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L.T. Meade

"Mou-Setse - A Negro Hero"

"The Orphans' Pilgimage - A Story of Trust in God"

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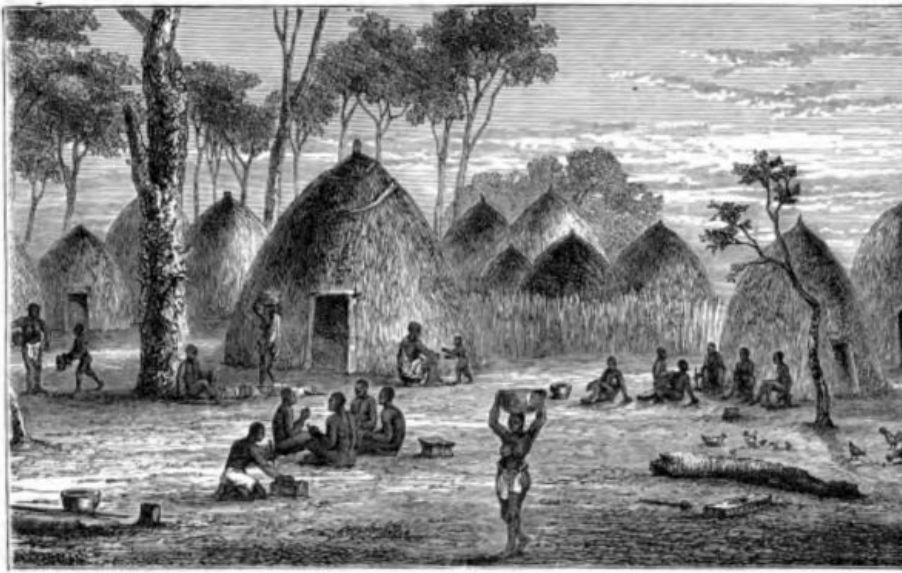
## Story 1--Chapter I.

### Part I—The Town of Eyeo.



**An African Hut.**

After all, his story began like any one else's—he came into the world. In a picturesque town in Africa he opened his eyes; and there is no doubt that his mother was as proud of her little black baby as any English mother would be of her child with fair skin. So far, his story was like any other person's story, but there, I think, the likeness came to an end. He was an African boy, and knew nothing of what we English people call civilisation. Mou-Setsé first opened his eyes on the world in a clay hut; but this fact by no means denoted that his parents were poor people; on the contrary, his father was one of the chief men of the town, and a member of the king's council.



Eyeo, Mou-setsé's Home.

Nor was the town a poor one. Perhaps I had better describe it a little, and also describe some of the strange actions of its inhabitants, before I really tell Mou-Setsé's story.

Though most of the houses were built of clay, the town of Eyeo was considered very beautiful. It lay in the midst of a fertile and lovely country called Yarriba. The town measured fifteen miles round, and a great deal of the ground was laid out in fields and gardens, so that, notwithstanding what we should call its want of civilisation, it looked very unlike many of the smoky, dirty towns at home, and very much pleasanter to live in.

There were walls round the town twenty feet high, built also of clay; and outside the walls there was a deep ditch. This ditch and this high wall were both necessary to protect the town from its enemies. Of course, like all African towns, it had a great many enemies, but it was supposed to be very well protected. The King of Yarriba lived in Eyeo. He had several wives, and his huts covered a whole square mile of the town. He was an idolater, and he had a council of some of the chief men to help him to rule. The king and his people had a very strange religion; each one of them had a god in his own house, and there were also two chief idols, one called Korowah and the other Terbertaru. One of these gods was for the men, and the other for the women. The women were not allowed to look at the men's god; and when the chief priest offered sacrifice to this god they dared not even glance at him. They might offer to their own god fowls, pigeons, and sometimes bullocks.

These curious idolaters had also a very strange way of burying their dead. All the dead man's riches, instead of going to his children, were buried with him. If he happened to have been a very rich man, his dead body was carried in procession round the town to the burying-place, *which was in the floor of his own room*. After he was buried there with all his riches, his family went on living in the house and daily trampled on his grave without the least concern.

In this town, with its strange religion and its many odd customs, was born the little black baby who is to be the hero of this story. He was called Mou-Setsé, and, though he had black skin and rather round and beady eyes, and though certainly his thick, curling hair was also very woolly, yet in his own way he was as fine a little baby as any fair English child; and, as I have said before, his mother was just as proud of him. Mou-Setsé had three brothers and one sister older than himself, so he had plenty of playfellows, and was a great pet, being the youngest of the family.

The pretty little fellow used to sit on his mother's lap in the doorway of the mud hut, and play with some very precious glass beads which were hung round her neck. As he grew older he mounted on his elder brother's shoulders, and merrily would he and they laugh as they trotted up and down together. And as he grew still older, and ceased to be a baby, and was able to use his fat, strong legs, he and his brothers and sister went often outside the city walls, and walked through the maize fields beyond and over the plain till they came to the foot of the hills. Then, high up among the rocks, they would wander about in the shade and gather oranges and tamarinds and figs.



The King of Yarriba.

No English boys could have been happier than these little Africans on such occasions. Neither Mou-Setsé nor his brothers thought of any dark days that might come, and were, alas! only too near.

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## Story 1--Chapter II.

### Dark Days in the Town.



Mou-setsé among the Children.

I have said that sad days were not very far from poor little Mou-Setsé. They came when he was still only a little boy

not more than eight years old.

The people of Eyeo had need of their high wall and their strong fortifications, for they were surrounded by enemies.

One day the news reached them that a strong neighbouring tribe, calling themselves Kakundans, were coming to attack them. The King of Eyeo had never done these people any harm, yet they wanted to conquer him, that they might take him and his subjects for slaves, and gain money by selling them to the Portuguese. This was very terrible news indeed; and great terror and great pain did it bring to the inhabitants of Eyeo. The poor mothers began to tremble as they clasped their babies in their arms and reflected on the dreadful thought that soon they and those little children so precious to them might be torn from each other. The fathers, too, brave warriors as they were, looking in the frightened faces of wives and children, felt some of those heart-pangs which make men resolute to conquer or to die. The king called a council, and it was resolved at this council that all needful preparations for war were to begin at once. Accordingly the priests offered sacrifices to Korowah, who was the men's god, while the women hastened to gain the favour of Terbertaru, who belonged to them.

The warriors busied themselves in polishing their knives and sharpening their daggers and securing the handles of their axes. Even the little children tried to help. The elder boys cleaned and brightened the weapons, while the younger went out to pick fruit, rice, and corn, in case the enemy should shut them up and they should be short of food. Little Mou-Setsé was particularly busy in this way, and his active little feet were scarcely ever still.

These many preparations were not made a moment too soon. The captain of the war, and the chief warrior who was to defend the city gate, were only just appointed when the terrible Kakundans were seen approaching towards Eyeo. With their arms glittering in the sunbeams, on they came, nearer and nearer, trampling down the flourishing rice harvest, until the sound of their feet and the clanking of their weapons were heard just outside the city walls.

It was the intention of this cruel enemy to encamp round about the city, and to subdue it by famine. Oh, what trouble there was in Eyeo that night! What weeping and sorrow in many a hut! For though the children were ignorant, and perhaps the wives had some hope, well did the warriors know that they had little chance of escape. They were determined, however, to do what they could, and to defend their wives and children at any cost.



**Mou-setsé's Father.**

From the hour the Kakundans encamped round the city all was in confusion there. There was nothing thought of but the war. Now and then bands of men used to go out and fight with the enemy, but the Eyeo men had very few successes and many failures. As the days went by they grew weaker and weaker. Alas! famine was making them weak. Famine was beginning to tell on old and young alike in the unhappy city. Little Mou-Setsé's fat legs grew thin, and his round cheeks hollow, while his bright, black eyes stared more and more out of his face every day. He was only one of many. He and his brothers and sister felt hunger, and even cried for bread, but they had not the terrible fear that pressed so heavily on the hearts of the grown people. That fear was to be realised all too soon.

The Eyeo men could bear the dreadful famine no longer, so they consulted together what they should do to get food. The siege had now lasted several months. After thinking and consulting for a long time, they decided on a very dangerous plan. It was this: the bravest of the warriors determined to leave the city for a time, and to go into the country to try and get a supply of food. This was a most bold and dangerous plan. They themselves would be exposed to the attacks of the enemy, while the city would be left defenceless. Hunger, however, had made these

brave men desperate. Anything, they thought, was better than their present condition. So the warriors went out in a strong band, leaving the little children, the sick, and the aged behind them. Mou-Setsé's father and mother both went away. They bade their children good-bye cheerfully, and little Mou-Setsé, as he clasped his arms round his mother's neck, even laughed at the prospect of the good food they all might soon have. Alas! how little they guessed the dreadful things that were about to happen.



