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Title: Pappina, the Little Wanderer: A Story of Southern Italy

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Release date: May 1, 2014 [EBook #45556]

Language: English

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Pappina Pierno

PAPPINA
THE LITTLE WANDERER

A STORY OF SOUTHERN ITALY

BY
KATHERINE WALLACE DAVIS
Author of "Cradle Songs of All Nations," Etc.

A. FLANAGAN COMPANY
CHICAGO

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CHAPTER I

Pappina Pierno

It was away up in that part of Naples called San Lucia, where clothes seem forever hanging out to dry, that Pappina lived with the rest of the Pierno family, a tribe too large to enumerate.

Pappina was only seven years of age, but she was different from every other child living in dingy, dirty San Lucia. Few even of the grown people of the neighborhood cared to be clean, and as for their hair—why, they paid no attention to that, but let it go as it found itself. But Pappina took delight in combing her silky black hair and in washing her beautiful face and dimpled hands.

This was a wonder to all who lived near.

"The one who washes! *Per bacco* [Great heavens]!" they said when they saw her. But their amazement did not disturb Pappina. She went about her play in the sordid old tenement–court like a sunbeam astray.

Doing the family washing in Italy

Only when she sang and danced and the people gathered around her did she seem to take much notice of her neighbors.

"Such a voice in one so small! It is from the angels!" the women would say, as, charmed by her singing and her grace, they would toss her *un soldo* (a half–penny).

The other children would run with every *soldo* to buy macaroni, for the children were always hungry in San Lucia, where even *soldi* are scarce; but Pappina, a true little Neapolitan, loved dress and display. She spent her money for trinkets with which to adorn her bewitching, graceful self.

Pappina's love of beauty sprang from her eager little heart like a sweet flower from a patch of rich earth on a rocky hillside.

It grew with very little nourishment from without, for in all her seven years she had hardly been out of sight of the hivelike tenement where her hard–working father himself had been born. On rare days she was taken to a near–by street where for generations the women of the neighborhood had gone to do their family washing at a free fountain; and of course, as all little girls in Italy do, she went to a gray old church regularly with her mother. Down the narrow street, past the mean shops, to church was the longest journey out into the world the bright–eyed little maiden had ever taken.

Her brothers, however, were great travelers. Sometimes at night they came home with tales of the wonderful foreigners who thronged the Toledo, of the splendid shops where all the treasures of the earth were gathered—jewels that sparkled like the sun; flowers that smelled like a breath of heaven; rich and gay clothes! Pappina sat with shining eyes and listened to these amazing tales until her heart was full of a longing to go and see for herself the wonders described.

On some mornings after drinking in news of the unknown world to which her brothers journeyed every day, Pappina would follow them down the stairs, through the court, out upon the cobble–stoned street, with outstretched hands, crying:

"Take me, Filippo, Vittorio!"

"*Non oggi, sorella* [Not to–day, sister]," they laughed as they dodged between the people in the street.

Sometimes she would follow her brothers for some distance, only to be taken back into the courtyard of the tenement when they discovered her running after them. Pappina, who had a temper of her own, returned more often in anger than in tears.

One day a great resolve came to her as she stood watching them go away.

In San Lucia

"I've staved at home long enough," she said to herself. "They won't take me, but I'm going; I'm surely going."

Pappina spent all the morning in adorning herself for the journey. Time and again her mother called to her:

"Pappina, *bambina* [baby], what are you doing?"

But Pappina, standing before a bit of looking–glass, never heard the call, she was so busy pinning on a bit of lace or a ribbon, or combing and curling her tresses.

Soon after noon a grotesque little figure darted out of the tenement and down the street. Without looking to right or left it ran swiftly for a short distance, and then it stopped and looked back to see if any one were following. Then Pappina—for it was she—moved on, bound for the Toledo.

She held her head up proudly, and all the bits of lace and ribbon that she had fastened to her faded little frock fluttered about her as she hurried on—toward the Toledo she thought, but, in truth, over the bridge that leads to the Marina or wharf at Castle dell'Ovo.

The place had no historic interest for her. Pappina knew nothing of history; she was just a poor little Neapolitan girl. Only foreign tourists visited the oval–shaped castle because it was the place where Cicero met Brutus bloody–handed from the murder of Cæsar; where kings and queens had dwelt and been imprisoned. She saw only the crowds of people—the divine people who made the wonderland her brothers told about.

Some of the people were waving their arms toward the water and laughing. Pappina approached the edge of the wharf, that she might see everything that was going on.

Well–dressed men were throwing money into the waves.

"What wealth they must have!" exclaimed Pappina to herself. "Such queer words they speak, too! These must be the foreigners Vittorio tells about!"

She drew still nearer and saw that the people were laughing at the way a mob of half–naked boys were diving for the *soldi* the foreigners threw into the water, bringing the coins up in their mouths.

"Oh, the foreigners are not crazy; they are only kind," she thought.

She turned at a burst of laughter behind her, and there were more foreigners throwing *soldi* to more boys who were standing on their heads, turning hand–springs, and crying: "*Date* [give] *un soldo*."

Pappina was astonished. There were blond–haired Englishmen, blue–eyed Germans, black–whiskered Russians, generous Americans; and such wonderful ladies everywhere!

"Where do all the *soldi* come from?" she murmured as she stood gazing about her in amazement.

Suddenly a group of light–hearted tourists, bent on discovering all the treasures of a foreign land, swept around Pappina.

"What a quaint little beauty!" one lady exclaimed. "See how she has decked herself out in all her finery! What cherubic eyes!"

Pappina clasped her hands to her breast and shrank back from the gaze of the eyes fastened upon her. She was such a little girl, and never before had she been so far away from home; no wonder the sudden attention of all these finely dressed ladies and gentlemen frightened her.

"I must go home," she exclaimed; "I must run home and tell them all about it. Oh, what a grand time I've had!" She laughed aloud as she broke through the crowd and darted away.

On ran Pappina until she spied the statues of La Villa, and then, although the beauty of the park was before her eyes, she was frightened. Where was her home—her dear, dear home? where were her brothers and sisters? Pappina was lost.

Suddenly her lips stopped quivering: forgotten were her home and her fright. Her little feet paused.

A band! Wonder of wonders! For the first time in her life Pappina heard the whole air aquiver. Streams of sweet sound swept around her. Her whole body tingled, down to her feet. She began to dance with the unconsciousness of a music–mad little child. Tapping her toes on the pavement, gliding and swaying to and fro with the music, keeping time with her arms, dancing with truly wonderful grace, she had drawn a large group of people about her by the time the waltz had ceased.

"Bravo! Bravo!" the people cried as they showered *soldi* upon the surprised little girl.

