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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK RAFAEL IN ITALY: A GEOGRAPHICAL
READER ***

Transcriber's Note:

The [Vocabulary](#) at the end of the book gives the Phonetic pronunciation of the Italian words used in the book.

The Unicode alphabets have been given wherever available. But the following two Phonetic diacritical marks do not have a Unicode representation.

inverted "T" -- (uptack)

"T" -- (downtack)

RAFAEL IN ITALY



LITTLE PEOPLE
EVERYWHERE



ON THE APPIAN WAY

LITTLE PEOPLE EVERYWHERE

RAFAEL IN ITALY

A GEOGRAPHICAL READER

BY **ETTA BLAISDELL McDONALD**

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"The Child Life Readers," etc.

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SCHOOL EDITION

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1910

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PREFACE

The very best way to understand the life and customs of a foreign country is to visit it. If that is impossible one may still learn much by reading a story of the people who live there. As this is true of grown people, so is it true of children. They can become acquainted with the children of other lands by reading stories of their simple, daily life, and by living it for a little while within the pages of the story-book.

It is no longer the fashion for our school children to learn by rote the facts written down in their geography about all the corners of the earth; they must know rather the children in these foreign lands,—the sights they see, their work and play, their festivals and holidays, their homes, their ambitions.

Such a tale is told in this little book about Italy. Rafael Valla, a lad of fourteen, is seen first in Venice; he rows his boat on the canals, hears the music of the band in the Square of St. Mark, goes to the Rialto bridge for the serenade, and suddenly, through a chance meeting with an American girl and her mother, the way is opened for him to see Italy. He joins them in Florence, and they ride over the Tuscan roads in an automobile, stopping to see the peasants gathering grapes, and to visit an olive-farm. In Rome they see the ruins of the ancient city under the direction of a guide, and they go to Naples, and visit Pompeii and Vesuvius.

The book is full of pictures of Italian life. One sees the children feeding the pigeons in Venice, the Easter festival in Florence, the vintage with its merry-making in Tuscany, the Roman ruins, the picturesque street-life in Naples with its noise and gayety, and the silent streets of Pompeii. There are many such pen pictures of Italian life, and the story should appeal to the imagination of the child and awaken his interest in Italy and its people.

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RAFAEL IN ITALY

[1]

CHAPTER I

AN EVENING IN VENICE

It was a glorious summer evening. The moon, rising over the city of Venice, shone down on towers and domes and marble palaces, and made a golden path in the rippling waters of the lagoon.

The squares of the city were all ablaze with lights, while from every window and balcony twinkling jets of flame found their reflection in the canals, and lengthened into shimmering arrows of gold.

There were no sounds save the calls of the boatmen, the soft lapping of the waves against the marble walls and steps, and occasional strains of music from the military band in the Piazza of St. Mark.

No place in all the world shines with more brilliancy than Venice in carnival time. The city is like a diamond, as it catches the myriad rays from moonlight and starlight, and flashes countless answering gleams into the shadows of the night.

It is small wonder that people travel from the farthest corners of the earth to watch the glitter and sparkle of this City of the Sea. [2]



The Grand Canal, Venice
Notice the mooring-posts and the black gondola.

It was on this summer evening that Rafael Valla, a Venetian lad of fourteen, decided to become a soldier of the king.

He was sitting in the water-gate of his mother's house, pointing with his toe to the reflection in the canal of a particularly large and brilliant star. "If the starlight moves to the right of my toe," he said to himself, "I will go to the Piazza."

He knew perfectly well that he would go to the Piazza. The music of the band was calling to him, and the star was slowly shifting its light, as it had done on many a night while Rafael sat waiting and dreaming in the gateway.

The tide was gently pulling his little boat away from the orange-and-black mooring-post, at the foot of the steps, toward the larger canal.

"Perhaps my boat knows of all the gay sights that are waiting for it in the Grand Canal," the boy thought idly. "It may well know," he added in his thought; "it has been there times enough."

The Grand Canal is the largest and finest of all the water-ways which thread the city. It is spanned by three beautiful bridges, and, on either side, rise the marble palaces of the ancient Venetian nobility; those rulers of men whose names fill the "Golden Book of Venetian History."

But Rafael lingered in the gateway. The music of the band was a promise of something still better. Soon hundreds of gondolas would gather at the bridge of the Rialto to hear the songs of the serenaders, and that was what the boy loved best. [3]

As the bells in the square sounded the hour, he rose, reached for the rope, and pulled his boat toward the stone landing steps. His motions were alert and decisive, and made him seem a different boy from the one who had been leaning so carelessly against the post of the gateway.

Rafael was good friends with his oar, and the little boat, which was only large enough to seat three comfortably, hurried gladly toward the lights of the Grand Canal, and the music in the beautiful Piazza of St. Mark.

Hundreds of black gondolas were moving up and down the canals, manned by boatmen in white linen, for the night was very warm; and a melody from an Italian opera, sung in a musical tenor voice, floated from one of the boats.

"I, also, would sing, if it were not pleasanter to listen," said Rafael to his boat. Then it occurred to him that it might be most pleasant of all to find his friend Nicolo and take him to hear the singers

at the Rialto bridge.

He turned toward the steps of the Piazzetta, murmuring as he did so, "These other boats are also moving toward the Rialto. I must find Nicolo quickly, or we shall lose our favorite place at the bridge." [4]

The boy tied his boat in the shadow of the steps, and took his way across the small square into the larger one in front of the Cathedral of St. Mark.

Numberless columns and pillars surround this square, and each one was outlined with twinkling golden lights. From every ornament and statue that grace the cathedral and palaces shone countless numbers of the fairy flames. The crimson globes of the larger lamps in the square added a different tone, and the silver light of the moon blended with the whole, dazzling Rafael with the brilliancy.

He shaded his eyes from the glare, as he searched rapidly among the crowds for his friend. The polished stones of the pavement in front of the cafés were covered with little tables, and hundreds of people were sipping ices or drinking coffee.

Nicolo was often to be found selling trinkets among the people at the tables, but he was not there to-night. Nor was he seated on the back of one of the two stone lions that crouch on their pedestals just beyond the cathedral.

It is from these convenient seats that the band sounds better than almost anywhere else in the square. At least, the boys of Venice seem to find it so, and so many years have they climbed up to watch the crowds of people in the Piazza of St. Mark, that the backs of the lions are worn smooth with much rubbing. [5]

A little bootblack and a water-boy held the places now, and occasionally begged for custom from any one who happened to linger near.

Passing in and out among the crowds were pretty young girls selling flowers, ragged boys carrying trays of fruit—crimson peaches, purple grapes and ripe figs—and men selling bracelets and necklaces of shells and colored beads.

It was a gay scene. An officer, in the naval uniform of the United States of America, stood in the central doorway of the cathedral, watching the movements of the crowd and listening to the music.

As Rafael gave up trying to find Nicolo and turned toward the canal, the officer left his place and followed the boy. "Where away?" he asked pleasantly, in English, as Rafael took his seat in the boat.

"To the Rialto; to hear the serenade, Signore," the boy replied courteously, also in English; and would have pushed away from the steps, but the stranger asked, "Will you take a passenger?"

"Si, Signore," answered Rafael, "I have been looking for one," and he held the boat still while the officer found a seat.

CHAPTER II

[6]

VIVA L'ITALIA!

"Do you like our lovely Venice?" Rafael asked, as the boat slipped away with oar and tide toward the bridge.

"Not well enough to stay here forever," answered the man, with a smile.

The boy opened his eyes in surprise. How could any one wish to leave the city after once seeing it! As for himself, he adored the place. To slip with his boat in and out of the canals and the lagoon, to dive from the steps and bridges and chase the other boys through the water, to listen to the music in the Piazza at night, seemed to him the only life worth living.

But the stranger was speaking again. "I could have been happy here centuries ago, when the city was in the making," he said. "It would have been glorious to fight for the right to live on these islands, and to have a hand in building such palaces and churches. Those were days of service for the men who loved their city." [7]

Rafael knew well the history of Venice. As the officer spoke, the boy's eyes turned to the stately walls of the Doge's palace, and to the domes of the great churches; and he thought of the early Venetians who gave their lives in loving service for their country.

The stranger continued, "Your good Doge Dandolo had a powerful navy when he led the Venetians across the Mediterranean to conquer the islands of Candia and Cyprus."

Rafael nodded. "Si, Signore," he said. "There were many at home who held the city safe while he was away," he added, "and there was need enough of brave men then, both at home and abroad."

"Venice was a rich and powerful state in those days," said the stranger. "Now she has little left but her beauty, and that will fall to ruin, as the great bell-tower in the Piazza fell not long ago. A man likes to fight for something more than beauty."

Rafael nodded again. He liked this stranger who spoke so easily of the early life of Venice.

Just then the boat slipped into a nook under the bridge, where it was safe from the sweep of the gondolas which crowded near, and the two became silent in watching the approach of the barge filled with musicians and singers.

This barge was surrounded by a solid mass of gondolas, closely wedged together, each gondolier trying to push his boat as close as possible, so that his patrons might see and hear well. [8]

Suddenly red lights flared up from the bridge and flooded everything with radiance. Palace fronts shone with a magical beauty; crimson banners waved from Moorish windows; statues and columns stood out clearly and asked boldly to be admired.

Rafael looked at his companion. "Did you ever see a more beautiful sight?" he asked.

But he could get no satisfaction from the stranger. "Beauty is not everything," was his answer; and Rafael racked his brain to think what more could be desired in this wonderland of marble and sky and water.

Suddenly the music from the barge swelled into a great volume of sound. "Viva l'Italia!" cried a voice from the bridge, and "Viva l'Italia!" echoed from all the gondolas.

Rafael waved his cap in the air. "Viva l'Italia!" he shouted in his boyish voice, while his heart beat fast with the enthusiasm of the moment. It seemed to his imagination that the singers were repeating the words of the stranger; that they were telling of the glory of battle, and of a life of service for one's country.

It was of Italy they sang—not of Venice—of Italy, and of Italy's king. "Viva l'Italia! Long live the King!" he shouted with the others; and at that moment he felt that he must become a soldier of the king, to live or die for Italy. [9]

After the singing was over and the gondolas had begun to disperse, Rafael pushed his way down the canal; and at the steps where he had embarked, the stranger rose to leave the boat. As he did so, he stooped to place a coin in the boy's hand. "With thanks," he said. "I have had an evening to remember."

But Rafael pushed his hand away. "I never carry people for money, Signore," he said proudly.

The coin dropped from the American's hand to the bottom of the boat. "For Italy, then," he said. "There are many in your country who need it."

The boy let his boat drift with the tide, while he thought over the words of the stranger.

He and his mother were all that was left of an old Venetian family. Like many others, they had almost no means of support. They rented two of the upper floors of their house to people poorer than themselves; and might have rented the whole house to some of the foreigners who often asked for it, but the mother held to it with a great love. It was a link that kept alive the memory of the past, when her family was one of importance, and Venice was a rich and powerful city. [10]

She would rather eat polenta and fish every day, if thereby she could keep the fine house as it had always been, rich with old furniture and the paintings of great artists.

She had taught her son to speak French and English, and no guide in the city knew every detail of its history so well as he. "Our history is our pride," she often said, with much emphasis, and the boy felt that she was right.

At last Rafael picked up the coin and put it into his pocket; then he took up the oar and pushed the boat back to his own mooring-post.

He found his mother, and told her that he was tired of his life of idleness. "I shall become a soldier of the king," he said.

"Ah," she said, "every Italian should serve his king. There is need of every one. Our country is very poor."

Rafael looked disturbed. "It is not the country that is poor," he answered. "Our good priest says that the country is rich, with all its vineyards, and orchards, and wheat-fields. It is only the people who are poor."

"What wilt thou do about it, caro mio?" asked his mother, with a laugh.

"I shall earn some money," replied Rafael. "My boat has shown me how."

RAFAEL'S TRAINED TOPS



**Children feeding Pigeons in the Piazza of St. Mark,
Venice**

**Notice the three flag-poles, and the bronze horses over
the central doorway of the Cathedral.**

It was early in the afternoon of the next day. The tide was low in the canals of Venice. Hundreds of green crabs could be seen clinging lazily to the stone walls of the houses, wherever there was a place still cool and wet from the salt sea-water.

At the base of the two great columns in the Piazzetta, groups of Venetian beggars were soundly sleeping. The gondoliers call these beggars "crab-catchers," because they cling about the mooring-steps of the canals to beg centimes from the passengers in the gondolas.

The Venetian pigeons were also sleeping. Their way of begging is more pleasing than that of the crab-catchers, but they are beggars for all that. They never wait for the sound of the bell which the good priest rings every day when it is time for them to be fed, but fly down to the pavement whenever they catch sight of a person with a bit of grain. They flutter down by twos and threes, and beg with their best coos for something to eat.

But now they had all disappeared from the pavement, and might be seen, dozing with their heads under their wings, up among the eaves of the fine palaces and beautiful public buildings which surround the Square of St. Mark. [12]

The children, who love to feed the pigeons, had disappeared, too, and all Venice seemed to be taking its afternoon nap.

An American lady and her daughter, paying no heed to the heat of the sun, turned the corner of the Doge's palace and entered the Piazzetta, meaning to cross to the farther end of the large square, where wood-carvings are for sale in one of the shops.

"Mother," said the girl suddenly, "I wish we knew of something to see besides the buildings in this square. We have been here four days, and have bought a lovely carved cherub, or a souvenir spoon of Venice, for every one of our friends, but we don't know anything about this beautiful old city."

"We must be careful not to get lost again, Edith," answered her mother. "This Piazza is always perfectly safe. If we keep within sight of the cathedral we can easily find our way back to the hotel at any time."

"I should like to get lost again," said Edith decidedly. "There must be many other interesting places to see besides the Doge's palace and St. Mark's Cathedral, if we only knew where to look for them." [13]

"You can learn much about the life of the city by looking from the hotel windows," said her mother.

"Oh, Mother, I can't sit at the window and watch the gondolas on the Grand Canal without wishing to ride in one," replied Edith. "Why can't we hire one, and go in and out among all the islands?"

Her mother stopped in the middle of the square and looked doubtfully out over the water of the lagoon. "We cannot be too careful what we do," she said. "Those gondoliers might leave us on one of the outer islands, and we could not get back to the hotel, for we do not know a single word of Italian."

"Oh, they don't do such things in Venice, I know," answered Edith; "and besides, we might take a guide along with us. There must be many who speak English, and who would be glad to show us the city sights for the sake of earning some Italian lire."

"Where should we look to find some one to speak English?" asked her mother.

As if in answer to her words there came the sound of boys' voices from a corner of the square, where the Merceria, with its shops, leads to the Rialto bridge. Edith and her mother looked up and saw a group of boys gathered around the pedestal of the lion farthest from the great church. [14]

English words floated across to the American people, although the voice which spoke them was an Italian one.

"Signor Rafael Valla will now present his troupe of trained tops," said the voice.

The American girl watched the group eagerly. Rafael—the boy of the boat and the serenade—knelt in the center, with a collection of tops on the pavement beside him.

The tops were of many different makes and colors. There were the light, agile ones from Japan, that spin only a moment. There were the big German tops that spin with a great humming sound, but are not at all graceful. There were the solid, business-like English tops that do their work and then go off at the close of the performance with a bow and an off-hand dash, as if to make room for the next on the program.

At last Rafael took up one which was wrapped in gold-foil, and which seemed to be both graceful and business-like, and wonderfully accomplished. It hung balanced between two outer circles of steel, and spun in every possible position—on the pavement, on the top of a post, and at right angles to it—all at one spinning. [15]

"It is my golden spinner," said the boy, in Italian. "It has travelled among all the great cities of the world, and never failed to keep an engagement."

The boys laughed, and Edith joined in the laughter, although she did not know the meaning of the words.