Slave-dealers attacking Eyeo.

The Kakundan camp, quickly discovering that the strongest of the inhabitants of Eyeo had left the city to seek food, determined not to lose so good an opportunity to make a final attack on the place. To make this attack, however, they must take two or three days to prepare. But well did the wretched people inside the city know what was going to happen. Poor little Mou-Setsé and his brothers and sister became at last really alive to their danger. They all cried and wept; but Mou-Setsé, though the youngest, possessed the bravest heart. He knew that crying would do no good; he wondered would it be possible to act, and so to act as to save his brothers and sister. He said nothing to them, but he ran about the town, and chatted to the old women, and finally got them to tell him a secret. This was the secret: as many as possible meant to escape from Eyeo that night. Mou-Setsé thought that he and his brothers and his sister might go too. Perhaps they might soon find their father and mother. Mou-Setsé believed that if only he had his mother's arms round him again he might be safe. He told his brothers and sister of his plan, and they all agreed to escape that very night. As soon as the night was quite dark they left their hut and went softly in the direction of the city wall. They reached the great city gate in safety, but there a sad scene of confusion met their eyes. Crowds of people were trying to get out, and, in the darkness, many of the feebler ones were killed. It was dreadful to listen to their cries and groans. Mou-Setsé saw that little children would have no chance whatever in such a crowd. He wondered could they climb the wall, but its smooth, hard side, twenty feet high, he soon saw would be utterly impracticable.

Very sadly the children returned home, and most bitter tears did they shed in each other's arms. Poor little children! they little guessed that never again would they kiss each other, or play together, or be happy with that innocent happiness that the good and loving God gives to little children. Cruel men who followed the devil, not God, were soon to part them the one from the other. In the morning a truly fearful sight met their eyes. The huts were nearly empty; parties of the enemy walked about the streets; the gardens, that used to be so beautiful, were torn and ruined; many aged men, who had killed themselves in their dread of slavery, were lying dead in the streets. A little farther on they heard the crackling of burning wood, and soon the flames of their beloved city burst upon their sight. The enemy had set Eyeo on fire.

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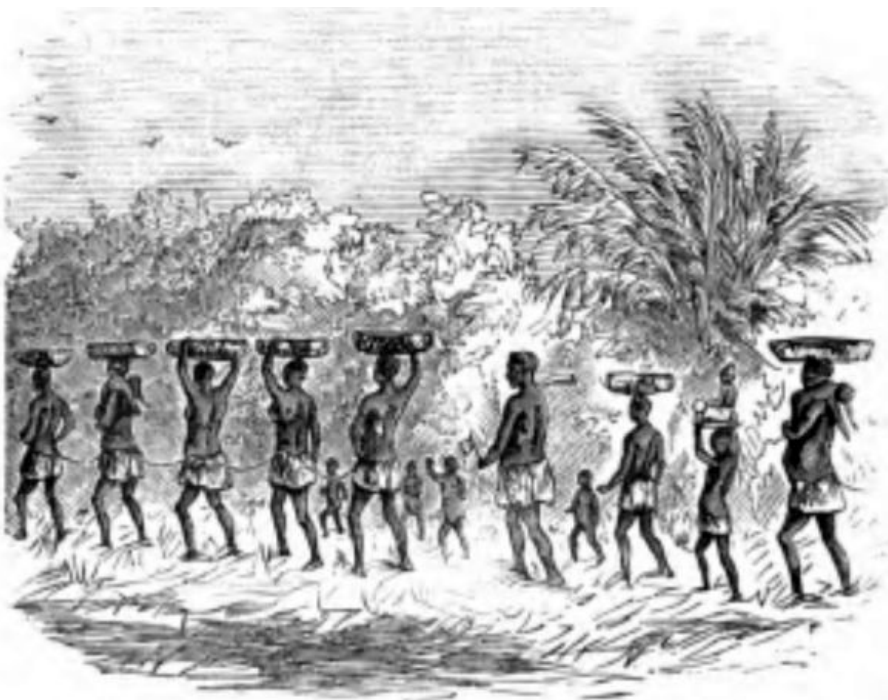
### Story 1--Chapter III.

What "The Right of Search" did for Mou-Setsé.



**African Idols.**

No doubt, the children who read this story have heard of slaves; have heard how some little children are not free; how they are sold to any one who will give enough money for them; and that whether they have loving mothers and kind fathers who break their hearts at parting from them. The fathers are sold to one slave master, the mothers to another, the children to another. Often, very often, these children and fathers and mothers never meet again. In these days no slaves are allowed to be kept in any English territory, and even in America the slaves are at last set free. At the time, however, when Mou-Setsé was a little boy, there were numbers of slaves in America, and indeed in many other parts of the world. Mou-Setsé had heard of slaves—for what tiny African boy had not?—and now he knew that he himself was going to be a slave. When he saw the flames rising up in Eyeo, and his beloved home being burnt to ashes, he knew that this fate was before him. "Let us fly!" said his elder brother, whispering eagerly to him in his native tongue; but Mou-Setsé shook his head, for he knew he could not fly. All around was a terrible scene of confusion. Women, carrying children in their arms, were trying to escape from the burning huts; sometimes they were entangled in a prickly bush and thrown down, or they were caught by the cruel enemy and tied together in gangs, so that they could not escape. Mou-Setsé stood quite still, and his brothers and sister, when they saw he could not fly, stayed near him. Soon the bright-looking children attracted attention, and were taken—then immediately they were separated from each other.



**Mou-setsé in the Slave-gang.**

Poor little Mou-Setsé, as he was carried away in a gang with many other captives, though he forced the tears back from his eyes, and tried, brave little fellow that he was, to keep up a brave heart, yet could not but cast some lingering glances back at the rocky hills where he and his brothers had often played so happily. He felt in his poor little heart that his play days were over, for how often had his mother told him that there was no play for slave children.

At last, after a long, long journey, little Mou-Setsé and a long gang of other slaves found themselves at a place called Quorra. Here the Portuguese met them, and here they were to be really sold. A trader came to examine Mou-Setsé, and finding him strong and healthy, quickly bought him. He was now to be sold again. The trader, seeing that he was a fine boy and handsome, took great pains with him. He gave him good food, and washed his polished black face, and brushed his woolly locks. He did this from no spirit of kindness, but simply from the desire to get a greater price for him. At last, when he had recovered from the fatigues of his journey, and looked fresh and bright, he brought him into the slave market. Here the traders who came to buy clustered round him and pulled off his clothes, and felt his limbs, and made him run, and leap, and throw his legs and arms about. No one cared whether he liked this treatment or not. He was treated in all respects like an animal without either soul or feeling. In about three hours he was bought by another trader and put, with many of his fellow slaves, into a canoe. They were sailing all that evening and all the next day. They passed through some very beautiful country, and Mou-Setsé might have enjoyed the lovely scenery had his heart been less full of wonder and pain. As it was, however, he could think of nothing but Eyeo and his home. Again and again he seemed to hear his beloved mother's voice, or he fancied himself looking with pride and admiration at his brave warrior father. Though he loved his mother best, yet it was the remembrance of his father that brought most strength to his poor little heart now; for his father had said to him often in his native language that a brave boy never wept—tears were for women and girls, but not for boys, who hoped to be warriors by-and-by. Remembering these words of his father's, little Mou-Setsé pressed back the tears from his hot eyelids, and endeavoured to wear an indifferent face. He could not quite smile—his heart was too heavy for smiles—but no one saw the glistening of a tear on his dark cheek. Occupied with these bitter and sad thoughts, he could scarcely be expected to notice the beautiful scenery through which the river on which the canoe glided passed. His father, his mother, his brothers, his sister, he was torn from them all; he did not know what had become of them; he might never hope to see them again; he might never learn their fate; their suffering might be even greater than his own. Poor little boy! and he knew of no God to comfort him, and had never heard of any hope beyond this world.

At last the canoe reached a place called Ikho. Little Mou-Setsé was again sold, and this time was sent to the fold, or the spot where purchased slaves are kept till there is an opportunity to send them off in vessels to other countries.

Mou-Setsé found life in the fold very dreadful. He had a coarse rope put around his neck, the ends of which were fastened round the necks of other slaves, so that a long row of them were secured together, and one could not move without dragging all the others with him. The boys were thus roped together, and the men chained in fifties.

In this terrible place—treated with cruelty, cold, half-naked—Mou-Setsé spent two months.

