it was the loudest of the day!

There was a long wait while the Judges put their heads together and compared notes. Helda grasped her aunt's hand tightly, and even Aunt Ursula herself was manifestly anxious. Gerard breathed hard, but did not dare look towards where his mother and little Saskia were sitting. Would the Judges never get through talking and nodding their heads so seriously?

At last the Burgomaster arose. You could have heard a leaf stir. Then he slowly put on his glasses and glanced at a paper in his hand and began to slowly read out the names of the prize-winners. There was a gold medal to be awarded, one of silver and one of bronze. The grown-up bands came first, of course, and each name was received with cheers from its friends, and some growls, too, from the dissatisfied ones. Finally the Burgomaster reached the juvenile bands.

"It is with great pleasure," he began pompously – "Oh! how slowly he talks," cried out Helda, softly – "it is with

much pleasure – ahem – that I announce to you here from this platform that the gold medal, and an additional cash prize of fifty francs, for the boys' bands, has been awarded to the youngest of our 'Circles,' the 'Leuw van Vlaanderen.'"

Gerard was as if rooted to the spot where he stood, but some one gave him a push forward toward the platform and he managed to stammer out a simple "Thank you," to the Burgomaster, and make a low bow to the Judges. The Burgomaster handed him their hard-earned prize, and somehow or other Gerard got back to his place when the boys flung themselves upon him in great joy, all laughing and talking.

Then Gerard became conscious that his mother and Saskia and Helda and Aunt Ursula were surrounding him, all laughing and crying at the same time.

Wasn't Gerard a hero! Well, you may be sure of it. He was the happiest little boy in all Flanders at that moment. The Judges called up all the members of the little band and shook hands with them. On the stand was a tall man with long black hair flung back from his forehead who patted

Gerard on the shoulder and said that it was easy to see that he was a born musician. Some one told him afterwards that this was the great violinist from Brussels.

With hands trembling with joy Gerard fastened the medal on the banner where it hung proudly above the Red Lion.

When they started for home Gerard was surprised to find that Hubert was not there, and though he looked around everywhere for him he could not be found, so they were obliged to leave without him.

The truth was Hubert felt so miserable and jealous when he saw Gerard, his rival, walk up to receive the medal from the Burgomaster and the congratulations of the Judges, that he slipped away so that he might hide his anger and disappointment.

Hubert's pride in his music had helped him to play through his part well, but he could bear Gerard's triumph no longer, for he knew, as did everyone, that the real credit for the band's excellent performance belonged to its little leader.

Gerard knew exactly what was the matter when he found Hubert missing, and it almost spoiled his pleasure for a moment, but in the excitement of getting the tram back to their village and the congratulations of his friends Hubert was forgotten.

CHAPTER VI

The Lost Violin

Gerard and his little band had now to decide how they should spend their prize money. Every day Gerard had a new plan. He asked advice from Helda and Aunt Ursula each time he brought the milk, and proposed the wildest things imaginable. One was that they should build a club-house: Karel suggested that they should get uniforms with the money, but when they came to figure it out they found they could only buy about two uniforms and a half so that was manifestly unpractical, while as for the club-house that was even more nearly impossible.

One serious-minded boy did suggest that they should lay in a stock of music, but all vetoed that motion. Even Gerard admitted that they ought to have some "real fun" with the money.

So matters stood one evening when the boys had gathered to play their favorite game of ball in the little Kooter of the village. The little Flemish boys play their game with a ball something like a tennis ball, which they knock about from one to another, using a wooden bat with a kind of gauntlet fitted over the hand like a glove, in fact the boys call the bat the gant, which means glove. Even very young Belgian boys become very skillful at the game. Hubert was playing this evening for the first time in some days, but Gerard, for some reason or another, was not present.

In the midst of the game Gerard came flying up and called out breathlessly, "What do you think, boys, I have a chance to earn some money with my violin. The school-master," he went on excitedly, "has just been to the farm and he says that they want me to play for them to dance at the big Kermesse which is to be held at Ostend next month.

"It all came about through one of the Judges at the competition. He lives at Ostend. The school-master knows him," went on Gerard, "and when he heard I could play the violin and wanted to make some money so as to study he

said that perhaps he could help me."

Gerard's little friends were as pleased as himself, all except Hubert, who seemed to be paying no attention at all, but who went on knocking the ball blindly about, when, finally with an impatient mutter, he stalked away with a black look on his face.

"Now, boys, here's a good way to spend our prize money," exclaimed Karel. "We will all go down to the Kermesse with Gerard. That will be having some fun with the money, will it not?" The little fellows all clapped their hands and agreed that it would.

A Kermesse is a great fair held out of doors. Every town and village in Belgium has its own special Kermesse and the people make a great holiday of the occasion, with dancing, merry-making and all kinds of games.

Helda and Aunt Ursula were as pleased as Gerard himself when they heard the news and listened with the greatest interest while Gerard rattled away of the wonderful things he was going to do with the money he was to earn.

Perhaps if the people at the Kermesse liked his music he

would be able to play at other Kermesses and thus make a great deal more money, and then he could buy another dog, for Hugo was getting old now. Then, too, they could have a better and a bigger cart. Perhaps, too, he might in time be able to play at concerts, as did the school-master, and then, maybe, he would be earning enough money to be able to hire some one to help his mother on the farm, in which case, Gerard went on with shining eyes, he might even be able to go to the great city of Brussels where one can study the violin better than anywhere else in the world, and take lessons of the great violin master there.

"Oh, Aunt Ursula, why can't we go to the Kermesse, too?" cried Helda with enthusiasm.

"Dear child, you must know I can not leave my work here, and as much as I should be glad to give you the pleasure of seeing the Kermesse it is impossible," and Aunt Ursula looked really sorry, for she did not like to disappoint her little niece.

Gerard whistled and sang all through his work that morning; he was busier than usual, too, for he had lingered

along his route telling the news to all his friends, so it was nearly dark when he got back home and went up to his room.

He was tired, but still, as was his habit, he went to get his violin for a few minutes' practice. He went to the chest where it was kept and opened the case when, to his astonishment, he saw that his beloved violin was gone. His first thought was that his mother or Saskia had taken it down stairs, but his heart misgave him as he flew down to the living room.

No, neither his mother nor Saskia had touched the violin. They searched the house all over, turning out every corner, but could discover no trace of the instrument. Some one must have stolen it when they were all away from the house. Vrouw Maes never locked up her house while they were at work on the farm, nor did her neighbors, for they were all honest folk in the neighborhood, and never before had anything been missed.

Poor Gerard was in despair. He kept on looking in the most unlikely places, never heeding his mother's entreaties

that he should wait until morning. At last he gave up hope and flung himself on his mother's bed and wept.

There was not much sleep at the farm that night. Bad news flies fast, and before noon all the neighbors had heard of Gerard's loss.

The little band held an indignation meeting and organized a search themselves, but with no success. Whoever could have done such a mean act? It could only have been some one who knew the way about the house. But why should he have taken only the violin? It must have been some one with a spite against Gerard himself.

"Where's Hubert?" suddenly asked Karel, as the boys stood in a group debating the matter. For the first time they realized that he had not been seen for two days. The boys looked at each other. The same thought came to all of them. Could it have been Hubert? They well knew how jealous he was of Gerard and his music.

A few minutes later Karel was back with a sober look on his merry little face. At Hubert's house he had been told that Hubert had gone early that morning to Tournai, to stay a

week with an uncle of his who was a weaver in a carpet factory. This looked strange, and the boys began to whisper among themselves. Things began to look black for Hubert.

As for poor Gerard, he was sitting at home in the courtyard his head buried in his hands, his only company the dogs. They were wondering, no doubt, what was the matter with their little master. But Gerard took no notice of them, he could not bear even to have any one talk to him. His only thought was that now he would not be able to play at the Kermesse, nor at any other time, for how would he ever be able to get enough money to buy another violin? All his chances of earning money were lost.

"It was Hubert. We are sure it was Hubert," declared Karel, who had come over to try and cheer Gerard up.

Gerard shook his head. "I don't believe it," he said. "Hubert may not have liked me, but I am sure he would never have done me an injury like this." But, as he spoke, he remembered the milk inspection and Saskia's suspicions, and it set him to thinking. Could Hubert really have taken the violin? What difference did it make who had taken the

violin! The violin was gone.

Things soon fell back into their usual routine, except that Gerard did not laugh nor whistle at his work any more. The boys talked of it when they met, but the subject was gradually dropped because they saw it hurt Gerard to even think about it.

One hot afternoon Gerard was sitting beside the canal that ran back of the farm, idly watching a tall white bird hovering over the water. It was a heron who with his long bill was trying to spear a fish for his supper. A noise disturbed the bird, and Gerard, looking up, saw Hubert walking along the opposite bank. He evidently did not see Gerard, but went on until he came near a bridge when, throwing off his clothes, he dived down into the water. He did this several times, for, like Gerard, he was as much at his ease in the water as a frog.

Gerard had just made up his mind to go and speak to him when just as Hubert dived again he struck his head on one of the bridge timbers.

As fast as he could Gerard ran towards the spot where

Hubert had gone down, and kicking off his *sabots* and throwing down his coat and cap he leaped into the canal and, as Hubert rose for the second time, caught him and with much effort drew him to the bank.

Gerard and the bridge-tender dragged the unconscious Hubert up the steep canal bank and carried him to Vrouw Maes' house. Some one rushed for a doctor. Some one else for Hubert's folks. The neighbors all came running in to help, and it was several hours before Hubert was brought around to his senses. He was put in Gerard's attic room, and Vrouw Maes nursed him as if he were her own boy.

Gerard was the hero of the hour. Hubert would undoubtedly have drowned but for him. Only a hardy little Flemish head could have stood such a knock, but Hubert mended rapidly. As soon as the doctor would allow it Hubert begged to be taken to his own home. He seemed grateful for all that the Maes family had done for him, but they saw he was anxious to get away.

Shortly after Hubert returned home he sent word to Gerard to come to see him. Gerard found him lying on a

sofa by the window alone.

"I asked them all to go out of the room," said Hubert, looking up at Gerard as he stood beside him. "I have something to tell you that I couldn't mention in your house; you have all been so good to me.

"Gerard," he went on, "come closer; it was I who took your violin. I climbed into the attic window when no one was about. I was so angry that I did not know what I was doing. I only knew that I could not bear to have you play at the Kermesse.

"But I did not injure the violin. I did not know what to do with it after I had taken it so I stole into the cow-shed and hid it away up under the eaves. You will find it there just above the white cow's stall. It must be safe. Nobody would ever think of looking for it there."

Gerard stood speechless. His relief was so great that he could have hugged Hubert. He forgot the wrong which had been done him, and was only conscious that he had his violin back.

"I might as well tell you everything," Hubert went on

quickly, before Gerard could speak. "It was I, too, who put the water in the milk on the day of the inspection. I went into the dairy the evening before and put the water in the empty jugs. Saskia nearly caught me. I wanted to injure you, and now I hate myself every time I think of it. But here," he said, taking a little bag out of his blouse, "is the money for the fine you had to pay. I saved it up. I always meant to tell you about it some day and pay it back."

"No, no, Hubert," cried Gerard, who probably felt worse for Hubert than Hubert did for himself, "I won't take it. Don't you know that the Jufvrouw Ursula paid the fine?"

"Never mind; take it anyway. It will make up for some of the harm that I have done you and I will tell the milk inspector all about it, too. You may tell your mother and sister, but you will not tell the boys, will you?" asked Hubert, anxiously.

"I will not tell anybody but my mother," declared Gerard stoutly. "And it will make no difference between us; you can come back in the band and everything will be just the same as it used to be," he went on, for Gerard was a generous little

boy.

"No, no, I know the boys suspect me," muttered Hubert. "I am going away. I am going to Tournai to live with my uncle and learn to become a carpet weaver. You have been a better friend to me than I deserve. Now go away, Gerard, and find the violin." With these words Hubert buried his face in his pillow.

Gerard tried to make Hubert take back his money, but the latter only shook his head and motioned for him to go.

As soon as Gerard arrived home he rushed to the cow-house and astonished the white cow so calmly chewing her cud by climbing up over her head. There, tucked in under the eaves, and hidden by the straw, was his beloved instrument.

True to his promise to Hubert, Gerard told nobody but his mother. He merely explained to every one that his violin had been found, and that whoever had taken it had only intended to play a prank on him.

When Hubert was well enough he took Gerard and went and confessed his fault to the milk inspector. It might have

gone hard with Hubert had not Gerard begged so earnestly that the authorities let him off with a good scolding. So the inspector gave it out that some enemy had watered the milk and that the Maes family were in no way to blame for it. Thus Gerard cleared himself without harm to his companion.

The members of the band may have had their suspicions when Hubert left the neighborhood, but they were loyal and kept things to themselves. Aunt Ursula asked no questions, only telling the little milk-man again and again how glad she was that he had found his violin. Gerard very much wished that he could pay back to Aunt Ursula the money she had so kindly given him, but that would be telling, so he gave it to his mother to spend as she thought best.

CHAPTER VII

The Kermesse

Gerard and his little friends began to make their preparations for going to the Kermesse. Their parents had all given their consent as soon as they learned that the school-master had promised to go with the boys to see that they did not get into mischief.

Helda was the only one who had any troubles left. She, too, wanted very much to go to the Kermesse. How could it be managed? She knew that it was useless to worry Aunt Ursula about it, but the good lady knew well what Helda had on her mind, for though she was usually as lively and chirpy as a bird she now went about with a very thoughtful and sad face. Aunt Ursula said nothing, thinking it better to let Helda find a way out of her difficulty herself.

After much thought Helda wrote a very blotty, but nice, little letter to her family asking why her papa and mamma

would not like to go to the Kermesse and take her along, too. She then carefully directed the envelope to Mynheer Shorel, Bruges, and dropped it into the letter box by the great gate of the Beguinage.