Rafael looked up into her face and smiled. It was the opportunity which she had hoped for. She had noticed his unusual appearance, and that he was dressed with care.

"Speak to him, Mother," she urged, in English. "Perhaps he will tell us where we may go to see the sights."

The boy rose and took off his cap. "I speak English, Signora," he said. "There are truly many things to see in Venice, if you wish to see them."

CHAPTER IV

STREETS OF VENICE

Mrs. Sprague looked from one child to the other. The girl was eager, the boy expectant. "He is no older than you are, Edith," she said at last. "It isn't possible that he can be a good guide. There will be three lost, instead of two as there were yesterday, if he tries to pilot us through these crooked lanes."

The day before, Edith had hired an Italian lad to act as a guide, when she had wished to buy an Italian flag and could find none in the shops near the Piazza. She had made her wish known, by signs, to one of the young boys idling at the base of the Lion's Column. He could speak no English, but Edith showed him a tiny American flag which she carried in her purse.

"Viva America!" she said, waving the flag with one hand. Then she waved the empty hand, saying, "Viva l'Italia!" and asked very loudly, as if he might be deaf, "Where to buy?" pointing to the flag.

The boy nodded that he understood, and led the girl and her mother across the Piazza and under [17]

the old Clock Tower, in which the clock has been marking the hours ever since Columbus discovered America. Beyond the tower he led them through short streets and narrow lanes to a remote, wretched part of the city.

Although Venice is called the City of the Sea, and has hundreds of canals, there is also a network of narrow streets and lanes threading the islands on which the city is built. It is possible to walk anywhere by following these streets and crossing the bridges, and each house has a land-gate as well as a water-gate.

One of these lanes led at last into a small square. A low, narrow doorway opened into a dark room, looking out upon a dirty little canal,—far away from the rose-colored, marble-paved Square of St. Mark—and here Edith found her Italian flag.

The room was cluttered with old rubbish; and a dozen ragged, hungry-looking men and women sat idly about on broken chairs.

The boy told his errand in Italian to one of the men, who answered him in an angry tone. They disputed together for several moments, and then the man brought a small flag from a far corner of the room. The bright red, green and white stripes of the flag were in good proportion, but it was made of a cheap, flimsy material.

[18]

"I don't care for it," said Edith, putting her hands behind her and shaking her head.

Immediately everybody in the room began to talk loudly, which so frightened Mrs. Sprague that she took out her purse and asked, "How much?"

The boy held up four fingers. "Quattro lire," he said.

"Four lire!" exclaimed Edith indignantly; "that is almost one dollar, and it isn't worth ten cents."

But the excited Italian voices were all speaking at once, and so angrily that Mrs. Sprague dropped the money into an old chair, and seizing the flag with one hand and Edith with the other, she backed quickly out into the open air.

She forgot that she knew nothing about the way to her hotel, and, without waiting for the boy, crossed the first bridge she saw, and struck into another narrow lane. She was too anxious as to her whereabouts to notice the interesting sights in the streets through which she hurried; but Edith, with a girl's curiosity, saw everything.

In a small square at one end of a bridge, a woman leaned from an upper window and lowered a basket to the pavement below. A man with a basket of fried fish on his arm took a piece of money from the woman's basket and put in its place a fish from his own. Then he returned to a little shed near-by, where a woman was frying onions and fish in oil, on several charcoal stoves.

[19]

As they crossed another bridge, they saw a woman lean from a window to splash her baby up and down in the canal for his daily bath. The baby was tied to the end of a long rope which his mother gently raised and lowered, and he laughed with glee every time he hit the water with his chubby fists.

Edith wished to stop and watch this curious bath, but Mrs. Sprague hurried her along, and they soon reached a part of the city where many people were moving toward a church. As they neared the building, the leather curtain, which hangs at the entrance to Italian churches, was pushed aside, and a stream of men, women and children began coming out, each one carrying a candle.

The children had little candles, the grown people carried larger ones; and everyone stopped to buy cakes from old women seated near the church door.

After crossing many bridges, and passing many churches, Edith and her mother suddenly entered the Piazza of St. Mark, which had grown so familiar to them both that it was like walking into their own home.

"I shall not go out of sight of it again," said Mrs. Sprague, with a sigh of great relief.

But Edith longed to explore those bewildering back lanes for more of the strange foreign sights. "After we get home to America," she said, "we shall see no more boys selling glasses of water at odd corners; nor shall we see women frying cakes in the streets, and mothers bathing their babies in the canals. If we can only find some one who understands English, we shall have no more trouble."

[20]

Now that she had found Rafael, she urged her mother to employ him. "He can speak both English and Italian," she said, "and can be our interpreter."

Mrs. Sprague shook her head and was turning away, when the boy spoke, and held her attention. "The golden spinner is the smallest of all my tops," he said, "but it does the best work. Why not let me try?"

The lady looked at his earnest face and smiled. "Very well," she said, "we will go through the Doge's palace with you. We can't get lost there."

Rafael gathered his tops together and turned them over to one of the boys. "Keep them for me, Nicolo," he said, and led the way at once to the beautiful entrance just beyond the corner of the cathedral—the entrance to the most magnificent of all the fine palaces in Venice.

STRINGING VENETIAN BEADS

Edith hurried along beside Rafael, and Mrs. Sprague followed slowly into the courtyard of the palace, up the Giant's Staircase and through great rooms, until they came out upon a balcony overlooking the square which they had just left.

"Is it not lovely?" Rafael asked simply.

Without answering, Edith balanced her camera upon the railing of the balcony and snapped a picture of the two columns in the Piazzetta, near a landing place of the Grand Canal.

"Everyone in the United States knows that picture," she said, "and when they see that I have taken it, they will know that I was really here once."

"Is it that you will show it to everyone in the United States?" asked Rafael with interest.

Edith looked at him quickly, thinking that he was laughing at her; but as she saw that he was serious she answered, "Oh dear! no; only to my friends, who were glad to have me come to see Italy, so that I can tell them about it."

[22]

"Is that why so many people come to my country," he asked,— "to tell others about it?"

Edith laughed. "I came to buy a string of Venetian beads," she answered roguishly.

But the boy would not laugh in answer. "It may be that you will take away with you a more precious necklace than your glass one, if you will let me show you our wonderful pictures and buildings," he said.

It was a pretty speech, and the girl answered him with another. "You mean a necklace of memory pictures," she said. "Yes, I have begun to string such a necklace. My memory of St. Mark's Cathedral is one of the beads, and this splendid square is another. Then there is a bead for the moonlight on the canals, and one for the fluttering pigeons at their midday meal."

Mrs. Sprague then told Rafael how they had wandered off into a part of the city where the canals were narrow and dirty, where the houses were old and crumbling to ruins, and where the streets seemed hardly more than cracks between the walls.

"I don't wish to put that memory picture into my necklace," said Edith.

"It is not necessary," answered Rafael. "There will be many beautiful beads. This afternoon we will climb the bell-tower of San Giorgio when the sun is setting, and there you will get a picture of this 'pearl of the world' that will make you forget every other."

[23]

But Edith was turning her camera upon the pavement below, where three flag-poles stand in front of St. Mark's.

"The lazy pigeons in the square were lean and hungry when those three masts were placed before the cathedral," Rafael told her. "The Venetians were hardy sailors, bold adventurers, and rich merchants in those days; and it was an honor for Morea and the eastern islands of Candia and Cyprus to fly their banners in our city. All the vessels from the East and the West stopped at our port, and the fame of Venice spread far and wide."

"You speak boastfully," said Edith saucily.

"It is all true," Rafael said earnestly. "Four hundred years ago there was no place in the whole world where so much pomp and magnificence could be seen as in St. Mark's Square and on the Grand Canal.

"Over in the museum at the arsenal"—Rafael's voice broke in his excitement—"there is a model of a ship of state, in which, for hundreds of years, the Doge used every year to go out to the entrance of the lagoon and throw a jewelled ring into the waters of the Adriatic, to make Venice the bride of the sea."

[24]

"People from far and wide, by thousands and tens of thousands, came to see the ceremony. It was a marvellous sight to see," he added proudly, as if he had seen it many times.

"Two or three hundred senators, in their scarlet robes, marched with the Doge from this palace to the wharf, where the ship of state waited for them; and thousands of magnificent gondolas followed it on its journey to the Lido port, where the ceremony took place."

"I thought all gondolas must be black," Edith objected. "A procession of black gondolas would not be very magnificent."

"It is the law now that all gondolas must be black," Rafael explained, "because in olden times so many nobles wasted their fortunes in decorating their gondolas extravagantly with rich carvings, gold ornaments, and gorgeous draperies. You can see that such a procession, reaching from here to the Lido port, would be a splendid sight."

"There must be many rings out there," he added.

Edith had listened, charmed with the sound of so much splendor. "Let us go to the Lido for a sea bath," she said; "perhaps we can find a ring."

Rafael shook his head. "The last ring was thrown into the water more than a hundred years ago," he said. "The sands have covered them all too deeply by this time."

[25]

Then he pointed to the four bronze horses which stand over the central doorway of the cathedral. "They are the only horses in our whole city," he said. "They are almost two thousand years old, and have travelled hundreds of miles, by sea and land.

"It is said that they first stood on a triumphal arch in Rome, but they were taken to Constantinople by the Emperor Constantine, where they were kept many hundreds of years. Dandolo, a Doge of Venice, conquered the city about seven hundred years ago, and brought the horses to Venice as a sign of his victory.

"They were placed over the door where they now stand, and have been there ever since, except for a visit of eighteen years to Paris, to please the Emperor Napoleon."

"See how they paw the air," said Edith. "They look as if they were eager to be off again to the ends of the earth."

"No," said Rafael, "we Venetians love those bronze horses. No one will ever take them away from us again.

"We need them," he added with a laugh, "how else would we know what horses are like, when we read about them in books?"

"It is a great pity that the bell-tower in the square fell," said Mrs. Sprague; "this new one that they are building in its place must be very expensive."

[26]

Rafael laughed merrily. "That is a queer thing about the Italians," he said; "if it is a great piece of art which we wish to preserve, we do not care what the expense may be."

Then he added soberly, "The fishermen miss the old tower more than any of us, because they used to find their way into the Lido port by it."

"You say so much about the Lido," said Edith.

"We will go over there after we have looked at some of the pictures inside the palace, and at the dungeons, and the Bridge of Sighs," answered Rafael.

Edith shuddered. "I will look at the pictures, but not at the dungeons," she said; "and I can look at the Bridge of Sighs every time I come from our hotel into the Piazza."

As they stepped back into the room behind them, she repeated the names of three of the great painters whose works have helped to make Venice a treasure-city.

"Titian, Veronese, Tintoretto," she said over and over again, as she looked at the pictures which Rafael pointed out to her in the long rooms. "If I find more of their paintings in other cities of Italy, it will seem like meeting old friends."

Rafael smiled. "Italy is rich because of her artists," he said. "You will find their works in every city. It may not always be the paintings of those same three men, but there are others which are also famous."

[27]

Then his happy face grew serious. "It makes the heart sad to think what wonderful dreams our great Italians have had," he said. "My mother says that no dream, no thought of beauty, was ever felt anywhere, that has not found expression here in Italy."

As he spoke, he led the mother and daughter out of the palace and across the Piazzetta to the steps where his little boat was tied, and Edith wondered if his words were true.

Before her sight-seeing in Italy was ended, she was very sure that they were.

CHAPTER VI

[28]

SUNSET FROM THE TOWER OF SAN GIORGIO

"It is not a good plan to leave the square from the steps in front of the two great columns," Rafael explained, as he went toward the landing-place opposite the Doge's palace, where he always moored his boat.

"Why is it not a good plan?" asked Edith.

"Because it might later make us run into a mud-bank," he answered merrily. "Whenever any one is executed in Venice, it has to be done between those two columns, and that has made the spot most unlucky. People used to gamble there before it was the place for executions, but now, of

course, no one thinks of such a thing."

"I should hope not," said Mrs. Sprague, "nor anywhere else."

"The only Doge that was ever beheaded, landed between those columns," continued Rafael, "and since then there are people who would not dare to use the steps, for fear it might bring them ill-luck."

"I am going to get into your boat from those very steps," said Edith, walking toward them.

[29]

Her mother, who was already seated in the boat, looked troubled. "He may be right, Edith," she called to her daughter. "You know that I am afraid of the water, and you promised not to take any chances if I would bring you to Italy."

But Edith insisted that she should get into the boat from the steps, or not at all. "There is no danger," she said. "These Italians are too superstitious. See how they are always closing one hand and pointing down two of its fingers to ward off the evil eye. I am going to show Rafael how foolish all these notions are."

The boy looked at her in anger. He had sometimes closed his own hand in the way Edith described, when he met old Beppo, the brown monk from one of the islands in the lagoon; and had often gone out of his way to meet the hunchback, Tonio, because it is well-known in Venice that the sight of a hunchback brings good luck.

Now, when he heard Edith speak so contemptuously of his cherished beliefs, he felt a flame of resentment. Standing quietly in his boat, he said, "Signorina, we go not from those landing-steps in my boat."

Edith saw that he meant what he said. "I am sorry that I hurt your feelings," she said, with a pretty air of penitence; "but if you will kindly take me from these steps, I will make a gift to the patron saint of the fishermen, if we find a shrine at the Lido."

[30]

Rafael melted at once. "It is not that I was afraid," he told her, as she stepped into the boat from the unlucky steps, "but I cannot have the ways of my country ridiculed."

Then he pushed off from the landing, and the two great columns rose above their heads in stately fashion.

Edith looked from the winged lion on the top of one to the crocodile and the figure of St. Theodore on the other. "There are many stone lions in the city," she said, "but I have seen only one crocodile. Why is that?"

"The lion is the symbol of St. Mark," replied Rafael, "and must guard the city, because St. Mark is our patron saint. St. Theodore, who stands on the crocodile, was our first patron saint, before the body of St. Mark was brought to Venice and placed in the little church which once stood where you now see the cathedral."

"Is it the St. Mark who wrote one of the books of the New Testament?" asked Mrs. Sprague.

"Yes, Signora," replied Rafael.

"We have been into the cathedral many times," said Edith. "Mother knows every picture and statue inside and out of it."

"It is one of the most beautiful cathedrals in the whole world," said her mother. "Some one has called it a jewel-box, because it contains so many magnificent gems, precious stones, and golden mosaics; and it seems so to me. Now that I have seen it, I am ready to leave Venice."

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"Oh, Mother," exclaimed the girl, "we haven't begun to see all that I want to! I must buy some more Venetian glass, and a lantern, and some flags and banners. I mean to make my room at home look like a bit of Venice."

Rafael looked pleased. "Our people were making beautiful things in glass two hundred years before Christopher Columbus found his way to your country," he said. He had no wish to seem boastful to these people of a younger nation, so he tried to say it courteously.

But Edith was impolite enough to say, "The men and women in your city seem to do nothing now but make glass, and carve wood, and weave lace. In so many hundred years they might have learned a good many new things, it seems to me."

The boy flushed. "Venice is old, it is true," he answered, "but Italy is still young." Then he threw back his head and laughed with the happy laugh of boyhood. "Viva l'Italia!" he cried joyously. "She will soon be the greatest country in the world."

"Viva Venice!" cried Edith, but Rafael was drawing his boat alongside a flight of steps, and did not hear her.

[32]

"Where is that lame crab of a steamer?" he muttered, looking off into the lagoon.

"What are we going to do?" questioned Mrs. Sprague anxiously.

"We must go to the Lido in the steamer," answered the boy. "It is too far for me to row there and back before sunset; and it will cost but a small sum to buy round-trip tickets for the three of us."

That will take us all to the casino by the tram-car, and pay for our bath in the salt-water."

"Pay for our bath!" repeated Edith. "Surely we may go into the water without paying for it."