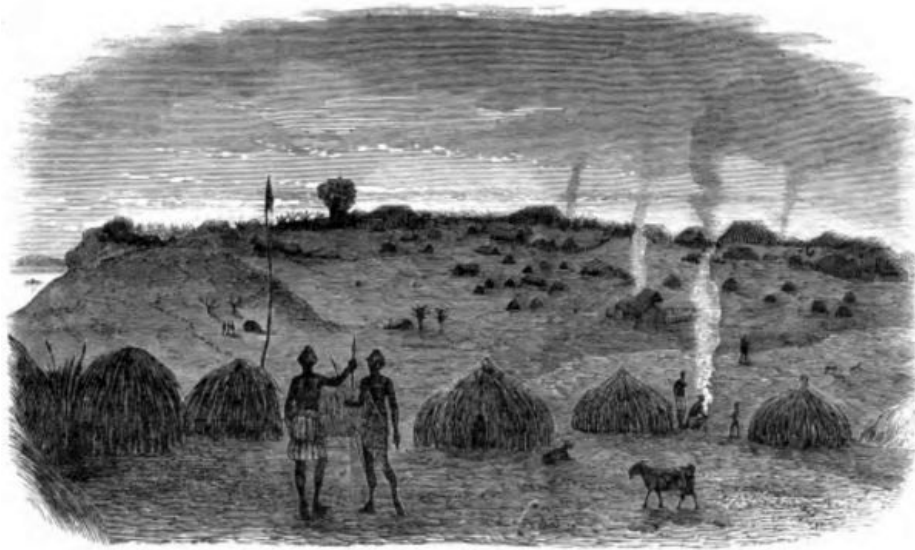
But a greater evil was to come. This poor little African boy was to pass through a black and heavy cloud into God's glorious light.

For let no one suppose that God had forgotten this little child whom He had made. Every hair of that little woolly head was numbered by God; every sigh he sighed, every groan he uttered, was heard and regarded by that great and good God, who loved him just as well with his black skin as He loved the fairest and most lovely English child.

But Mou-Setsé had a dreadful time before him, for God teaches His lessons in the storm as well as the sunshine.

This suffering was to take place on board the Portuguese slave-ship to which he was shortly removed. No one can understand who has not witnessed it the miseries of a slave vessel. The negroes are placed on their backs, or fixed in a sitting position, on ranges of shelves, one above the other, and in dark, close places, where hardly any air and no light are allowed to enter.

Here they are chained so close together that the space which each is allowed is scarcely so much as he would have in his coffin. Thus they lie for weeks and months, sometimes brought up on deck to jump about in their chains for exercise, exposed to sea-sickness, disease, and to the rubbing of the rough boards on their naked bodies. Many die, and those who live are, on landing, wretched objects. In the vessel in which Mou-Setsé was, the men were packed away below deck, but the women and children were allowed to remain above. Sad, sad were their hearts as they thought of their dear native country, and of those little children and fathers and mothers from whom they were severed. Their bodily sufferings were also very hard to bear... But God had not forgotten them. Belief was at hand.



Town where the Slaves were kept.

At the time of which I speak, the English had put away slavery in their own countries, and they were very anxious to have it stopped everywhere. The other nations of Europe had agreed to check the slave trade so far as to allow to England what was called the right of search. That is to say, if an English ship saw another ship on the sea which was supposed to be a slaver, she might pursue it; and if slaves were found in it she might set them free. English vessels were kept cruising about the seas for this purpose. America, however, though calling herself a free country, had then in the Southern States upwards of two million suffering slaves, and she would not allow to England the right of search. Many slave-ships, therefore, falsely using the American flag, escaped uncaught.

The Portuguese brig on board of which little Mou-Setsé was had hoisted this flag; but there must have been something suspicious about her appearance, for one day an English man-of-war was seen bearing down upon her. When the captain and the traders saw this large vessel in full pursuit, they were in a great fright. They thought all their profits would be gone, for we may be quite sure they loved money very much, or they would never have taken to the slave trade. In their terror they told the poor slaves an untruth. They said that the people in the large ship wanted to eat them. All hands were set to work at the oars. Even little Mou-Setsé pulled with every inch of strength he possessed; for, though he was very unhappy, he did not want to be eaten. So eager and frightened were the poor slaves that ten men pulled at one oar. But all was of no avail.

Nearer and nearer came the great ship; and at last, after twenty-four hours of hard chase, she sailed up alongside the slaver, and all the negroes, were captured.

Little did Mou-Setsé know, as in terror he was taken on board the English ship, that his dark days—at least his very darkest days—were over; that from being a poor slave he was free.





**The End of the Slave Ship.**

But retribution was at hand for those cruel traders who were so indifferent to the fate of the suffering human creatures they had bought and made their own. God sometimes punishes very soon, and in a very awful manner. This was the case on board the vessel where Mou-Setsé had endured his worst sufferings.

Through some accident the vessel, an old one and badly built, took fire. How terrible it looked in the dark night! How fearful were the cries of the terrified sailors! Mou-Setsé and the other rescued slaves saw the flames from the English vessel. The captain and his crew also saw it and hastened back to the rescue, but too late. Before they could reach the spot the slave-ship had blown up and foundered, and those who happened still to be on board had perished.

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## **Story 1--Chapter IV.**

### **The Dawn.**



**Sierra Leone.**

I do not think Mou-Setsé ever told any one what his feelings really were when he at last understood that he was free; that the English who had captured him, far from being his worst enemies, were proving themselves his best friends.

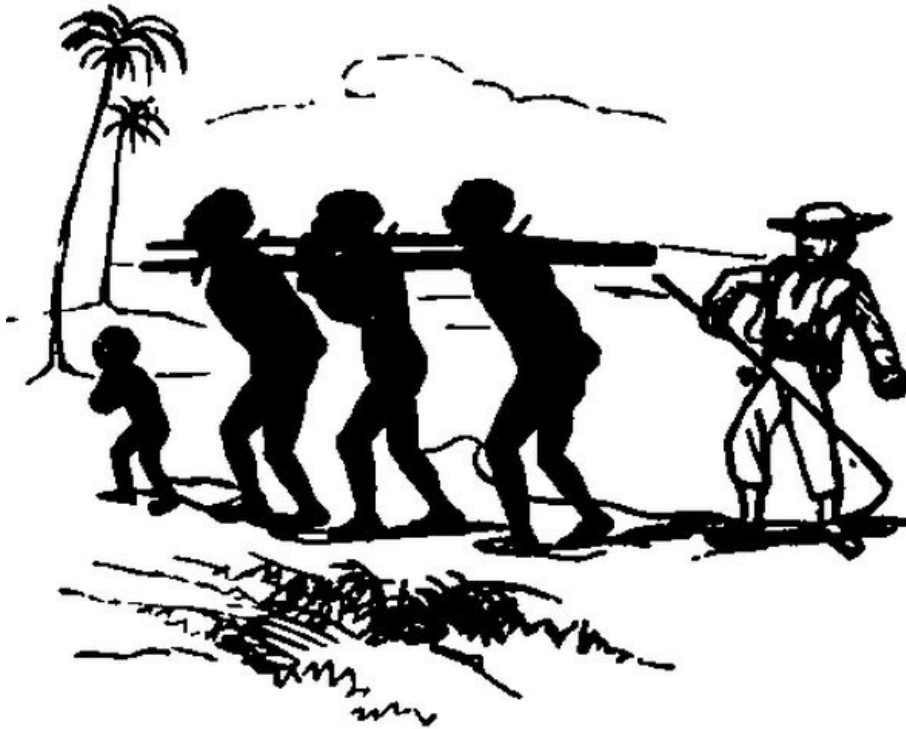
There is a story told of him that, when he first landed at Sierra Leone, and saw a kind-looking black woman, he threw his arms round her neck, whispered to her in his native tongue that she was like his mother, and wept some of the tears he had restrained through all his sufferings on her bosom.

But perhaps his early and great suffering had made him reserved, for, unlike most of his race, he had few words, and no ejaculations, to betray his feelings.

For a time he even scarcely trusted the new life of peace and happiness which was opening before him. He had many dreams of being retaken as a slave, and his little face had a wistful and scarcely trustful expression.

The kind English, however, did well by him. He was sent to a mission school at Freetown, where he was taught to read and to speak English; also to write, and, above all, in this school he first got any true, knowledge of God.

It was wonderful how this knowledge took possession of him—how he craved to know more and more of his Father in Heaven; how eagerly he asked; how quickly he learned; and then, as the great love of God revealed itself, how his own warm heart leaped up in answer to it, until all the “fear which hath torment” passed away, and the little face became bright and happy.