But alas! Papa Shorel wrote back and said that while he would like nothing better than to give his little daughter pleasure and that he and her mamma would enjoy seeing a Kermesse again but ~ and it was a big BUT ~ he was just in the midst of curing the flax and Helda would know how busy they all were, and that neither he nor her mamma could think of leaving home just at the present time.

Helda sighed. Yes, it was so. She had forgotten how very busy every one was at the time of drying out the flax before it was put away in the big storage lofts behind the house.

Helda's mother reread the letter and smiled over it and thoughtfully set about to work out a plan. Helda's brother, Dirk, was soon coming home from Antwerp, and he might stop on his way and take his little sister for a day to the Kermesse. This decided, Vrouw Shorel wrote a letter to Dirk and a letter to Helda, and you can imagine what a happy

little girl Helda was when she learned how it had all been arranged.

Just before the Kermesse Dirk came. He had grown so tall and looked to Helda so like a grown man, and he probably felt that he was one too, though he was only fifteen. Helda thought he was a wonderful brother as she listened to his tales about Antwerp, the fine old city, with its beautiful old cathedral with its tall tower and the old buildings and the valuable pictures. Ships come and go from every port of the world to the very city gates. Helda listened attentively as Dirk told of the great warehouses and the wealthy merchants and valuable cargoes from over-seas that were piled up on the quays. Dirk himself had walked between piles of ivory tusks of elephants, out of which all sorts of ivory things were carved, and had seen bales and bales of rubber from the great African forests.

Dirk said that when he had finished school he was going to work in the office of one of the great Antwerp merchants who dealt in rubber. "These merchants of Antwerp are rich men," said Dirk. "I am going to be a merchant in Antwerp

myself some day, and Helda, you can come and live with me and keep house for me," finished up the big boy, grandly. And, of course, Helda said she would, and forgot for the time all about her wish to become a Beguine.

On the day of the Kermesse there were no laggards at the train that was to take them to Ostend. The little band had clubbed together to share all the expenses and buy the tickets.

The train was crowded with holiday-makers for the Kermesse at Ostend was always a very popular event, the city being situated right on the sea. It was with some little difficulty that all our little friends found seats but finally they were all placed. Dirk and Helda with Saskia, whom Helda had brought with them. Gerard hugged his violin case in his arms, and the rest of the boys, with freshly scrubbed faces and in their best clothes, fairly brimmed over with glee.

It was not long before they were at Ostend. Everything was very gay, everywhere were garlands and flags flying. Booths were set up on either side of the streets and there were tents for the dancers in the middle of all the Kooters.

Already there were such crowds swinging up and down the streets that the children found it hard to make their way and keep together.

Gerard would never have been able to find his way but for the help of the school-master, who piloted him to the tent where he was to play for the dancing. Here Gerard was installed on a high wooden seat half hidden in the greenery and bunting and soon began to play to let the people know that the dancing was about to commence. He felt a little strange at first, especially when his friend the school-master had to hurry away to look after the rest of the party, but as soon as he drew his bow across the violin all his shyness left him and he played away so merrily that the couples at once began to come into the tent and take their places on the sand-strewn floor.

Meanwhile, after listening to Gerard for a time, Dirk and Helda and Saskia joined hands to keep from becoming separated and wandered about just bent on having a good time. There were the usual amusements to be found at a Belgian Kermesse, merry-go-rounds, shooting galleries,

places where fortunes were told, noisy mechanical melodeons grinding out popular Flemish airs, and everywhere were stacks and stacks of brown gingerbread.

It all seemed very marvellous to the children. Dirk was at first a little high and mighty, and tried to tell them how much better it was all done in Antwerp, but he soon forgot his dignity and entered into all the fun with as much glee as did Helda and Saskia.

When it was time for luncheon they went back for Gerard, who was then released from his duties until later on in the afternoon.

The whole party gathered on the beach where they ate the lunch which they had brought with them, and afterwards walked up and down the Digue, a splendid promenade, or walk, which runs for more than a mile along the shore, lined on one side by magnificent villas and hotels.

The best part of the day for the children was when the Archery Clubs began their practice. There are numbers of clubs of archers in Belgium to-day, as there have been for long years, for, in the old days, the Belgian archers were a

famous body of fighters. They defended their country from invasion for hundreds of years.

"Are they not fine?" exclaimed Helda, as the archers were drawn up on the shooting field before their targets.

The archers wore green jerkins, or belted-in coats, leather knee breeches and buskins, and little bonnets, or caps, of green, with a feather on one side, were set jauntily on their heads. Each archer carried a long bow just like the bows with which the ancient archers were equipped, and slung over the shoulder was a leather case, or quiver, which held the arrows.

By this time Gerard was playing to a much bigger crowd than in the morning. Presently he saw a tall man with long black hair brushed back from the forehead watching him from the other side of the tent. It was the same man who had been beside the Burgomaster at the band competition.

When the dance was finished the tall man walked over to Gerard and said, "So you are a violinist as well as the leader of a band, my little man. Who taught you to play the violin?"

Gerard then told him of his struggles to become a musician and how he loved music, and how it was the dream of his life to be able to study under the great master at Brussels.

The man's rather severe face softened as the little boy poured out his story.

"You must have the chance," he said, when Gerard had finished his tale. "You play better than you know, my little fellow."

He then took a card out of his pocket and wrote something on it and handed it to Gerard. Gerard gasped when he read the name on the card. It was that of the great violinist of Brussels. Not only the best in Belgium, but one of the best in the world.

"You know that name, eh?" continued the tall man with half a smile.

Did Gerard know it? Did not every music lover in Belgium know it?

"Well, you must come to me in Brussels and I will see that you become the violinist that you wish to be. It will cost

you nothing, and I can soon put you in the way of earning money. Now talk it over at home. The directions on the card will tell you how to find me when you are ready to come to Brussels. No, don't thank me" – as Gerard began to stammer – "I am always looking for boys such as you. I see they are waiting for you to begin again, so good-by for the present, and don't forget."

Before Gerard could utter a word the tall man had gone. Gerard was dazed. How he went on playing he never knew. Was this really he, little Gerard Maes? Was it not all a dream?

How the school-master ever managed to get his little charges together again is difficult to tell, but it was finally accomplished and at dusk the weary but happy little party of young folks found themselves on the train homeward bound.

Some had their pockets stuffed with knick-knacks which they had bought. Dirk had a walking stick and Helda had bought a gingerbread lion for Aunt Ursula. Karel had cut his thumb on a wonderful knife he had bought, and every



“The archers were drawn up on the shooting field before their targets.”

one had more or less sticky fingers and faces.

It was a sleepy lot that finally separated to go to their homes that night, but Gerard and his mother sat up very late talking seriously together.

Did Gerard's dream come true? Yes, it did. Gerard did go to Brussels to study with the great violinist who had befriended him, and Aunt Ursula loaned him enough money so that his mother might hire some one to help her in his stead.

Gerard studied diligently in Brussels under his master, and worked so hard that he was soon able to play at important concerts when he commenced to make money seriously.

The very first money that he earned he sent to Aunt Ursula to repay her loan, and he was soon able to send some to his mother, too, but the first time that he had any left over for himself he bought a fine, young, strong dog for the cart so that good, faithful old Hugo could rest from his long hard work and sleep on a mat before the door and do nothing, like a real house dog.

Little Helda's dream came true, too. She made great progress in her work and became a maker of beautiful lace like Aunt Ursula, so that the visitors who came to buy lace of the Groot Jufvrouw almost always chose some from the stock made by Helda.

And you will be glad to know that the little band prospered under Karel's leadership, and that Hubert became an excellent carpet weaver and a fine young fellow.

THE END.

Our Little Spanish Cousin

Mary F. Nixon-Roulet



Fernando and His Donkey

Preface

Washed by the blue Mediterranean and kissed by the warm southern sun, the Iberian Peninsula lies at the southwestern corner of Europe. To this sunny land of Spain we owe much, for, from its hospitable shores, aided by her generous queen, Columbus sailed to discover that New World which is to-day our home. We should therefore be very friendly to the country which helped him, and American boys and girls should welcome the coming of Our Little Spanish Cousin.

CHAPTER I

The Christening

One of the first things which Fernando remembered was the christening of his little sister. He was five years old and had no other brother or sister to play with, for Pablo, his wonderful big brother, was away at the Naval School, and his older sister, Augustia, was at school in the convent.

When Fernando's nurse told him that he had a little sister he was delighted, and begged to see her; and when all his relatives on both sides of the house came to see the baby christened, he was still more pleased.

Fernando was a little Spanish boy, and in his country a great deal is thought of kinsfolk, for the Spanish are very

warm-hearted and affectionate. So Fernando was glad to see all his aunts and uncles and cousins and all the friends who happened to be visiting them at the time.

Fernando's father, the Señor Don Juan de Guzman, was a courtly gentleman, and he bowed low over the ladies' hands, and said, "The house is yours, señora!" to each one; so, as boys generally copy their fathers, Fernando assured his little cousins that he "placed himself at their feet," and welcomed them just as politely as his father had the older folk.

What a wonderful time he had that day! First came the christening in the great Cathedral which towers above Granada, and in which lie buried the king and queen, Ferdinand and Isabella, in whose reign Columbus sailed away from Spain to discover America. The Cathedral was so grand that it always made Fernando feel very strange and quiet, and he thought it was shocking that the baby cried when the priest poured water on her and baptized her, Maria Dolores Concepcion Isabel Inez Juanita. This seems a long name for such a tiny little mite, but there was a reason

for every single name, and not one could be left out. Nearly all Spanish children are named Maria, whether boys or girls, because the Spaniards are devoted to the Virgin Mary, and as the baby was born on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, she was called Concepcion. Isabel was for her aunt, and Inez was for her godmother, and Juanita for her father. Her name did not seem at all long to Fernando, for his name was Fernando Antonio Maria Allegria Francisco Ruy Guzman y Ximenez. Every one called him Fernando or Nando, and his long name had troubled him but once in all his gay little life. That time he had been naughty and had run away from his *aya*, the nurse who always watches little Spanish children like a faithful dog, and he had fallen into the deep ditch beside the great aloe hedge.

The aloes are stalwart plants with long leaves, wide-extending and saw-toothed, and they are often planted close together so as to make hedgerows through which cattle cannot pass. The leaves of the aloe are sometimes a yard long, and they are very useful. From them are made strong cords, and also the *alpagatas*, or sandals, which the peasants

wear; and the fibres of the leaf are separated from the pulp and made into many things to wear. The central stem of the aloe grows sometimes twenty feet high, and it has a number of stems on the ends of which grow yellow flowers. The leaves are a bluish-green in colour, and look like long blue swords. The long hedgerows look very beautiful against the soft blue of the Spanish sky, but little Fernando did not see anything pretty in them as he lay at the bottom of the ditch, roaring lustily.

"Who's there?" demanded an American gentleman, who was travelling in Spain, as he came along on the other side of the hedge, and Fernando replied, "Fernando Antonio Maria Allegria Francisco Ruy Guzman y Ximenez!"

"If there's so many of you I should think you could help each other out," said the American, and when he finally extricated one small boy he laughed heartily, and said, as he took Fernando home:

"I should think a name like that would topple you over." After that Fernando always called Americans "the people who laugh."

After the baby was christened, they went home through the narrow streets of the quaint old town. All the horses wore bells, and, as they trotted along, the tinkle, tinkle sounded like sleighing-time in America. The reason for this is that in many places the streets are too narrow for two carriages to pass, and the bells give warning that a vehicle is coming, so that the one coming from the opposite direction may find a wide spot in the road, and there wait till the other carriage has passed.

As the christening party went toward the home of Fernando, it passed a man driving two or three goats, and he stopped in front of a house, from a window of which was let down a string and a pail. Into this the man looked, and taking out a piece of money which lay in the bottom, he milked the pail full from one of the goats, and the owner pulled it up to her window again. It seems a strange way to get your morning's milk, but it is sure to be fresh and sweet, right from the goat, and there is no chance to put water in it, as milkmen sometimes do in America.

The houses Fernando passed were all painted in many

soft colours, and they had charming little iron balconies, to some of which palm branches were fastened, blessed palms from the church at Holy Week, which the Spaniards believe will keep lightning from striking the house.

Fernando's house was much larger than the rest, for his father was a noble of one of the oldest families in Spain, whose ancestors had done many splendid things for the state in the olden times. The house had several balconies, from which hung down long sprays of blossoms, for every balcony railing was filled with flower-pots. There grew vines and flowers, nasturtiums, hyacinths, wallflowers, pinks and violets, their sweet scents filling the air.

When the christening party entered the house, the baby was borne off to the nursery, and Fernando, no longer a baby, but a big boy with a baby sister, was allowed to go with the rest to the *patio*, where breakfast was served.

The *patio* is one of the most charming things about the real Spanish houses. It is a court in the centre of the house, larger than an ordinary room, with a marble floor and a huge awning which protects from the sun, yet leaves the



“The owner pulled it up to her window again.”

patio open to the fresh air and sweet scents of the sunny out-of-doors. All the family gather in the *patio*, and it is the favourite lounging-place for old and young. In the *patio* of the Señor Guzman's house were orange-trees and jasmine, and all colours of violets bloomed around the marble rim of the fountain, which was in the centre.

What a wonderful thing that christening feast was to Fernando! There was much laughing and talking, and such good things to eat!

When all were through eating, little Juanita's health was drunk, and her godfather proposed her health, and recited a poem he had composed in her honour.

"Queridita Ahijada!
Plague alecielo qui tu vida
Sea feliz y placentera
Cual arroyo cristalino
Qui atra viesa la pradera

Su Padrino, Francesco."[1]

This very much delighted every one, and so with laughter and merriment the christening feast was over.

[1] "Please God, my little godchild,
That your life as pure may be
As the laughing brook which through the valley,
Runneth ever limpidly.
Your Godfather Francesco
Wishes fervently."

CHAPTER II

School-Days

When Fernando was seven years old he began to go to school. Little Juanita cried bitterly, for she was devoted to the big brother who played such lovely games with her, and she did not like to think of his being away from her nearly all day. However, she was told that Fernando was a big boy now, and that before long she would be having a governess to teach her to read and embroider, so she stopped crying very quickly, for she was a sunny little child, and went to picking flowers in the garden quite contentedly.