She drew back, frightened.

"Yours, all yours!" called some voices.

She began picking up the coins as she laughed her thanks. Her chubby little hands were soon so full that she dropped some *soldi* every time she picked up one. She gave a perplexed sigh, then suddenly made a purse of her apron and filled it with the jingling money. How the people laughed at her cleverness!

Rich little Pappina! The luxuries of the world—her world—were now within her reach. What

should she buy? For a moment her bright eyes rested on the strings of macaroni some boys near her were eating. She felt a sudden hunger, but she had wanted a coral necklace too long to spend her money for the mere pleasure of eating, so she started off to hunt for a shop filled with jewels such as Filippo had often told about.

Eating macaroni

Pappina had not gone a hundred feet when she spied Filippo himself, sitting with a group of twinkling–eyed, barefooted boys of his age, playing "Mora," the Italians' favorite game of chance. The boys—shouting, disputing, quarreling, eager to win—were all so intent on the game that not one of them noticed Pappina's approach. Slipping up behind her brother, she clasped one hand over his eyes, asking: "*Chi e* [Who is it]?" and laughing merrily when she saw his surprise.

Filippo turned sharply toward her and gruffly demanded: "What are you doing here?" In her joy she ignored both his anger and his question. With dancing eyes she jingled her coins.

"See," she cried, "I've been dancing. Come quickly, Filippo; I want a coral necklace; take me where I can buy one."

"Sit down, you simpleton," he growled.

Words proved useless. Pappina must wait, so she sat down close beside Filippo, watching the game patiently for some time. Tired of this, she opened her apron, trying to count her wealth.

Luck certainly was against Filippo. His day's profits from the sale of cigarettes were slowly but surely dwindling away. To lose his earnings usually meant to remain away from home all night, for to return without money brought worse hardships than sleeping supperless on the street. Alas, to–day there was no way out of it! He must make good his losses. Great beads of perspiration stood on his brow as he recklessly risked his last *soldo*. Lost! Muttering an oath, he turned toward Pappina, who still sat at his elbow absorbed in her efforts to count her *soldi*.

Playing mora

At another time Filippo would have laughed at his favorite sister as she counted softly to herself, "One, two, six, four," but to–day he heard nothing, saw nothing but her tempting *soldi*. He reached into her apron for funds with which to make another play. Pappina looked up, surprised, but said nothing.

The second time she jumped quickly to her feet, her eyes and cheeks aflame. The third time she gave him a vigorous slap.

"Let my money alone! You're a mean, horrid boy!"

The boys laughed loudly, then took up the game, shouting as before, "*Uno*, *quattro*, *tre* [One, four, three]," etc. So boisterous were they that Pappina began to cry. The necklace was forgotten.

"I'm so hungry, Filippo, and I'm tired, too. Take me home." He made no move. "Don't you hear me? I want to go home at once, Filippo," and she stamped her little foot imperiously.

The game thus interrupted, the boys arose and moved on.

Filippo shook Pappina as he demanded: "What business have you down here bothering me. I'd like to know! You'd better stay home after this."

Pappina paid no attention to his anger.

"Oh, Filippo," she cried, "it's lots of fun to come down here to the Toledo. I'm coming every day."

"'Tain't the Toledo," said Filippo, still out of sorts.

"'Tis, too! I know it is, for I saw all the fine people in carriages. Didn't the foreigners throw *soldi* at me?"

"Don't try to tell me. I tell you, 'tain't the Toledo."

"Then take me there," pleaded Pappina, "I won't go home till—"

She stopped at a burst of applause.

"What is it, Filippo?" she asked, eyeing a crowd of people they had reached.

"Come along; it's only the Punchinellos."

"The Punchinellos? What's that?"

"Were you born yesterday? Live in Naples and don't know the Punchinellos?"

Filippo stopped to laugh at so absurd an idea, for Punchinellos are as common in Italy as hand–organs in America.

Taking advantage of his laughter, Pappina pulled Filippo into the crowd.

"Filippo, I cannot see," she cried.

She could hear voices carrying on a conversation, but as for seeing, she was lost in a wilderness of legs. Dragging her unwilling brother by the arm, elbowing her way through the crowd, she took her place directly in front of the Punchinellos.

The first part of the puppet performance was just ended. Then came the most popular of all puppet plays, in which a splendid puppet fully ten inches high, with fixed, staring expression, began good–naturedly to deceive the smaller puppets.

As the first simple–minded puppet gave his wealth to the arch deceiver, Pappina cried out:

"Don't give it to him! Don't, I say! He is bad."

The crowd roared. Filippo pinched her.

"Shut up, you baby!" he whispered. "They're only puppets."

Pappina turned her flashing eyes for a moment toward Filippo, who expected his saucy sister to give his hair a vigorous pull, but she was too interested in the play to stop now even for this satisfaction.

Several times Filippo had to hold her by the arm, to prevent her from running to the rescue of the abused puppets. He was ashamed of her ignorance. He wanted her to go home, but she refused to move, and he knew her willfulness too well to insist.

The play continued. A puppet who refused to give up his money was beaten on the back till dead.

"Stop him! Stop him!" screamed Pappina in her excitement.

Filippo placed his hand over Pappina's mouth.

"Let her alone!" cried several persons in the crowd, so he stopped trying to repress her and joined in the merriment over her enthusiasm.

The play ends with the murder of the villain, an event which never fails to bring forth the laughter and applause of the audience, with shouts of "Hurrah! Hurrah!" This time, however, the crowd failed to show its approval in a more substantial way.

The hat was passed. Nothing was given.

The owner of the Punchinellos stood expectantly awaiting the returns. Timidly the pale woman took him the empty hat. He scowled. Turning toward the dispersing crowd, he cried:

"What! You give me no money? Sons of dogs, I play no more to you"—this being a rebuke all Punchinello owners use.

No one seemed to care except Pappina and the woman. The latter shrank back from the showman's wrath.

The rowdies and hoodlums, observing his disappointment, remained. They were waiting to be called "figure of a pig," which to an Italian is a deadly insult and means trouble. They were hoping, longing for a fight, and it would have come but for Pappina.

She saw the brown–haired woman trembling at the rage of the disappointed man, and down she dug into her apron and passed a handful of *soldi* to the poor creature, who smiled her thanks.

Pappina sealed her fate by this act of generosity, for her beauty and grace attracted the swarthy Punchinello man's notice.

As Filippo led Pappina away, the owner of the puppet show muttered something to the pale–faced woman who had passed the hat, and thrusting the little stage toward her, darted off after the homeward–bound children.

Down the street they went, hunter and hunted, through the crowds, up highways and down byways, to the humble home in San Lucia.