"Not if you wish to go in from the bathing-house at the casino," Rafael replied; "and it is forbidden by law to take away even one pailful of the water without paying a tax. There is a tax on salt in our country, and it is feared that we may get the least bit of salt from the water."

"I never heard of such a thing!" exclaimed Mrs. Sprague.

"It is very hard," said the boy; "but what can one do? A tax is a tax, and must be paid."

"But it would not be so, if I could get hold of an oar of the government," he added with a laugh, as he held the boat steady with his own oar while his passengers landed. [33]

The little steamer was just drawing up to the pier from its trip across the lagoon. This lagoon is a wide stretch of water, deep only in those places where the ship-channels are kept constantly dredged. When the tide is low, the city shows that it is built upon mud-banks. Twice daily the waters move away from the lagoon, leaving the flats covered with floating seaweed. The returning tide, flowing from the Adriatic through several openings in the long narrow sand-bars, called lidi, covers the seaweed and mud-flats, and forms the lagoon.

The little steamer carried Rafael and his passengers to the Lido in a quarter of an hour, giving them time for a bath in the salt water, and a cup of tea at the casino; and also a moment at the little church dedicated to the patron saint of the fishermen, where Edith left a coin as she had promised to do.

Then they returned across the water to the church of San Giorgio for a view of the sunset, the sight in Venice which artists love most. It was the most wonderful sunset that Edith had ever seen. The low sun gave out a glory of color, and waves of golden light flooded the city, crowning every tower and dome with a great radiance.

"So much gold makes it seem like the Heavenly City," Edith said softly. [34]

To the north lay the white-crowned Alps, to the east the blue Adriatic; and Edith never forgot the glory of that hour.

A fisher's boat swung slowly through the Lido port, and moved toward its mooring-place at a group of rose-tinged piles. In just such a boat Columbus must have sailed when he was a boy. The rounded prow was decorated with a flying goddess blowing a trumpet; on the masthead there was perched a weathercock and a little figure of a hump-backed man, like the one hidden away in St. Mark's. A great sail, painted deep red, caught the sea-breeze and carried the boat slowly over the shimmering, rose-colored water.

Edith drew a long breath of the salt air, and clasped her hands with delight at the picture.

Some workmen, driving piles to mark the ship channel, were chanting an old song,—one that has been sung for centuries by the pile-drivers of Venice,—and Rafael translated the words for her, as the men raised the heavy wooden hammer:—

"Up with it well,
Up to the top;
Up with it well,
Up to the summit!"

Each line of the Italian words ended with a long "e-e-e," or an "o-o-o," and the American girl laughed at the strange song. [35]

"It is just the time and place to paint a picture, or write a poem about the Venetian sunset," she said.

"It is so different here from what I had imagined it to be," she added. "I used to wonder what kept the sea from dashing against the walls of the houses, and beating down the doors."

"Then you knew nothing about the lidi which hold back the sea?" questioned the boy.

"No," replied the girl. "People who have been here speak only about the Grand Canal, and the Piazza of St. Mark, and the Bridge of Sighs."

She pointed out to her mother the long wharf which stretched along the opposite bank of the lagoon, and their hotel, which was farther up the canal. "There is plenty of space on the pavement near our hotel to spread a sail," she said, "and I thought there was never a spot to set foot in all the city, except in the squares."

The sight of the hotel reminded Mrs. Sprague of home. "We must go back and see if there are any letters," she said suddenly, and turned to go down the spiral staircase.

A CHAT ABOUT VERONA

As they took their places in the boat, Edith said to Rafael, "Tell us some of your Venetian legends. Is there not one about this lagoon?"

"There are many," he answered, and he told her the story of the three saints—St. Mark, St. George, and St. Theodore—who crossed the lagoon one night, centuries ago, and drove back the evil spirits who would have destroyed the city.

"Our boatmen can tell you of many other strange things which have happened on these canals," he concluded, as they reached the steps in front of the hotel.

Edith ran in, and soon returned with several letters for her mother and herself, which they began reading while Rafael poled slowly back into the canal.

"Listen to this," exclaimed Mrs. Sprague suddenly. "Tom tells me to go to Verona, where his chauffeur is waiting with the automobile, and take it to Florence for him."

"I don't like to leave Venice just as we have begun to enjoy it," said Edith. Then seeing that Rafael looked wonderingly at them, she added, "Tom is my cousin, who is seeing Italy with his friend in an automobile. He said it would take too long to see it with Mother and me." [37]

But Mrs. Sprague began reading aloud,— "We shall be gone into Austria for more than a month, and I know you will enjoy a ride through the Italian country."

Looking up from the letter, she said, "We will go to-morrow."

"How shall we find the chauffeur?" asked Edith.

"He is at the 'Hotel of the Golden Dove,'" said Mrs. Sprague. "There will be no trouble in finding him."

"I prefer the winged lions of Venice to the golden dove of Verona," said Edith, looking up at the column in the Piazzetta.

"You will find a stone lion in the forum in Verona," said the boy.

"In the forum!" exclaimed Edith, "that sounds like Rome."

"Yes," said the boy rather proudly, "there is also an old forum in Verona, but it is used now as a vegetable market. You can take a picture of it with your camera."

"Perhaps I may," answered the girl; "but I shall first take one of Juliet's balcony." [38]

Rafael laughed. It seemed that he, too, had read "Romeo and Juliet," for he said, "You will be much disappointed in that balcony."

"Why so?" asked the girl, with a look of surprise.

"Because the house is not a fine one. It is in a block of tall narrow houses. The street leads from the market-place and is so narrow that the tram-car almost rubs against one's knees.

"Romeo had trouble enough, if he climbed to that balcony," he added. "It is five stories above the sidewalk, and is hardly big enough for a man to stand in."

"Perhaps Juliet's balcony overlooked the courtyard," Mrs. Sprague suggested.

"As for the courtyard, that was full of worn-out carriages when I saw it," Rafael answered, "It was not a good place for a lover to hide."

"I don't want to go to Verona and have all my dreams shattered," mourned the girl. "Shall I be disappointed in Juliet's tomb, too?"

The boy laughed again. "You can pick an ivy leaf from the plant near-by. Is not that what your country-women do?" he asked.

Edith tossed her head. "Of course," she answered. "I have a large collection of ivy leaves myself,—one from every castle in England and Ireland." [39]

The boy looked mischievous. "One from Juliet's tomb will be most precious of all," he told her, "because ivy grows not so easily in Italy as in England."

"Is there anything else to be seen in Verona?" asked Mrs. Sprague.

"There is a colosseum in Verona which is second only to the one in Rome, Signora," Rafael replied.

But Edith shook her head. "That cannot be," she said. "We have one in the United States which we think is next to the Roman one in importance."

It was the boy's turn to show surprise. "How can that be?" he asked quickly. "The one in Verona is very old, and has seen many exciting battles between gladiators."

"Well," persisted the girl, "our stadium in Cambridge, where the men of Harvard University fight their foot-ball battles with men of other colleges, has seen just as interesting contests as any

colosseum in Europe. Thousands and thousands of people have cheered the victors in our country as well as yours," and Edith's cheeks flushed, as she thought of some of the stirring foot-ball games which she had witnessed.

The boy looked at her in amazement. "I did not know that you ever saw such inspiring sights in your country," he said humbly. [40]

"Indeed we do," said Edith, glad to see that Rafael was impressed.

"How long will it take to reach Verona from Venice?" asked Mrs. Sprague.

"If you leave here at the fifteen hours, you will arrive before sunset," he answered.

"At the fifteen hours," repeated Edith with a laugh. "What a funny way to say three o'clock. Your way of counting time up to the twenty-four hours is the queerest thing in Italy."

"It seems the most natural thing in the world to me," said her mother. "There are twenty-four hours in the day. Why should we not name each one?"

Then she arranged that Rafael should take them to the station in his boat, on the next day, at the fifteen hours.

CHAPTER VIII

 [41]

EDITH'S FLORENTINE MOSAIC

HOTEL NEW YORK, FLORENCE, ITALY.

October 10, 19—.

TO SIGNOR RAFAEL VALLA,

My dear Sir:—Can you leave your tops for a few moments and read a letter from your American friends, the Spragues?

Although we have been in Florence for more than a month, we have not yet forgotten our visit in Venice and our journey to Verona. We sat by the right-hand window in the train, as you told us to do; but I looked often across the way to see what could take place on the opposite side. Once I saw some storks that had flown down from Strassburg and were standing on their long legs in the marshes.

But our side of the train was truly the more pleasant one. There were grape-vines and mulberry trees and wheat-fields; and also cypress trees, which you did not mention, but which we were glad to see. Then there were big fields of watermelons ripening in the sun, and women gathering them in baskets which they carried on their heads across the fields. [42]

In Verona we went to see the play in the colosseum by moonlight. I have never seen such a performance in our stadium at Harvard, and you have a right to be proud of the great colosseum.

There were four hundred performers on the stage at one time, and the play ended at "the twenty-three hours" with a gunpowder explosion that destroyed the fort,—the play fort, I mean.

And we looked at the tombs of the Scaligers, although I don't know any good reason for doing so; and then we came through the most beautiful country to Florence.

Men and women, dressed in gayest colors, were reaping with sickles in the wheat-fields. The grain was truly "golden grain," and there was never a foot of ground anywhere, whether the grain was standing or had fallen, without a flaming scarlet poppy. And every hill was green with trees and crowned with a castle or a tower.

We rode through miles and miles of vineyards, all arranged in pictures, for our benefit, as it seemed. The vines hung in festoons from long rows of mulberry trees. The trees were planted in rows that crossed one another, forming hollow squares, and the square spaces were filled with the scarlet poppies and the golden grain. [43]

The trees grew so regularly, and the vines hung so gracefully—a single vine running from tree to tree—that we could not take our eyes from the lovely sight; and we have promised ourselves to see the gathering of the grapes, on our way from Florence to Rome.

At the toll-gate we found that we could not enter Florence until after our automobile and all our luggage had been examined. The officers seemed to fear that we were trying to smuggle something to eat, either fruit or vegetables, into the city.

It was in the midst of a thunder-storm; and not until the official was convinced that we were quite wet, and wished to enter in order to find shelter, and that we were truly a foreign lady and her daughter, on a sight-seeing tour, did he let us pass through the gates and enter the city.

And now, after our month's visit, I have a Florentine mosaic to take to America with my Venetian necklace.

The golden background of my mosaic is another sunset; one which we saw from the Shepherd's Tower, with the sky a rosy-pink, the River Arno taking its slow course through the city and reflecting the rosy light, and the surrounding hills all deep blue and amethyst.

The most precious stone of my mosaic is the glorious statue of David, on the heights of San Miniato. Perhaps, if Michael Angelo could have known, four hundred years ago, that I was going to have one minute of such very great happiness as when I first saw his work, he would have been very glad. [44]

What a splendid fashion the Italians have of placing beautiful statues out of doors where everyone may see and admire them often! In America we crowd them all together in museums and charge an admission fee, so that one sees them but seldom, if at all.

There are many stones in my mosaic. Florence is well called the "City of Flowers." One sees flower-girls everywhere, and little Bianca, with the tanned face and the big black eyes, who comes to our door every morning with the sweetest and freshest of roses, is one of my friends.

Every Friday we have been to the market-place to see the peasants, who come in from the surrounding hillsides with loads of peaches, figs, grapes, pumpkins, watermelons, squashes,—all kinds of beautiful fruits and vegetables.

But I like best the boys who carry trays of plaster images which have been made in their little villages up among the mountains, and which they bring here just as they sometimes take them to America.

We saw also the straw market, and the women braiding the straw and making hats. You shall see the one which Mother bought for me, and which I wear every day. [45]

And this brings me to the reason for writing you this letter. We are going to leave the music of the churches, the pictures, the sculptures, the peasants and the market-place, and go into the country to see the harvests.

I shall miss hearing the constant ringing of the church bells, and seeing the squads of soldiers marching to the sound of military music. And perhaps I shall never again sleep in a room with barred windows overlooking the blue waters of an Italian river, and look through those same bars into the faces of sweet nuns and shaven monks as they pass on the sidewalk outside.

But we can have the automobile only a few days longer, and it is our great wish that you join us in Florence and take the trip with us to Rome.

Then if you will but stay with us for a few weeks in Rome, we shall not get lost again because of being unable to speak Italian. Mother says that you will be tongue and eyes for us.

Your American friend,

EDITH SPRAGUE.

CHAPTER IX

[46]

RAFAEL LEAVES VENICE

It was a long letter. Rafael read it aloud to his mother, and at the end he spoke without looking up at her.

"May I go?" he asked simply.

She did not answer for several moments, and he spoke again. "I know so little of Italy, outside of Venice," he urged. "Those Americans go everywhere and see the whole world."

"That is true," his mother answered, "and you may never have such another opportunity to see the Eternal City. You may go," she added finally, to Rafael's great delight.

"That is good! I will start as soon as you can pack some clothes for me," he cried. He half thought she would go at once to pack them, but she sat still, and began to talk about her girlhood.

"I was born near the hotel where your friend is living," she said, "and know every foot of ground in Florence. It is a pity you are not going to be there on Holy Saturday, the day before Easter. Then you would see a sight that is seen nowhere outside of Florence." [47]

"Tell me about it," said the boy.

"It is called the 'Burning of the Car,'" she told him. "Back in the time of the Crusaders, one of the men of old Florence who went to Jerusalem brought from the Holy Sepulchre two pieces of the stone, and also a torch lighted from the holy light that has been kept burning there since the time Christ was crucified.

"In order that the wind might not blow out his light, he rode the whole distance back to Florence with his face toward Jerusalem.

"The people of the cities through which he passed thought that this man who was riding backwards must be crazy, and they cried out after him, 'Pazzi! Pazzi!' which means mad-man. Finally he was called by the name of Pazzi, and was the founder of the Pazzi family, which to this day shares with the government the expense of burning the car at Easter time.

"The light and the two pieces of the stone sepulchre are treasured in the oldest church in Florence. They are taken out once every year, and the people are allowed to look at them, and are also permitted to light their candles at the sacred flame. They count that a great blessing.

"The burning of the car is an interesting ceremony, and thousands of people come from far and near to see it. Two yoke of pure white Tuscan oxen are chosen to pull the car into the Piazza del Duomo for the burning; and proud is that peasant whose oxen are chosen for the ceremony. [48]

"They are driven into the city on the night of Good Friday when everything is very still, and are taken early the next morning to the enormous barn where the great car is kept.

"The car is built of wood and is hung with festoons of colored paper and garlands of flowers. Fireworks of many kinds are hidden among the flowers and paper,—some which make loud noises, and others which burn with a bright light.

"The oxen are harnessed to the car and draw it slowly through the street to its place in the square in front of the cathedral,—'the very great heart of Florence.' A wire is then stretched from the high altar of the cathedral to the car in the square, and everything is in readiness.

"In the meantime a priest takes the holy light, very early on Saturday morning, and walks with it to the cathedral, lighting the candles of the people as he goes. On either side he is accompanied by a servant in livery from the house of Pazzi.

"Crowds of men, women and children, dressed in holiday attire, collect in the square in front of the cathedral, and there is a babble of voices, with much merriment and laughter.

"Just before the hour of noon a great silence falls upon the crowd, and the priests begin the Mass. At the moment when the 'Gloria in Excelsis' is reached, the Archbishop places a lighted taper in the bill of an artificial dove, and sends the dove down the wire to the car. Then all the bells in the city begin to ring. [49]

"Down to the car flies the dove, and the taper in its bill sets fire to the fireworks. Then it flies back to the high altar, and if the trip is successful and the fireworks go off with a great burning and banging, there is rejoicing among the crowds in the square, for it means that the autumn harvests will be plentiful.