**Slave-driving.**

The good missionaries at Sierra Leone were more than kind to Mou-Setsé; they had him baptised and openly proclaimed as a Christian. At his baptism they called him “John,” but Mou-Setsé would never allow himself to be addressed by this name. His mother had herself given him his other name, and the missionaries, when they saw how his heart still clung to his mother, spoke to him and of him by his old African name. In his new home he grew tall and strong; and having, notwithstanding the suffering he had endured on it, a fancy for the sea, went on board an English merchant-vessel when fourteen years of age. In this vessel he travelled over many parts of the world, and saw strange sights and new faces. Thus his childhood and early youth passed away.

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## **Story 1--Chapter V.**

### **Part II—A Purpose.**



**A War Camp.**

Mou-Setsé grew up to be a man, with a very fixed purpose in his heart. All his thoughts and all his desires were bent on its accomplishment; but, as I said before, he was reserved, and never spoke of this thought of his inmost heart to human being. It brought out, however, marked characteristics in his face, and those who knew him well often spoke of the fire and earnestness in his eyes.

As a sailor, he was a favourite with the crew and with the captain—that is, he was as great a favourite as any boy with a black skin could be, for it must not be supposed that all white people were as kind to him as the good missionaries; but, on the whole, he was well treated, and no rude words addressed to him on account of his colour brought a retort from his lips.

He was by no means, however, wanting in bravery, as a little incident once showed. A great hulking white fellow had been abusing him, taunting him with cowardice, and daring him to fight. The sailors belonging to his ship looked on amused, and (as he was a blacky) not caring to interfere.

“You ain’t nothing but a coward,” said the white man; “a coward, and the son of a slave.”

At these words Mou-Setsé, who had been sitting very still and apparently unheeding, rose to the full length of his great height. The words “son of a slave” had brought a certain flash into his eye.

With a stride, he was at the real coward’s side.



Mou-setsé as a Sailor.

"I not fight," he said; "you not make me fight, when de Book say no. No; I not fight, but I knock you down."

In a moment, without the least apparent effort, the hulking white fellow lay at his feet.

"I specs you not like to lie dere," continued Mou-Setsé. "Well, you beg de black man's pardon; den you get up and go away."

After this little scene, no one cared: again to molest Mou-Setsé.

He remained a sailor until he was two-and-twenty; then he took his leave of the captain and his crew, and left their ship. He had become a sailor for the furtherance of his hidden and unspoken purpose. Now, having made and saved money, he went away. His purpose was calling him to America—then, indeed, the land of slaves.

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## Story 1--Chapter VI.

### Mou-Setsé Seeks to Fulfil his Purpose.



**African fenced City.**

I have said that Mou-Setsé had a fixed purpose. This purpose led him to America. He settled in a certain town in one of the States, and with the money he had saved opened a small shop or store. He dealt in the kind of goods that his black brothers and sisters most needed, and many of them frequented his little shop.

At this period of his life some people considered him miserly. His shop did well and his money stores increased, but he himself lived in the most parsimonious style; he scarcely allowed himself the necessaries of life, and never thought of marrying or giving himself the comforts of a home. All day long he attended his shop, but in the evening he went about a great deal, and gradually became known to all his black brothers and sisters in the town. Most of these were in slavery, and many had most bitter tales to tell. A few, however, were free; these were the slaves who had worked for long years to obtain sufficient money to buy this precious boon from their masters. With these free slaves Mou-Setsé held much intercourse, asking them of their past life, and always inquiring most particularly from what part of Africa they or their parents had come. By degrees, as he collected money, he helped these free slaves to emigrate to Canada, where they could enjoy and make a good use of the freedom they had so dearly won. But he never helped any one to go away with his money without first exacting a promise from him or her. This promise was made in secrecy, and was, I believe, faithfully kept by each and all.

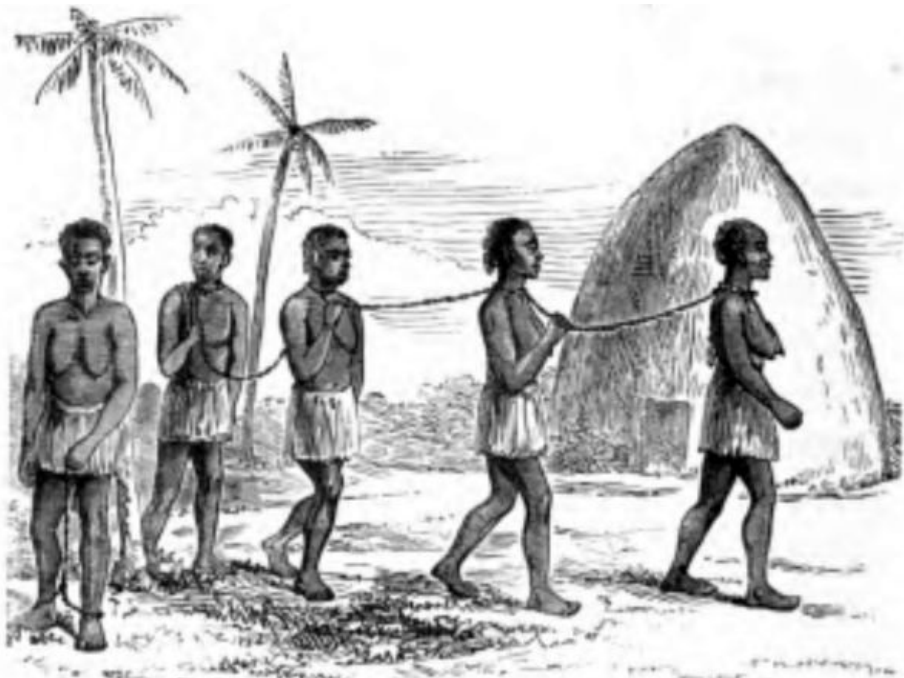
As he helped each poor freed slave to get away (and as his gains increased he helped many)—as he helped them off, and knew that he had gained a certain promise from them, his heart grew lighter, and he felt that he was nearer to the realisation of some dearly cherished dream. On these occasions he often repaired to a certain church and prayed. Kneeling in the quiet church, the black man poured out a very full heart to his loving Father in heaven. “God, de good God,” he would say, “let me not cry in vain; let me see my fader and moder and my broders and sister again. Give me more of de money, good God, and more, much more of de faith; so dat I may send more and more of de poor blackies to look for dose as I lobs!”

But his great anxiety about his own people by no means closed the heart of Mou-Setsé to those whose troubles he daily witnessed. For reasons of his own, he was always down on the quay to watch the faces of any new slaves that might come. He knew before any one else of a fresh slave who was brought into the town, and he always attended the slave market. But he did more; he helped his brethren whose groans went daily—indeed, night and day—up to heaven. Many a poor mother, when she was torn from her child, went to Mou-Setsé’s store, and poured out her great trouble into his kind heart; and somehow or other, he managed to get tidings of the lost child, or the lost parent or husband. By degrees he made an immense connection for himself all over America, and no one knew more about the ways and doings of the black people than he did.

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## **Story 1--Chapter VII.**

### **Mou-Setsé Waits and Watches.**



**Slaves on the March.**

Years went by, bringing changes, bringing to Mou-Setsé grey hairs, taking from him his fresh youth, and adding to his face some anxious lines. But the years brought greater changes than the light hands they lay upon head and brow, to his black brothers and sisters in America. The brave souls who had fought through thick and thin for the freedom of the slaves, who had gone through danger and hardship almost at the peril of their lives in this great cause, had won a noble victory. America, by setting free her black brethren, had also removed from herself a most grievous curse.

The black men were free, and Mou-Setsé had removed from the little town where he had first settled to the larger and more flourishing one of St. Louis. He had succeeded as a merchant, and was now a rich man. His love for his brethren had also increased with years. He did much to help them. He was revered and loved by all who knew him, and that was saying no little, for there was scarcely a black man in the States who did not know Mou-Setsé. But the dearly-longed-for and unfulfilled purpose was still discernible on his face, and oftener than ever would he repair to the church to pray.

"I specs de dere Lord will be good to me," he would say; "de dere Lord hab patience wid me. I told de Lord dat I would have great patience wid Him. I will wait His good leisure. I believe as I will see my people again."

Mou-Setsé had for long years now added work to his prayers, leaving no stone unturned to find or obtain some tidings of the father and mother and brothers and sister from whom he had been so cruelly torn. But all his efforts had been as yet in vain, no description even resembling them had ever reached his ears.



**Mou-setsé in his shop.**

His black friends told him that his father and mother had either never reached America or had long been dead. But Mou-Setsé would never believe these evil reports, his strong faith that at least some of his own would be restored to him, that the work and labour of his life would not be in vain, never deserted him.