"I have brought home the little runaway She was—" A knock at the door interrupted Filippo's speech.

All the Pierno family were within the poor home. They looked at one another and grew still. Pietro, the father, went to the door and opened it.

"It's the Punchinello man!" exclaimed Filippo.

"I am Guiseppe Capasso, signor," said the dark–browed man, bowing and stepping inside the doorway, "and if you are the father of yonder little girl I have business with you."

The children whispered together and drew away from Pappina, who ran to her mother.

Guiseppe Capasso began at once to bargain for the little girl.

In spite of his poverty and his desire for money, Pietro was loath to part with his child. He sat with bowed head, looking neither to right nor to left, apparently uninterested.

Guiseppe leaned forward and touched Pietro on the shoulder.

"Come, come," he said, "can you keep so beautiful a child a prisoner in this dingy San Lucia when—"

"*Vieni, bambina* [come, baby]," Pietro interrupted him, holding out his arms to Pappina. She ran to him and climbed upon his knee.

"*Si* [yes], signor," Pietro began, as he took one of Pappina's curls in his hand, "*bella, bella* [Beautiful, beautiful], but she has a temper of her own at times. She ain't always sweet and gentle as she looks; are you, *bambina?* You, signor, don't know her or her ways. She ain't like any of the others. We love her best of all. No, signor, we can't give up Pappina." He looked at the child with love and pride.

Then Guiseppe with his glib tongue started all over again. He was ready with many arguments why it would be best for Pietro to hire Pappina to him.

"I will be good to her and educate her. Marta, my wife, and I will take her traveling over Italy like the daughter of a lord."

Still Pietro shook his head.

"Such advantages—can you refuse them? And the money—" Guiseppe leaned toward Pietro, slyly watching him as he repeated slowly, "and—the—money—".

Pietro raised his head a trifle, looking into the cunning eyes of the other man.

"Think how much it will do to feed and clothe the others," Guiseppe urged. "I pay you money for the right to give your child splendid advantages. *Per bacco!* What more do you ask?"

Pietro began to waver, and Guiseppe, seeing this, continued his arguments.

It was a case of a shrewd man bargaining with a poor, ignorant one. Guiseppe—smiling, shrugging his shoulders—met every objection, and at last Pietro consented to let him take Pappina for a year.

"Well, get the child ready," said Guiseppe, changing his tone from coaxing to command as soon as the bargain was closed and the money paid.

"But I don't want to go," Pappina cried, running to her mother in whose apron she fairly buried her frightened little self.

"*Su, su* [Come, come]!" exclaimed Guiseppe. "There's many would be glad of your chance."

"Oh, signor," said Elisa, throwing her arm about her child, "let us have her one night more! She is tired. One night more! I will send her to you with Filippo in the morning."

Guiseppe shook his head.

"The bargain's closed. Quick, get her clothes, we must be off."

"She is ready as she stands," said Pietro, pointing to Pappina, who stood holding tightly to her mother.

"What, no clothes!" cried Guiseppe harshly.

Elisa looked angrily at him.

Guiseppe, anxious to get away, went to Pappina and rested his hand on her head with a show of tenderness.

"Come, little one, come," he said, "and to–morrow you shall buy a splendid dress, bright and new."

Pappina was interested.

"Will you take me to the Toledo, where all the lords and ladies are?" she asked.

"*Si, si, carina* [yes, yes, little dear]," said Guiseppe guilefully.

"Go with him, *bambina*. It is best," said Pietro, trying to disguise his fears and hide his sorrow.

Pappina, taught always to obey her parents, hesitated no longer.

"I'm ready," she said, leaving her mother's side.

There were no preparations to make for the child's departure, no clothes to fold and pack. All she owned she was wearing. She had only to bid adieu to the loved ones before starting out with Guiseppe Capasso into the street, into a new life.

Elisa, wringing her hands and with tears raining down her cheeks, watched her most beautiful child disappear into the dusk. Her grief would have been wilder still had she known the truth—for Pappina was leaving San Lucia forever.

> On thy dear head my hands I lay
> In solemn, fervent prayer,
> Praying that God may keep thee
> Thus pure and sweet and fair.
>
> —*Heine.*

CHAPTER II

The Conquest of Guiseppe

When Pappina awoke the next morning, the little east room where she lay was flooded with sunshine. She looked about her wonderingly.

"Where am I? Is this a dream?" she asked herself softly.

For a few moments she lay with half–closed, sleepy eyes looking in the golden light at the white curtains draped at the window.

"Pretty, pretty," she murmured. Her little hand took up the coverlet. It was white! She turned over quickly: there was a white covering on her pillow! Surely this was not home! She sat up, rubbing her eyes, and there was brown–haired Marta smiling at her from the other side of the room.

Marta was an Englishwoman. While traveling through Italy as maid to the Countess Filota, she had met and fallen in love with the handsome professional story–teller, Guiseppe Capasso. After their marriage he had turned his stock of stories to account by setting up as a puppet showman.

Marta knew how to take care of a child. Her English face shone with pleasure as she washed Pappina, combed her hair, and dressed her, clean and rested, for breakfast.

This home was poor. The furnishings were little better than those of Pappina's own, but it was clean. Pappina looked about the room.

"I like it," she said.

She had just finished the simple breakfast Marta served when Guiseppe appeared, frowning, in the doorway.

The gladness went out of Marta's eyes as though a cloud had passed before the sun.

Pappina noticed his scowl and was half frightened for a moment. She clung close to Marta, waiting for Guiseppe to speak.

From under his heavy, shaggy eyebrows he stood silently studying the face of the black–eyed child. Pappina flushed under his scrutiny. She wanted to cry, but she was not lacking in spirit and she did not mean to let him know that he frightened her.

"Signor, why don't you say good–morning to Pappina?" she asked. "I shan't like you if you look so cross."

Guiseppe was surprised at the speech and pleased at her courage. Most children ran away from him when he scowled and looked fiercely at them, as he knew he had looked at Pappina. To Maria's astonishment he burst into a hearty laugh.

"I'm good and I'm cross, *bambina*. I'm clouds and I'm sunshine. Sometimes I'll be kind. Sometimes, maybe, I'll beat you."

"No, you won't," retorted Pappina, darting from Marta's side. "Oh, no, signor! If you should dare, I'd run away from you."

Guiseppe believed her when he saw her small clenched fists and the fire of indignation in her eyes. He knew she meant what she said.

"*Hola*, the sauce box! I'll break her in! I'll curb her spirit by degrees," he told himself, smiling as though he enjoyed the prospect. Bowing with great courtliness, he said aloud: "Ah, a very beautiful morning to you, Madamigella Pappina."