"Then the prize oxen, all beautifully decorated with garlands, and with blankets embroidered with the arms of the Pazzi family, are again harnessed to the car; it is refilled with fireworks, and the burning is repeated in the square Victor Emanuele, near the Pazzi palace.

"And afterwards all the men buy new hats, and wear them home in honor of the event.

"I have heard that it rained last Easter-time, and that the burning was not so good as usual," she said with a smile, "perhaps your friends will not find plentiful harvests."

Rafael smiled in answer, and looked at Edith's letter, where his eyes fell upon her words about the tomb of the Scaligers. [50]

"Why do foreigners always find it hard to understand our Italian history?" he asked.

"Because for many centuries Italy was made up of small states, each one governed by a different ruler,—sometimes a family, and sometimes a Doge, as here in Venice. The Scaligers were a famous family which ruled Verona for many years during the middle ages.

"When I was a girl, Cavour, one of Italy's greatest statesmen, brought about the unification of the many states into one kingdom under one king, and since then our people have become happier and more prosperous. Italy is now one of the important nations in Europe."

She would have said more, but Rafael was tired of listening to the stories of the past, and wished to plan for his journey.

"I must get ready to go to Florence at once," he said.

"It cannot be done in one day," replied his mother. "Write to your friends that you will come on Thursday."

So on Thursday he bade his mother good-bye and started on his journey. He was taken to the station in his little boat, poled by his friend Nicolo; and his last words to Nicolo as he left the boat were, "I am so glad to go!"

CHAPTER X

GATHERING GRAPES IN TUSCANY

I am still glad! Yet it would not be so if you were not also glad for me.

It was the joy of the morning to find a letter from you to-day. Two letters have I now had in my life, and both from Italy. I had thought we Italians had letters from nobody but "friends in America," as Paolo, the fruit-man, always says.

And you say that Nicolo wishes to buy my boat; and that he will pay for it after he has carried many passengers under the three bridges of the Grand Canal, and to the Lido.

Well, say to him that I cannot sell my boat. Did I not make it myself, from an old fisherman's boat, with only a little help from Carlo, in his workshop on the canal of the chestnut trees? And of a truth I will not sell it to Nicolo. But I shall give it to him for his birthday gift, if in return he will carry old Grandmother Nanna every Sunday morning to early Mass, so that she will not miss it because I am no longer there. [52]

I shall never want the boat again, because I am going to become a citizen of Florence.

It is true that we leave to-day for our automobile ride to Rome, but I shall come back again. That is what everyone does who has once been here.

Why did you not tell me about the Palazzo Vecchio with the wonderful statues in the Loggia? Did you think that because we have so much beauty in our old Venice I should care for none elsewhere?

And the pictures in the Pitti and the Uffizi palaces,—you should have warned me that I would wear my eyes out with much looking at them! And it is one thing to hear of Michael Angelo, and quite another to see his great works!

The American lady, Mrs. Sprague, with her guide-book, follows the English-speaking guide about, and continually interrupts him to ask, "At what page have we arrived now?"

But her daughter is different. She carries no guide-book. She has a boy's mind and asks questions about everything. She asked me about the tunnels through which my train came from Venice. Ah, those tunnels! There were twenty-two of them in sixteen miles, and the train whizzed in and out in the most exciting manner. [53]

More I cannot say, but that I am perfectly happy! And I shall sign my name Benvenuto, because the American girl says I am welcome.

A thousand greetings to you, from your absent crab of a boy in Florence,

RAFAEL VALLA.

During that wonderful automobile ride from Florence to Rome, Rafael was glad that his mother had told him so many stories of her native city. There was pointed out to him on one of the Tuscan hills not far from Florence, the same yoke of oxen that had drawn the car through the city streets on the previous Easter, and he was able to tell Edith the whole story of the "Burning of the Car."

The chauffeur, under Mrs. Sprague's directions, took them off the highway and close to the oxen and their driver. The horns of the oxen were decorated with garlands of flowers and gay paper streamers, because they were again to take part in a festival,—the festival of the vintage; and on the drag behind them rested a great tun for the wine.

Rafael spoke to the smiling contadino and asked if they might follow him to the harvest.

"Not follow," he answered; "the oxen move but slowly, and must first drag the tun to the wine-cellar at the farm-house. But you may lead," he added. "It is a straight road along the base of the hill and across the brook, to the gate of the vineyard." [54]

So they sped along in the automobile, and soon reached the busiest, merriest place that Edith had ever seen. Men and women, boys and girls, all dressed in the brightest, gayest colors, were cutting grapes from the vines which hung in long festoons from tall trees. They were constantly coming and going, with full baskets or empty ones, and some of the boys had climbed ladders to pick the grapes from the tree-tops.

There was much shouting and laughter, with happy calls to one another about the number of baskets of grapes each had picked, and the number of lire the work would bring.

"See how carefully that boy is cutting the grapes from the vines," observed Edith, pointing to a lad about Rafael's age, who sang as he worked, and who lifted the luscious, purple clusters of fruit into his basket as lovingly as if they could feel the touch of his hand.

Mrs. Sprague called attention to some of the vines, which had already been stripped of leaves as well as fruit.

"Why do they pick the leaves also?" she had Rafael ask one of the men.

He answered that the grapes grew so thickly that it was necessary to pick off the leaves in order that the fruit might get the full benefit of the sun. "There is much to do for the grapes before they can be picked," he added. "We must see to it that neither hail nor wind spoils the clusters before the vintage."

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Then he explained that the grapes would soon be taken to the house and poured into great vats, where they would be made into wine.

Before Edith could ask about this process, Rafael shouted, "The oxen! Here come the oxen!" and she turned to see the gaily decorated, white oxen moving slowly across the field, drawing a big wagon.

The driver led the oxen to the farther end of the vineyard, and the boys and girls climbed upon the wagon with their baskets, and were carried under the festoons of vines, picking clusters of grapes here and there as they rode slowly along.

"I should like to help pick the grapes," said Edith wistfully, as she watched the merry pickers at their task.

Rafael asked one of the men if she might be allowed to do so. He smiled and nodded, pointing to an empty basket on the ground, and soon the two children were filling it together, and laughing and shouting with the others.

"This is like a moving picture," Edith said to Rafael, when at last their basket was filled and they had climbed into the ox-cart to ride with the overflowing baskets and grape-stained children to the farm-house.

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As they passed under the vines, Edith cut off some of the trailing ends and made crowns for the bareheaded, black-haired peasant girls, and one of them, more daring than the others, crowned Edith's own black hair.

Mrs. Sprague had already found her way to the house, and to the heart of the farmer's wife, by admiring the little baby that lay sleeping in its cradle under a fig tree near-by.

The baby was wrapped in a swaddling band, a piece of linen four or five yards long, which is wound round and round the tiny body, beginning just under the arms and ending at the toes. It is a curious fashion the Italians have of dressing their babies, and has been followed ever since the Mother Mary wrapped the infant Jesus in a swaddling band, so many hundred years ago.

"Pretty bambino," Mrs. Sprague had said, pointing to the baby, and the mother had found a hundred things to say in reply, in her voluble Italian fashion, not one word of which Mrs. Sprague could understand.

The farmer's wife was still talking when the vintage procession swung into the yard, the boys and girls lifting their voices in a festival song and keeping time to the swinging of the horns of the great white oxen.

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Then there was the merry confusion of emptying the grapes into the huge vats, and the choosing of certain men and maidens to trample out the purple juice.

Two or three always stand together in a single vat and press the grapes with their bare feet, thus forcing out the juice, which runs through an opening in the base of the vat into a wooden bucket.

Some of the farmers use a machine to press the grapes, but many think it should be done, as it was in old Bible times, with the human foot. It seems that the feet know how to avoid crushing the seeds and the skins, as a machine cannot know.

Rafael asked to be allowed to press the grapes in one of the vats, and after permission had been given him, Edith suddenly asked to do it also.

The farmer shook his head doubtfully. "It is very hard work," he objected.

Edith bade Rafael say that she was an American girl, and not afraid of hard work, and at last she was permitted to stand with the Italian boy in the vat and tread until she grew tired.

However, to stand in the midst of juicy grapes means to spoil one's clothes, so the farmer's wife took Edith and Rafael into the house and dressed them like peasant children.

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There was much laughing and shouting from the other boys and girls over the sight of the two strange wine-treaders, and it reminded Edith of something. "Doesn't the Bible speak of the singing and laughing that go with the vintage?" she asked her mother.

"Yes," answered Mrs. Sprague, "there are many references in the Bible to the vineyard and the vintage; and also to the fig trees, which seem always to be planted in the vineyard."

"When I was learning in my Sunday-school lessons about the vine and the fig tree, I never dreamed that some day I should be eating grapes and ripe figs, and treading in the wine-press, as they did in olden times," said Edith.

"It will be the best wine in the whole country," said the farmer, when at last Edith was lifted out, her feet crimson with the blood of the grapes.

"I must see where they put it," she said, and followed to the dark wine-cellar, where the grape

juice was poured into a tank and left to ferment.

It was late in the afternoon when they were once more in readiness to continue their journey toward Rome. The farmer's wife, who had told them all her family history, in Italian, would have been glad to keep them over night, but Mrs. Sprague shook her head.

"Tell her that the bambino is very cunning," she said to Rafael, "but we must be far along on our journey to-night." [59]

Rafael's heart sang again, "I am so glad to go!" Every moment spent in the automobile was one of joy to him. He barely noticed the queer old streets and ancient buildings of the towns through which they passed. He cared more for the rapid motion of the car, and the sensation of flying through the air; and besides, he knew well the customs of the people in the Italian towns, and there was nothing strange to him in the sight of men and women sitting at tables outside the cafés, or wandering up and down in the public promenades.

But he chattered in gay delight over the country sights. "See the haystacks!" he would cry, "and the golden pumpkins! and oh, the ears of yellow corn!"

A small flock of geese ran into the road, hissing at the big red automobile, and Rafael laughed gaily.

"You should not laugh at those geese," Edith reproved him. "No doubt they are descendants of the sacred geese that saved Rome." Then after a moment of silence, she added, "Saved Rome from what?"

"From the enemy," Rafael answered, with another laugh. [60]

"I know that, of course," said Edith; "but Rome has had so many enemies that I can never keep the different ones separated in my mind."

Mrs. Sprague overheard the conversation, and said, "That is one reason why I brought you to Italy, Edith. I want you to understand all this Roman history, so that you will be able to pass your examinations when you return to school."

Rafael was interested to hear something about the American school examinations, and Edith told him of her troubles with history.

Then Rafael told of the difficulty he always had in remembering whether George Lincoln lived before Abraham Washington, or afterwards; and while Edith was explaining to him his mistake in the names, they arrived at one of the many olive-groves that dot the Tuscan hillsides.

"I think the vineyards are much prettier," said Edith. "But the twisted black trunks, and the gray branches of the olive trees are very picturesque," she added.

Boy-like, Rafael began at once to make friends with the farmer, and soon learned the whole process of crushing the oil from the ripe black fruit.

The farmer led them all to the sheds where the great stones were set up to crush the olives. He showed them just how the work was done, and then explained about the different grades of oil. [61]

"We buy a great deal of your Italian oil in America," said Mrs. Sprague; and when Rafael had repeated this in Italian to the farmer, the man went into the house and soon returned with two bottles of his very best oil, which he presented to Edith and her mother.

"We Italians sell more oil than any other country," he said proudly to Rafael, "and we use a great quantity ourselves. It is much better than butter for cooking."

Then he showed them the barrels of mammoth green olives which he had sold on the trees to an American dealer the month before, and which were soon to be shipped to Genoa.

Mrs. Sprague looked at the setting sun, and advised that they hurry on to the next town, where they were to spend the night; and Rafael rejoiced once more in the speed of the automobile.

But Edith was tired, and was glad to reach a comfortable bed in Siena, and lay her head upon the pillow filled with live-geese feathers; after which she knew nothing more of Italy, until the next morning's sun wakened her, and she began another day's journey over the roads of Tuscany.

CHAPTER XI

[62]

A MARATHON RUN TO ROME

"All roads lead to Rome!" called Edith, from her seat in the automobile, to Rafael in the door of the inn. The boy gave her a merry salute in answer, and climbed to his place by her side.

It was a lovely morning, and every peasant they passed waved a hand in friendly greeting to the two happy young people, while Mrs. Sprague leaned back and listened to their merry chatter, which never stopped through the long hours.

Rafael was constantly calling Edith's attention to this thing or that,—to the gray oxen, to the flocks of sheep, to the donkey carts which they passed. At last Edith said, "Rafael, why do you look always at the road? Why don't you look instead of those distant mountains, with the castles and monasteries crowning their peaks?"

Rafael looked somewhat bewildered. "These animals are all so foreign-looking to me," he said gently; "and it is a new thing for me to see men digging in the fields, and women picking leaves from the trees."

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"Why, of course!" said Edith, remembering that Rafael was used to canals instead of roads, and the changing waters of a lagoon rather than green meadows. "It is a new sight to me, as well," she added, "that of women picking the mulberry leaves to feed to silkworms. We have few silkworms in our country."

"But neither do we have mountains crowned with castles. When I go home, I shall have to imagine that the hotel on top of Mt. Washington is a haunted monastery crowning the summit of a lofty peak."

Although Rafael knew nothing about Mt. Washington and the hotel on its top, he did know that Edith was a bright, observant girl who liked a touch of the ideal, so he asked, "Do you know about the Marathon runs of ancient Greece?"

"Yes, indeed!" she answered. "We have them now once a year at my own home in the United States, and there is great excitement over the winning of the twenty-six mile run."

Rafael shook his head in mock discouragement. "There is nothing in Europe which you have not also in the United States,—except age," he added.

"And history," said Edith.

"Yes, history," the boy repeated. "I like our history." Then he laughed and said drolly, "You may have all the history you like from my mother. She says it is better than salt. My own head is filled to bursting with all the stories she has told me of the men of olden times; of their wars and victories, their triumphs and their games. Why can we not call this ride to Rome a Marathon run?"

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"A Marathon run! What fun!" exclaimed the girl. "How far away is Rome?"

"More than a hundred miles," he said. "Do you suppose we could possibly reach the site of the Golden Milestone before sunset?"

Edith's eyes sparkled at the thought, and she leaned forward to speak to the chauffeur. "Is the machine running well?" she asked. "Can we travel one hundred miles to-day?"

The man shook his head doubtfully. "There are mountains between here and Rome," he answered, "and it is not well to push the car too hard."

Edith looked at Rafael imploringly. "You are a man; can you not persuade him?" she asked under her breath.

The boy was pleased to be called a man; but as he was in truth a gallant Italian lad, he said courteously, "It is for you to persuade."

Then to the chauffeur he said, "Please stop for a moment at the first olive-garden."

"What are you going to do?" asked Edith curiously.

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"Make it easy for you to persuade," he answered; and as the car stopped he jumped out, sprang to the top of the wall, broke off a branch of beautiful, silvery-green leaves, and presented it to Edith with a graceful bow.

"What can you make with the leaves?" he asked with a smile.

Edith looked at the branch thoughtfully for a moment.

"I know," she cried, "the victor's crown of olives!" and she clapped her hands together with delight. "See," she said to the chauffeur, "if you will reach the Golden Milestone in Rome by sunset, you shall have a crown of olive leaves."

She said it hesitatingly. The chauffeur was a quiet, business-like man, and Edith, with a child's judgment, supposed him to be too old to feel a single thrill of ambition.

Perhaps he was. Perhaps it was only the desire to give pleasure to the American girl that moved him to smile faintly and say, "Well! Well! We will see what our car can do; but it is not at all likely that we shall see Rome this night."

However, he began at once to increase the speed, carefully to be sure, but with purpose.

Edith turned to the task of plaiting a wreath of leaves. As her fingers twisted and arranged them to make the most of their dull green upper surfaces, she asked Rafael, "What of this Golden Milestone? I have never heard of it."