"I tole de Lord dat I would have great patience," he would reply to those who begged of him to give up so hopeless a search, and doubtless patience was doing its perfect work, for the end for which he so longed was at hand.

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## **Story 1--Chapter VIII.**

### **Fruit of Faith and Patience.**



**On an African River.**

One very bitter day in March there was great commotion among the black people of St. Louis. The snow was falling thickly, the wind was blowing. Inclement as the whole winter had been, this day seemed the worst of all; but it did not deter the freed blacks from braving its hardships, from hurrying in crowds from place to place, and above all from repairing in vast crowds to their own churches. Every coloured church in St. Louis was full of anxious blacks, but they had not assembled for any purposes of worship. Unless, indeed, we except that heart worship which takes in the ever-present Christ, even when he comes hungry, naked, and in the guise of a stranger. The black people of St. Louis

made beds in the church pews and kindled fires in the basements.

Having made all preparations, they went, headed by their preachers, to the quays; there to meet some six hundred famished and shivering emigrants, who had come up the river all the way from the States of the Mississippi Valley and Louisiana.

In extreme poverty and in wretched plight whole families had come, leaving the plantations where they were born, and severing all those local ties for which the negro has so strong an attachment. All of these poor people, including the very young and the very aged, were bound for Kansas.

This was the beginning of a great exodus of the negroes from the Southern to the Northern States.

The cause did not seem at first very manifest; but it must be something unusual, something more than mere fancy, which would induce women and children, old and young, with common consent to leave their old homes and natural climate, and face storms and unknown dangers in Northern Kansas.



**Negro Women at Home.**

Mou-Setsé, with his eyes, ears, and heart ever open, had heard something of the dissatisfaction of the negroes in the South.

They were suffering, not, indeed, now from actual slavery, but from wicked rulers who would give the coloured man no justice. Outrages, murders, and wrongs of all descriptions were driving these fugitives from their homes. They said little of hope in the future; it was all of fear in the past. They were not drawn by the attractions of Kansas; they were driven by the terrors of Louisiana. Happen what would, they all resolved to fly, never to return. Death rather than return was their invariable resolution.

Mou-Setsé, as I have said, had heard of this exodus. Profound secret as the negroes had kept it, yet it had reached his ears. He consulted his black brothers and sisters in St. Louis, and it was resolved that the strangers should be well received—hence the preparations in the churches, and hence the assemblage on the quays.

Mou-Setsé was one of the last to leave the church where he had been most busy. Just as he was about to turn away to help to fetch into warmth and shelter the famished emigrants he turned round. Some voice seemed to sound in his ears; some very strong impelling influence caused him to pause. He entered one of the pews, sat down and buried his head in his hands.

Something seemed to tell the black man that the desire of his eyes was coming to him; that his life-work was bearing at last its fruit. So sure was he of this that he forgot to pray. He only said several times, "Tank de Lord; tank de Lord berry much."

Then he followed his companions to the quays. How often had he gone there in vain! How often had he gazed at face after face, looking and longing for the forms of those he loved! They had never greeted him.

Now his step was elastic, his face bright.

Two hours after he had left the church he entered it again, leading by the hand a very old man and a bowed and



aged woman.

“My fader and moder,” he explained very simply to the bystanders. He put the old couple in the most comfortable pew, and sat down by them. They both seemed half dead. The woman lay nearly lifeless. Mou-Setsé took her limp and withered hand and began to rub it softly.

“How do you know them?” asked some interested bystanders who knew Mou-Setsé’s story.

“De ole woman hab de smile,” he said; “I neber forgot my moder’s smile. She looked at me on de quay, and she smiled, and my heart leaped, and I said, ‘Tank de Lord, glory be to God.’ I tole ye de Lord would help me.”

Just then the man stretched himself, opened his eyes, fixed them on Mou-Setsé, and began to mutter.

Mou-Setsé bent his head to listen.

Suddenly he sprang to his feet. “Oh praise the Lord!” he exclaimed again. “I said as de Lord would help me. Listen to de ole man, he is talking in de tongue of the Akus, in the country of Yarriba. He was de brave warrior, my fader was.”

Yes, Mou-Setsé was right. The fruit of long patience was at last yielding to him its precious store, and the old warrior of the beautiful African valley had come back through nobody knew what hardships, with his aged wife, to be nursed, cherished, and cared for by a long-lost son.

As soon as they were sufficiently revived Mou-Setsé took them to the comfortable home he had been so long getting ready for them. Here they told him of their slavery, of the terrors they had undergone, of the bitterness of knowing nothing of his fate, of the lonely days when they had belonged to different masters; then of their release from slavery, and how, as free man and woman, they had met again. But their hardships had been great, for though they had so-called liberty, every privilege belonging to a white man seemed to be denied them.

They resolved to fly with their brethren. Selling all they had, they managed to scrape together enough money to pay for their passage in the river steamer.

Penniless, famished, half dead, they arrived at St. Louis.

“It is a good land you hab come to,” said Mou-Setsé when his mother had finished her narrative, “a land flowing wid milk and honey. Yes, it is a good land; and I am like Joseph, only better dan Joseph was, for I hab got back my fader and moder too, praise de Lord.”

“I am Jacob,” said the old warrior slowly, “and you are, indeed, my son Joseph. It is enough. Praise de Lord.”

“De Lord is berry good. I tole ye so,” exclaimed the aged wife and mother.

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## Story 2--Chapter I.

### The Orphans’ Pilgrimage—A Story of Trust in God.



**An Austrian Village.**

In one of the small towns in the north of Austria there once lived a humble pair, as far as earthly goods and position go, but who were rich in what was far better—love to God and simple trust in His Fatherly care.

The woman was a Tyrolese, the daughter of an old harper, who still resided in one of the small villages among the mountains. As a motherless girl she had been his only companion, and many a time her sweet pure voice would be heard accompanying her father in the simple melodies of her native land, as he wandered from place to place to earn a livelihood.

The time came when the harper's daughter left her hills for a home in town, but was more than repaid by the tender love of her husband, who, though he could earn but a scanty subsistence, was good and kind to her. Their fare was frugal, but, happy in each other's affection, they were content and thankful, and, contrasting their lot with that of the Saviour, would say, "Can we, the servants, expect to fare better than our Lord and Master?"

As years passed by, three little children were sent to them by their Father in heaven, to whom they gave the names of Toni, Hans, and Nanny; very precious gifts, and they showed their gratitude by training them early in the right way, teaching them from His word to know the good God, to love and trust Him, to try to please Him, and to love their neighbour as themselves. They were unselfish little children, and would at any time share their scanty meals with others in distress. "Little children, love one another," was a text often repeated, and also practised, by them.



Austrian Family Life.

The two boys were very fond of each other, and both were united in love for the little sister whom they felt bound to protect. Great was their delight when she first tottered alone across the room, where they stood, one at each end, with outstretched arms to receive her; and when her little voice was heard crying for the first time "Father," "Mother," they shouted for joy.

On the opposite side of the street lived an artist, who took great pleasure in this little family, and painted a picture in which he introduced the children, not intending it for sale, but as a gift to their parents, in token of the esteem he felt for them. A very pretty picture it was—little Nanny, lightly draped, showing her fat dimpled shoulders and bare feet, her golden hair floating in the wind, was in a meadow chasing a butterfly; while her brothers stood by, as guardian angels, with hands extended ready to catch her if she stumbled. It might have fetched a high price, but the man was not in needy circumstances, and would not sell it.

When Nanny was about four years old it happened that the cholera—that fearful scourge which has from time to time been so fatal in many parts—broke out in this town, and both father and mother were smitten and lay ill with it at the same time. I need not say how, in the midst of pain and weakness, many an anxious thought was turned to the future of their little ones; but, as faith had been strong in the time of health and prosperity, it did not fail them in their hour of need, and they trusted simply to the promise, "Leave thy fatherless children; I will preserve them alive."

In a very short time the children were left; orphans, and (the eldest not being more than eight years old) quite unable to do anything for their own support. What was to be done? The neighbours were kind and good to them, but, having families of their own, had enough to do without adding to their cares. It was at length arranged that a letter should be written to an uncle who lived in Vienna, and was doing well as manager of a small theatrical company in that town. Not a very good school, you will say, for these children who had been trained so carefully.

No sooner did the man receive the sad news than he set off, arriving just after the funeral was over. He lost no time in selling his brother's small possessions, and, pocketing the money, started for his home, taking the little ones with him. I should say that, at the special request of their friend the artist, the picture was reserved and taken with them. This, then, together with the large Bible from which their father used to read to them morning and evening, and the box containing their clothes, was all that they could call their own.