How grown up Fernando felt! To be a real schoolboy! His school-days were all alike. He arose at half-past seven, when the church-bells were ringing for the daily service; he had a bath, said his prayers, and dressed himself very neatly, for he had first to be looked over by his *aya*, and then inspected by his mamma, to see if he could pass muster, and

was clean and neat as a little Spanish gentleman should be. Mamma being satisfied with his appearance, he gave her his morning kiss, and greeted the rest of the family. Then followed breakfast -- a simple, wholesome meal of *semula*, or gruel and warm milk, with bread and honey and eggs.

After a run in the garden, the *ayo*, or preceptor, called to take him to school. Fernando skipped happily away to study until twelve o'clock, when dinner was served to the day boarders, a dinner of soup, vegetables, and dessert, with a little playtime afterward. Spanish boys do not take tea or coffee until they are grown up. At half-past four the boys are turned out of school, and then comes the delight of the day to Fernando. His *ayo* has disappeared, and in his stead has come Manuel, his own man, who tells such delightful stories of knights and warriors and the glories of Spain, and who thinks that all his little master does is perfect. Manuel knows all about the city, and he is willing to take Fernando any place he wishes to go, provided it is a fit place for a boy of rank. He knows just where the marionettes are playing, and if there is a gay crowd on the square, a trained bear or a

funny little monkey, he will be sure to have heard about it, and take Fernando to see it. If there is no special excitement, Manuel takes him to the *paseo*, where all the boys of the town gather. Here they play in mimic battles and bull-fights, and Fernando enters into everything with delight, until Manuel thinks it is time for the señora, his mother, to pass by in the carriage. How delighted the little boy is to see her, and how his tongue rattles as he tells her all the events of the day, as he rides home with her through the long soft twilight of the soft Spanish night! How good his supper tastes, a simple little supper of chocolate, rich and dark, white bread and golden honey, with some little iced cakes, which dear old Dolores, the cook, has made for the little master. All the servants love Fernando dearly, for though he has a hot temper, and sometimes is very wilful, he is so loving that they do not mind his naughtiness. After supper Fernando says the rosary with his *aya*, goes over his lessons a little, and then tumbles into bed in a happy slumber.

All his days are very much alike, for Spanish children are brought up very simply, and have little excitement, though

they have many pleasures. There are little visits paid to aunts and cousins, visits remembered not too pleasantly by the pet dog and parrot of his aunt. The parrot was brought from Cuba by Uncle Enrico, the priest. The bird knows Fernando well, and scolds terribly in most unchurchly language every time he approaches the cage. The French poodle, too, does not greatly care for a visit from Fernando, for the boy cannot help teasing, and the fat, stupid dog, his Aunt Isabel's darling, does nothing but lie around on silken cushions and eat comfits. Fernando likes animals, and would never really hurt one, but there is something in the calm self-satisfaction of Beppino which stirs up all the mischief in him, and Aunt Isabel has been heard to exclaim: "Fernando will be my death! He is a dear boy, and if it came to choosing between him and Beppo, I am quite sure that I would take my nephew, but, thank Heaven, I have not to choose!"

Fernando's own dog was different. He found him one day close by the garden railing, a poor, ragged fellow, lean and hungry, with a lame foot, but a pair of pleading and wistful brown eyes, which, with all their misery, had yet a

look of good-fellowship within them which appealed to Fernando's gay nature, as the pitiful plight of the little fellow appealed to his tender heart. The dog put a pink tongue through the railing and licked Fernando's hand, and that clinched the bargain. Henceforth the two were friends. Fernando persuaded Manuel to bathe and tie up the wounded foot, and feed the puppy. That was all the boy dared at first, but the next day he found the dog in the same place and fed him again. Every day after that the little tramp followed him to school, and when school was over his yellow-haired dogship awaited his benefactor. Manuel winked at the friendship, and allowed Mazo, as Fernando called him, to have many a good meal at the garden gate. Manuel was a great stickler for the proprieties, but he had been a boy once, and there were some things that Fernando's lady mother would not at all have comprehended, that good old Manuel understood perfectly. Mazo was far more interesting to Fernando than the thoroughbred, ladylike pets of his mother, and it was a sore subject with him that Mazo, who was so clever, who could

whip the tramp dogs of any of his school friends, should be kept outside the house. His mother did not seem to realize that Mazo's fighting qualities were what made him valuable. One fatal day, when she had driven to the *paseo* a little earlier than usual, and had seen a fight between Mazo and another little dog, equally disreputable, she had cried out:

"Fernando, come away from that ferocious beast! He must be mad!" and she had seemed anything but reassured when Fernando had tried to calm her by saying:

"But, mamma, he is not mad; I know him well; he is the gentlest of beings, and he can whip any dog in the *paseo*," the pride of possession getting the better of prudence.

Thereafter Manuel was most careful of Mazo's appearance. He captured him and washed him, and let him sleep in a shed at night, and by degrees the little fellow lost his trampish appearance, and became a semi-respectable member of society, though still ready to follow Fernando like a shadow, to fight at his will, and to share with him an excursion into forbidden lands. It was really droll to see the different airs which Mazo could assume. He had ever an eye

upon his audience, having early learned in the hard school of misfortune that his comfort depended not at all upon himself, but upon the humour of those about him. With the outside world his look was wary. With the family of his master he was apologetic. His brown eye seemed to say: "I place myself at your feet, most noble señors; I pray you excuse me for living." But with Fernando, while it was tempered with respect, his air was one of good-fellowship alone. Even the señora herself, the head of the house and authority in chief, as is the case in all Spanish households, came to regard Fernando's dog with a degree of friendliness, and finding this out, the servants treated him kindly, and Mazo decided that his lines had fallen in pleasant places. Upon this, however, he never presumed. He knew not how long it would last, but felt that he was upon good behaviour. He restrained his desire to chase Juanita's pet cat, and to bark when the parrot imitated his barking, though the restraint put upon himself must have been severe, for he made up for it when out with Manuel and Fernando. Then he was himself again, Mazo the tramp.

CHAPTER III

A Visit to a Hacienda

One day in October, when the sun was shining in golden beauty, the señora said to her husband:

"I should like to go to the *hacienda* to-morrow, and take the children with me, for *la niña* has never seen the picking, and Fernando did not go last year or the year before."

"It will give me pleasure to escort you," said the Señor de Guzman, in the courtly manner which Spanish gentlemen use toward their wives. "At what hour will it please you to start?"

"As early as you can," she answered. "So that we may arrive there in plenty of time to see the picking before luncheon, and after a siesta, drive back in the pleasant part of the afternoon."

"We shall start at nine, then," said her husband, "and

should arrive there by ten or a little after."

When Fernando returned from school and heard that he was to accompany his mother next day, he was nearly beside himself with joy.

"Juanita," he cried, "you have no idea how delightful it is at the fruit farm! I have not been there for two years, but I remember it well. All the oranges one can eat, and such raisins! You will much enjoy it, I am sure."

He was up bright and early next day, and impatient to start long before his mother was ready, and even his father was waiting before the señora made her appearance. She was a large woman, and very slow and graceful in her movements. No one had ever seen her hurried, and every one expected to wait for her, so that it was nearly half-past nine when they started. The coachman whipped up the horses, and away they went skimming over the rough stones. Fernando sat with Diego and Manuel on the front seat of the carriage, while Dolores sat beside the señora, holding Juanita on her lap. The señor rode upon his high-stepping Andalusian horse beside the carriage, and pointed out

places of interest to the children as they drove along.

A gay young officer passed by them, young and slim, riding a handsome horse, and some soldiers were manoeuvring on the Plaza. One poor fellow, once a gay soldier, but now with an empty sleeve, dressed in a faded army blouse and wearing a merit medal, was begging in the street, and the señor stopped to give him a piece of silver, for Spaniards are always generous and pitiful, and cannot resist a beggar. "He had served in Cuba," said the señor to his wife, and she sighed as she thought of the many lost to Spain and their dear ones in that useless war.

Fruit-venders passed along the street, and donkeys so laden with fruit and flowers that almost nothing could be seen of them but their slim little legs and their great waving ears. Water-carriers were there, carrying huge jars which looked like those used by the old Moors; and a travelling merchant, in gray garments, but with brightly dressed mules. It was not so bright a party that they passed later, for a peasant funeral passed by on its way to the cemetery. Four young men carried the bier, upon which was the body of a

child, covered all but its face, which lay exposed to the sun.

"Take off your hat, son," said the señora. "Always do so to a passing funeral, for maybe yours will be the last salute the dead will receive on earth."

No sooner was the funeral passed than there came a straw and charcoal merchant, crying, "*Paja! Carbon! Cabrito!*" So many people in Granada have no way to warm themselves except by the *brazero*, in which charcoal is burnt, that there is great need for the charcoal man, and he drives a brisk trade.

Next they saw a priest on a sick call, for he bore the Blessed Sacrament. A crowd of ragged urchins stopped in their play to kneel as he passed, and Fernando and his father raised their hats.

By this time, the carriage had reached the outskirts of the city, and the road wound along the banks of the Darro, a rushing stream which gushes out of a deep mountain gorge, and passes through the town. Its banks are lined with quaint old houses, leaning far over the river, and Fernando saw women there, washing their linen in the water, and

spreading their clothes on the stones to dry.

Outside of the town their way lay along the beautiful Vega, which stretches beyond Granada, in green and fertile loveliness, to the far-away hills. Crossed by two rivers, the Darro and Genil, the plain is dotted with whitewashed villas, nestling like birds in the soft green of the olive and orange trees. Sloping gradually to the mountains above, the Vega is green as emerald, and truly a fair sight beneath the turquoise sky, and the mother-of-pearl of the snowy mountains.

Fernando's father owned large estates upon the hillsides, and raised oranges and grapes. The last were used for raisins, the grapes from which the finest wine is made, the *Amontillado*, for which Spain is so famous, not reaching their greatest perfection in this part of the land.

In an hour they reached the farm and drove down the long lane which led to the house. The *Hacienda* of Santa Eulalia was a large, low building, with a broad porch and a tangle of vines and roses climbing over it. Huge trees spread their arms over the roof, and from the balcony one could

see groves of cypress-trees, pines, oaks, and poplars, beyond the fruit-trees, and, above all, the rose-coloured peaks of the Sierras. Upon the slope of the hill, as it fell away toward Granada, were the grape-vines, with huge clusters of grapes, purple, white, and red, weighing down the vines. There were, too, terraces where the raisins dried; and nearer the house were the drying-sheds, where an army of packers pressed the raisins under boards, and carefully sorted them before packing. The vineyards were beautiful, but even more so were the orange groves, and one who has seen a grove in full fruit never forgets the beautiful sight. The trees are deep green in colour, and full of leaves, many of them bearing at the same time flowers and green and ripe fruit.

The children were wild with delight, and ran about eager to see the picking and sorting of the fine fruit, for the oranges of Santa Eulalia were famous for size and quality. The trees grew rather low to the ground, and were covered with fruit which the pickers were gathering. Ladders were put up to the lower branches, and each picker carried a basket swung to his neck by a cord. He carefully picked the

oranges, one at a time, and dropped them in his basket, and so expert were many of them that it seemed as if they had scarcely mounted the ladder before the basket was full. Many young girls were employed as pickers, and they were particularly skillful, vying with the men in their swiftness. Very gay were their voices, and merry jest and song enlivened the work, until it seemed as if it were not work but play. Fernando and Juanita hopped about like little rabbits, eating the fruit which rolled to the ground, for often the golden globes fell from the trees, as they were shaken by the picking.

When the baskets were filled, the oranges were carried to the sheds and left overnight to harden the skins a little, when each orange was wrapped in soft tissue-paper. For this are employed young boys and girls, and very expert they grow in the wrapping of the oranges, each one being properly wrapped with but a twist of the hand. The next thing is the packing, and the oranges are stored away in wooden boxes, and are ready to be shipped to market.

The children ate so many oranges that they scarcely

wanted any of the luncheon prepared for them at the *hacienda*. There was an omelet with green peppers, a delicious salad, some fowl, and tiny round potato balls, all sprinkled over with chopped parsley, with a huge dish of oranges and grapes for dessert.

The señora insisted upon a little siesta after luncheon, but Fernando's eyes were so wide open that he could not close them as he swung to and fro in the great hammock between two orange-trees in front of the house. He was delighted when his father sat down beside him, in one of the big easy chairs, and said:

"You look to me like a boy who would like to hear a story."

"Indeed I would; please tell me one," said Fernando.

"Have you ever heard about the judges of Pedro the Cruel?"

"No, papa," said Fernando, all interest.

"A long time ago, there ruled over Andalusia a king named Pedro, and he was so disliked by his subjects, and did so many wicked things, that he was called Pedro the Cruel.

He lived in the city of Sevilla, and though he was cruel, and often heartless, still he had a strong sense of justice, which would not allow the common people to be badly treated. He found out one day that four of his judges had been cheating the people and taking bribes, and he determined to teach them a lesson. He went to his favourite gardens, those of the Alcazar, and sent for the judges to come to him there. It is a wonderful place even to-day, and then it must have been very beautiful. Huge banana-trees waved their rough green leaves above the tangled beauty of the flower-beds, where jasmine and violets and roses grew in profusion. In the midst was a fountain, and Don Pedro knelt beside it, smiling wickedly as he placed upon the perfumed waters, five oranges cut in halves, and placed flat-side down. The reflection was so perfect that any one would be deceived, and think they were whole oranges floating upon the water.

"'How many oranges are there here?' asked the king, smiling genially, and the judges replied:

"'Ten, may it please your Gracious Majesty.'

"'Nay, but it does not please my Gracious Majesty to have

four fools for judges,' he said. 'Liars! Can you not see that there are but five?' and he raised two of the halves and held them together. 'Know, oh, unjust judges,' he said, sternly, 'that the king's servants must see more than the surface of things if they are to conduct that portion of the realm which it is their business to attend to, and since you cannot tell a half from a whole, perchance that is the reason of the tales I hear of your ill-dealings with the property of some of my subjects!'