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"It was a gilded stone set up in the old Roman Forum by the Emperor Augustus," Rafael replied. "He wished to make of the city a great trading center; and so he built many roads radiating from

the Forum to all parts of ancient Italy. The distances of all the principal towns, measured from the city gates, were recorded on the golden stone. Although it is no longer there, its place is marked."

Edith was disappointed. "I thought I was going to see it," she said, twisting a leaf to show its gray under-side.

"There are so many other ruins from the days, of ancient Rome, that you will never miss the milestone," Rafael assured her.

"How do you know?" she asked.

"My mother has told me about them," he answered. "It was only by word of mouth that much of the earliest history of the world was made known, and I have learned it in the same way."

"It may not be the most 'up-to-date' fashion," said the girl, "but it is certainly more interesting. I wish you would try it now, and tell me something about the Eternal City."

The young Italian boy, who was making his first journey into the heart of his native land, felt his own heart expand with joy as he looked across the beautiful valleys to the distant blue mountains for inspiration. [67]

"It was many hundred years before the birth of Christ that people first came into Italy," he said. "My mother told me that they wandered over here from Central Asia in search of good pastures for their flocks, but it was so many centuries ago that very little is known about them."

Edith pointed to a roughly thatched hut in a distant field, and asked, "Do you suppose they lived in huts like that?"

"Not at first," the boy answered. "It was a long time before they built even such good huts as that one. It was only little by little that they learned to clear the ground and cultivate it with rude tools; to make dishes out of clay and cook their food; to spin and weave the wool from their sheep, and to live under shelter.

"At first each family lived by itself, but after a time they began to form tribes and choose the strongest and bravest of their number for a chief. This chief governed them in times of peace and led them in their wars with other tribes, becoming their leader or king.

"There were many such tribes in Italy, and for centuries they lived here, waging constant warfare with each other and with other tribes and nations." [68]



Gateway of San Sebastian, Rome
There are many gates in the walls which now surround the city.

"Were there no civilized people in those days?" asked Edith.

"Yes," replied Rafael, "there were the people of Egypt and Greece; and some of the Grecians had already wandered over into Italy before the time of Romulus.

"When he ploughed a trench for the strong wall which was to be built for a fortification, Romulus ploughed around a great altar to the Greek god, Hercules."

"Who was Romulus?" interrupted Edith.

"It is said that he was the founder of the city of Rome," Rafael told her. "He was a son of Mars, the god of war, and he founded the city 753 years before the birth of Christ. There are some parts of his wall still standing. He lifted his plough over the places where the gates were to be built."

"Why, Rafael?"

"Because the ground where the walls would stand was made sacred, but the gateways would be profaned by the passing of many feet."

"How many gates were there?" Edith asked.

"Three; but please don't ask me their names, for I never learned them. There are many gates in the walls which now surround the city."

Edith put down her wreath and laughed with glee. "I'm glad there is something you never learned about Italian history," she said. "But tell me what it was like, this early city of Rome." [69]

"Romulus chose a hill for the site of his village, and soon men from the neighboring tribes came to join him, so that the town grew large and prosperous and covered two hills instead of one.

"Those early Romans lived in rude huts. They made their tools of flint, bone and bronze, and their dishes of clay. Beside each house was a garden and sheepfold. Every morning the peasants went to their work on the farms, and the shepherds drove their little flocks outside the city walls. Arched gateways were built in the walls, and through these gates everyone entering or leaving the city was obliged to pass."

"Think of having sheep and cattle inside the city," exclaimed Edith. "I suppose they had to be protected from the wild animals."

"Yes," replied Rafael, "and from the hostile tribes who were always ready to steal them. There are many stories about those tribes, and about the kings who governed the city after Romulus died. Some of the kings made wise laws and ruled in peace, but others led armies to conquer the neighboring tribes, and added small territories to their kingdom."

"And I suppose each king tried to do something to make his name famous," said Edith. [70]

"Not for that reason," Rafael replied. "He did it for the good of the city. Many of the roads and canals and temples which are now famous ruins, were built by some of those old kings.

"As Rome was on the River Tiber, fifteen miles from the sea, one king built a seaport at the mouth of the river, and a long straight road leading down to it, which was laid so solidly that it is still in use to-day.

"The valleys between the hills of Rome were wet and marshy. A king named Tarquin drained those marshes by building immense stone sewers. One of them was so large that several yoke of oxen could pass through it side by side, and the work was so well done that it is in good condition now, although it is more than twenty-four hundred years old.

"One marsh which the sewer drained was used as a market-place. Shop-keepers set their stalls up there; temples and public buildings were erected, and it became known as the Roman Forum."

"The very Forum where we are going?" asked Edith eagerly.

"Yes," replied Rafael, "the very Forum where Augustus, several hundred years later, set up the Golden Milestone."

"What else did those old Romans do?" asked Edith. [71]

"They were fond of amusements," said Rafael. "One of the valleys between two of the hills was a good place for races and other games. On the sloping hillsides on each side of the valley, seats were built for thousands of spectators, and the place was called the Circus Maximus.

"The same king who built the sewers built also a strong fortress on the top of one of the hills. This fortress was called the Capitol, and the hill was called the Capitoline Hill. He also ordered that a wall should be built all around the seven hills to enclose the city, but it was not finished during his lifetime."

"Let us get out the map and look at it," suggested the girl, who had finished plaiting the olive wreath.

So the wreath was put away in the hamper, and the two heads were soon bending over a great map of Rome; and Rafael traced the lines of the old wall which Romulus built.

Just then Mrs. Sprague looked up at the sun. "It is time for lunch," she said, and began unpacking the lunch-basket, while the car rolled steadily nearer and nearer to the Roman Forum.

CHAPTER XII

[72]

"THE GOLDEN MILESTONE"

"If we are to reach Rome at sunset, some one must lend a hand at the wheel," said the chauffeur, as the children finished eating their lunch. "There is not a moment to lose, and I, also, am hungry."

Rafael sprang at once to his side. He had longed to drive the automobile from the very moment they began the journey from Florence, and had often sat on the seat beside the chauffeur, watching him, and asking him questions about his work.

There followed a glorious afternoon for the boy. He was a ready pupil, the roads were good, and the friendly chauffeur a careful teacher.

They passed peasant women in gay bodices, with folded handkerchiefs on their heads and long earrings in their ears, carrying baskets of fruit on their arms. They passed peasant men driving donkeys or oxen, who smiled at them from under hats decorated with pompons of colored paper and tinsel. Geese ran out to hiss at them as they flew by, and hens and chickens fluttered out of their way; but Rafael had eyes only for the road.

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They passed lemon groves and rose-gardens, and Edith was grieved because Rafael could not enjoy with her every new and strange sight.

"I wanted you to tell me more about the Roman ruins," she said.

But the boy tossed a merry smile back at her for answer. "We will speak more about those things when we are in Rome," he said. "I can think of nothing now but flying," and he bent his eyes again to the road.

At last they began the descent of a lofty hill, and the car glided into the road which is the old Flaminian Way, leading directly to the city.

Edith felt the thrill which always stirs the heart when one first draws near to the Eternal City. She leaned forward and said to the chauffeur, "How do you feel, to be riding toward Rome?"

For answer the man pointed to the sun, which was low in the western sky. "There is only another hour of sunlight," he said with a smile.

"Oh, shall we fail to reach the Golden Milestone at sunset?" the girl asked, as anxiously as if it were the most important thing in the world to win their Marathon run.

But Rafael suddenly lifted a hand from the wheel. "Ecco!" he said, pointing to the distant South.

Edith followed the direction of his finger. Far away she saw the great dome of a cathedral rising toward the clouds.

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"Rome! St. Peter's!" she shouted.

The boy nodded. The splendor of the ancient city flashed into his mind. He saw as in a dream the magnificent temples and palaces, the triumphal processions, the chariot-races, the games and combats of the early Romans, about which his mother had told him so many stories.

"It is a wonderful city," he said. "What tales those old walls could tell!"

As they crossed the River Tiber he heard Edith murmur behind him, "Oh, Tiber, Father Tiber, to whom the Romans pray!" and then it seemed but a moment before they were rolling through a massive stone gateway, and the chauffeur had taken the wheel.

As Rafael lifted his eyes to look about him once more, they looked straight into the eyes of a man who was riding in the opposite direction, and he smiled. He did not know that he had smiled, nor that this man was the king of Italy. His thoughts were back again with the conquerors of the early days, and the splendors of the ancient city.

But the king had noticed the boy, and turned to look after him. "That was the spirit of the old Romans looking from his eyes," he said to his attendant.

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The last rays of the setting sun fell upon the scarred columns of the ruined Forum, as the car rounded the base of the Capitoline Hill and stopped at the spot where the Golden Milestone once marked the beginning of the Roman roads.

Rafael was speechless; but Edith took the olive wreath from the hamper with exclamations of delight.

"Where will you have it?" she asked the chauffeur, "on your head or your wheel?"

"It belongs to the car triumphal," he answered as they turned and moved cautiously through the street-car tracks of modern Rome.

"There could never have been such a record run made by your kings and emperors of olden times," said the girl proudly to Rafael.

But he was too happy with his thoughts to make any reply, and Edith turned her attention to the conversation between her mother and the chauffeur.

"To the Continental Hotel," Mrs. Sprague was saying, and all too soon they had crossed the city, and were welcomed and given rooms in the hotel. The chauffeur bade them good-bye, and their Marathon run was a thing of the past.

CHAPTER XIII

A RAMBLE IN ROME

[76]

"Did you see a picturesque-looking shepherd, dressed in shaggy skins, driving his flock through the square at midnight?"

Rafael asked the question at the breakfast table one morning, about two weeks after their arrival in Rome.

"No, indeed!" Edith answered. "I was fast asleep. How could you see what he wore?"

"It was bright moonlight," Rafael told her in reply. "I could see plainly his sheepskin jacket and the long hair of his goatskin leggins. He had a great white dog to help him guide the sheep, and they entered the square and passed through it so silently that it seemed almost like a dream."

"Perhaps it was a dream," said Edith; but Rafael shook his head, and the girl went on, "Now I had a dream about the geese that saved Rome; but you will no doubt tell me that if I had looked out of the window I should have seen them following old Mother Goose through the square."

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Rafael laughed. "I do not know your old Mother Goose," he said, and left the table to telephone for the guide who was to take them to see some of the famous ruins of ancient Rome.

In a short time the guide arrived, and they were ready to drive through the city streets. This guide was Professor Gates, a man who had lived in Rome over twenty-five years, studying its history and ancient ruins, and he had already taken Rafael, with Edith and Mrs. Sprague, to see many interesting places.

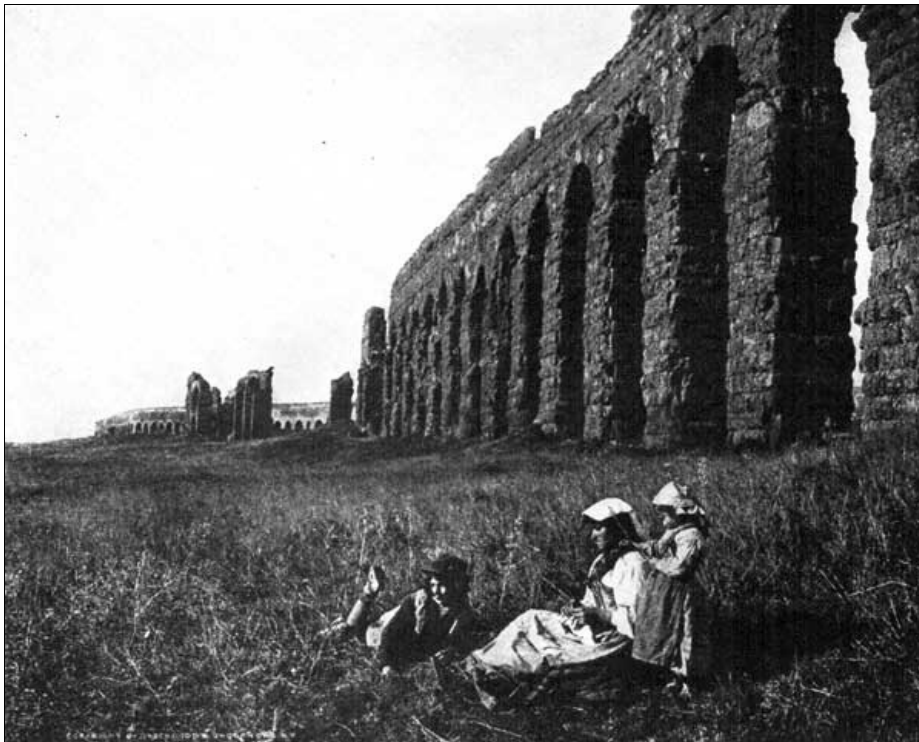
"Where are we going to-day?" Edith asked, as they took their seats in the carriage.

"I want you to drive a little distance along the Appian Way," replied their guide; "but we will look first at some of the arches of the old aqueduct which was built by Appius Claudius, many years before the birth of Christ, to bring water to the city from the mountains sixty miles away."

It was a lovely morning for a drive, and Edith and Rafael saw many sights to point out to each other. Near the foot of one of the arches of the aqueduct they found a group of models picking flowers, and Edith asked them to pose for a picture.

It was a pretty little group. The boy wore a conical hat adorned with a feather, a red jacket, and sandals which were bound upon his feet with red cords that were interlaced up the legs as far as the knees. His mother and sister wore bright red skirts and green aprons, and they all smiled at Edith as she tossed them some coins for posing.

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Ruins of the Claudian Aqueduct
The arches were built to support the Aqueduct which is at the top.

"You will find such models all over the city," said Professor Gates.

"Like all-over embroidery," said Edith with a merry laugh; but no one saw her little joke, so she asked more seriously, "How did the water flow through the arches?"

"It did not flow through the arches, but through the aqueduct which you see at the top," the guide explained. "If you remember your Latin you will know that this word is formed from two others which mean 'water' and 'to lead.' In some places the aqueduct was laid upon the ground, but here there was a valley to be crossed, as you see, and the arches formed a bridge over which the pipe was laid."

From the aqueduct they drove to the old Appian Way.

"The Appian Way was named after Appius Claudius, who built a part of it," Professor Gates explained. "It is three hundred miles long, and crosses Italy to Brindisi, a seaport on the south-eastern coast."

"I thought you said that Appius Claudius built the aqueduct," said Mrs. Sprague.

"So he did," replied the professor. "The road is called 'Appian' after one of his names, and the aqueduct 'Claudian' after the other." [79]

"Was he one of the kings of early Rome?" asked Edith, taking out her note-book.

"No," he answered, "the kingdom came to an end more than two hundred years before this road was begun. This is one of the great works of the republic."

"What a glorious sight it must have been to see the Roman army come marching home in triumph from some of its great victories," said Rafael. "Think how thousands of soldiers, with spears and helmets flashing in the sun, marched over this road, leading their prisoners of war."

"Yes," said Edith, "and think how the Roman women came hurrying through that old gate to meet them, shouting with joy at their return."

The professor smiled at the children. He liked the way they had begun to see pictures in their minds of the earlier days of Rome. He called their attention to the ruins of tombs which are scattered along the road on either side, and then pointed to three peasant children who had been playing in the field, but had stopped to watch the strangers. "There is ancient Rome and young Italy. You will find one quite as interesting as the other," he said.

"Most of what you see is historic," he told them as they rode back into the city. "There is a story about every ruin along the Appian Way. I have told you the legends of the kings, but there are also tales to tell of the days of the republic and of the glorious empire." [80]

"Rafael likes those old kings," said Edith. "How did the kingdom happen to come to an end?"