Pappina stood still a moment, watching him; then, with a shrug of her shoulders, she replied

"*Ebbene* [Well]! But you have not told me, signor—"

"Call me, Guiseppe," the man interrupted. "We're just old Guiseppe and Marta to every one."

"Well, then, old Guiseppe—"

"Guiseppe, without the old, if you please, signorina." He bowed mockingly, but he smiled as though the child's independence and fearlessness had charmed his surliness away.

"Signor Guiseppe, you have not told me at what time you will take me to the Toledo. I want the new dress you promised to buy me to–day."

Marta held her breath. Would Guiseppe, who had led her such a hard life for years, permit this child to look boldly into his face and command him to do her bidding? Would he suddenly burst into a rage and rain blows upon her?

To her relief she saw a half–concealed smile on his lips as he took from his pocket a handful of money. He counted out a few pieces and laid them on the table.

"Marta, buy the minx stuff for a dress—and shoes, too, I suppose. We can't have her toes sticking out as they are now," he said.

"And stockings?" asked Marta with a courage she could never have summoned had she been asking for money for herself.

"She'll do without them," Guiseppe replied grimly. "If her feet are covered she'll get along. I'll go alone with the Punchinellos this morning. This afternoon I'll keep my promise and take the child to the Toledo, although why she's so crazy to go there is more than I know."

Taking up his Punchinello box, he left the room.

Pappina danced about, radiantly happy over the prospect of a new frock.

"You'll let me go with you, won't you, Marta? I want so to go, and if there's money enough. Marta—dear, good Marta—may I have some of that stuff that smells like flowers? I smelt it on those foreign ladies when they took out their handkerchiefs at the Marina."

"There'll be only enough for the dress and the shoes to–day, *carina*." Marta was sorry to deny the child.

Pappina took the woman's hand.

"*Vieni*, Marta. We must hurry or everything will be sold to the foreigners. They have so much money they even throw it away. My dress must be red, and red is so beautiful! If we don't hurry. I'm sure they'll have it all. Please, Marta, aren't you ready?"

Marta had not the heart to keep the eager child waiting, and they started at once.

It was not they

Pappina walked as though on air, by Marta's side, looking at everything, prattling in her inimitable way. Marta was beginning to feel that even for herself life still held some charm.

The child had not once thought of home. She had been too absorbed in the newness of everything. Suddenly she caught sight of two ragged boys asleep on the ground, with their empty baskets over their faces. She stopped beside them.

"Marta, wait!" she commanded. "Maybe it's Vittorio or Filippo. Sometimes they don't come home at night. I must see if it is my brothers."

A passer–by, hearing her cry, uncovered the boys' heads. Eagerly Pappina peered into their faces. It was not they. She burst into tears.

"*Padre—madre* [Father—mother]!—I want to see them all! Take me home," she cried.

"First the pretty red dress, *carina*." Shrewd Marta! She knew perhaps the one thing to make the child forget.

The tears were dried, and hand in hand they hurried to a shop. Pappina wanted everything she saw in the store that was bright and pretty.

"Mayn't I have that shawl for my head? Please, Marta, buy it for me!"

"No, *carina*—just the dress and shoes to–day. There is money only for them."

Pappina's request was hardly made before she had forgotten it because of the wonders she beheld in the great store—show–cases filled with ribbons of all the colors and tints of the rainbow; cases of spools of silk; bright–colored fashion plates, and a dazzling array of fabrics in prints, cheesecloth, merinos, and silks. With exclamations of delight the child danced about like a butterfly from one thing to another, smiling Marta following her.

When they started from the shop, Pappina refused to let Marta carry either the shoes or the dressgoods. She hugged them close in her arms, every other minute peeping through the tear she had made in the wrapping–paper.

"*Che bella, Marta, che bella* [How beautiful, Marta, how beautiful]!" she exclaimed softly, again and again.

"Are we going to make the dress right away, the minute we get home, Marta?"

"*Si, si, carina.*"

"You will let me help?"

"Can you sew, *carina?*"

"My sister Angela knit when she was only four, and I can sew, I'm sure I can. You'll let me, won't you, Marta?—so it will be done before I go with Signor Guiseppe?"

"You shall wear it this afternoon, *carina*."

"He'll be sure to like the color of the dress. He can't help it, can he? Shan't I be grand, Marta, when I have on my splendid new dress and shoes!"

Marta, looking at the eager little upturned face, forgot she had ever had a sorrow or a hardship.

It did not take long to sew up the simple little frock, but it would certainly have been finished quite an hour before had not Pappina insisted upon sewing this and that. Marta, good soul, in her keen enjoyment of the child's pleasure, considered it no trouble to stop sewing and hold up the little dress to be admired, to try it on some six or seven times, and while Pappina was absorbed in her new shoes, secretly to take out the big stitches put in by this wild little child who would help.

At noon Guiseppe came home, out of sorts and cross. His coming was like a shadow on the happiness that Marta and Pappina felt.

"No money," he growled as he rattled the Punchinellos into a corner. "I might as well have stayed at home. I'm sick of playing to such dogs." Pappina and Marta were silent. "Is it done?" he asked, noticing the red dress in Marta's hands.

"Yes."

"I'll try what youth and beauty will do. I'll take her to the Toledo with the Punchinellos. Can you sing, girl?" he asked turning his glowering eyes on Pappina.

"*Si*, signor."

"Get up and give us a song; dance if you can. I feed and clothe no one who can't earn what I give."

He waited a moment, watching Pappina's flashing eyes. She made no move to obey him, but, looking at Marta who sat with downcast lids, she followed her example of silence. In all the poverty of her home no such crossness had ever been shown Pappina, and she was not quick to submit to tyranny.

"Why don't you do as I tell you, girl?" exclaimed Guiseppe threateningly.

"Because, Signor Guiseppe, I couldn't sing for you when you are so cross and mean. When we go this afternoon to the Toledo, if you're good to me, I will sing and dance, and they'll give me money, lots of it."

"*Per bacco!* The minx has courage!" Guiseppe muttered, then added gruffly: "Dress, then, at once. We'll go and see what stuff you're made of."

It was a small matter to put on the new shoes and don the simple little frock. As Pappina was putting on the bright dress she could hardly stand still. It was so fine to her that she could scarcely believe it was her own.

Suddenly remembering who had given her the money with which to buy the gorgeous garment, she ran to Guiseppe. Climbing upon his knee, she threw her arms about his neck.

"Oh, Signor Guiseppe," she exclaimed, all her anger forgotten, "look at me, quickly! I am Pappina Pierno. You wouldn't know it, but I am really and truly the same little girl. Do I look well? Are you proud of me? Do you like my red dress? Will every one know it is new—and my shoes, too?"