"He ordered them to be beheaded and their places filled with better men, and the poor people whom they had defrauded had their property restored to them. There are many other stories of King Pedro which are not pleasant to tell, and it is good to remember that he sometimes did kind things."

"Thank you," said Fernando. "What is the Alcazar where the gardens were?"

"It is a very remarkable place, and when you go to Sevilla you will see it. At first, hundreds of years ago, when the Romans were in Spain, it was the house of Cæsar; afterward

the Moors turned it into a fortress, and it is a perfect example of Moorish work. Don Pedro rebuilt it, and spent a great deal of money upon it, making it the most beautiful palace in all Spain. All manner of things happened there, among them the murder of Don Pedro's half-brother, Don Fadrique, who he was afraid would lay claim to the throne.

"But here come your mother and Juanita, and I think your rest time is about over. Go and play, and tell Manuel we return at four o'clock, so you must be on time."

So Fernando spent a delightful afternoon in the orange grove, and drove home through the cool twilight, passing



the *paseo* just as the band was playing the *Marche Real*, the national song, which he hummed until he went to bed.

CHAPTER IV

At the Alhambra

"*Mi madre,*" cried Fernando, rushing into the house one day in October, "to-day is the feast-day of the head master, and we have a holiday. May I have permission to go to the hill to see Antonio?"

"Not by yourself, my son," replied his mother, and Fernando said, hastily, "Oh, no, *madre mia*, Manuel says that he will take me if you will permit me, and, if Juanita's nurse could be spared, we could take the *niña*, as she has never been there, and that would give her pleasure."

"Let me see," his mother paused a moment, "the day is fine. This morning I am busy, but after luncheon I will drive thither with the little one, and leave you for an hour while I go on to the villa of the Señora Sanchez; but you must be a good boy, and mind Manuel."

"Yes, mother, and you will see Antonio, whom I like best of all the boys at school," said Fernando, and he hastened away to make ready for the great treat. A drive with his mother in school hours was a pleasure seldom indulged in, and a visit to the great hill which crowns Granada was treat enough, but to take Juanita — these were things so pleasant that he said to himself, "I think my guardian angel must have whispered in my mother's ear to give me all this pleasure."

It was about two o'clock as they drove through the narrow streets of the city up the steep and hilly way which led to the outskirts of the town.

"You are going to see the nicest boy in Granada, and the most wonderful castle in Spain, *niña*," said Fernando to Juanita, and the two children chattered merrily as the carriage went slowly up the hill.

"Here is a riddle I heard at school, *niña*, see if you can guess it,—

"'Guarded in a prison strait,
Ivory gaolers round her wait,

Venomous snake of sanguine hue,

Mother of all the lies that brew!'"

"I do not know," said his little sister, wonderingly. She thought all that Fernando said and did was perfection. "What is it, Nando?"

"Why, the tongue, of course," he said, pleased to have given a riddle which she could not guess; and his mother said:

"That is a very good riddle, and I hope you will remember it, for it is the tongue which makes much mischief in this world. Remember that 'a stone and a word flung do not return.'"

"There is Mazo following us," said Juanita, and her mother said, laughingly, "Really, Fernando, I don't see why you like that dog so much! He is uglier than Picio."[2]

"He isn't handsome, but you have told me that handsome is as handsome does!" said her son, and his mother laughed again.

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[2] Picio was a man so ugly that his name has passed into a proverb in Spain.

"Oh, what is that?" cried Juanita, as the carriage made a turn, and some splendid great towers came into view.

"That is the Alhambra," said Fernando. "It is the most wonderful castle in Spain. Manuel said it was begun in 1238, in the reign of the Moorish king, Ibn-l-Ahmar, and it was years and years in building. He says the Moors used to have the castle and the city of Granada, and I read in my history of how the Catholic king, Ferdinand, came here to conquer it. He fought and fought, but the Moors wouldn't give it up. I think they were a brave people, if they were beaten, don't you?"

"Yes, my son, they were very brave, but they did such cruel things to the captives they took, that it is not surprising that the Spaniards wanted to conquer them," said his mother.

"They captured Christian girls, and forced them to become their wives, though what they wanted with them I cannot see, for they already had many wives, and I should think one was enough for any man. Where shall we find your friend, Fernando? If you wish I will leave you with him

for an hour, and continue my drive."

"Oh, thank you, mother, I knew you would let me stay!" cried Fernando; and Juanita said, "Please leave me, too, mother, that I may see Antonio and the great palace."

"Antonio lives within the palace, mamma," said Fernando. "He was born there, and he and his sister, Pepita, have never been away. He is to go to the English school at Gibraltar, but not until he is bigger. May we ask some one where he is?"

"Certainly. He must be a nice boy to have lived always in such a place, and to have you so devoted to him. There is a guard; ask him where the apartments of the boy's father are," she said to Manuel, who sat upon the box with the coachman. Further inquiry, however, was not necessary, for, as the carriage made its way up the broad drive shaded with magnificent elm-trees, which the Duke of Wellington planted, a boy came bounding toward them.

"There he is," cried Fernando. "Antonio, come here, we have come to see you."

The carriage stopped, and Fernando hopped out as

lightly as a squirrel, giving Antonio a good hug, for Spanish boys are never ashamed of showing that they like their friends. Antonio's cap was off in a trice and he smiled and bowed as Fernando presented him to his mother and little sister. Antonio was a handsome boy, with eyes as dark and blue as the sapphire of the Spanish skies, and fair hair tossed back from an open brow. All Spaniards are not dark, and, in Andalusia, the province in which Granada lies, there are many blonds.

"I will leave Fernando and Juanita with you for a visit," said the señora, graciously. "Will you bring them here in an hour?"

"*Si*, señora," said Antonio. "But if you would so honour us, the señora, my mother has prepared a little luncheon in the Garden of Lindaraya at four o'clock, and she would be most happy if you would partake of it with us."

"Thank you, then I shall allow the children to remain with you until that time and I shall myself prolong my visit with my friends at the villa," she replied. "When I return I shall do myself the pleasure of meeting your mother."

So she drove off, and the children tripped happily away, followed closely by Manuel and Dolores, for Spanish little ones of good family are never allowed to go about alone. However, one must relax a little sometimes, and the two attendants saw a pleasant hour before them as they sat idly about while the children played in the wonderful gardens of the palace. Pepita, Antonio's sister, was but a year older than Juanita, and the two little girls were quite happy together, and the boys did not consider themselves too big to play with them. They played hide and seek through the marble halls, and tag and chase about the flower beds. The little girls played house and made mud pies, although Dolores objected to this and told Juanita that she would be as dirty as the "*caseada de Burguillos*"[3] if she were not more careful. Juanita thought Pepita was wonderful because she had been born in a palace, and her father was custodian of the wonderful place, but it was Antonio who claimed her greatest admiration. He was even more marvellous than

[3] The "housewife of Burguillos," who prided herself on her neatness, yet who was seen to spit in her frying-pan to see if it was hot enough.

Fernando, she almost thought, because he was bigger, and his eyes had such a kind and merry look, and he always carried her over the rough places in his strong young arms, and lifted her over the walls as they strolled through the gardens.

She had never seen such gardens as these of the Alhambra. They were full of the most beautiful flowers, and there was the most delicious scent in the air.

Antonio told her it was from the wallflowers, which grew here in great profusion, and were twice as large as they were in other places. But besides them there were great trees of purple heliotrope, the blooms as large around as Juanita's big hat; and geranium-trees, taller than a man, with orange-trees in bloom, late though it was, and with the ripe fruit upon their branches also.

Then the children had a charming luncheon on the grass, for Antonio's mother set forth for them all manner of good things – a dainty salad with some cold meat, thick chocolate in tiny cups, and cakes in the daintiest of shapes. What a merry picnic it was beneath the shade of the great

orange-tree which Antonio told them had been there for over a hundred years, and from which the great American, Washington Irving, had picked fruit when he lived at the Alhambra! Then when the party was over, and his mother had not come, Fernando said:

"Antonio, tell us a story. You know some about the castle, I am sure." And little Juanita begged, "Do please tell us one, Antonio," and as nobody could ever resist the *niña's* wistful, brown eyes, Antonio smilingly began the story of "The Three Sisters."



“They played hide and seek through the marble halls.”

CHAPTER V

Antonio's Story

"Once upon a time," Antonio began, "there were in the palace of the Alhambra three princesses whose names were Zayde, Zorayde and Zorahayda. They were daughters of the Sultan, for it was in the days when the Moors reigned in Granada, and there were no Christians here but captive Spaniards. The princesses were kept in a tower called the Tower of the Infantas, one of the most beautiful towers of the Alhambra. It was fitted up in a manner befitting the home of the king's daughters. The walls of the room were hung with tapestries in cloth of gold and royal blue; the divans were heaped high with pillows, the pillars and arches which held up the roof itself, were in filigree of softest hues – blue, terra-cotta, and gold. The Princess Zayde's chamber was the richest, all in cloth of gold, since she was the eldest Infanta; that of Zorayde was hung with steel mirrors,

burnished bright, for she was most fair to look upon and loved to look upon herself; while that of the youngest, little brown-eyed Princess Zorahayda, was delicate in tone, as if some rare jewel lay in a dainty casket. Upon the princesses waited the discreet Kadiga, an elderly duenna who never let them from her sight for a moment. She watched them as a cat does a mouse, but there was one thing she could not control, and that was the eyes of the princesses. They would look forth from the windows, and, indeed, this Kadiga never forbade, for it seemed to her a pity that three such fair maidens should have so little amusement, and she thought it could not possibly hurt them to gaze into the gardens below.

"One day, while the princesses were looking out the narrow windows, they saw something which made them look and look again. Yes, it was true – could it be? it *was!* They were the very same – the three Christian princes whom they had seen at Salobrena; but here they were labouring as captives. At the tourney to which the princesses had been taken, they had seen these noble knights, and had fallen in

love with them, and it was for this that their father had shut them up in a tower, for he had said no daughter of his should marry a Christian.

"But the knights thought differently, and they had come to Granada in the hope of finding their princesses, and had been taken captive and were compelled to hard labour.

"'It is he!' cried Zayde. 'The knight with the scarlet tunic is the one I saw!'

"'Yes, but the one in blue, he is mine!' cried Zorayde.

"Little Zorahayda said nothing, but she looked with all her eyes at the third knight. And this was not the last time she saw him, for the knights had come thither, bent on rescuing the maidens, and had bribed their jailer to help them to escape. So one moonlight night, when the moon was turning into silver beauty the orange-trees of the garden, and shining in fullest light into the deep ravine below the Tower of the Infantas, the knights awaited their lady-loves in the valley below, and Kadiga let them down by a rope-ladder.

"All escaped in safety but little Zorahayda, and she feared

to go.

"'Leave me,' she cried. 'I must not leave my father!' and at last, since they could not persuade her to go, they rode sadly away without her, and her little white hand waved a sad farewell to them from the window. There she still is, so say the legends, and there are those who, walking in these gardens at midnight, tell that they have seen a white hand wave from the tower window, and a voice whisper through the murmur of the fountains, *'Ay di mi Zorahayda!'*"

"Oh, Antonio! hast thou seen her?" cried Juanita, and her brother laughed, and said:

"Little foolish one, it is but a story! But Antonio, tell us a tale of battle, for this is but a woman's story, and there have been splendid deeds done in this old castle."

"Splendid ones, and sorry ones as well," said Antonio, who was old for his twelve years, and had lived so long in the atmosphere of romance that he seemed a part of it, in speech and manners. "Shall I tell you of the taking of the Alhambra from the Moors? It was a glorious fight, and both sides were brave men."

Then he told them of the conquest of Granada, when Christian knight and Moor fought valiantly for the possession of the splendid city, with its gem, the Alhambra. He told of how the noble knight, Juan de Véga, was sent to demand tribute from Muley ben Hassan, King of Granada, and that fierce old monarch said:

"Return to your sovereigns, O Spaniard, and tell them that the kings of Granada who paid tribute are all dead. My mint coins only swords!" Brave words, but it was his son, Boabdil the Unlucky, who was forced to surrender the castle to the victorious enemy, and who handed the keys to the Spaniards, as he rode through the gate of the Siete Suelos, saying: "Go, possess these fortresses which Allah has taken from me, but grant me this one boon, that none other shall pass under this gateway from which I have come out." And Ferdinand granted his request and walled up the gate, so that, from that day to this, no one has passed through that entrance.

These and other tales Antonio told them, and the afternoon passed so quickly that the children were surprised

when their mother's voice warned them that it was time to go home.

"Oh, mamma," they cried, "must we go?" and the señora smilingly waited a little, chatting with Antonio's mother, while he picked a huge bunch of flowers for the children to carry away with them. Then the good-byes were said, and they drove away crying:

"Come soon to see us, Antonio." To which he replied, in pleasant Spanish fashion:

"Thank you well, and very much for your visit!"

"Isn't he a nice boy?" said Juanita.

"Quite a little Don," her mother answered, smiling. "Fernando, I am glad to see that you have the sense to choose your friends so well," and Fernando grinned, boylike, well pleased.

"Oh, who is that?" Juanita asked, as a fantastic figure approached.

"That is the gipsy king," said her mother. "You know the gipsies live all huddled together there, below the Alhambra, and they have a chief whom they call king. They are a lazy

set, doing little but thieving and telling fortunes. They live in little burrows, like rabbits, set into the hillsides, and there are pigs, goats, and dogs all living together with the people."

"That girl with the king is very pretty," said Fernando, "with her black hair and eyes, and her bright skirts, and the pomegranate flower behind her ear."

"The pomegranate is the flower of Granada, you know," said his mother, "and it does look pretty in her dark hair. Hear her call her dogs! Gipsy dogs are all named Melampo, Cubilon, or Lubina, after the shepherd dogs who followed the shepherds, and saw our Lord at Bethlehem. Ah, Juanita, *'Jesus, Maria y Josef!'* You must not sneeze! Drive faster, Diego, and Dolores, wrap the baby in that Palencian blanket, so soft and warm. The nights grow cool quickly at this time of year."