"One of the Kings was such a cruel tyrant that the people rose in rebellion, under the leadership of a man named Brutus, and drove the king and his followers from the city," replied the professor. "Brutus then persuaded the Romans never again to be ruled by a king, so two men were elected each year to govern the people, and the kingdom became a republic. That was about five hundred years before the birth of Christ."

"During the time of the republic, which lasted nearly five hundred years, the Romans were waging constant warfare with other tribes and nations, to gain wealth and power. One war followed another in rapid succession, and there were many famous warriors who fought bravely for the glory of Rome."

"Horatius was one of those old warriors," said Rafael.

"Yes," said Edith, "Horatius, who held back the army of the enemy from crossing the bridge over the River Tiber. I learned a poem about it once." [81]

"The bridge was a wooden one which crossed the river at a spot near here," said the guide. "We will drive around to see the place where it stood."

They soon reached the bend of the river where Horatius called for volunteers to aid him in defending the city.

"Let me hear the story again," said Edith, "right here where he once stood," and Rafael told it with shining eyes.

"Horatius was a brave soldier who had already lost an eye in the service of Rome," he began; "and now he was ready to lose his life if need be. He crossed the bridge with two companions, and called for men to come forward from the ranks of the enemy and fight.

"While they fought, the Roman soldiers were cutting down the bridge behind them. The two companions of Horatius turned and saw that, at last, the bridge was about to fall, so they ran back to safety. But Horatius was so brave that he remained alone, fighting until the bridge crashed down.

"Then there was no way for the enemy to cross the river and enter Rome, so he jumped into the water with all his armor on, and swam safely to the other side, where he was received with great rejoicing." Edith jotted a few words down in her note-book, murmuring as she did so:— [82]

"Still is the story told,
How well Horatius kept the bridge
In the brave days of old."

"Another hero of the days of the republic was Cincinnatus," said Professor Gates. "He was an old soldier who was plowing in his fields when he was called upon to lead a small company of brave men to aid the Roman army, which was surrounded by the enemy and could not fight its way out.

"After Cincinnatus conquered the enemy and rescued the army, he returned to Rome, where he was given a grand triumph."

"I suppose our city of Cincinnati was named after him," said Edith, and then without waiting for an answer, she asked, "What was a grand triumph?"

"Those triumphs were often granted to famous victors, and were times of great rejoicing," the professor said. "The day was made a holiday, the houses were decorated with garlands, the streets were filled with throngs of people, and there was music and feasting throughout the city.

"Magnificent processions passed through the streets. Beautiful maidens scattered flowers before the victor, who looked very fine, clad in purple robes and riding in a triumphal car." [83]

"The prisoners of war followed the victor's chariot, to make his triumph more of a spectacle, and soldiers carrying booty taken from the conquered cities marched beside them singing hymns of victory, while the shouts of the Roman populace called down blessings and praises upon the head of their hero.

"The procession passed through the Forum, and at the foot of the hill the victor turned to the left to go to the Capitol, where thank-offerings were made to the gods, while the prisoners turned to the right and were led away to prison.

"It must have been a magnificent sight, even in those old days of splendor," he added, and turned to lead the way back to their carriage.

"Those triumphs must have cost a great deal of money," said Mrs. Sprague.

"There were enormous fortunes in old Rome, and the people spent extravagant sums on amusements and public celebrations," their guide told her. "One of the greatest of all the triumphs was given in honor of Julius Cæsar, when he returned from conquering the Gauls. He wrote an account of his wars with those barbarians which has been read by many thousands of school children."

"Is it in Latin?" Edith asked.

"Yes," replied the professor. "That was the language of the Roman people." [84]

"I have read it then," said the girl; and she sighed as she thought of the tears she had shed over her Latin lessons and Cæsar's accounts of his wars with the Gauls.

"Julius Cæsar was one of the greatest generals the world has ever known," said Professor Gates. "He was a powerful leader and ruler of men, and it was this great power that made him ambitious to be called Emperor of Rome, and to make the republic an empire."

"Some of his friends feared he would be successful in this attempt, and, joining his enemies, they assassinated him. They loved the freedom of their country more than they did Cæsar.

"His body was burned in the Roman Forum," added the professor. "But not long after his death the republic did actually become an empire."

"Tell us about the empire," begged Rafael, who always wished to know everything at once.

"Not to-day," said Mrs. Sprague, looking at her watch. "It is time for luncheon and our afternoon rest."

"That is true," said the professor, looking at the sun. "Some other day, with Mrs. Sprague's permission, I will take you to the Colosseum and then we will hear about the empire."

CHAPTER XIV

[85]

A MORNING IN THE COLOSSEUM

Edith was sitting at the hotel window with her note-book open before her. "Professor Gates tells us so much," she said, "that it is all mixed up in my mind.

"But it is my dearest wish to get it straightened out," she added quickly, as she saw the troubled look on her mother's face. "What is your dearest wish?" she asked Rafael, who was reading a letter from his mother.

"I have none," he answered, "since the Signora has been so good as to bring me to this wonderful city."

"Oh, Rafael!" Edith said merrily, "you must have found an Italian blarney stone somewhere." Then she went on more seriously, "Every one always has a dearest wish. As fast as one is fulfilled, another takes its place."

He smiled. "Very well, since it must be so, I have a dearest wish," he said, "and it is to serve the king."

Edith looked at him with laughing eyes. "That is a very fine wish," she said; "but I think mine is more likely to be granted first, because Professor Gates is to take us to the Colosseum this very morning, and I shall ask him every question about this history that I can think of."

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Several days had passed since their excursion to the Appian Way, but the children had found every one full to overflowing. The mornings had been spent in the art galleries and churches, and the afternoons in driving through the Campagna or the beautiful grounds of the Villa Borghese.

One whole day had been devoted to visiting St. Peter's Cathedral, which is the largest church in the whole world, and to seeing the treasures of the Vatican,—the home of the Pope.

Mrs. Sprague was glad to sit quietly on her camp-stool and let the children wander about the enormous buildings under the direction of the guide. Of all the treasures, Rafael liked best the pictures in the Vatican by the great painter Rafael, for whom he was named; but Edith was more interested in the mosaics and statues in the cathedral, and in the huts of the workmen who live on the roof, and spend all their time in repairing the vast church.

During the noon hours they had stayed in the hotel, where their rooms had gradually taken on a most homelike appearance. Beautiful, bright-colored Roman scarfs found their way from the shops to the children's tables, and photographs of the places that they had visited turned the walls into picture galleries.

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Rosaries, bought from old women on the church steps, and later blessed by the Pope, hung over the mirrors. In their work-baskets Edith and her mother always had a bit of sewing to catch up at odd moments, and there were books, maps and papers everywhere.

Rafael fitted into this cozy atmosphere with wonderful ease. He never returned from a walk without a bouquet of flowers for the vases on the tables, and he fell into a way of carrying a light camp-stool in their excursions through the picture-galleries, so that Mrs. Sprague could sit down when she was tired.

But this morning Mrs. Sprague was to visit some friends who were spending the winter in Rome, and Edith and Rafael were going alone with Professor Gates to the Colosseum.

"There is nothing new under the sun," said Rafael, as they stepped out of the hotel elevator. "I have just been reading that there were elevators in the Colosseum nearly two thousand years ago."

"They couldn't have been much like this fine one," said Edith. "What were they for?" she asked, taking out her note-book.

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The Colosseum at Rome
This enormous out-door theatre seated eighty-seven thousand people.

"They were used to lift the fierce wild animals out of the underground pits where they were kept until it was time for them to fight in the arena," Rafael told her, and added, "You haven't much more room in that note-book."

"The only way I can remember all you tell me is by making a note of it," Edith replied with a laugh, and turned to greet the guide, who had a carriage waiting for them.

There were many other tourists' carriages standing outside the great ruin of the Colosseum, but as the professor led the two children under the arches and into the arena they were hardly conscious of these other sight-seers, so vast is this king of buildings.

"The Colosseum was an enormous out-door theatre which seated over eighty-seven thousand people, and there was standing room for many more," the guide told them.

As Edith climbed up to sit on one of the stone seats, Rafael said, "Think of all the old Romans who sat on these same stones, and who looked down into that arena at the terrible battles between men and beasts."

"Yes," added Professor Gates, "for four hundred years the Roman people came here on holidays, and sometimes they had as many as one hundred and twenty-five holidays in one year. They came to be amused and entertained with games, contests, and combats between men and wild beasts; and they saw with delight many scenes of bloodshed and death, too horrible for me to describe to you."

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The children looked with him at the deep underground pits where the animals—lions, tigers, elephants, and other savage beasts—were kept, and at the places where two aqueducts led the water into the arena.

"Those old Romans were always trying to find some new way of pleasing the people," he told them, "and sometimes they made a large lake of the arena, and had boats on the lake fighting terrible battles, in which many men were killed just for amusement. There are no walls now standing which have seen so much of the splendor and cruelty of ancient days," he added.

Edith sighed. "I shall never boast about the stadium at Cambridge again," she said.

"This Colosseum was built in the early days of the Roman Empire," the guide continued. "The first and greatest of the Roman emperors was Augustus, for whom our month of August was named. During his reign many buildings were repaired which had begun to crumble to ruins in the days of the republic, when the Romans had devoted most of their time and money to wars, and many other beautiful buildings were erected. It was said of this emperor that he found Rome brick and left it marble."

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"It was during the reign of Augustus that the most important event in the history of the world took place. Christ was born in Bethlehem. Every event which happened before the birth of Christ is said to have taken place so many years B. C. (before Christ). All dates after His birth are given as so many years A. D.—Anno Domini—(two Latin words which mean 'in the year of our Lord')."

"I was born in 1893 A. D.," said Edith, "and that means that it was eighteen hundred and ninety-three years after the birth of Christ."

"Yes," said Rafael, "and Julius Cæsar was killed in 44 B. C., and that means forty-four years

before Christ was born."

"True," said the professor, "and Julius Cæsar was born in 100 B. C., which makes him fifty-six years old when he died. Can you puzzle that out for yourselves?"

Then without waiting for a reply, he continued, "The Roman Empire was very large, with vast provinces, but it also had powerful enemies. Among these enemies were the barbarians in Central Europe, and it was necessary for Augustus to protect his northern frontier with strong forces, to keep them out of the country. This he did, but we shall see that later emperors failed to see the importance of this step, and this was one of the causes that led finally to the destruction of the city of Rome and the fall of the Roman Empire. [91]

"Augustus also encouraged trade, and built roads which radiated from the Golden Milestone at the head of the Forum to all parts of the Roman world. From this came the saying, 'All roads lead to Rome.'"

"We came into Rome in an automobile on one of the roads which were built so long ago," said Edith, "and we have seen the site of the Golden Milestone; but I should like better to see an old Roman chariot with four prancing horses go whirling around this arena."

"My mother has told me that many Christians have died for their faith in this same arena," said Rafael.

"Yes," replied the guide, "after the birth of Christ people began, little by little, to follow His teachings and to become Christians. In the centuries before the Christian religion was the accepted religion of Rome many hundreds, and even thousands, of men and women were put to death both here and elsewhere.

"During the reign of Nero, who was a very cruel emperor, a great fire destroyed a large part of the city, and many Christians were tortured and killed on the groundless suspicion that they had caused the fire. [92]

"Come," he added, looking at Edith's sad face, "let us think of something more cheerful," and he led the way out of the Colosseum and down the road to a great stone arch.

"This arch commemorates the famous victories of Constantine," their guide told the children. "He was the first emperor to become a Christian."

"How did he happen to become a Christian?" asked Edith.

"Soon after he was declared emperor, he was leading his army to battle one day, when a bright cross suddenly appeared in the sky. Surrounding the cross were four words which mean, 'In this sign conquer.' On seeing the vision, Constantine vowed to become a Christian if he should win a victory over the enemy; and he ordered a new standard, bearing the cross and the inscription, which was carried before him in the battle.

"He did win the victory, the enemy was defeated, and he entered Rome in great triumph. In memory of the victory this very arch was called the Arch of Constantine. He also kept his vow to become a Christian, and for the first time the Christians were given equal liberty with the pagans, who still worshipped the Roman gods." [93]

Edith, who had been writing again in her note-book, looked up at the professor with a laugh. "If this Roman Empire doesn't come to an end soon, I shall have to buy a new note-book," she said.

Rafael laughed, too. "You will need a whole library of books to hold all the history of the Roman Empire," he told her.

"Are we going to hear it all?" Edith asked anxiously.

"No," replied Professor Gates, "there is little more for me to tell to-day. After the death of Constantine there were many more terrible wars with the barbarians. At last the fierce Goths crossed the Alps and marched down to the very walls of Rome. They besieged the city, burst in by surprise, killed hundreds of the people, and destroyed many of the buildings. As they also were Christians, they spared the churches and all who took refuge in them."

"I have heard of the Goths," said Edith, "and of the Vandals, too. Where did they come from?"

"They came over from Africa, captured Rome, and remained here fourteen days, destroying the buildings and sacking the city. They carried away whole ship-loads of booty, and took many of the Romans to be their slaves.

"The Roman Empire had already been divided into two parts, and Constantinople was the capital of the Empire of the East. The Bishop of Rome, who was called the Pope, now became the ruler of the Empire of the West. He succeeded to the throne of the deposed emperor, and held this position of power until 1870, when Victor Emanuele I. was made king of Italy." [94]

"Viva l'Italia!" said Rafael, tossing up his cap.

"Don't toss up your cap like that," Edith reproved him. "Those little beggars may think you are tossing it for them. Ecco!" she called to the boys, and threw a few coins to the funny little fellows who ran along beside the carriage, begging for coppers even while they stood on their heads.

"I can buy photographs of all your famous ruins," she said to Professor Gates, as she pointed her

camera at the heap of boys scrambling in the road for the coins, "but I shall always like best my own pictures of these happy little Italian children."

CHAPTER XV

[95]

MERRY NAPLES

Rafael wrote his mother joyful accounts of those happy days in Rome.

And he saw the king! It happened upon an afternoon when all Rome, dressed in gayest costumes for one of the festivals, crowded into open carriages and drove out to the Villa Borghese.

In the shade of a great tree, where a living spring bubbles up from the ground, Rafael twisted a leaf into a cup, which he filled with water and offered to Edith.

As he looked beyond the girl, he met a piercing glance from a pair of brilliant blue eyes. This time he knew the king at once, and saluted him.

The king smiled, saying to his aide, "I have seen that boy before. He wore the look then of an older Italy, but now he has the promise of the young country in his eyes."

Rafael wrote his mother of that smile. "I could follow the king anywhere for another like it," the letter said.

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Then he wrote of the heavy Roman faces; the hard, tiresome pavements, and the noisy clang of the street cars,—all so different from his bright, silent Venice.

"But there are pleasant things," he wrote. "There are many beautiful fountains where the water gushes all day; and I often go out of my way for a sight of the Pope's soldiers, the Swiss Guard, standing at the entrance to the Vatican. They make me think of our Venetian mooring-posts with their many-colored stripes; and their stately halberds are not unlike the prow of our gondolas. I am very grateful to Michael Angelo for designing a costume which reminds me of home.

"Often we meet schools of boys walking two by two, wearing black dress-suits and high, stiff black hats, and I am glad I am not one of them."

His mother sighed as she read of his endless pleasure, and wondered if it would estrange him from his quiet life in Venice. Then she wrote a long letter in answer, in which she said, "Remember that the fine old Roman character was weakened through ease and indulgence. Remember, also, that our young king likes nothing so much as devotion to duty."

Her letter ended with a quotation from an English poet,—*"Live pure, speak true, right wrong, follow the king."*

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Rafael read between the lines that she feared he would learn to like his happy life with the Spragues too well. He lifted his eyes from the letter and acknowledged to himself that this freedom from care and responsibility was very pleasant. Mrs. Sprague indulged him as she indulged Edith. The treasures of the shops flowed into his own room as well as hers, and no door which money could open remained closed to them in this city of precious sights.