She plied him with a hundred questions all at once, it seemed to Guiseppe, who had never before had a child in his home. He did not even like children, and yet he felt a delight in having this impetuous little beauty dash at him and in her excitement nearly knock him off his chair.

"*Bella bambina!*" he exclaimed involuntarily, while good Marta smiled at the sight.

All was now in readiness. Guiseppe, Marta and Pappina, with the Punchinellos, were off.

For years Guiseppe and Maria had not walked side by side. Guiseppe had a way of going ahead, letting Marta follow like a faithful dog after his master. To–day, as usual, Guiseppe took the lead, striding through the network of lanes and streets certain that Marta with Pappina was close at his heels. But everything was so new to Pappina that progress was slow.

Every minute she would beg Marta to stop while she feasted her eyes on the wonders of the shop windows; and Marta was torn between her desire to please the child, who had already brought so much pleasure into her hard life, and her desire to avoid angering Guiseppe.

"Oh, Marta, can't you wait just a minute to see these pretty things?" Pappina would exclaim, stopping at a jeweler's.

"Not to–day, *carina*—another day. Now we must hurry."

"But just to see these pictures—"

"No, *carina*, look! Guiseppe is far ahead. It is there at the bend of the street by that statue that he always stops when he plays on the Toledo."

At the mention of the Toledo, Pappina was only too ready to hurry along with Marta. So, half running, they reached Guiseppe's side just as he set up the Punchinellos.

Pappina, looking with disappointment up and down the street, asked: "Marta, is this the Toledo?"

"Yes."

"Then where are all the grand people in their fine carriages?"

"The grand people have nearly all gone away from Naples, away to the coast, where it is cool," Marta replied.

The crowd was now considered large enough to warrant a performance of the show.

Pappina was the most interested of the spectators. When she had seen the show with Filippo she had been so absorbed in the puppets' actions that she had not noticed it was Guiseppe who moved them, spoke for them with a change of voice, and lived through all their passions for them. To–day, standing close to him, she understood. She looked wonderingly, first at him, then at the puppets, and knowing that it was all make–believe, she did not cry out against the villain's actions.

When the play was finished, both Pappina and Marta passed through the crowd to collect the pay for the performance, but there were only a few *soldi* from the sprinkling of soldiers—nothing more.

Guiseppe was on the point of bursting out in angry abuse when he bethought himself.

"Try your luck, girl," he said roughly to Pappina. "Sing, dance, give us a gay one."

Pappina hesitated, then she looked at her new dress and shoes, took up her tambourine, and began to sing.

The liquid notes poured forth as from the throat of a nightingale. She forgot the people and where she was, forgot everything but her song. Her voice rang out so clear and pure that even the lazy, loafing boys threw away their cigarettes and joined the crowd that was holding its breath to catch the silvery sweetness of the tiny singer's song.

The last notes were unheard, so loud were the cheers they gave her.

Guiseppe, the money–lover, was chuckling with pleasure and anticipation.

"Pass your tambourine," he commanded.

The ragged boys dived into their pockets to see if there was even *un soldo* to give. Young black–haired, bareheaded women found a small coin or two. Pale–faced Neapolitan loafers with the drapery of their cloaks thrown over their shoulders, having nothing to offer but shouts of approval, slunk away before the tambourine reached them. Old women all rags and fangs, weak little girls supporting big babies, eager to hear another song, tried in vain to find something for the singer.

What little there was in the tambourine Guiseppe soon had in his pocket.

"The girl's too good for such beggars," he said as he took up the Punchinellos and started down the street.

Pappina, pleased with his praise, walked proudly beside him, prattling, humming, laughing, pointing here and there, enthusiastic over every new thing she saw.

"Guiseppe, where are we going now?" she inquired.

It was a question Marta had longed to ask, but had not dared. The change in Guiseppe was too recent for Marta to believe he would continue good–tempered long.

Certainly since hearing Pappina sing, Guiseppe had seemed in good spirits. The visions of much money cheered him so that he was gracious even to Marta.

"We are going now to Porta Capuana, songstress," he laughingly replied. Noticing Marta's surprised look, he added kindly to her: "I've never done well there myself, but if all those others can make a living there I guess Pappina can draw the money with her voice."

Porta Capuana is a quarter of Naples where street singers congregate. Here, also, one may find public readers who follow in the footsteps of ancient poets like Homer and tell their stories to the public in person instead of through the cold type of the printer.

Pappina, proud of Guiseppe's praise, smiled happily into his face and walked close by his side, in her childish way holding with one hand a corner of his coat.

The almost deafening shouts of the quack doctors trying to sell their cure–alls, and stopping occasionally to pull teeth, frightened Pappina. She clung so tightly to Guiseppe's coat that he turned to look at her. Her bright, happy expression had changed to one of fear. Guiseppe took hold of her trembling hand, reassured her, and leading her to a place where the quacks and their victims were out of sight, he said in the kindest tone he had ever used:

"*Canta* [Sing], *bambina*."

Away from the din, with loving Marta on one side, protecting Guiseppe on the other, Pappina quickly forgot her fear. She sang and danced; money was given freely. She was happy. She and Guiseppe were the best of friends, and they were having a glorious time.

Such noise and such bustle! Such scenes and such macaroni!

Guiseppe apparently was really enjoying Pappina's happiness. He looked pleased when she smiled into his face, patted his sleeve, pulled his coat or squeezed his big hand, always willing to sing and do his bidding.

It was a good day for them all. It passed only too quickly for Pappina, who did not wish to go home, and begged to stay to see the lights and hear the band. She gave in sweetly when she was refused, however, and was taken home and put to bed, too tired after the exciting day to think once of the loved ones in San Lucia.

CHAPTER III

Feste Day in Naples

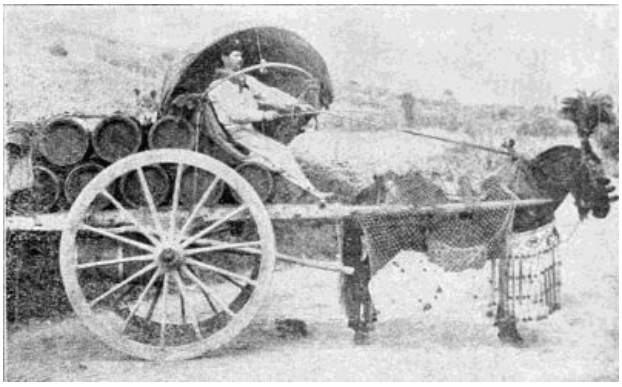
Italy, the land of sunshine! Its hills and valleys, churches and palaces are famous for their historic treasures. But when the sightseers arrive to view this birthplace of history they are annoyed on every hand by hoards of *lazzaroni* (beggars). Every one seems hungry for money.