"Why do we always say *'Jesus, Maria y Josef!'* when people sneeze?" asked Fernando.

"It has been the custom so long that people have almost forgotten why it is done," replied his mother; "but I remember my grandmother saying once that her mother

told her the reason. Years and years ago, in 1580, there was in all Andalusia a terrible plague called the *mosquillo.* People sneezed once, and lo! they had the plague, and little could save them, though some few recovered. So it grew to be the custom, when one sneezed, for those who heard him to look pityingly upon him and say, *'Dios le ayude,'*[4] or call upon the holy names to help him, saying, *'Jesus, Maria y Josef.'"*[5]

"See that ragged beggar, mamma," said Juanita. "May we not give him something?" as a little boy came hopping along beside the carriage, crying, lustily:

"Una limosna por el amor de Dios,[6] *señora!"*

"I have no *centimos,"*[7] said the señora, "and it is not wise to give more to a beggar, but you can always give politeness, *niña*, and when you have no money say, *'Perdone me, usted,'*[8] or, *'Por el amor de Dios,'*[9] and thus you will not give offence to God's poor."

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4 "God help him."
5 "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph."
6 "An alms for the love of God."
7 Coppers
8 "Pardon me, your Grace."
9 "For the love of God

CHAPTER VI

The Holidays

Fernando had been three months in school and was beginning to grow tired, when it came time for the feast of Christmas, and he was very happy in the thought of all he was to do and see during his holiday. He and Juanita were very much excited in preparing their *nacimento,* which nearly every Spanish child has at Christmas time. This is a plaster representation of the birth of Christ. There are in it many figures, a manger surrounded with greens, the Baby Our Lord, St. Joseph, and the Blessed Virgin, the Wise Men worshipping the Holy Child, and angels hovering near, as well as the patient ox and ass who were his first worshippers. Juanita was wild with excitement as these were all grouped and set in place. She was only four and did not well remember the Christmas before, so that it was all new to her.

Christmas Eve there was a grand family party, all the relatives coming to the home of Fernando and partaking of a supper of sweetmeats and wine. In the morning there was, of course, early Mass in the great cathedral, where the choir sang divinely. It started way up in the loft to sing the *Adeste Fideles,* the Church's Christmas hymn for centuries, slowly coming nearer and nearer; and Juanita thought it was an angel choir until she saw it come into sight and the glorious voices rolled forth in a volume of song.

Then the children had breakfast and they made their *aguinaldo,* for every servant on the place expected a present as surely as did the old darkies of Southern days. The postman, the errand boy, the porter, the *sereno* who walks the street all night with his lantern, trying your door to see if it is locked properly, and assuring you that all is well as the hours strike – all must be remembered. Then the señora took the carriage, and the children accompanied her, as she filled it with sweetmeats for the poor children and such of her special protégés as could not come to the house for their *aguinaldo*.

It was a cold day, for Granada grows cold in the winter time, and is not like other Spanish cities, which have summer all the year. The wind sweeps down from the Sierras and brings with it a blustering hint of mountain snows; and as the houses have no furnaces and seldom good stoves to heat them, even the rich can suffer, and the poor do suffer bitterly.

While the sun shines it matters not, for the sun of Andalusia is so warm and bright that it blesses all who lie beneath it; but when the dark days come or evening's mantle falls upon the town, people hover close about the *brazero* and long for summer.

With Fernando it mattered little, for he was seldom still enough to be cold, and he spent a merry Christmas, falling asleep to dream of delightful things, and waking to the happy thought that it would soon be the feast of the Circumcision. This is New Year's Day, and is celebrated with much festivity in Spain. The evening before there is a grand party for the grown-ups, and slips of paper are passed around, one being drawn by each person. They are in pairs,

so that the one who draws number one must go to supper with number one, and great merriment is made over the pairing off of the guests. The gentleman has to send a bunch of flowers or sweets to the lady whose number he draws, and not a few matches have been made in Spain by this merry custom.

Fernando and Juanita, however, were quite otherwise engaged. They were sent early to bed and were dreaming of the sugar-plums of the morrow, wondering whom they would first meet, for they think in Spain that what happens to you on New Year's Day will determine the course of the whole year. If you meet a pauper you will have bad luck, but if you see a man with gold in his pocket, you will have money all the year.

Merrier still was the feast of the Three Kings, which is the day upon which little Spanish children have gifts made them as American children do at Christmas. This is in honour of the Wise Men having brought presents to Our Lord on that day, so that on the eve of January sixth, the feast of the Epiphany, Fernando and Juanita set their little

shoes on their balcony with a wisp of straw to feed the Magi's horses, and with many surmises as to what they would find in them on the morrow. What wonderful things there were! Fernando had all the things that boys love ~ tops, marbles, balls, and a fine knife; while Juanita had a wonderful dolly and all manner of dainty things for her to wear. "The Three Kings never make one feel like the governor of Cartagena," said Fernando, as he tossed his new ball and lovingly fingered his knife.

"But there is still another gift for thee and thy sister," said his father, and he led them to the door. There stood a wonderful little donkey, his bridle decorated with streaming ribbons and bells, his kind eyes blinking as he turned his head and seemed to say, "Hello, Little Master, are you and I going to be great friends?"

"Oh, papa, is that for us?" cried Fernando, while Juanita clapped her tiny hands with delight. It took Fernando but a moment to spring on the donkey's back, but his mother cried, warningly:

"Be careful, son! Remember how the little Prince of

Granada rode too fast through the streets, and fell from his pony and was killed."

"Have no fear," her husband said, smiling, "the donkey will not go fast enough to hurt him; that is why I selected him." And he placed Juanita up behind her brother, bidding Manuel walk beside them, while Mazo, unbidden, jumped around.

Everything else that Fernando had sank into insignificance when compared to the little donkey, which he named Babieca, and which he and Juanita rode whenever they had a chance. Babieca was a kind little beast, though something of a rogue. He seemed to know that he must play no tricks when Juanita rode him, and he behaved himself well; but when Fernando rode, it was quite another matter. Babieca would prick up his long ears and go along quietly, then stop suddenly without saying "by your leave," and, of course, Fernando would go over his head. He would not hurt himself at all, and the naughty little mule would look at him wonderingly as if to say: "Now what on earth are you doing down there?" Fernando soon grew to expect such

antics and was on the lookout for them.

When St. Anthony's Day came, of course Babieca had to go with the other four-footed friends of the saint, to be blessed and insured from all harm through the year. The seventeenth of January is the day of St. Anthony, patron of mules, horses, and donkeys, and a grand parade took place. All the people of the town who had such animals drove them down to the church to be blessed and to get a barley wafer. Many of the animals were gaily decorated with streamers and ribbons, and some with flowers; and all along the streets small booths were set up containing little images of St. Anthony and barley cakes. Babieca behaved very well at his blessing, though his refractory tongue did try to nibble the priest's stole; but some of the horses kicked and neighed, and, with the braying of the many donkeys and mules, there was a din not often heard in staid Granada.

There were no more fêtes for the time being, and Fernando, a trifle spoiled by all the gaiety, had to return to his studies again. It was a long month before carnival time, but his thoughts went forward to that delightful season, and

it seemed to the little boy as if it would never come. However, as "all things come to him who will but wait," the great day arrived at last, and Fernando was wild with joy. Carnival time is just before the beginning of Lent, and is a season of great merriment. Under a turquoise sky, with no clouds to mar its fairness, there is a pageant almost like those of the days of chivalry, and Fernando and Juanita, attended by their faithful Manuel and Dolores, saw it all. Fernando dressed as a page, and his sister as a court lady of the days of Isabella the Catholic, and they were masked, as are all the people who throng the streets on these gay days.

Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday the carnival continues, each year, and the children are asked to little dances at the houses of friends, and also to hear student choirs sing and to see plays. But what they most enjoy is mingling in the crowds upon the *paseo*, throwing *confetti* at those who throw at them, seeing the flower-decked carriages, the wonderful costumes; monks, nuns, generals, court ladies, flowers, animals, all are represented -- all are laughing and throwing *confetti* right and left. Children are selling *confetti*, crying

shrilly, "*confetti*, five *centimos* a packet. Showers of a million colours! Only a *perro Chico!*"[10] Ah, how gay and delightful it all is! Juanita saw much, and Dolores lay down at night thanking the saints that carnival lasted but three days! But Fernando saw everything, and poor Manuel's legs were weary as he kept pace with his little master, now here, now there, now everywhere, laughing and jesting, the merriest lad in all the carnival.

Alas, it was all over! Ash Wednesday dawned, dull and heavy, the weather as sad and sorry as the day. Fernando dragged himself to church, where his brow was marked with ashes according to custom, and gazed longingly at the *Entierro de la sardina*, a bit of pork the size and shape of a sardine, buried to show that the fast had begun, for no one in Spain eats meat on Ash Wednesday, and very little of it in Lent.

Fernando looked so depressed at supper that his mother asked him:

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10 *Perro chico,* little dog, name given to a five-*centimo* piece because of the little lion upon it.



“All the people of the town who had such animals drove them down to the church to be blessed.”

"What is the trouble, little son, are you ill?"

"No, mamma," he said. "But it is so long till Easter."

"Not if you do not think about it," said his mother with a smile. "Do your work with a will, and the days will pass quickly. If you are a good boy, you shall have a treat at Easter."

"Oh, what will that be," he asked, and Juanita cried, eagerly, "Shall I have it, too?"

"Both of you," the mother said. "Your father is going to take us to Sevilla, to see the grand Easter festival, and we shall see your brother and sister as well, and your cousins and your Aunt Isabella, so you must be good children."

"Indeed we will," cried both, joyously, at the thought of so much pleasure.

CHAPTER VII

Easter in Sevilla

Easter in Sevilla! What a gay and charming time it is! Flowers are everywhere, blooming in beauty, and all the people seem joyous in the thought that the long season of fasting is over.

Fernando and Juanita had arrived in the city on the Saturday before Palm Sunday, and were wild with delight at seeing their cousins, Mariquita, Pepita, and Angel, and in looking forward to the delights of the week's holiday with its processions and fêtes. Beginning with the beautiful Procession of the Palms, on Palm Sunday, all through Holy Week are processions and celebrations, and the little folk thoroughly enjoy them.

Their older brother and sister were there, also, and full of wonderful tales of what they had done at school.

Fernando thought Pablo was a wonderful being, and that everything he did was perfect. He could hardly wait until he himself would be big enough to go away to college; and little Juanita felt quite the same way about Augustia, who had learned many things in the convent.

"Indeed, *niña*," she said, "it is pleasant at school with the girls, but that Mother Justina makes one work so hard, and that the play-hours are few. I have embroidery to make, and lessons to say, and my class learns French as well as Castilian. But the other girls are charming. Most of all I like Paquita de Guiteras, an *Americana,* at least she comes from the Island of Cuba, and the girls say that she is an Indian, and that her mother was an Indian princess married to her father, a noble Spaniard. Of this I cannot say, and she herself does not relate, but she says that in Cuba the Spaniards have often married the Indians and have been kind to them, and have not destroyed them as have the *Americanos* in the *Estados Unidos*. Well, *niña*, Paquita is the merriest of girls! She has always some prank to play upon some one, and, indeed, she cares not if it is the Mother Superior herself, so she can have

her joke. Her aunt, good Sister Mercedes, is always fretting for fear lest Paquita should be in disgrace, but it worries Paquita not at all. One night she did the funniest thing. There is one girl who is very mean to the little ones, always teasing them, and they dare say nothing, as she is the niece of the Mother Superior, and she believes nothing against her. This Teresa Alcantara once found a little girl, and teased her until Paquita could stand it no longer, and flew at Teresa and bit her hand. Sister turned at that moment and saw the bite, but she had not seen what had gone before, and would not listen to what I tried to tell her, and Paquita is always too proud to try to make excuses, and just looked at Sister so fiercely from her great black eyes that the Sister was still more displeased.

"'Thou art but a savage wildcat,' she said, and took her to Mother Superior for punishment. She could not have any playtime for a whole week, and she would have to apologize to Teresa, too, and I think she hated that the worst of anything. But she got even with her, as you shall hear. She found out that Teresa was terribly afraid of cats, and one

night, when we were all safely tucked away in our little beds, there came from behind Teresa's curtains a terrible scream, and she jumped out of bed and rushed up and down the dormitory. Such a breach of decorum was never seen before, and the nuns were shocked to a degree. Teresa kept shrieking, 'A wild beast is in my bed! A wild beast is in my bed!' and after calming her down they went to investigate. What do you think they found? A feather duster! It was tucked under the sheets, and who could have put it there? No one knew, but every one felt that Paquita was the only one who could have thought of such mischief. But the sisters did not try to find out, for one of them had seen Teresa teasing the little girl, and knew why Paquita disliked her so much; and after that the big bully let us little ones alone."

"Oh, it must be so nice," sighed Juanita, but Pablo laughed, and said that those were girl's stories, and that far more exciting things happened at the naval college, especially when they all went on a cruise.

On Easter Sunday morning the children went to the cathedral to see the wonderful dances which take place but

three times a year. Fernando and Juanita were struck dumb with the beautiful cathedral, so unlike the Gothic one of Granada; for this one at Sevilla is a Saracenic church, built hundreds of years ago, begun by the Moorish Sultan, Yakub al Mansour, in 1184.

How strange it seemed to see dancing in church! Fernando and Juanita sat beside their mother, on their little camp-stools, for there are no pews in Spanish churches. The whole centre of the church is empty, and people kneel there during the mass, or if they are too tired or too little to stand, they rent camp-stools for half a cent, and an old woman who has them in charge hobbles along with a stool, which they may keep while the service lasts.

The men generally stand, and it is interesting to see them settle themselves in a comfortable position when the sermon begins, and stand there almost without moving while the preacher speaks, sometimes a half-hour, sometimes a whole hour. But the hearers do not seem to mind, for these Spanish monks are very fine preachers.