Poor children! they had certainly found a home, but what a contrast to that to which they had been accustomed! Sorely did they miss the tender, watchful love which had surrounded them all their lives, and the peace and calm which dwelt in that household. Their uncle was a hard, money-loving man, and determined to make the best for himself out of this seeming act of kindness. Therefore, instead of giving them a good education and fitting them to make their way in the world respectably, he merely taught them what would be profitable to himself in his own line, viz, dancing and gymnastics. Their whole time was spent in practising to appear in public on the stage, and many a weary hour did they pass, being punished if they dared to complain, and never by any chance being encouraged by a word of approval.

Such a life as this soon began to tell upon little Nanny, who had never been a strong child; but not the most earnest entreaties from her brothers would induce the hard-hearted man to allow her to exert herself less. It was a weary life for them all, and many a time when wreaths and bouquets were showered upon them by the applauding audience would they retire and burst into tears for very fatigue and sorrow.

Toni and Hans at last became seriously alarmed about their little sister. She got gradually paler and thinner, and when, one day, after dancing for some time, with flushed cheek and shortened breath, she fell to the ground in a faint, they could endure it no longer, but ran to their uncle, beseeching him to have pity on her.

I am sorry to tell you, the poor boys were only answered by blows, and making nothing of their grief, he walked carelessly away, saying she would be better after her dinner. This was too much for Hans; he jumped up from the floor where he had been sitting, and stamping his foot, his face glowing with anger, cried out, "I shall not allow her to dance any more!" to which he, of course, received only a scornful laugh in reply.



**In an Austrian Cottage.**

Nanny had by this time revived, and was sitting between her brothers wiping away her tears.

"Oh! if father and mother knew of this," said Hans, "I think it would make them weep even in heaven; but perhaps then they would send an angel to help us."

"We do not know whether they can see us or not," answered Toni; "but we are sure the good God can. I have been asking Him to put into our minds what we shall do for Nanny. Sometimes I am afraid she will leave us like father and mother did. And do you know I feel as solemn as little Samuel must have done when God called him, for a thought has come into my mind which I am sure must have been put there by our Father in heaven."

"And what is it?" asked Hans, in a whisper, folding his little hands, as if inspired by the devotion of his brother.

"Why, that we must save our sister, and not let her die," answered Toni.

"That would be glorious; but how shall we manage it?"

"We must run away from this place with her and take her to our grandfather, in the mountains."

"But that is so far away, and we have no money: and then, how should we know the way?" asked Hans anxiously.

"The little birds fly away in the winter to Africa—God shows them the way, and gives them strength and food; and shall not we trust Him to help us his children?"

It was all clear to Hans now, and the bold resolve was made.

From that time the two boys thought of little else than the intended escape. The sight of their little darling pining away before their eyes nerved them to plan and to work. Preparations were carried on in secret: no one having any idea of what was going on. A little playfellow lived close by whose father was a carpenter, and being often in the man's workshop, he came to have a liking for the orphans; and many a spare piece of wood he gave them to play with, which, by watching him at work, they learned in their rude way to fashion into shape. They now began to put

the small knowledge they had thus acquired to some account; and after many attempts and failures, at last succeeded in making a rough sort of little cart. The cover of a box with a rail round it formed the seat, the pole was a cast-off measuring-rule which had been thrown away as useless; but when they came to the wheels, they had need of all the patience they possessed; however, perseverance in due time was rewarded, when, after devoting every spare moment they could secure, the little carriage which was to effect their escape was finished. How happy they felt when the finishing touch was put, when it was drawn away to a corner of the yard behind the workshop, and hidden among a heap of sawdust and shavings! A heavy burden seemed lifted off their hearts: they dreamt not of any future difficulties, and only looked forward with eagerness to the moment when they should be free, and when the roses would come back again to their little sister's cheeks.

All was now in readiness: that very evening they were to start on their pilgrimage, leaving the shelter of their uncle's house, together with his tyranny, behind them. It was time for Nanny to be let into the secret; and, having done this, the two boys, kneeling down, drew her between them and prayed, "O Lord, send a good angel to help us, and keep uncle from waking when we go away."

They had fixed on an evening when they had not to appear in public. All had retired to rest early, and they waited only till they thought it would be safe. The boys then arose, and, dressing themselves quickly, made up a small bundle of clothes, and having lifted the precious picture from the wall, and their father's Bible from the box, they proceeded to summon Nanny. This was of all the most anxious part, for she had from the first slept in her aunt's room. Her little ears, however, were on the alert, and a gentle tap as signal made her leap lightly out of bed, and with shoes in hand and her clothes on her arm, she was in a moment at the door. It was bolted: and how could she reach it? Standing on tiptoe did not help her. So, quickened by fear, no time was lost in getting a chair and mounting on it, the bolt was quickly drawn, and in a moment's time the child was at her brothers' side, pale and trembling. And now came a new dilemma, the house door was locked, and the key in their uncle's room. Here, however, their gymnastic training stood them in good stead, and their bedroom window being not far from the ground, they jumped out of it, and alighted safely on the pavement.



"Halt! Who goes there?"

The little cart was next brought from its place of concealment. Nanny, wrapped in her cloak, took her seat in it, and the book and picture being laid at her feet, and the bundle serving as a cushion at her back, the children set out on their unknown way. It was quite dark. They had not gone very far when they encountered the watchman with his horn and lantern. Throwing the light full on the strange group, he cried—

"Halt! who goes there?"

"Good friends," promptly answered the elder of the boys; when the man, with a kindly smile, let them pass without further inquiry.

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## Story 2--Chapter II.

In due time they had got clear of the town, and were trotting along a straight country road as fast as their feet would carry them. Whether the Tyrolese mountains lay to the right or left, before or behind them, they knew not nor seemed to care. They had left their cruel uncle, and the mere thought of this made them happy. They were but little children, and did not reflect on any dangers they might have to encounter.

It was in the dim twilight of early morning that they happened to meet a woman driving a cart filled with cans of milk which she was taking to the town. A sudden thought seemed to strike Toni, for, going straight up to her, he said—

"Please, mother, can you tell us the way to the mountains?"

"To the Tyrolese mountains?" answered the woman, in a tone of astonishment, standing still, and looking at the group with much interest. Perhaps she had children of her own, and pictured them as little wanderers like those before her. "You are all right so far," she continued, "for a sister of mine left me to go there but the other day, and

drove straight along this road. I watched her till she was out of sight. I am afraid I cannot direct you further. But what do you three children want there?" she inquired.

"We are going to look for grandfather," Nanny answered in haste, "and he will give us some breakfast, for we are so hungry." At these last words she cast a longing glance at the milk cans.

"So hungry, are you?" said the woman, looking at her with real motherly tenderness; then taking out a tin measure, she filled it to the brim, and putting it into her hands, said, "Drink it all up, my dear; and it is milk from a Tyrolese cow, too," she added, smiling. "And we must not forget your good horses. Will they take milk too, I wonder?" offering one of the boys a full can, which she filled a second and a third time. Then she drove on, scarcely giving the children time to thank her.

"It was God sent us our breakfast," said Toni. "Father used to say that He sees us, though we cannot see Him, and knows what we are in want of as well as we do ourselves. But now the sun is rising, and we must ask Him to take care of us to-day."

Nanny stepped out of her little carriage, and under a wide-spreading beech-tree, the branches of which overshadowed them, the children knelt down, and in their own simple way entreated God's blessing.

Just at that moment the sun, like a ball of fire, rose above the horizon and shed over them his golden beams. We can fancy how lovely everything must have appeared to these little ones, who had never known the beauties of sunrise in the country.

"It seems as if God was holding his shining hand above us and blessing us," said Toni.

"Oh, how pretty!" exclaimed Hans. "Everything about us is so bright; even the very stones; and the little blades of grass look covered with diamonds, but it is the dew which God sends to refresh them. How good He is! He cares for the plants as well as for us, but He made them, so they are His children too."

"And look at this," cried Nanny, full of glee, taking up an acorn cup; "only see what a large drop of dew inside—it must be a bath for the tiny insects."



**The Bird in its Nest.**

Whirr, whirr—up flew a bird from its nest.

"Ah, have I frightened you, you poor little thing?"

"That must be a lark," said Toni; "look how high it flies, singing all the time; up and up it goes as if it meant to go right up to heaven."

"Greet father and mother for me, pretty bird," cried Hans, "for they are in heaven."

"Yes, yes, and for Nanny too," said the little maiden; and touching the tips of her small fingers with her lips, she threw them up as if wafting the kisses upward.

"Perhaps the lark will carry our prayers to God," said Hans.

"Oh no," replied his brother, looking very thoughtful. "God does not need any messenger to take our prayers to Him, for He is always with us; and even if we just think in our hearts what we wish to ask Him, He knows it all quite well. Father said He was close by at all times."