Now that Guiseppe had possession of Pappina he felt himself in a fair way to appease his hunger, for, with all the poverty surrounding the splendid churches and palaces, the people of Italy are joyous and mirthloving, and give freely to those who amuse them.

For a couple of weeks after securing control of Pappina, Guiseppe reaped a harvest such as had never before been his fortune, while Pappina was having the very gayest time of her little life.

Every day she was quite as eager as Guiseppe to set forth, although they were in search of different things—Pappina coveting the smiles and applause of the lords and ladies who seemed to her like beings from another world, Guiseppe eager for gold.

Every morning they would start out for some new quarter of the city which was visited by tourists and held mysteries for Pappina. It meant money to have these foreigners admire the child. Every one stopped to listen to her. She was kept singing, dancing, here, there, and everywhere, it seemed to her. Many times she was willful, and would stubbornly refuse to obey Guiseppe.



A wine cart of Naples

"I'm tired of singing and dancing and being stared at," she would say, with a determined look on her little face that warned the man not to force her. "I've earned enough for to–day."

The child would always assert her independence when among people, and at a time quite impossible for Guiseppe to discipline her.

It is well that these two high–tempered people had Marta always with them. Often she was able to keep the peace when an outbreak threatened. Pappina loved her, and would listen to and obey her when no threats from Guiseppe could move her.

As the first Sunday in June drew near, preparations were begun for the Festival of the Constitution, the Italian Fourth of July; and to the nearness of this fete day Marta was indebted for many an opportunity to make the child forget Guiseppe when he showed an ugly temper.

Stores were draped with bunting. On all the principal streets arches were erected, and every man, woman, and child seemed to be preparing for it. Even Guiseppe made ready for the fete. Late one forenoon he took a sudden turn into the Corso Garibaldi and hurried down its broad walk at such a pace that even Pappina was almost breathless in trying to keep up with him.

"Where are you going now, Guiseppe?" she asked, seizing hold of him. "Is there a crowd some place, that you hurry so?"

Marta listened eagerly for a reply. It was a never–ending source of astonishment to her that Guiseppe would answer the child's questions without impatience; she, herself, rarely received a pleasant word from him.

"You see, *bambina*," the heavy–browed man graciously replied with a good–natured twinkle in his bright black eyes, "you are so fine since you have your red dress, old Guiseppe thinks he must get a new coat, and so we're on our way to Porta Nolana."

"But Marta bought my new dress over there in the shops, where there is everything in the world," exclaimed Pappina, waving her little hand over her shoulder.

"Ah, but I don't buy, I trade, little one. It's Rag Fair day."

"Rag Fair day," Pappina repeated, wrinkling her forehead. There were so many things to wonder about these days that she did not question him further, but trotted along by his side, until suddenly she found herself among a throng of chattering, bartering men and women, who were offering all kinds of garments for sale or exchange.

Guiseppe stopped and, handing the Punchinellos to Marta, stripped off his coat. Pappina stood with wide–open eyes and lips parted in amazement to see him offer his coat for a better one, with one franc—two—three—then five—and the exchange was made.

When at last Guiseppe donned his good coat, Pappina told him over and over again, to his

amusement: "Guiseppe, you look just lovely."

"You like my coat, *bambina?*" he said. "Then come along. It takes money to buy good coats and bright red dresses."

Taking Pappina's hand, he strolled buoyantly away from the noisy Rag Fair, toward the Observatory, beyond which some of the wealthy Neapolitans have their homes.

Up the hilly streets they climbed. Pappina, darting ahead on explorations, would stop at each corner as she came to it and wait for Guiseppe and Marta.

"Keep your eyes open for a likely house where they will pay for entertainment," urged Guiseppe, who was as much a stranger in this new quest for money as was Marta.

At the two or three places at which they stopped the voice of the little girl rose through the heated afternoon air, but only a few *soldi* tinkled on the pavement.

If Guiseppe was disappointed he did not show any signs of it. He smiled calmly upon Pappina.

"We'll save your voice and strength for to–morrow, *bambina*. Not another song to–day. Come along, Marta. Old Guiseppe's getting to be a kind master, eh, Pappina?"

His was a selfish kindness. He knew the morrow's fete would prove a harvest to him, and since no one gave to–day, he thought best to let Pappina rest for the fete day's strain.

When the bright, beautiful fete morning dawned, Guiseppe was early astir.

"Come, Marta! Up, little one!" he exclaimed. "The day can neither begin too soon nor last too long for me."

"Nor for me," declared Pappina.

First they, with every one else, must go to mass in the handsome church San Francesco di Paola.

The thunder of guns from the vessels of war and the harbor batteries frightened Pappina. She held Marta's hand tightly and sometimes in her fear even Guiseppe's, but when she saw the militia she forgot the noise.

"Oh, I like the soldiers," she cried happily. It was the first military parade she had ever seen, and she wanted to follow the marching troops down the street and lend her cheers to those of the crowd.

How grand the carriages were! How gay the people looked, tricked out in all the magnificence they could command! Pappina, looking at the surging mass of holiday–makers, asked: "Marta, is the whole world here to–day?"

Days before the fete Pappina had been taught to sing the Garibaldi. Guiseppe knew well the effect the song would have upon the people. For years he had sung it himself on fete day, but that was before he had his Punchinellos, before his voice had grown thin and cracked. Time and again he had scolded Marta because neither she nor the puppets could sing the Garibaldi.

Now he had a child with voice and beauty. As they paused at a crowded corner where he thought it would be well to have her sing, he looked at her with satisfaction. He had talked to her so much of the applause and *soldi* she would win that she could scarcely curb her impatience to begin. Like a high–bred, prancing horse eager to run, she stood with her gayly decorated tambourine ready, anxiously waiting for Guiseppe to bid her sing. When he said, "*Canta*," she needed no second bidding. Wildly she struck her tambourine. Her voice rang out:

"*Viva! Viva! Viva!* Garibaldi!"

Such a din of applause! She could scarcely hear her own voice, but loudly she continued: "*Viva! Viva!* Victor Emanuel!"

She need not pass her tambourine to–day. She need not even stop to pick up the *soldi* as they rained upon her. That was Marta and Guiseppe's pleasant task.

"Bravo! Bravo! Encore! Encore!" the crowd shouted, and Pappina sang the song over and over again.