As the children gazed at the beautiful altar covered with

flowers, there came the sound of music – violins, flutes, flageolets, and hautboys all making a quaint harmony – and with the music was mingled the sound of youthful voices, fresh and sweet, and a band of boys entered the chancel, and gliding down the altar steps danced quietly, singing as they danced. Their bodies swayed to and fro in time to the music, at first slowly, then, as the time quickened, castanets click-clicked with the other sounds, and the boys moved faster and faster, still in perfect time, yet not with wild abandon, but rather with dignified respect for the place. They were quaintly dressed in the court costumes of the Middle Ages; on their heads were big Spanish hats, turned up at one side with a sweeping blue feather, a mantle of light blue was over one shoulder, their vests were of white satin, their hose and shoes of white. The boys danced on until the great bells of the Giralda rang out, and then they vanished, the music growing softer and softer, until its last strains sounded far away, like a floating wave of heavenly harmony.

"How pretty the dance was," said little Juanita, as they walked home from the service. "Why do they dance in

church?"

"The Holy Scriptures say that David danced before the Lord," her mother answered, "so perhaps that is the reason the Sevillians think this is a form of worship, but you must ask your cousins to tell you how it was first done."

"Do tell me, Mariquita," said the little girl, and her cousin said, "I do not know how it happened at first, but it has been done ever since the Moors were here in Sevilla. Only once in hundreds of years has it been stopped, and then an archbishop said it was not right to have dancing in church. He made every one very angry, for the people said, 'What our fathers did is good enough for us!' So they went to the Pope, and he said that he could not tell unless he saw the dance. So the boys and the musicians were taken to Rome, and there danced before the Holy Father, who said, 'I see no harm in this, any more than in the children's hosannas before Our Lord when He entered Jerusalem. Let them have their dance so long as the clothes which they wear may last.' Then they came back and so determined were they to continue it for ever, that they never let the clothes wear



“Their bodies swayed to and fro in time to the music.”

out to this day. If one piece of a suit shall be worn it is so quickly mended or repaired that no suit has ever worn out all at once, so that these are the same suits as those worn long ago."

"I am so glad they still have it," said Fernando, "for I wouldn't have missed seeing it to-day for anything."

CHAPTER VIII

Rainy Days

"Mamma, would you allow me to go to the bull-fight with father and Pablo?" asked Fernando next day.

"No, indeed, my son, a bull-fight is no place for women and children," his mother replied. "I have never been to one in all my life, and Juanita shall never attend. I wish Pablo did not care to go, either, but he must do as he wishes now that he is grown. A boy cannot always be at his mother's girdle, but you must be much bigger than now before you will see such a sight."

Fernando sighed, but he knew that there was no use saying more, for the word of *la madre* was law. He was very anxious to see a bull-fight, for every boy in Spain desires that above all things. The fights are held on all holidays, but the finest one of all is at Easter. The immense amphitheatre of

Sevilla holds thousands of spectators, men wild with excitement over the sport, and even women, though the most refined ladies do not frequent the *corridos*. The bull is turned loose in the centre of the huge ring and tormented until he is ready to fight. Men with sharp-pointed darts, called *banderillos*, tease him by throwing their barbs at him, and pricking his skin until he is nearly crazy. Then men mounted on horseback, the *picadores*, wave scarlet cloths before his eyes, exciting him still more, for a bull hates red worse than anything in the world. He dashes at the cruel cloth, and sometimes is too quick for the man who carries it, tossing him on his horns, but generally it is the poor horse who is killed, and the man jumps away to safety. The *matador* is the one who slays the bull, and he is sometimes killed himself. It is a terribly cruel affair, though Spaniards say it is not so cruel as our prize-fighting.

It was late that evening when Fernando went to bed, and ere he did so there was quite an excitement. They were all seated upon the piazza of the house, he and Juanita, his cousins and their elders, when there was a great cry from the

street, "The toro! The toro!" and a clatter of horses' hoofs. All screamed loudly, for to have a bull escape from the pens is a frequent occurrence, and not a very pleasant one. The cries became louder, the horses' hoofs beat nearer and nearer, and as in the dusk a figure dashed down the street, the señora, screaming loudly, caught Juanita to her and tried to climb the pillar at her side. She was very stout, and the pillar was very slippery, and she could not climb with one arm, so she slid down as fast as she climbed up, squealing all the time, *"A toro, Madre di Dios! a toro!"*

Fernando was frightened, too, but he was a brave boy, and he tried his best to push his mother up out of danger, boosting her as she slipped down, but not helping very much, as you might suppose. It seemed to him an hour, but it was only a minute before servants came from the house, and as they did so a horse dashed up before the pillars, and, stopped too hastily by his rider, slid along the stones on his hind feet. On his back was Pablo, waving his *sombrero*, and crying, "What a *corrido!* It was glorious! Six bulls to die, and Rosito never in such form! But, *madre mia*, what is the

matter?" as he sprang from his horse and assisted his mother to a seat.

The señora could not speak, but Fernando said, "We thought the noise was a bull escaped, and I was assisting my mother to a height of safety."

Pablo looked at the little figure speaking so gravely, then threw back his head and shouted with laughter, but seeing Fernando's hurt expression, stopped quickly, and said:

"Bravo, little brother, thou art a good knight to care for thy mother and sister!"

"Better than thou!" His mother had regained her voice by this time.

"Thou art still the same Pablo, and will yet be the death of thy poor mother," but Pablo kissed her hand so gallantly, and begged her pardon so amiably, that she quite forgave him.

Next day, alas! it was raining, and it rained so hard all that day, and nearly all of the next, that the children were like little bears in a cage. They played with everything they could think of, but after awhile they grew restless and

quarrelled so that the grown-up folk grew nervous, too.

At last, Mariquita's father, gay and charming Uncle Ruy, came to the rescue.

"Who wants to take a trip into the country with me?" he asked, and as each one squealed "I!" he said:

"Of course we can't go, really, but we can make believe, and I shall take you to a *hacienda* outside the old wall of Sevilla.

"It lies amidst orange and olive groves, and all kinds of flowers, and many of the things we eat come from that very place. Who knows how they pickle olives?"

"Are olives pickled?" asked Juanita, and Mariquita said:

"How queer it seems that all the things we eat have to go through so much before they can be eaten. I did not know that olives had to be pickled."

"Yes, *mi niña*, and we will play that we are visiting an olive grove, and we can see the way the olives are picked and made ready for food. See, here are the trees, and the fruit is picked from them and placed in baskets. There are two kinds of olives used, green and ripe, the green ones are picked just

before they begin to turn soft. These are separated from the others, and the bitter taste is removed by soaking in fresh water for a long time, or some picklers soak them for a shorter time in a solution of potash lye. This softens the skin and extracts all bitterness, but the olives must be soaked in clear water, which is frequently changed to get all the potash off. Then they are placed in weak brine, and afterward in stronger, until they have the salty taste which we like so much. Then they are put in small barrels and taken to the bottling rooms, where they are bottled and labelled for the market."

"How is the oil made?" asked Fernando.

"That is harder to do, but it is very interesting to watch. The fresh olives are carefully picked, dried a little, and then crushed. Old-fashioned stone mills are used to crush the fruit, and the mass is pressed to extract the liquid which contains all the watery juice as well as the oil and pulp."

"What do they do after it is pressed?" asked Fernando.

"They let it stand for a month and the refuse goes to the bottom. Then the oil is poured off and allowed to stand

another month, when the process is repeated. After the third time the oil is ready for use. The best oil is made in this way, as it keeps its colour and flavour better by the settling process than when it is filtered.

"In some places the olives are placed on a platform and the millstone is placed over them. This is turned round and round by means of a pole to which a donkey is hitched, and the mass which is turned out is placed in rush baskets, which are put under a press which is screwed down by five or six men, so that the oil is squeezed out, but that is a very old-fashioned way of making oil, and there are better ways now. They still use this, however, when there is a big crop, and they want to get the fruit made into oil as rapidly as possible. Great care must be taken that everything is clean and that the oil does not become rancid, or it will all be spoiled."

"Is everything we eat so interesting?" asked Juanita.

"The things we eat and wear, too," her uncle answered, "and nothing in all Sevilla is more interesting than the way of making silk."

"How is that done?" asked Fernando.

"I am afraid I could not make you understand it all, unless you could go to the silk manufactory, and even then it would be hard for you. But I can tell you about the cocoons, and that is the strangest thing about it. The silkworm was first brought to Europe from India in 530, when monks brought it to the Emperor Justinian. The silkworm is a kind of a caterpillar which feeds on the leaves of the white mulberry-tree, and lays his eggs in a kind of gummy substance on the leaves in the end of June to be hatched out in the following April. The caterpillar is small at first, about a quarter of an inch long, but grows to be three inches in length. By means of a substance in their mouths the silkworms spin out silky strands which form cocoons, each fibre being about eight hundred yards long. When ready for weaving, the cocoons are placed in an oven at a gentle heat which kills the chrysalis so that the silk fibres can be removed and wound."

"How do they get the silk wound? Doesn't it break?" asked Fernando.

"It is rather hard to do," his uncle answered, "but they

learn to be very careful, and the cocoon is soaked in warm water which loosens the little filaments. When the cocoons are reeled the first step has been taken, and the reeled silk is called raw silk, from which all silk products are made."

"I wish we could see it all, but perhaps we can sometime when we are here again," said Fernando. "Oh, it has stopped raining!"

"Yes, indeed, and the Guadalquiver has overflowed its banks," said Pablo, coming in at that moment. "There has not been such a freshet for years. Come along with me, Nando, and we will go boating in the streets. I climbed to the top of the Giralda, and the whole country looks like a great sea."

"Oh, may I go with Pablo and see?" cried Fernando, and his mother, with many injunctions to Pablo to take care of him, said "Yes."

They went to the Alcazar gardens, those most wonderful gardens of Spain, and as it was early spring the flowers and insects were making merry in the sunshine, which had come back with renewed force, after its vacation. Scarcely tumbled

by the rain, lovely banksia roses were climbing over the walls, the rosy, blossoming judas-trees, tinted acacias, and pink almonds were in bloom, and orange-trees were bursting into fragrant beauty. Violets and tulips, yellow oxalis, wild hyacinths, and the scarlet dragon-flower carpeted the ground, while tall white lilies, like fair maidens, and stately iris with sword-like leaves, reminding one of the knights of chivalry who once walked these paths, stood sentinel adown the walks. Fernando saw, too, the insects which flitted among the branches, beetles with bright green coats like emeralds, white and gold butterflies, birds with brilliant wings and sweet voices. But Pablo was thinking more of sport than of nature, and he hurried along until they found a man and a boat to row them, and what a gay sail they had right down the main streets of the town! Past the cathedral steps and the Golden Tower where Columbus piled up gold brought from the New World, Sevillians say, and all the other interesting sights of the city, so that Fernando came home tired and happy, to tell Juanita of the wonderful things he had seen.

"I do not wonder that they say, 'He whom God loves has a house in Sevilla,'" he said. "It is so beautiful a city."

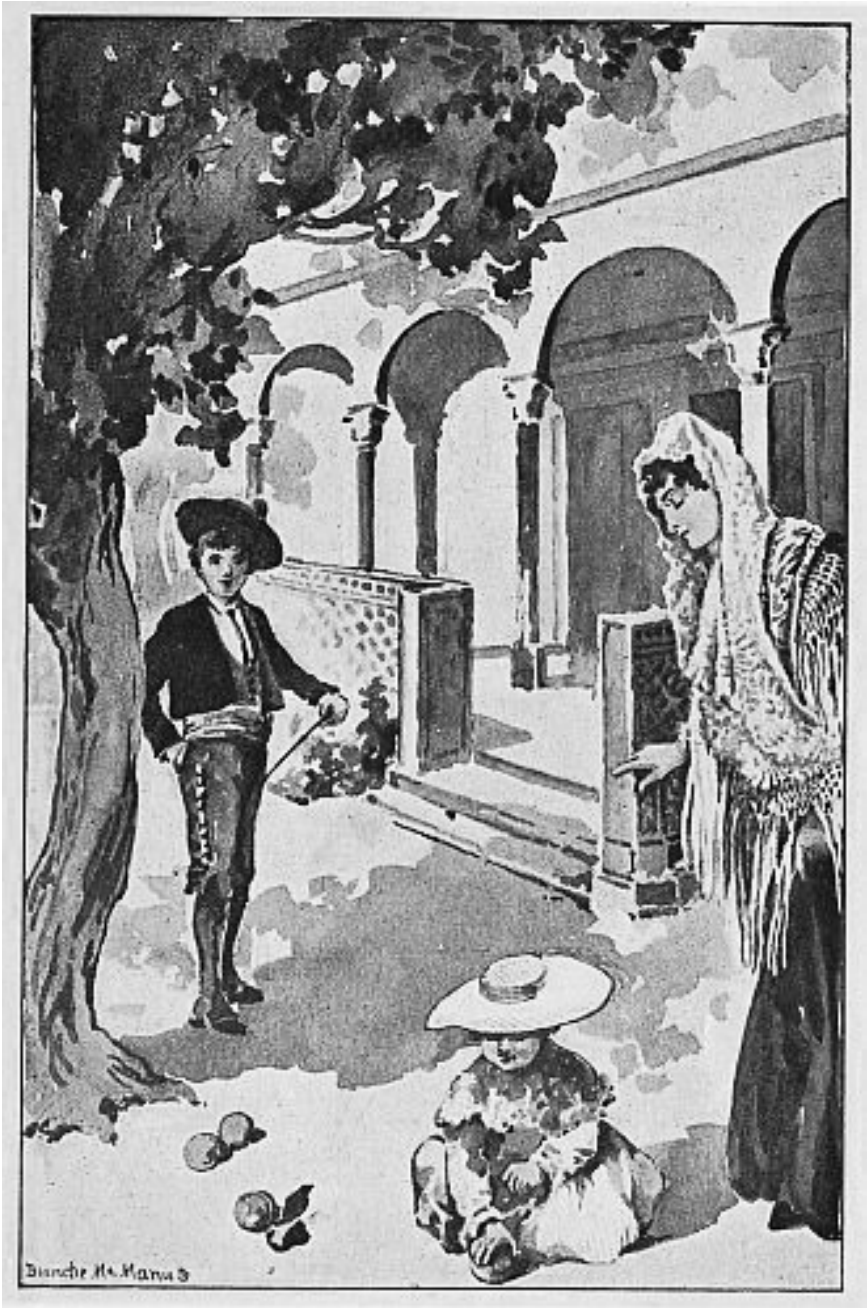
"Truly –

"'Quien no ha vista Sevilla
No ha vista un maravillo,'"[1]

said Mariquita boastingly, but little Juanita prattled in reply the Grenadino's favourite response –

"'Quien no ha vista Grenada
No ha vista nada.'"[2]

[1] He who has not visited Sevilla
Has not seen a marvel.
[2] He who has not seen Granada
Has seen nothing.