"Hark what a pretty song the lark is singing! What a pity we cannot hear what it is about!"

"I will tell you, Nanny, what I fancy he would say," said Toni. "'I thank the good God that He has given me wings, so that I can fly up to the blue sky, and that He has made the sun so warm, and the fields so green and soft where I build my nest.'"

"That is nice, Toni. But listen! there is a bee humming as it flies by. What does it say, do you think?"

"Well, perhaps it is buzzing, 'Praise God that He lets me rove from flower to flower to sip the dew and gather honey, and that I am such a happy little bee.'"

"Now then," continued the little girl, "there is a large caterpillar creeping along on the ground. It cannot say anything; it neither sings nor hums."

Toni was silent a moment; then taking both Nanny's hands into his, he went on, "I was just thinking, my dear little sister, of something mother used to tell me about that. The caterpillar thinks, perhaps, 'I certainly am not so beautiful now as many other things in the world, but I have life and can enjoy it. I thank God for that; and some day, when I am tired, He will teach me how to spin myself a cradle in which I may lie down and sleep; then, when I am quite rested, God will come and wake me, and instead of creeping slowly on the ground I shall fly up a lovely thing with wings.'"

"And then, you know," said Hans, following out his mother's words, which his brother had recalled, "it will be with our parents something like this butterfly, for first they lived on earth, then God laid them down to sleep in the churchyard, and at last He will come and wake them, and they will be happier and more beautiful than they ever were before."

"How can you tell what the birds and insects think about?" said Nanny, looking inquiringly into her brother's face.

"Of course we can only fancy it all," Toni replied; "but mother often talked about these things, and taught us to be kind to dumb creatures, and never to hurt even the smallest insect that God had made, because they can feel as well as we; and then she would tell us so many pretty stories of their different ways, that it makes me think sometimes they must have some sort of reason like human beings. But now step in, Nanny; we must not talk any longer, but go on our way, or we shall never reach grandfather's." The little one settled herself comfortably in the cart, her brothers harnessed themselves once more, and away they went.



A Tyrolean Village.

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### Story 2--Chapter III.

When they had gone a short distance, Hans, who had been looking rather grave, whispered into his brother's ear, "Toni, do not say this to Nanny—but how shall we know where grandfather's house is? We may wander among the mountains all day long and never find it."

"God will lead us right," answered the trusting boy, "and give us strength for the long journey. Only think, we have been up all night, and are not tired yet. But, Nanny," he said, turning to his sister, "you must go to sleep now; lie down and shut your little eyes."

The boys stopped, folded up their coats, putting them under her head for a pillow; and, being protected from the sun's rays by a sort of awning formed of green boughs, she snuggled her head down and was soon fast asleep.

It was some hours before Nanny awoke. They had passed through some villages without stopping in any, and were now beginning to feel very hungry. It was early dawn when they had their drink of milk, and they had tasted nothing since. The little girl began to cry piteously, but Toni comforted her, promising they would get something to eat the very next place they came to. Just at that moment a cart filled with potatoes passed them; and as they followed in its track they found, to their great joy, that here and there one or two had fallen on the road, so they were thankfully

gathered up and put into Nanny's apron, the carter meanwhile having vanished out of sight. Some distance in front was a large meadow, where a flock of sheep was feeding. When they came near they saw the shepherd in the act of warming his breakfast over a fire of sticks he had just kindled. The boys, running up to him, asked leave to bake their potatoes in the ashes. This was readily granted; and not only that—the man kindly shared his meal with the hungry children, giving each of them some porridge and a slice of bread.

How nice it tasted! and how happily they sat round the fire, peeling their potatoes and talking to their new friend!

When they had finished breakfast, the boys, who had been on their feet all night, lay down on a green bank to rest, and being very weary soon fell asleep. Nanny was quite refreshed after her nap and hearty meal, and amused herself meanwhile with the sheep and lambs, who soon became so friendly that they would let her pat and fondle them as much as she liked.



**Making a Fire.**

After an hour's time they were again on their journey, and had scarcely proceeded half a mile when a cart laden with wood passed by. The man belonging to it was walking by the side of his horses (his "browns," as he called them), and stopping to speak to our little friends, he asked them where they had come from and whither they were going. When he had heard their simple tale he looked kindly at them, and said, "You have come a long way, and must be weary, my boys; I will give you a lift. Step out, my little lass." So saying he lifted Nanny out of her cart, and hanging it at the back of his waggon, was going to help them, when with one leap they sprang up and placed themselves on a log of wood he had put across to serve as a seat. "There now," he continued, "I can take you ten miles on your way. I wish it had been farther, but I must then unlade my cart and return back again."

This was a pleasant and most unexpected rest. It passed only too quickly. They were not long in reaching the place to which the man was bound, when, having deposited his load of wood and taken a kind leave of the children, he drove off, followed by many a loud and hearty "Thank you" from his grateful little friends.

It was now mid-day, and they began to wonder where they should dine. It happened, as they passed through the next village, that the peasants were just returning from their work. As may be supposed, the little pilgrims attracted observation, and many questions were asked by one and another till their story was told. Hans, whose thoughts were at that time naturally intent on the subject of dinner, could at last bear it no longer, and said frankly, "You have questioned us about all sorts of things, but no one has asked if we are hungry."

"Well said, little fellow," they answered, much amused at this practical hint. Then every one was more anxious than the other to show hospitality to the friendless orphans, till the schoolmaster settled the point by taking them home with him. His pretty house was close by, and having requested his wife, who was in the act of serving up the dinner, to let them have it on the grass, the table was brought out, and they sat down to baked fruit and pancakes—undreamt-of luxuries to the little travellers, who five minutes before knew not where they were to get a piece of bread. To Nanny it recalled the old home, and, throwing her arms round the good woman's neck, she told her how sometimes, when she had been a very good girl, her mother would give her that for a treat.



In the Pine Forest.

Dinner was over, and now it was time for the children to go on their way. The peasants were waiting to take leave of them, and many had brought their little offerings of sympathy: one a loaf of bread, another a pot of honey, while a feeble old woman came tottering along with a bottle of milk. The children of the village said they must harness Nanny's horses, and admired her spirited steeds, playfully offering them a feed of corn.

So they went merrily forward, accompanied for some distance by a troop of the younger inhabitants, and followed by the blessings of all.

They had proceeded about a mile when they saw a boy in the distance running along the road they were going. They stopped when he came up, and, as he lifted a corner of his jacket, what was their delight to see snugly lying there rolled up like a ball a Pomeranian puppy, about four weeks old, with a soft, white, silky coat.

"What are you going to do with the pretty creature?" they all exclaimed with one breath.

"Give him to whoever will take him," said the boy, "for we have three more of the same sort at home. Would you like to have him?" he continued.

"That I should dearly," said Hans, holding out both hands to receive the little fellow, "and thank you a thousand times."

"You are heartily welcome," returned their new friend; "indeed, I am obliged to you for taking him off my hands."

The bottle of milk was at once opened, and, there being no cup, Hans's hand was filled again and again for the dog to lap from, which he did most gratefully; after which a bed was made up of Nanny's cloak, and, with her apron to cover him, he was soon asleep.

And now they start off afresh, and their way being for a time in the direction of the boy's home, he proposed harnessing himself to make a third, and away they went full gallop.

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## Story 2--Chapter IV.

It was far on in the afternoon when they passed through a beautiful wood. The Tyrol abounds in fir forests, beeches, and chestnuts. We may fancy our little friends, then, enjoying themselves under the shade of the trees. Many hours having passed since their mid-day meal, the loaf of bread was produced, and Toni cut a slice for each with his pocket-knife, spreading it with honey. This proved very grateful to the hungry children, who had tasted nothing since their dinner with the good schoolmaster. Toni and Hans, tired enough by this time, were glad after their meal to stretch themselves on the grass and go to sleep, but Nanny, who had been spared all fatigue, ran about playing with the dog, going here and there, and looking with wondering pleasure at the trees and wild flowers, all of which were so new to her, and talking to the little birds that hopped from bough to bough twittering their pretty songs. The light was playing between the trees, flecking the turf beneath with shadows, and illuminating the trunks of the old firs with a ruddy glow. The little girl skipped about in great delight, getting as she went along a lap full of flowers, which she amused herself by forming into bouquets and wreaths. In stooping down, her eyes fell upon some wood strawberries,



which were quite ripe and growing in great numbers. "Oh, what a nice surprise for my brothers!" she said, and set to work gathering as many as she could. Three large leaves were spread on the top of a small rock which served as a table, and when the boys awoke, they were called to partake of the feast. A merry little party they were. And now, having finished their repast by taking a drink of milk from the old woman's bottle, no more time must be lost, Nanny was told to take her seat, and, the dog being laid at her feet, they again set out.