As one throng left for new sights and amusements another took its place, and so the tambourine was filled again and again. Yet Guiseppe kept her singing and dancing, dancing and singing. Never, it seemed to Marta, would he be satisfied to let the child rest.

The woman noticed with anxiety and pain the bright, feverish spots burning on Pappina's cheeks, and the unusual brilliancy of her great black eyes. Several times she made bold to ask Guiseppe if she might not take the child home, but Guiseppe replied only with glances of contempt and indignation at her interference.

Even the buoyancy of youth must give way to fatigue after a time, and Pappina's little limbs began to ache. She sat down to rest.

"Get up, girl. We must be moving," said Guiseppe.

Pappina arose.

"Take me home, Guiseppe," she begged, "I'm so tired." The request was ignored.

"There's a crowd up the street; come," was all the man said.

Pappina's bright eyes spied an empty carriage on the thoroughfare. All her little life since she could remember, she had longed for a ride in a carriage; here was her first chance for one and she grasped it.

"I'm too tired to walk, Guiseppe," she said quietly. "I'm going home now, and I'm going to ride, for I've earned lots of money to–day."

Guiseppe took no notice of the remark.

"Come on, I say!" he growled. "Don't you see that crowd? Come!"

"Guiseppe, I'm going home, and I'm going to ride, for I've earned lots of money to–day."

Pappina repeated, stepping, as she spoke, into the carriage.

What was Guiseppe to do? They were still among a crowd of people who had poured *soldi* and *soldi*, even francs, into her tambourine. Should he attempt to discipline her and have a scene on this public, crowded thoroughfare? He looked savagely at Pappina seated in the carriage, her proud little head resting against the cushions like that of a princess. He could not doubt that she intended to ride. Should he humor her? He stood a moment in deep study. The people were smiling admiringly at the dainty child. Guiseppe knew their sympathy was with Pappina. He could not hide his anger.

"Confound her!" he muttered. "Get in, Marta," he commanded with an oath.

There is no knowing what, in his rage, Guiseppe would not have said and done had not Pappina fallen asleep almost immediately. It was poor Marta who was destined to feel the fury of his rage.

"She always takes advantage of me when I can't help myself," he began. "The upstart! Am I, Guiseppe, to give in to her, an imp raised in poverty and dirt?" He beat his hand on his breast. "Marta, I'll show her. I'll teach her who is master. I'll curb her temper. I'll conquer her or I'll die. Bah! Do you hear me? I say I'll conquer her or I'll die."

Marta certainly heard him and believed him as well. He had made her life a hard one, insisting upon having his own selfish way always. She was expected to know no wish that differed from his. No wonder he felt galled to find himself defied, forced to give in to a child who in years was scarcely more than a baby.

Marta was in constant fear that the little girl might awaken and that Guiseppe would be eager to fulfill his threat to show Pappina who was master. But Pappina slept on, even after the carriage had stopped in front of their home.

Marta took the tired little girl quickly and tenderly in her arms and put her to bed, her heart overflowing with a great motherly love as though Pappina were her very own. For a long time she sat by the child's side, to guard her from Guiseppe's anger. She could hear him in the adjoining room, pacing the floor like a lion in his cage. Then there was silence.

What now! Marta held her breath as she tiptoed to the door and peered through a crack to see what Guiseppe was doing. He had his money bag in his hand.

"Full! Full!" he exclaimed softly. He smiled grimly as he counted the coins. "*Diavolo!* she brings the money! Ten—twenty.—She's a gold mine, the vixen!—Thirty—forty.—I can afford to give in a little.—Fifty.—What spirit she has!—Sixty.—I could kill her at times, but—seventy–five—I'll be hanged if I don't like her!—Eighty.—Yes, I like her—temper and all."

CHAPTER IV

In the Valley of Pompeii

Marta was awake early the morning after the fete. She hurried to Pappina's cot and found the child ill. It was as she had feared: the excitement had proved too much for the little one. The wonder–child lay pale and listless. Her black eyes were drowsy.

Marta was bathing the feverish brow and hands when Guiseppe, returning from an errand, angrily asked why they were not ready to start on the day's rounds.

"Ready to start!" Marta cried. "Have you no eyes except for money? Look at her! Do you not see that it is impossible to keep the child always singing and dancing?"

Only for the sake of Pappina had Marta dared be so brave. Guiseppe was astonished. This was a new Marta to him. That his wife, who had so patiently borne with him for so long a time, should turn on him, was more than he was prepared for.

"*Basta, basta* [Enough, enough]!" he said, raising his hand to silence Marta. Then he glanced toward the cot. He could see how pale and still Pappina lay. "It's early yet. An hour in bed will put her right."

"An hour!" Marta exclaimed, darting up to him in her indignation at his heartlessness. "Do you wish to kill the hen that lays the golden eggs?"

"She laid many yesterday," he replied, taking out his money–bag. "They are all in here, francs and *soldi*, and there are many of them." He patted the bag affectionately, looked again at Pappina, and added: "I'll let her rest. It's quiet after the fete, and I can't lose much to–day."

"To–day! Guiseppe, she shall not leave the house till she is quite well. You know how high–strung and sensitive she is, like a golden lute that responds to the slightest touch of any breeze, no matter how mild and soft. You must let her rest. You must, Guiseppe." Marta had gone close to her husband and was looking earnestly and pleadingly into his face.

"I'll not break her down and lose her," Guiseppe replied. "She did well at the fete. After all, what will a few days matter?" He walked to the little cot and continued: "I know you, *bambina*, I know you. If you don't feel right you may as well stay at home, for you can't sing and you won't dance."

He turned with a shrug of his shoulders, picked up the Punchinello stage, and left the house.

Pappina dozed all through the long day, with Marta keeping close watch by her side.

Late that evening Guiseppe came in stealthily. He found his supper waiting him.

"All right again, Marta?" he questioned.

"A few days' rest is all she needs," Marta answered, thankful that he was not ill–natured, and pleased that he had inquired about the child.

For several days Guiseppe went out alone with the Punchinellos. He missed Pappina, and the money he earned was not worth the time and trouble it cost him to give the show.

"It's no use," he said to Marta one evening as he came in. "The foreigners have sought the cool resorts. The wealth of Naples is leaving also. It's along the coast they go to enjoy the fresh breezes of the Bay of Naples, and we may as well follow them and their money."

This announcement surprised Marta, for since her marriage she had never been away from Naples.

"You really mean we are going away?—away from Naples?—away from home?"

"What's the use of staying in Naples?" he growled. "It's money I want—money, I say. Old Parisotti goes down the coast every year. His old guitar isn't fit to listen to; neither can that girl of his sing. We have Pappina, and as soon as she's able we'll go."

Marta carried the news to Pappina, who was sitting up. She clapped her hands softly.