“They went to the Alcazar gardens.”

CHAPTER IX

To the Country

Home again! At first it seemed to Fernando as if he could never go back to school, for after his week of fêtes and processions and fun, lessons were dull things, but he soon fell into the old ways, and there were so many pleasant things at home that he did not pine for Sevilla at all.

He had a pet lamb – what boy has not in spring-time in Spain? – and he was devoted to it for awhile, trying to feed it all manner of things.

"Manuel," he said one day, "I do not know what is wrong with my pet lamb. It will not eat the things I give it. I have never seen so stubborn a thing. Mazo is far different. It will eat anything at all, but the lamb stands and stares at me, and shuts its mouth, no matter what I offer him."

"Lambs are always stubborn," said Manuel. "They do not

eat much but milk when they are so young. But here, I have a new kite; will you fly it?"

"Indeed I will," cried the boy, and in an instant the lamb was forgotten, and he was skipping down the street, his kite skimming the air like a gaily coloured bird.

It was a beautiful spring in Granada, and Fernando spent every minute out of doors unless actually compelled to be in school or in bed. The family ate in the lovely *patio* where the flowers were beginning to blossom, and the sun was not too warm to do without the awning, which in summer stretched overhead. If it was not kites in which he was interested, it was marbles and ball, or even a play bull-fight; and Fernando was very proud when he was chosen to be "toro," and put his head in a basketwork affair with points like horns, and the boys chased him with sticks, running, jumping, and dodging when he turned and charged them as he had heard that the bulls did at the real *corridos.*

Best of all, it was time to have his head shaved, and of all things that was what he liked. His mother mourned, for the boy's hair was naturally curly, and in winter was as soft and

pretty as black velvet. But all Spanish boys have their heads shaved in summer, and Fernando must be like the rest. It was cut so close that it made him look very funny, and his great black eyes shone like beads in his lean brown face, with no soft hair to soften its harsh outlines.

Fernando and Antonio were still devoted friends. They played together after school and on the holidays, and many delightful times did the two boys have, either in the Alhambra or at Fernando's home, where there were many city sights as interesting to Antonio as the delights of the old palace were to Fernando.

So devoted had they become that Fernando felt very sorry to leave his friend when the time came for him to accompany his mother and sister to their country home. Generally he had been delighted to go to the *hacienda*, and enjoyed the country school even more than the one he attended in the city, but this year he felt so badly over it that his father said:

"Never mind, my son. I shall bring Antonio out to visit you when school is over, and you may have a fine time

together at the *hacienda*." This made Fernando more contented, and he went away with his parents quite happily.

As they started for the country on a bright May day, Juanita said, "Oh, mamma, see that strange cow! It is all dressed with flower-wreaths, and has bells around its neck and flowers on its horns. Why does that young girl lead it, and that old blind man walk behind, and blow that horn and beat the drum?"

"That is a cow to be won in a lottery," said the señora. "Manuel, stop; I wish to buy a ticket. How we Spaniards do love a game of chance! See, I shall buy a ticket for each one of you, and maybe your number will win the prize."

"Oh, thank you, mamma!" both children cried, for neither had ever had a lottery ticket before.

"Now I wish you to stop at a cigar-store, and buy a stamp[13] for my letter to your Aunt Isabella, and then we will drive on."

As they turned into the main street leading to the

[13] In Spain stamps are sold in cigar-stores, not at the post-office.

Alameda, Juanita asked, "Oh, *mi madre*, what are those people sitting in the streets making?"

"Haven't you seen the ice-cream makers before?" said the señora. "No, I think you cannot remember last summer, can you? The gipsies go up to the Sierras in the very early morning, and get donkey-loads of snow, and the people make ice-cream in those pails with the snow in it. They sit right at their doors on the sidewalk and make the fresh cream, and any one can buy a glass of it."

"Do let us have some," cried the children, and their indulgent mother ordered the horses stopped while they ate some of the delicious fresh cream.

As the carriage rolled on down the steep street, so narrow that as Manuel said "one can hardly pass another after a full dinner," the swineherd was just coming out for the day, and Juanita cried:

"Oh, *madre!* See that man with the pipe in his mouth; what queer music he plays! What is he?"

"He is the swineherd, *niña*. See, he comes from his alley, staff in hand," the señora said. "Watch him blow his pipe

without turning his head, and the pigs come after him, as if he had charmed them. Little and big, dark and light, fat and scrawny, there they come following him to pasture. Every alley we pass adds some curly tail to the procession. Now he is ready to turn out of the town into that grove, and see what an army of piggies follows him! He never looks for any of them, but they hear the music of his pipe and start because they learned long ago that it leads them to good pastures."

"I think they are too funny for anything," said the little girl. "Does he bring them back at night?"

"Yes, and every little piggy knows his own alley, and goes right home with a little frisk of his curly tail to say 'good night,'" said her mother, smiling.

"See those oxen; are they not splendid fellows? I love to see them draw their loads so easily. Beautiful creamy creatures, with their dark points and their great, soft eyes."

"What is that wooden thing over their heads?" asked Juanita.

"That is the yoke to couple them together. They are the gentlest animals in the world, these great, hornèd beasts,

and the driver walks in front of them with a stick over his shoulder, which he seldom thinks of using."

"Oh, what a cunning little donkey!" cried the little girl, as they passed a tiny donkey laden with panniers filled with flowers, fruit, vegetables, bread, fowls, and even a water-jar. "How prettily he is clipped, all in a pattern."

"Mamma," said Fernando, "some of the donkeys that the gipsies have clipped have mottoes and pictures on them. I know a boy whose donkey has *'Viva mi Amo'*[14] on his side. I don't like that, for if the donkey doesn't love his master, it is telling a story."

His mother laughed. "We will hope he has a good little master, and then the donkey will care for him and not be telling a falsehood with his fur.

"But here we are almost to the *hacienda*, and how short the ride has seemed. Now if two children I know are good, we shall have a delightful summer, and although you are to be in the country, and thou, Fernando, will go to a country school, remember the saying of thy fathers:

---

[14] I love my master.

"'Quando fueres par despoblado
Non hagas desaquisado,
Porque quando fueres per poblado
Iras a lo vesado.'"[15]

[15] When you are in the wilderness do not act ill, or when you are among people you will do likewise.

CHAPTER X

Games and Sports

The *hacienda* was more beautiful than it had been in the fall, and Fernando was soon busy as a bee. He had of course to attend school, but it was a country school, not so strict nor so large as the city one, and he enjoyed showing off his superior accomplishments to the other boys. This the others did not relish, and there was a grand fight to see which was the strongest, and when Fernando had whipped all the boys of his own size, he was happy and felt that he had not disgraced the name of Guzman. Manuel did not attend him in the country, and Fernando much enjoyed doing as he liked, roaming about, taking his own time to come home, tramping about the orange groves, or sailing boats in the brook.

When school was over and Antonio came for the

promised visit, what merry times there were! The boys went swimming at all hours. They ran bareheaded all over the place, Mazo after them, their constant companion. Fernando had a few lessons to do each morning, a master to teach him his French, music, and drawing – for boys of his class in Spain are accomplished as well as educated – but these were soon over, and then, stung by the bees, burnt by the sun, wet by the rain, eating green oranges, doing in fact what American boys, or boys all over the world will do if let alone, this was the way in which the two Spanish boys spent their vacation.

Juanita, meantime, was having a very happy time. She, too, had a few lessons, and her *aya* was giving place to a governess, but she was still too young to learn much, and the beautiful out-of-doors was a great lesson-book to her. Riding Babieca, tagging after the boys, sun-tanned and rosy, she grew strong and hearty, and was never so happy as when allowed to go with her brother and Antonio. Generally they took very good care of her, and her mother felt that she was safe with the two boys. Fernando teased her a good deal, but

Antonio was of a calmer mood, and was always her gentle knight.

All manner of games were played by these happy children, who, with their little neighbours of the nearest *hacienda*, made a merry group. They were simple-hearted little folk, and the boys had not reached the state described in the old Spanish rhyme of the boys of Madrid:

"They should be romping with us,
For they are only children yet;
But they will not play at anything
Except a cigarette.
No plays will cheer the Prado
In future times, for then
The little boys of seven
Will all be married men."

Fernando, and even the graver Antonio, entered into all the childish sports with the rest, and an especial favourite was a play very much like our "London Bridge is Falling

Down," called the "Gate of Alcala." Two children are chosen to head the lines, and called Rose and Pink. They form an arch with their arms held up and their fingers locked, and under this the other children pass headed by the mother. They sing gaily a little dialogue:

Rose and Pink. "To the viper of love that hides in the flowers
The only way lies here."

Mother. "Then here I pass and leave behind
One little daughter dear."

Rose and Pink. "Shall the first one or the last
Be captive of our chain?"

Mother. "Oh, the first one runs so lightly,
The last one shall remain."

Chorus. "Pass on, oho, pass on, aha!
By the Gate of Alcala."

The last child, with squeals of delight, is caught in the falling arms, and chooses whether she shall follow Rose or Pink, taking her place behind the one of her choice. When

all have been chosen, there is a grand tug of war, the merry party singing, meantime.

Rose and Pink. "Let the young mind make its choice,
As young minds chance to think;
Now is Rose your leader,
Or go you with the Pink?
Let the young mind make its choice
By laws the young heart knows.
Now is Pink your leader
Or go you with the Rose?"

Chorus. "Pass on, oho, pass on, aha,
By the Gates of Alcala."

The boys enjoyed playing soldier, and would whittle toy swords out of sticks, and form in line, marching and singing:

"The Catalans are coming,
Marching two by two;
All who hear their drumming,

Tiptoe for a view,
Aye, aye, tiptoe for a view;
Red and yellow banners,
Pennies very few.
Aye, aye, pennies very few.

"Red and yellow banners
The moon comes out to see;
If moons had better manners
She'd take me on her knee.
Aye, aye, she'd take me on her knee.
She peeps through purple shutters;
Would I were tall as she.
Aye, aye, would I were tall as she.

"Soldiers need not learn letters
Nor any schooly thing;
But, unless they mind their betters,
In golden chains they swing.
Aye, aye, in golden chains they'll swing.

Or sit in silver fetters,
Presents from the king.
Aye, aye, presents from the king."

The prettiest of all the games is that of the "Little White Pigeons," which all Andalusian children love to play. The little companions form in two rows, and, facing each other, dance forward and slip beneath the upraised arms of the opposite side. Thus they pass under the "Silver Arches" to Sevilla and Granada:

"Little white pigeons are dreaming of Seville,
Sun in the palm-trees, rose and revel.
Lift up the arches, gold as the weather,
Little white pigeons come flying together.

"Little white pigeons, dream of Granada,
Glistening snows on Sierra Nevada.
Lift up the arches, silver as fountains,
Little white pigeons fly to the mountains."

Our little Spanish cousins play nearly all the same games that American children play, only their "Blind Man's Buff" is called "Blind Hen," and "Pussy Wants a Corner," is called "Cottage to Rent," and played with the rhyme:

"Cottage to rent, try the other side,
You see this one is occupied."

Their game of tag is called the "Moon and the Morning Stars," and is played by one child being chosen as the Moon and forced to keep within the shadow. The rest of the children, being Morning Stars, are safe only where it is light. If the Moon can catch a Star in the shadow, the Star must become a Moon, and as the Stars scamper in and out of the shadow, all sing:

"O the Moon and the Morning Stars,
O the Moon and the Morning Stars,
Who dares to tread--oh
Within the shadow."

"Hide and Seek" the children played, and "Forfeits," and all manner of other games, and as the sun nearly always shines in Andalusia, the summer was one long merry round of out-of-door fun.

CHAPTER XI

A Tertulia

September found the children at home again, and Fernando back at school, while Juanita had a governess for a part of each day, though she was not expected to learn a great deal; for the Spaniards think if their girls are sweet and gentle they need not be very learned. If a Spanish girl of sixteen knows how to read and write, simple arithmetic, a little history, and can dance and embroider well, she is quite accomplished enough to marry, which is what most of them intend to do.

Things were going very quietly, when there came an excitement so great for the children that they were almost wild. This was the home-coming, in the latter part of September, of Pablo, just in from his long summer cruise, with a fortnight's leave of absence. He came home to

celebrate his coming of age, and there was to be a *tertulia* in his honour. The children were to stay up to the party, and as it was the first time that they had been permitted to stay up after eight o'clock, they were delighted. To them it was the greatest event in their lives, and they were almost afraid to breathe all day, for fear the treat would be cut off. Juanita even stood quite still to have her curls made, which was generally a performance attended with agony, and before the end of which her *aya* was sure to say, "Hush, Mambru will certainly get you!" Mambru is to a little Spanish girl what a bogey is to an American child, and she will be very good for fear of Mambru. But the day passed off pleasantly, and the children were dressed and sent down to the *patio* to await the arrival of the guests.