The sun was sinking lower and lower in the bright sky, till at length it vanished below the horizon. And now the next question was, where they should sleep? Should they go on to the next village, and beg a night's lodging? For money they had none wherewith to pay for one.

"No, no," cried little Nanny, quite in love with the pretty green wood: "let us make this our home for the night; the stars will be our lamps, the moss and flowers our pillow, and the little birds will sing us asleep." She clapped her hands with joy at the thought.



**In the Fields.**

The boys were not unwilling to agree to this proposal, and having drawn the cart under a large oak-tree, they all knelt down upon the grass, and Toni prayed aloud. "Our Father in heaven, we thank Thee for having brought us in safety so far; we thank Thee for giving us food when we were hungry. We are sure Thou wilt be with us in the darkness, and Thou wilt hold Thine hand over us, and not let any wild beast or snake come near to hurt us. Please cover Nanny, that the night dew may not give her cold: do, good God, for Thou knowest she is not strong, and we would like to take her quite well to grandfather. Hear us for Jesus' sake. Amen."

They rose from their knees, and oh! how full of delight Nanny was! for around on every side, both on the ground and flying about among the bushes, were numbers of the most brilliant sparks; I am sure if she had tried she could not have counted them.

"Toni! Hans! look," she exclaimed. "Are these stars? But stars, I am sure, never live in the grass. What can they be?"

"They are glow-worms and fireflies," said Toni, and explained to her how that by day they looked brown and ugly, and it was only in the darkness they were so bright.

We see Nanny was not without reason in likening these fireflies to stars. She entreated her brothers to catch some of them, that she might hold them in her hand; and they soon collected several, and put them in her hair, so that she looked as if crowned with a wreath of stars.



The Children lay down to rest.

It was now night, and, under the dim light of a half-moon, the children, weary with the previous day's exertion, lay down to rest. Nanny's starry crown soon disappeared; nightingales struck up their thrilling notes, crickets chirped, soft airs whispered among the trees, little birds, with their heads under their wings, roosted in the boughs overhead, and the children soon fell fast asleep, safe under their Heavenly Father's protection.

It was bright daylight ere the little ones opened their eyes. They soon recollected themselves, for at first they looked about, wondering where they were, and having risen and breakfasted on bread and honey, with a drink of milk, were not long in setting off again on their travels.

So far we have followed them. They had escaped without discovery, their daily wants had been supplied, and they trusted to be before long happy with their grandfather.

We shall not, however, be surprised to hear that, while they had been peacefully pursuing their way, there had been no small stir in their uncle's house. When he found the children missing, he was almost beside himself with rage. What now would become of all his fine dreams for the future? They had already helped to fill his purse with gold, and he looked forward greedily to more gains in time to come. Find them he must. Inquiries were made in every direction, advertisements put in the public papers, bills pasted on the walls, police put on the search. What would he not do to get them back again? He himself drove out to the country; fortunately, however, or rather God so ordered it, he took the opposite direction to that which the children had taken.

Three days had passed, and the boys were beginning to be very weary and footsore.

In the evening they were wondering what to do, and where to go for the night, when they saw a large number of gentlemen and servants on horseback coming towards them. It was a hunting party returning home.

"Hallo! hallo!" cried one of them; "here's some fine game. Why, these must be the runaway children about whom there has been such a hue and cry in Vienna. Hold! stop! you are caught," he continued, addressing himself to the terrified little ones. "Come away with us, and to-morrow we will send you home."

Nanny clasped her hands, and bursting into a flood of tears, exclaimed, "Please, sir, oh, please not to send us back to uncle!" and Hans, trembling in every limb, begged them to have pity.

Toni was the only one of the three who remained calm, saying in a cheerful voice to his sister, "Do not be frightened, Nanny; the good God knows all."

By this time the rest of the party had come up, and among them a tall, elderly man with white hair, who smiled kindly on the children, and directed one of his servants to take them to the castle. They were accordingly lifted on to a truck that was conveying the game, the result of the day's sport; their own little cart was slung on behind; and so they arrived at a beautiful house standing in a large park. Nanny and Hans, sobbing bitterly, with their little arms round one another, were seated on a roebuck. Toni, sitting opposite, looked so smiling, trying in his own quiet way to comfort them, that they at length began to look brighter and dried their tears.

When they arrived the castle was brilliantly lighted. The children were lifted down and led into a large hall, where a number of ladies were assembled, waiting to receive the party, who had been away since early morning.

As you may imagine, great was the astonishment when the little ones were brought in, and many questions were put to them; but it was not till the arrival of the gentlemen that they understood what it all meant.

When they were at length joined by the lord of the castle, he went up to the children, and, looking kindly at them, endeavoured to gain their confidence. He began by gently inquiring the cause of their leaving their uncle's house. "Was he unkind to you?" he asked.

"Not exactly, sir," quickly replied the little girl; "but I danced till I could dance no longer. I felt as if I was going to die."

"It is all true, sir," said Hans. "Toni and I were afraid we should lose our little sister."

"I am sure it was God's will we should try and save her," interrupted Toni.

"It was *God's will*? How did you know that, little one?"

"Why, sir, it must have been God who put a thought into my mind that I ought to get her away. When uncle would make her dance, dance till she fell down and did not know anything, and looked so pale, I thought she was dead. Then I know He must have helped us to make the little cart, and to keep it hidden so that uncle did not see it; and He has led us the right way, and given us food to eat when we were hungry."



The Great Castle.

"Who taught you all that, my boy?"

"Nobody, sir," answered Toni; "only father and mother used to talk about God ordering everything, and told us to remember, and that perhaps some day we should see it for ourselves."

"Who were your parents?" asked the gentleman, much interested.

"I can hardly tell you; but they were God's children, for they called Him Father."

"But what was your father? That was what I meant. What did he do?"

"Well, sir, in the morning he came and woke us and gave us a kiss, and when we were dressed, he read to us out of the big book; after breakfast he went out to teach music, I think, and when he came home he taught us to read and write: that was what he did."

"Did your father not leave you anything?"

"Leave us anything?" said the boy thoughtfully. "I heard him say once to mother when he was ill, 'If we die we shall have nothing to leave them, but God will be their friend.'"

"Was it your father's wish that you should live with your uncle?"

"I never heard him say so; but he was talking to mother one day, and he said grandfather was a good old man, and could teach us to be good, and then he went on, 'My brother is a wild fellow, but the Lord will be with them and will do for them what is best.'"

"And do you think you will be able to reach your grandfather's home after all?"

"Yes, sir, indeed I do."

"But we must send you back to your uncle—at least, so the police say—and what then?"

"No one can send us back unless it is God's will we should go: father said He is stronger than men."

"But how will God hinder it?"

“That I cannot tell. He has promised to help those who call upon Him, and what He promises He is sure to do; mother taught us that.”

All who were standing round the children were touched by the simple faith of this young boy, and the gentleman was silent for a moment, while a tear came into his eye. Then he said, “The Saviour’s words come home to me with fresh force, ‘Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.’”

The children were then put under the housekeeper’s charge, who gave them a good supper, of which they were much in need. The pretty and comfortable beds were not less welcome, where they slept soundly till long after the sun had risen.

At this house our little friends remained till matters were arranged with their uncle. Letters were dispatched telling him they had been found. He was very unwilling to give them up; but at last all obstacles were removed, and their grandfather’s address having been procured, they were in due time sent to him under charge of a faithful servant.

No doubt the old man gave them a hearty welcome. We can tell you little farther about them, but we know they helped to cheer his old age. They did what they could to lighten his cares; Nanny learnt to play skilfully on the harp, so that in course of time, when her grandfather’s eyesight failed, she was able to fill his place. When the young people were out at any time on errands or work, and their grandfather was left alone, the trusty Pomeranian they had named “Caesar” remained in the house as his companion; and when the old man became feeble, and had to rest often in bed, the faithful creature slept at his feet, keeping kindly watch over his aged master.

Nor must I forget to add that twice every year, at Christmas and Easter, one of the servants was sent from the castle (though it was a long way distant) with a large basket of provisions. With what delight, you may imagine, the hamper was opened and the contents, one by one, taken out! In autumn, too, when the fruit was ripe, some grapes and peaches occasionally found their way to the humble cottage-home.

I think I cannot better conclude this story than by telling you that when the good old man was dying, Nanny was found with her harp at his bedside, playing one of the Tyrolese hymns about “the glories of Heaven.” The old man listened in rapture, with his hands clasped, till he entered its Golden Gates.—*Translated from the German.*

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The End.

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