His eyes fell again to the letter, and a choking feeling filled his throat as he pictured his mother sitting alone in the home in Venice. "The dear, lonely mother!" he said to himself. "My letters have given her sad thoughts."

Then, with a boy's carelessness, he said, laughing lightly at his English joke, "I can write wrong, it seems; but can I follow the king?"

Just then Edith ran into the room crying, "Mother has decided to take the noon train to Naples. Doesn't she do everything suddenly?" And Rafael forgot his mother's letter in his pleasure over another journey.

The car ride to Naples always remained in the boy's mind as a succession of pictures; but no picture could reveal the many phases of his mind as he passed from one experience to another in the days that followed.

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"The guide-book calls this the most fertile valley in Europe," said Mrs. Sprague, as they rode along, catching glimpses of farmers plowing in the fields. The distant hills were soft and blue, but on drawing near to them, terraces and flights of steps were to be seen on the slopes.

At last Edith called, "I see Vesuvius!" and the wonderful volcano lay before them. Its smoke rose in a straight column and then broke, trailing off into the distance like the smoke from an ocean liner.

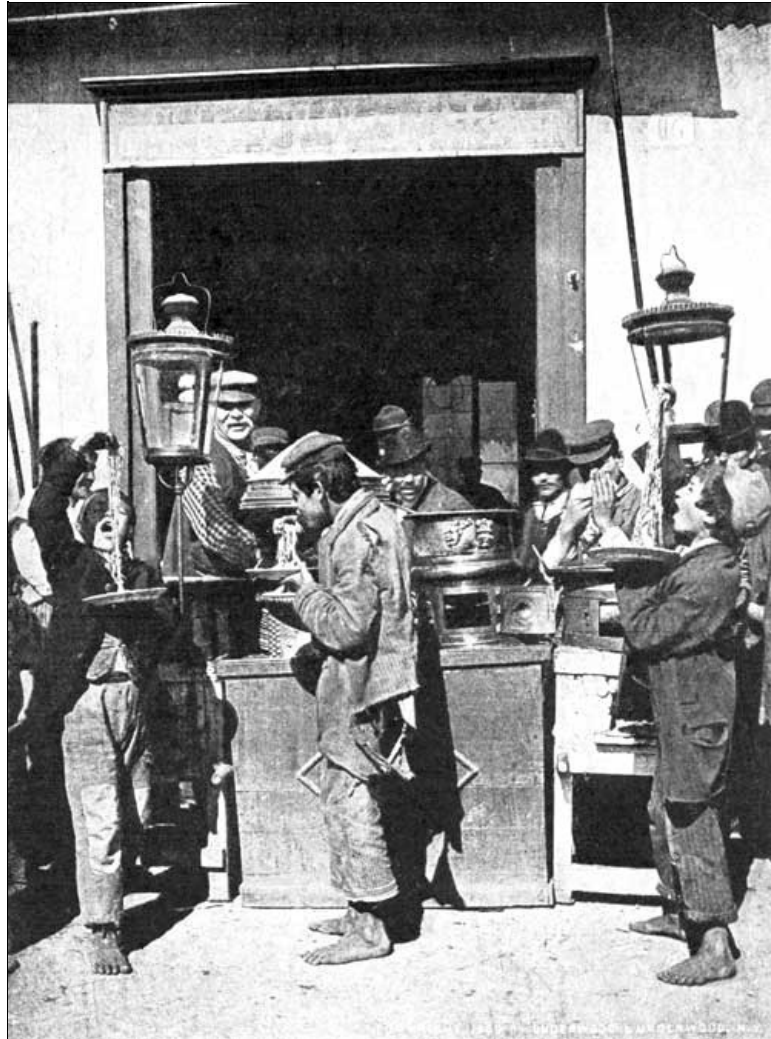
"It makes the mountain look like a man-of-war," exclaimed Rafael, and the two pairs of eyes hardly saw anything else until they reached Naples.

"Let us go to a hotel where we can see the fire at night, if it comes out of the volcano," said Edith; and they took rooms from which they could watch every mood of Vesuvius.

Before they had been in the city three days Edith decided that she liked it better than she did Rome. "The people there looked so serious," she said, "while here they are very merry and sociable."

Mrs. Sprague laughed. "They are certainly sociable enough," she said. "Yesterday I heard a woman read a letter aloud from an upper window to her friend on the sidewalk below."

Edith laughed in her turn. "Was the window in the same house where we saw the rooster and chickens in the upper balcony?" she asked.



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"It is a funny sight to see the boys of Naples eating macaroni"

Rafael felt a touch of sadness at hearing their light talk. "The poor people!" he said. "When they live upstairs there is no other way but for them to keep their animals up there with them."

"Many of them seem to live in the basements of the rich," observed the girl.

To Rafael, the sight of such great poverty was no new thing, but Edith spoke of it constantly, and wrote of it to her father in America.

"There seem to be nothing but happiness and laziness here among these poor people," the letter said. "They live and eat upon the sidewalk, and it is a funny sight to see the boys swallowing macaroni."

"Many of the rooms in which the people sleep seem to be spaces left in the foundation of a castle, with no windows or doors in the openings. Often the castles seem to be ruined hills; and they have great holes in their barren sides, like caverns in the sides of cliffs; and we see barred doorways instead of windows, with dungeons beyond."

"Then suddenly the hills blossom out into ramparts and parapets, so that it is impossible to distinguish between hills and castles; and to puzzle us still more, long flights of steps lead up between hilly castles and castled hills."

"Occasionally we see a group of basket-makers, or tailors, or shoemakers on the sidewalks among the family groups of fathers, mothers and children. A little beyond such a group we saw yesterday a herd of goats resting comfortably in the shade, also on the sidewalk."

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"Early in the morning these goats are driven through the streets. They stop in front of a doorway, a woman runs out with a cup, the man milks her cup full and then drives on to the next doorway. Sometimes, if the woman lives on an upper floor of the house, one of the goats is driven up the stairs, to be milked at her very door."

"We see rich people, also, driving in their splendid carriages on their most beautiful boulevard, overlooking the blue bay; and in contrast to them and their spirited horses, a contadino will come bringing a load of produce to market from the country, driving a white cow harnessed between a full-grown horse and a tiny mule."

While the American girl was marvelling at the queer mingling of riches and poverty in Naples, Rafael was drinking in the beauty of the bay, and of the lovely villages which lie along its border.

Mrs. Sprague stayed two or three weeks in Naples, although she said that she did not like it at all. "The people are so shiftless," she complained, picking up her skirts and walking round a group of girls who were sitting on the sidewalk combing their hair. "It is the dirtiest city in the world."

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"Oh, Mother!" Edith exclaimed, "how can you say so? When we go out on the bay in the evening and I look back at the city, it seems to me most beautiful. It is like an amphitheatre, with its tiers of lights rising one above another. Then she sang softly:—

"My soul to-day is far away,
Sailing the Vesuvian Bay!"

"Avanti!" exclaimed Rafael suddenly, and shook his head at a boy who was offering a pair of pearl opera-glasses for Mrs. Sprague to buy. Mrs. Sprague drew the back of her hand under her chin, tossing her head at the same time.

The little peddler laughed and showed his white teeth at the awkward motion of the American lady, but he did not insist that she should buy.

As for Edith and Rafael, they looked plainly astonished. "Why, Mother!" said the girl admiringly, "you are talking in a foreign language when you use signs. How did you happen to find out such an easy way to dismiss the little beggar?"

"I was driven to it," answered her mother. "These foreigners have cheated me out of half my money by asking me to pay so much for their wares. They will never take 'no' for an answer. That same boy has been trying to make me buy that same pair of opera-glasses for three days; but at last I have found out a sign that will keep him away. I have seen the others use it," she said with satisfaction.

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"What does it mean?" asked Edith curiously.

"It means 'I will not take it at any price,'" said Mrs. Sprague.

Rafael, who had been laughing with great amusement while she gave this explanation, now said, "This language of signs is very convenient. We Italians do half our talking by signs."

Edith looked at him and shook her head decidedly. "Just listen!" she said, pointing to the groups of people gathered along the quay. These people were all talking in the liveliest manner imaginable, and there was a great babble of excited voices. Street peddlers were crying their wares, drivers were cracking their whips, and men in boats, on the water below, were shouting to each other about the price of fish.

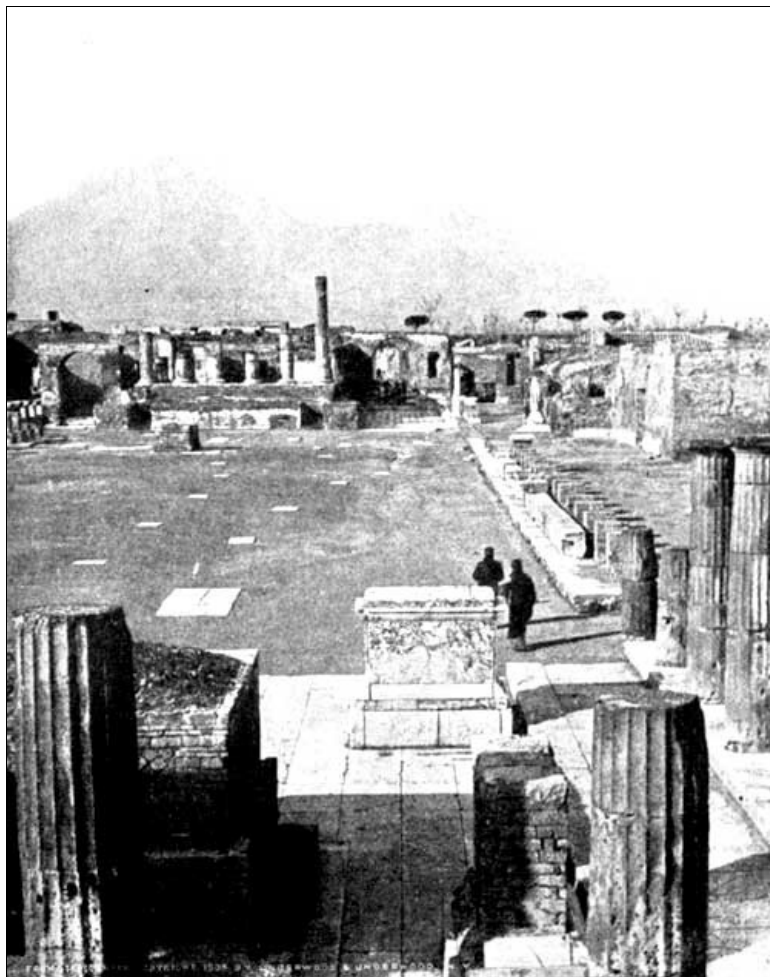
"It is certainly the noisiest city in the world," Edith said; "but it is also the jolliest. I am going now to the stand where the public letter-writer sat waiting for customers yesterday. I will let him write a letter for me."

The three separated and Mrs. Sprague returned to the hotel, while Rafael went down to the quay to watch the fishermen. The water with its bustle and stir of life, its coming and going of boats, was like a breath of home to the boy.

CHAPTER XVI

THE BURIED CITY

[103]



Pompeii and Mount Vesuvius

Edith and Rafael planned their trip to the top of Vesuvius for many days before the right morning finally arrived.

"The right morning is a bright morning," sang Edith one evening as she looked out at the stars; "and to-morrow will bring a bright morning," she added, so positively that Mrs. Sprague sent Rafael to buy the tickets, in order that they might be ready for an early start.

Although it was the last week in December the air was soft and warm, and the sun shone with the brightness of summer.

From Naples to the foot of Mt. Vesuvius there was first a drive of several hours, after which they went up to the crater over an inclined railway.

"It is like looking at the entrance to the underworld," said Edith, as they looked down into the great chasm which holds so much mystery and terror; and she was glad to take the train back to the foot of the mountain.

As they stood looking at the great beds of lava which poured down the sides of the mountain many years ago, Edith exclaimed, "How can any one dare to live near the volcano?" [104]

Rafael turned to a peasant whose little farm was not far away, and asked him if he ever felt free from danger.

"Ah, no!" the man answered, lifting sad eyes and hands to heaven. "When I go to sleep at night I think always, before the light of the morning, the mountain, he may send his fire and stones to crush us all; who knows?"

"Why did the people of Pompeii live so near to Vesuvius, if they knew it might bury them?" Edith asked impatiently.

"They did not know it in the days when Pompeii was built," Rafael told her. "Vesuvius was supposed to be an extinct volcano then. It had not said a word for hundreds of years. Everything about it was green and beautiful, and its slopes were covered with forests and vineyards. It is not strange that people built the two cities near its base."

"What other city was built, besides Pompeii?" asked the girl.

"Herculaneum," answered Rafael. "None of the people felt any fear of danger in the two cities, although an earthquake destroyed some of the buildings in the reign of Nero." [105]

"But in the year 79 A. D., Vesuvius suddenly woke up, and there was a fearful eruption. Ashes and rocks were thrown out of the crater with great force, and hot lava poured down the side of the mountain. The two cities at the foot were completely buried under the ashes, and thousands of people were killed."

"There was an eruption in 1906, which made many people homeless," said Mrs. Sprague, "and no one knows when there may be another.

"Pompeii lay buried for seventeen centuries, and people forgot that there had been such a city; when, after a long time, a farmer who was digging for a well discovered the ruins, and since then a part of each city has been excavated."

"I should like to know just how the people of Pompeii lived, and what they were doing when the city was destroyed," said Edith.

"You shall see the relics that were taken from the ruins and are now in the museum at Naples," her mother told her. "The life of the old Pompeians has been studied from those relics and a guide can tell you just how they did their housekeeping and what their life was like."

Before she left America, Edith had looked forward to the smoking mountain of Vesuvius and the city of Pompeii as being the most wonderful part of her journey. The volcano, and the city which lay buried under ashes for centuries, had been the goal of her desires. [106]



"The army of boys bearing baskets of earth from the excavations at Pompeii"

"Wait until we see Vesuvius and Pompeii!" had been her cry whenever she wrote home. "Then I shall have something to tell you!"

But she turned her face away from the forbidding crater and the desolate beds of lava with a feeling of disappointment that was half fear.

"Perhaps I shall like better to go into the museum and see the curious things that were found in Pompeii," she said, as she searched for a bit of lava from which to have a piece of jewelry fashioned.

"Just think of having the whole world interested to know how the people baked their bread so long ago," said Rafael; and when they had returned to Naples, the children found it very interesting to visit the museum and imagine how the people lived in the time of Christ.

Then one day they went down to the ruined city, riding in a small car over a roadbed so loosely made that Rafael laughed about it, and Edith said it was only a toy journey.

But when they went through the sea-gate at Pompeii, passed the army of boys bearing baskets of earth from the excavations, and stood in the silent streets, Edith drew closer to her mother, and Rafael walked quietly beside them.

They followed the instructions of the guide and looked obediently at the deep ruts made in the [107]

pavements of the narrow streets by the old Roman chariot wheels. They walked through the forum, and stood in the ruined amphitheatre.

At last Edith drew Mrs. Sprague into the lonely angle of a wall where they could see nothing of the crumbled houses all about them, the pavements, or the great stepping-stones in the streets.

"I want to go home," she said with a shudder. "I never want to see Vesuvius again."

She was plainly homesick. It was a sudden ending to the "long thoughts of youth" which had filled so many hours with bright anticipations; but she was in such a hurry to get away from the buried city that they took the next train back to Naples without even stopping to buy picture postcards of the ruins.

When they reached their hotel in Naples they found a foreign war-ship anchored in the bay.

"There is the old man-of-war threatening us from the land, and here is one in the bay," exclaimed Edith. "It makes me nervous!"

Mrs. Sprague saw that her daughter was tired. "We will go back to Rome to-morrow," she said.