The pleasant thing about a Spanish party is that there is no fuss made, and therefore everybody enjoys themselves. The hostess never tires herself out preparing for her guests so that she cannot be cheerful and agreeable when they arrive. The hospitality of Spain is perfect. A Spaniard gives his friends just what is good enough for himself, and never

thinks of doing more. So there was not a great brewing and baking on the day of the party, and flushed, heated faces; but there were a few simple refreshments, much pleasant talk and hearty laughter among old and young. There were about thirty friends of the family who came in to talk and chat. The parents came with their daughters, for girls never go to parties alone in Spain, and old and young spent the evening together. Some one played on the piano and the young people danced, lovely Trinidad del Aguistanado dancing with Pablo. This Juanita watched with delight. Trinidad was the loveliest of all the girls, and she thought, of course, Pablo should have the prettiest maiden in all the world. She was as sweet as she was pretty, and said to the little girl:

"What is thy name, *niña*?" and when Juanita answered, sweetly:

"Juanita, to serve God and you," as all Spanish children are taught to answer, Trinidad kissed her on both cheeks, and gave her a rose from her girdle. At this Juanita was delighted, and Pablo sighed prodigiously. The older people,

too, seemed well pleased with Pablo's choice, for the girl's family was as good as theirs, and the two had been friends for many years.

"Juanita," said Fernando in a whisper, "I believe that Pablo will bite the iron[16] of the Señorita Trinidad. Will it not be strange to think of him beneath her window, singing of love to his guitar?"

"It will be beautiful," sighed the little girl, for Spanish children are always interested in the love affairs of their older brothers and sisters, and even little girls talk about them. "How handsome Pablo looks as he talks with her."

"They are as fair as the lovers of Teruel," said old Dolores, who was at the party to take care of her little charges.

"Tell us about them," said Juanita, eagerly, for she dearly loved Dolores's quaint stories; and the *aya* began:

"In the town of Teruel there lived, many years ago, a Spanish knight, Don Juan Diego Martinez de Marcilla, and

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16 Spanish lovers stand beneath the windows of their sweethearts, to serenade them every night, and, as the windows are grated with iron, this is called "biting the iron."

he loved with all his heart Doña Isabel de Segura. Alas, unhappily! for the fathers of the two lovers were enemies, and would not listen to love between them.

"'Thou art but a second son,' said Don Pedro de Segura, the father of Doña Isabel. 'Moreover, thou hast not a fortune equal to that of my daughter, who possesses thirty thousand *sueldos* in good gold, and is my sole heiress.'

"'Full well I know that I am in no wise worthy of thy fair daughter,' said Don Juan, 'and upon her grace have I no claim save that she loves my unworthy self. But since this is God's truth, I pray you give me the chance to prove my devotion, and I will furnish sufficient fortune to equal hers. I go to the wars with my lord, King Sancho of Navarre. Grant me five years in which to gain this fortune, and give me your promise that for that length of time you will not force Doña Isabel to marry another.'

"Doña Isabel was very young, and her father very fond, and by this he could keep her with him five long years, and, moreover, marry her to whom he pleased, for he said to himself, 'In that time both of them will forget,' and so he

smilingly said:

"'Your words have some reason. Go with God, and if you return, well and good. My daughter shall not marry against her will for five years to this day, but mark me, rash youth, not one day more shall she wait.'

"Then the lovers bade each other farewell, and Don Juan rode to the wars. These were waged against the wicked Moors, and with knights and squires, the armies of Don Alphonso of Castile, Don Pedro of Aragon, and Don Sancho of Navarre fought long and fiercely until, at the great battle of Las Navas de Tolosa, the Moor was crushed. Many a valiant deed was done, and Don Juan was bravest of them all. He broke through the chain which guarded the tent of the Moorish king, and thereby gained great glory and won for himself the right to wear a chain around the margin of his shield in honour of the day. He gained great renown and fortune, but, alas, he was sorely wounded, and it was more than five years before he could return to his beloved. He arrived in Teruel but one short day after the time was up, and found Doña Isabel married to another, Don Pedro

Fernandez de Azagra. Despairing, he desired to see his beloved once more, and climbed to her window on her wedding-night. Finding her alone and her husband sleeping, he implored her to give him one last kiss. She refused, and said, weeping, 'Alas! you came not and I thought myself forgotten. I am wedded to this good man, and to him alone belong my caresses.'

"At this his heart broke, and crying, 'Farewell, beloved!' he dropped dead at her feet.

"At that moment her husband awoke, and she told him straightway the truth, at which he said, 'Thou hast been cruel and unkind to this good man, but to me faithful and true, and I shall but love thee the more!' and he took the body of the poor Don Juan and bore it secretly to his father's step and laid it down and fled away.

"When the body of the knight was found, there was great mourning, and he was given a grand funeral at the cathedral, to which all Teruel came to do him honour. There also came the unhappy Doña Isabel, disguised so that none might know her, and, determined to give her lover in death the

kiss which she had denied him in life, she stooped to kiss his lips. Lo! the eyes unclosed, he smiled at her, and they closed again, and she fell beside him dead! All were struck dumb with horror, but Don Azagra came forward and told the mournful story, whereupon the two bodies were buried in the same grave.

"'Separated in life, in death they shall be together,' said the generous knight who had been her husband but not her beloved; and this is the sad, sad story of the lovers of Teruel."

"Oh, thank you, Dolores, it is a beautiful story," cried Juanita, and the young people who had gathered around to hear clapped their hands, and thanked her, too.

"What think you, Señorita Trinidad, would you have kissed your lover had you been Doña Isabel?" asked Pablo of the young girl.

"I should not have married the other man, señor," she said, flushing prettily.

"Come, Trinidad, you must sing for us," cried one of her friends. "Sing the song of Santa Rita," and Trinidad, with a merry little glance at Pablo, sang the gay little song which

Spanish girls sing in jest, asking Santa Rita to procure them a good husband.

"Santa Rita, Santa Rita,
Cada una de nosotros necesita,
Para uso de diario
Un marido milionario,
Anunque sea un animal
Si tal, si tal, si tal, si tal,
Un marido milionario,
Anunque sea un animal."[17]

Everybody applauded loudly, and Trinidad, laughing and blushing, sang again. The older people sat about

[17] "Santa Rita, Santa Rita, send us now,
We pray thee fervently,
A millionaire for a husband,
E'en a blockhead though he be,
E'en so, e'en so, e'en so,
A millionaire for a husband,
A blockhead though he be."

serenely, some talking, others playing cards or dominoes. The younger ones played sprightly games and talked like magpies, and the children listened spellbound.

"Who art thou, Pablo?" laughed one, and Pablo answered, merrily:

"Ole Saltero, sin vanidad,
Soy muy bonito, soy muy sala!"[18]

And every one laughed, and Trinidad gave him a charming glance from under her black lashes.

Refreshments were passed around, very simple ones. There were trays of water, and by each glass round lumps of sugar, which the guests dipped in the water and ate, hard little cakes, cups of thick chocolate into which finger cakes were dipped and eaten, and some charming little bonbons. There was no wine, for although the finest wine in the world

[18] "Sister Saltero, without vanity,
I am lovely, I am salada,"
salada meaning charming, witty, gracious.

is made in Spain, the Spaniards are great water drinkers, and seldom have wine except at dinners. The men all smoked, but not the ladies, for while the Mexican women sometimes smoke a dainty *cigarrillo*, Spanish women do not.

Later on, Pablo's health was drunk in tiny glasses of sherry, as this was a special occasion, and pleasant speeches were made to him, wishing him all success in his career.

"Thou art now a man, my son," said his father, proudly and affectionately. "Remember that since the time of the Emperor Charles V., thy fathers have had the right to wear the Golden Key[19] upon their hip, and do nothing to disgrace thy name. On the sword of my grandfather was engraved the motto, 'Do not draw me without reason nor sheathe me without honour!' Let his motto be thine own, and remember that to a Spaniard honour comes first."

Then the party broke up, and Fernando and Juanita were trotted off to bed, and sleepily murmured their evening prayer:

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[19] The noblest of the Spanish grandees wear a golden key upon the hip to indicate that they have the right to enter the king's doors at any time.

"Jesus, Joseph, Mary,
Your little servant keep,

And with your kind permission,
I'll lay me down to sleep!"

and they heard through the soft moonlight the tinkle of Pablo's guitar, as he strolled along to bite the iron beneath the grating of the dainty Señorita Trinidad.

CHAPTER XII

Viva el Rey!

All Granada was in a flutter! It was the brightest of October days, and the sun seemed to be trying to be as bright as the people, or the people to be as gay as the sunshine. Fernando and Juanita hopped out of bed and ran to the window the first minute they were awake, and squealed with delight when they saw that the day was fair.

"Oh, mamma!" cried Fernando. "Is it not glorious? The fête will be a success!" and Juanita echoed her brother, "Is it not wonderfully fair!"

"Come and have your chocolate quickly, like good children," returned their mother, "for you must be ready early."

As soon as the children were breakfasted, they were dressed in their best clothes, Juanita all in white, with a gay

sash, and Fernando in a sailor suit of blue, and they waited impatiently for their parents to be ready to start for the fête.

It was a great day for Granada, for the king was coming to visit the city, and it had been many years since royalty had honoured the Andalusian town. Spaniards are nearly always devoted to their king, and in Andalusia there are very few who are not fond and proud of the young King Alphonso.

In Northern Spain there are many who are called Carlists, and who believe that the descendants of Don Carlos are the lawful kings of Spain, and these have often gotten up revolutions and tried to set their own favourites up as kings.

In Barcelona and some of the eastern provinces there are many who like neither King Alphonso nor Don Carlos, and these are anarchists; but Granada was heart and soul for the king, and all the people were overjoyed at his coming.

Every balcony in the city was covered with flowers; flags and banners floated everywhere. The Alameda was ablaze with decorations, and every face wore a smile of welcome. The programme for the day was a simple one. The king was

to be met at the station by a delegation, a band, and a mounted escort, witness a military review on the Alameda, and depart by an afternoon train. All Granada must see him, and Fernando and Juanita with it.

It had been decided that the best time for the children to have a good look at the king was when he drove to the Alhambra, and Manuel and Dolores started early to take them to meet Antonio, who had promised to provide places within the Alhambra grounds, where the general multitude would be less likely to go, and where the children would have a finer view. Pablo went with them, for he was still at home, and he walked beside Babieca to see that Juanita did not fall off, on her long ride up-hill.

"See there, little sister," he said. "Is not that an easy way to get milk for the day?"

The goatherd was passing at the head of his procession of goats, looking neither to the right nor to the left, expecting his herd to follow him as gravely as he walked; but a peasant woman stole out of her door, and quietly milked one of the little beasts, who seemed not to object in the least,

and took it so calmly that Pablo added, "That is not the first time there has been stolen milk for breakfast, I'm sure."

"See the poor beggar; do give him something, Pablo," said Juanita, touched by a wretched specimen of humanity who sat with blind eyes peering up at them as they passed. Pablo threw a *perro chico* into the beggar's outstretched hand, but he said:

"You must not be too sad for all the beggars, *niña*; there is an old rhyme:

"'The armless man has written a letter,
The blind man finds the writing clear;
The mute is reading it aloud,
And the deaf man runs to hear.'

They are not all so sad as they look, but one must give for fear one may slight the really needy."

"Oh, Pablo, may we have some *horchata?*" cried Fernando, and his brother stopped to purchase some of the snowy, chilly, puckery stuff, and they enjoyed it greatly.

Fernando ate too hastily, and his brother said:

"*Quita, quita!* You must not act so! You are as bad as the king when he was a baby and put his knife in his mouth. His governess said to him, 'Kings do not eat with their knives,' and he haughtily replied, 'This king does!'"

"Indeed," said Fernando, pertly, "the king is my cousin, so it says in my history book that all Spaniards may say."

"He is your cousin, that is, you must love him as your own blood; but say, rather, 'All equal below the king,' and put him ever first. Remember that your fathers have died for the Kings of Spain, and we may have a chance to show our loyalty yet," and Pablo's bright face clouded a moment.

"Listen to the music; there goes the military salute! The king has come, and by the time we reach the Alhambra he will be on his way hither. Get up, Babieca," and he hurried the little donkey along until they reached the top of the hill and found Antonio waiting for them, his face flushed and eager.

"He will pass here," he cried, "beneath the Gate of Justice, and my father says we may stand just behind the

guard upon the wall; there could not be a better place."

"How nice that will be!" cried Juanita. "And where is Pepita?"

"There, awaiting you," Antonio answered. "I will take care of Babieca and return," and he led the donkey away, coming back in a few moments, and they all waited impatiently.

Spaniards all love a spectacle, and the young folk could hardly restrain themselves as they heard the strains of music coming nearer and nearer. At last the cavalcade came in sight – first a troop of soldiers, then a band playing the *Marcha Real*, then a mounted guard keeping close to His Majesty's carriage. There he sat, the young king, a tall, slight youth, with a pale, proud face and great black eyes, sad, yet merry and tender; a patrician face in every feature, yet a lovable one, and one to arouse all of love and loyalty in his subjects, as the character of Alphonso XIII. arouses their respect and affection.

As the carriage paused at the entrance gate, the king looked up at the eager little group upon the wall and smiled.

Juanita and Pepita flung into his carriage their huge bouquets of flowers and to the girls he threw a kiss; but Fernando and Antonio stood up very straight and saluted gravely, and with a smile in his eyes, but with grave lips, the young king raised his hand to his hat and gave them in return the military salute. Then his carriage passed on, and bore him out of sight, but a shout went up from every voice, *"Viva el rey!"*

"When I grow up I shall be a nun and pray all the time for the king!" said Pepita.

"I shall be a soldier and fight for him," said Fernando, proudly.

"And I," said Juanita, "shall marry and have many children to fight and pray for him and for Spain!"

"Indeed, little sister, perhaps thou hast chosen the better part," said Pablo, laughing heartily.

"See!" cried Antonio, "there goes the carriage again, and hear how the people shout!" and as the bravas rent the air, the children shouted, too:

VIVA EL REY!

"Viva Espagna! Viva el rey! Dios guarda usted!"[20]

THE END.

[20] "Long live Spain! Long live the king! God guard your Grace!"