"But I want to buy a lottery ticket before we leave Naples," said the girl.

"Befana will fill your stockings with ashes if you do," said Rafael. [108]

"Everybody in Italy buys lottery tickets. Why should not I?" asked Edith perversely.

"I do it not," said Rafael shortly.

"That is because your wonderful king does not believe in it," she answered.

"Is that not a good reason?" asked the boy. He looked at her with the same expression he wore in Venice, when she spoke slightly of the superstitions of his country, and as she knew him better now, she laughed and agreed with him.

"I did not really mean to do it," she said, and added, "Tell me more about Befana."

"How I used to shake in my bed when I heard her bell ring!" he said with a laugh.

"Did you really hear it ring?" asked Edith.

He looked at her drolly, answering, "Of course I heard her bell. And often I heard the sheep talking to one another on Twelfth-night; or at least I thought I did."

"Truly?" asked Edith in great delight.

He nodded, smiling mischievously at her unexpected pleasure in hearing of the Italian superstitions.

Befana is the Italian Lady Santa Claus. She is quite different from the fat, jolly man who drives his reindeer over the roofs at Christmas time.

While Sir Santa is short and rosy, Befana is dark and tall; and while the kind old gentleman leaves something in every stocking, good and bad alike, this rather terrible old lady puts presents only in the good children's stockings, and drops bags of ashes into the others. [109]

Instead of happening at Christmas, as with us, the Italian festival is celebrated on the eve of Epiphany, the sixth of January.

"Everyone is happy then," said Rafael, "and we shall forget Pompeii and the man-of-war which is always threatening it."

So the children began at once to plan for the Twelfth-night festival.

"Mother and I will make some peasant costumes for us to wear," Edith told Rafael, and added, "or you might wear a soldier's uniform and a cocked hat. The soldiers look so fine and march so well in Italy!"

"Come children, it is time to go to bed if we are to take the early morning train to Rome," interrupted Mrs. Sprague, who had been studying a time-table; and the children separated, little dreaming that every plan would soon be changed.

CHAPTER XVII

[110]

THE MAGIC OF THE FOUNTAIN

In the morning they wakened to find on every tongue the news of the terrible earthquake at Messina, and for many days it was Italy the desolate that filled their minds and kept their hands busy.

People who saw it never forgot the dreadful misery of the country at that time.

Edith and Rafael stood silent, as when they had walked the streets of the buried city of Pompeii, and watched the confusion of vessels coming and going to the South. Boxes and bundles of all sizes and shapes were piled high on the wharf, and supplies of food and clothing were being hurried to the suffering city.

Newspaper men, frantic to gather news which everyone wished to hear, hurried back and forth on the quay, filling Edith with indignation. "What difference does it make whether we know all the latest news or not?" she asked hotly. "All those poor, starving people must be fed."

Rafael watched the soldiers march through the streets, without the music of the band, and go on board the ships to follow the king's boat to the stricken island, and his heart yearned to go with them. [111]

"Italy is accursed," he heard the superstitious Neapolitans moaning, but he shook his head. "Not while the king and queen live, and teach us how to help," he said to himself, and then he went to find Mrs. Sprague.

"I cannot live this idle life any longer," he said, as he had said it once before, in Venice.

And as his mother asked then, so Mrs. Sprague asked now, "What will you do?"

"I will follow the king to Messina and ask him to make me one of the patrol guard," the boy answered.

They were standing on the quay as he spoke, and could see a relief-ship which was getting up steam, ready to sail out of the harbor.

Mrs. Sprague was alarmed. She knew that the boy would not be allowed to go into the ruined city, and she felt sure that his mother would not permit him to go if she were there; but in the excitement it was possible for him to slip away at any moment, under the mistaken idea that he could be of service.

She put her hand upon the boy's arm to detain him, if indeed he needed to be detained, and said, "How can I make you see that it is not possible for you to be of any use there?" [112]

A man in naval uniform, who was just about to step into a tender and go out to the relief-ship, heard her words and turned, looking into Rafael's face.

He smiled suddenly and held out his hand. "We have met before, when life was brighter," he said; and Rafael recognized with delight the man who had listened to the serenade at the Rialto bridge with him, that summer night in Venice.

"May I go with you?" asked the boy impetuously.

The officer looked at him thoughtfully for a moment. "Our ambassador has sent me down to see what Messina needs most," he said, "and I shall be gone but a day or two. I see no harm in taking you along; but there must be no nonsense about doing patrol duty."

So it came about that Rafael went to Messina and saw the ruin and destruction caused by the greatest earthquake in the history of the world.

He was back in Naples a few days later with a face deeply saddened by the suffering he had seen. "I could not do anything there," he told Mrs. Sprague, who was glad to see him safely back again; "but my friend, the naval officer, helped me to think of a way to be of service."

"I will help you. What are you going to do?" asked Edith. She had been busy every day, helping her mother collect food, clothing and medicine to send to Messina in the relief-ships; but she longed to do still more. [113]

"I am going to make some tops," he told her. "I saw the king and queen doing with their own hands whatever needed to be done to help the poor people; and I can make tops and sell them. In that way I can raise a little money for the sufferers."

That was how it came about that, one evening a week later, a pair of picturesque peasants stood among the booths in the Circus Agonale, in Rome, selling tops. There were booths where peddlers sold whistles of every kind and description; but they two, Edith and Rafael, were the only peddlers of tops.

In all the din of the crowds that passed and re-passed, nothing attracted more attention and made more fun than the doll-tops which Edith and her mother had dressed for Rafael. Edith blew a great blast on her whistle, Rafael gave a piercing scream on his, and they had a little crowd of merry-makers around them in a moment.

Roman whistles are made of pewter, terra-cotta, or wood, in every shape of bird, or beast, or fish. Rafael had a bird-whistle, Edith's was a yellow butterfly, and the tops which they spun were dressed like dolls, in many fantastic costumes. [114]

As he had said in Venice, so Rafael called to his audience in Rome, when he had a little space cleared for the performance, "Signor Rafael Valla will now present his troupe of trained tops!"

"It is for the earthquake sufferers," he had taught Edith to say in Italian, and she had no sooner said it than the tops were all as good as sold.

"It is a pity we had not time to make more," said Edith, when the last one was gone, and they were counting their gains in their room at the hotel.

"You would make a good business man, Rafael," she said suddenly. "The tops cost you only ten lire, and you have sold them for twenty times as much."

But the boy was tired and made no answer for a few moments. Perhaps the tops reminded him of home. After a little, he said, "I think my mother must be very lonely in Venice, when she reads of those who have been made homeless in Messina."

Mrs. Sprague looked at him wisely and nodded her head. "Edith and I must go home to America," she said. "Our friends will be worried about us, and will fear for our safety, after this terrible earthquake."

So they began to plan for leaving Rome at once. The keepsakes and treasures were all packed, the last calls were made, and the night before their departure arrived. [115]

"Let us say good-bye to the Eternal City at the Fountain of Trevi," Edith suggested to Rafael. "I have heard that whoever wishes to return to Rome, should go to the fountain on the last evening of his visit, take a drink out of the basin with his left hand, then turn and throw a half-penny into the water over his left shoulder. I surely wish to come back some day."

"And I," said Rafael. "Let us find some half-pennies at once."

It was a cold, clear, moonlight night, and the two children hurried through the streets, chatting merrily over their errand.

They passed an old woman carrying a scaldino under her shawl. "We shall need a scaldino ourselves," Edith said, "to warm our fingers after we have dipped them in the cold water."

A scaldino is a little brazier for holding coals of fire. The Italians carry one about with them in winter, and when they sit down they hold it in their laps or put it on the floor at their feet.

When they reached the fountain Edith stood still a moment, looking at the water. "I have had such a good time in this historic old land that I shall always be a good Italian," she said; "but I shall be a better American also." [116]

"That is right," said Rafael. "And I shall read the foreign papers to see if you become a famous woman."

"I don't care so much about being famous as you men do," she answered. "But I shall read the foreign news to see what the great patriot, Rafael Valla, is doing for his country, and perhaps, some day, your good king may send you to the United States as ambassador from Italy."

"Let us wish it," she added, and dipped her hand into the fountain. "To Rafael Valla, the ambassador," she said with a smile, and drank the clear, cold water.

"To the Signorina, my friend," said Rafael. "I wish her happiness."

Tears sprang to Edith's eyes, and she held out her hand quickly for the half-penny. "Over your left shoulder, remember," she said, as she tossed the coin into the water.

"Over my left shoulder," Rafael repeated, and added earnestly, "We shall see Rome and the king again."

VOCABULARY

 [117]

Ăp' pî [letter a with an uptack]n Way, a famous Roman highway.

Ăp' pî ũs Clau'dî ũs (clâ), a Roman statesman.

ă vãn'ti (tê), begone.

băm bi'nô (bê), baby.

Be fa na (b[letter a with an uptack] fã'nà), the Italian Lady Santa Claus.

Bi an ca (b[letter e with an uptack] ăñ'kà), a girl's name.

Brin di si (br[letter e with an uptack]n'd[letter e with an uptack] zê), a seaport of south-eastern Italy.

Cam pag na (câm pãn'yà), a plain surrounding Rome.

Căn'dî à, an island in the Mediterranean Sea.

Căp'î tō line, one of the seven hills of Rome.

că' rō, dear.

Cà vour' (vōor), an Italian statesman, died 1861.

cen time (săn tēm'), a copper coin, the hundredth part of a franc.

Çin çin nà'tūs, a Roman soldier and hero.

Çîr' cūs Ä gō nāl' [letter e with an uptack], one of the squares in Rome.

Cōl ōs sē' ūm, an out-door theatre of ancient Rome.

Cōn'stân tine (tên), the first Christian emperor of Rome.

cōn'tä di'nō (dē), a peasant farmer.

Çy'prüs, an island in the Mediterranean Sea.

Dän'dō lō, a Doge of Venice, died 1205.

Doge (dōj), the chief ruler in the ancient republic of Venice.

ěc'cō, look; behold.

Flā mǐn'ĩ an Way, a highway of ancient Rome.

fō'rŭm, a market-place or public meeting-place.

Gěņ' [letter o with an downtack] à, a seaport of northwestern Italy.

gōn'dō là, a boat used in the canals of Venice.

gōn dō lier' (lēr), a man who rows a gondola.

Hěr cū lā'nē ūm, a buried city near Naples.

Hō rā'ti us (shĩ ũs), a Roman legendary hero.

Jul ius Cae sar (jŭl'yŭs sē'zär), a famous Roman general, statesman, orator, and writer; died 44 B. C.

là gōon', a shallow sound or channel.

li di (lē'dē), sand-bars in the lagoon of Venice.

Li'dō (lē), the bathing-beach of Venice.

li'rá (lē), a coin worth about nineteen cents.

li re (lē'ra), plural of lira.

l'İ täl'ĩ à, Italy.

log gia (lōd'jà), a roofed, open gallery.

mäd're (r[letter a with an uptack]), mother.

Măř'à thōn run, a twenty-six-mile running race.

Mer ce ri a (măr ch [letter a with an uptack] rē' [letter a with an uptack]), a shopping district in Venice.

Mēs si'nà (sē), a city in Sicily, destroyed by earthquakes in 1908.

mi a (mē'à); mi o (mē'ō), my.

Mi chael An ge lo (mĩ'kěl ănj[letter e with an uptack] lō), an Italian painter and sculptor; died 1564.

M[letter o with an uptack] rē'à, the southern peninsula of Greece.

Nē a pōl'ĩ tạn, pertaining to Naples.

Păl' a tīne, one of the seven hills of Rome.

Pa laz zo Vec chi o (pä lät'sō vëk'kē ō), a palace in Florence.

Pä' ō lō, a boy's name; Paul.

Paz zi (pät'sē), an influential family of Florence.

Pi az za (pē ät'sà), square.

Pi az' za dël Dū ō'mō, the square in front of the cathedral in Florence.

Pi az zet ta (pē ät sët'tà), little square.

Pit ti (pē'tē), a palace in Florence.

pō lën'ta, a pudding made of meal boiled in milk.

Pöm pe ii (pä'yē), a buried city near Naples.

quat tro (kwöt'trō), four.

Ri ä'l'tō (rē), a bridge over the Grand Canal of Venice.

Sän Gior'gĭ ō (jōr), Saint George; a church in Venice.

Sän Min i a to (mē nē ä'tō), a cemetery on a hill southeast of Florence.

scal di no (sköl dē'nō), a brazier.

Scäl' ĭ gĕr[letter s with an downtack below], an Italian family of medieval times.

si (sē), yes.

Si e na (sē ā'nà), a province and city in Italy.

Si gnor (sē nyōr'); **Si gnore** (sē nyō'r[letter a with an uptack]), Sir; Mr.

Si gno ra (sē nyō'rà), Madam; Mrs.

Si gno ri na (sē nyō rē'nà), Miss.

Sträss'bürg, a city in Germany.

Tär'quin (kwĭn), a legendary king of ancient Rome.

Ti'bĕr, the river on which Rome is situated.

Tin tō rĕt'tō (tĕn), an Italian painter, died 1594.

Ti tian (tĭsh'ān), a famous Venetian painter, died 1576.

Tre vi (trā've), a fountain in Rome.

Tūs'ca nÿ, a province of Italy.

Uf fi zi (öf fĕt's[letter e with an uptack]), a celebrated art-gallery in Florence.

Vät' ĭ çan, the Pope's residence.

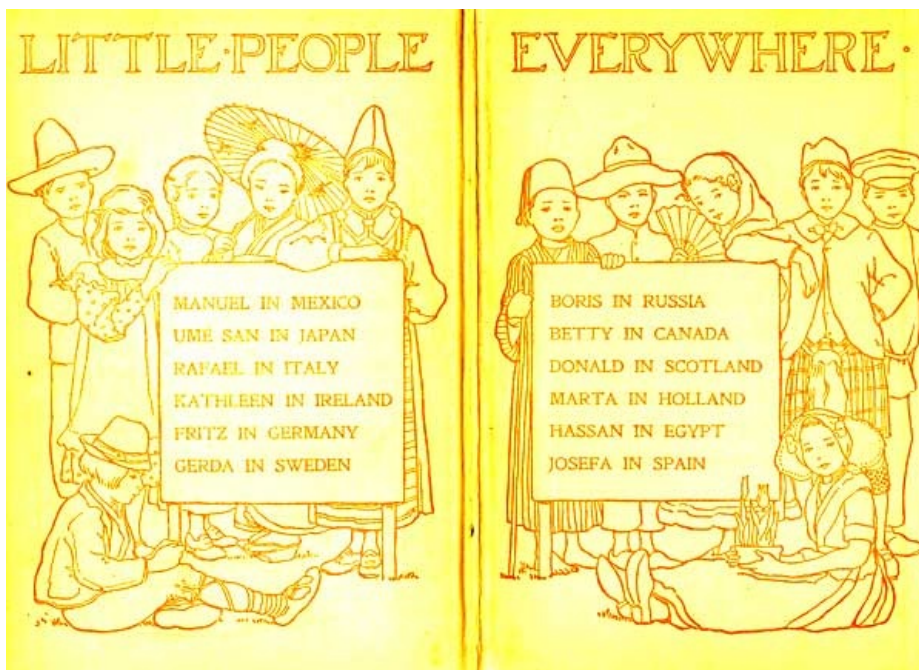
Ve rō' nà (v[letter a with an uptack]), a city in northern Italy.

Ve ro ne se (v[letter a with an uptack] r[letter o with an uptack] n[letter a with an uptack] z[letter a with an uptack]), an Italian painter, died 1588.

Vĕ sū'vĭ ũs, an active volcano near Naples.

Vil'la Bör ghe'se (gā z[letter e with an uptack]), a villa near Rome.

Vi'vă (vĕ), "long live!" "hurrah for!"



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