"Can we go soon, Marta?" she cried.

"As soon as you are well enough, *carina*. It is beautiful along the coast. You will like to be away from the crowded city—away, *carina*, where the birds sing, the flowers grow, the grass and trees are green, and the air is cool and fresh."

Before the end of the week Pappina came to breakfast and announced: "I'm ready to start, and I want to go at once."

All dimples and smiles, she went to Guiseppe and sat uninvited on his knee. Looking into his eyes, she asked:

"Guiseppe, are you angry with me?"

He was surprised and pleased. If there was a warm spot in Guiseppe's heart she had touched it. He took Pappina's face between his rough, broad hands.

"There, there, *carina*," he said, "Guiseppe's a bear—old and often crabbed. Just forget his faults and try to like him."

He pushed her almost roughly off his lap and began his morning repast. Guiseppe admitted to himself that he had missed the little elf while she was ill, more than he would like any one to know. He considered the feeling a weakness, and would not permit Pappina and Marta to see how glad, even happy he was to have the child well again.

"She must not know how angry my heart has been against her. She must not know how I have missed her, with her moods, her storms, her sunshine, and her prattle," he said to himself as he sat stolidly trying to conceal his pleasure.

Pappina, having little appetite, was soon away from the table, imitating the tarantella dancers, to the great amusement of both Marta and Guiseppe. Tiring of this, she ran first to Marta, whom she gave a big squeeze, then around the table to Guiseppe, about whose neck she put both arms.

"Guiseppe, dear Guiseppe," she cried, "I'm so glad we're going away! I'm tired of being shut up in the house. When shall we go? To–day, good Guiseppe?"

Guiseppe laid down his knife and fork. His face lighted up with pleasure as he took Pappina's two little hands caressingly in his.

"Marta!" he exclaimed, "do you hear what she calls me? 'Good Guiseppe!' *Per bacco*, I have never before been called good! Do you mean it, *bambina?*"

"I do, Guiseppe; truly I do!"

"Then, if I'm good, I'll see that my little one is quite strong before she is taken on a long, hard tramp, with plenty of singing and dancing wherever we meet people."

He kept his word. In spite of Pappina's impatience to be off, it was several days before he would consent to start.

As the wardrobe of the three consisted principally of the clothes on their backs, there was little to do but lock the door of their humble two–roomed home, take the Punchinellos, and start out of Naples, through the noisy, bustling east suburb.

Along the busy streets Guiseppe marched, as though walking for a wager—past various markets, with fish, vegetables, and carts of oranges standing outside; past houses where women sat in the sun mending fish–nets or spinning from distaffs; through crowds of unwashed, ragged children, beggars, carts, red–capped fishermen and sailors; on through the wild confusion of horses, donkeys, drivers, and people such as one sees nowhere in the world but in this part of Naples.

Guiseppe had promised himself to stop at the villas, but here he was going past villas and palaces, gardens and vineyards, down the country roads that lead to Vesuvius and Pompeii, without any apparent notice of anything they were passing. He looked neither to right nor left, but with bowed head walked mechanically on. Marta and Pappina followed close behind their stolid leader. No one spoke.

Just at the outskirts of the city, they passed the macaroni factories, where Pappina saw long strips and strings of macaroni hung out on poles in the street to dry. She gazed longingly at the food.

"I want some, Marta. Tell Guiseppe I want some macaroni," she said, but before Marta could reply, they turned a bend in the road and Pappina saw for the first time Vesuvius, puffing out great volumes of smoke against the clear blue sky. Visible as this mountain is from some parts of Naples, Pappina had not seen it before. The tall tenements of gloomy San Lucia, with lines upon lines of garments everlastingly hanging out to dry between the balconies or from poles thrust out, completely hide the volcano from the view of those living where the Piernos had their home.

"O—oh, Marta!" Pappina exclaimed, pausing abruptly. "Marta! Look! See! What is it?" she cried, pointing to attract Marta's attention.

Marta was hastening along to keep up with Guiseppe and hardly glanced at the smoke–crowned mountain, which was an old sight to her.

"What is it, Marta?" Pappina persisted as she caught up with the woman.

"Vesuvius, *carina*."

"Where does all the smoke come from? Where's the fire?"

Marta told Pappina all she knew about it:

"Travelers from all parts of the world come and climb the volcano to look down into the crater, the mouth from which the smoke comes. I went up once with Countess Filota. People melt coins in the lava—that's the melted rock that comes out with the smoke. Sometimes the guides boil eggs over the lava to show how hot it is."

"Marta, can't we go up? Weren't you afraid to look down into the mouth?"

"No, *carina*. They tell the story of an Englishman who went too close and fell in, but that was because of his own carelessness. There is no danger. Perhaps sometime we shall be able to go, so you can see for yourself."

On and on they marched, with the pillar of smoke ever before them. Pappina could not overcome the awe she felt at first sight of this great furnace of Nature.

The walk down the dusty road through Posilipo awakened memories in Marta's heart. She spoke, more to herself than to Pappina:

"How long it is since I came here with my dear Countess Filota! She and her friends spoke of Cicero and Virgil, their homes beneath this hillside. We turned and went—let me see, which way was it? It is so long ago I have almost forgotten. Oh! this way, to the left and we visited the tomb of Virgil; we—"

"Who were they, Marta?" Pappina interrupted her, "friends of your Countess Filota?"

Marta was too deep in her memories to be amused at the child's question.

"No, no, *carina*. They were great poets. I wish you might—" She left the sentence unfinished, for glancing toward Guiseppe, plodding ahead, she noticed something queer in his gait. She ran forward, calling: "Guiseppe! What's the matter, Guiseppe?"

Guiseppe turned at the call and stopped, facing them. As they drew near, Marta saw that he was breathing hard and that his face was drawn and white.

"I'm not well, Marta," he gasped as they reached him. "My legs and breath shouldn't give out like this. It won't do. I tell you. I'm not well."

He flung himself down on the ground. This was the first complaint of illness Marta had ever heard him make. She was alarmed, and she showed it. Guiseppe reassured her.

"We'll stop at the Valley of Pompeii. We'll go to the church Santa Maria dell Rosario [Saint Mary of the Rosary]. It will do us all good to pray. The blessed Virgin makes the blind see and the lame walk. She cured Genario's boy who had been sick two years. She'll make me well."

He crossed himself, and lay back, closing his eyes. Marta and Pappina sat watching the sick man. For some time he lay as though sleeping, then suddenly he sat up.

"Marta," he cried, "we need food. I can't move on to–night. Go, bring us something."

Marta hesitated a moment, wondering if it were best to leave him. He commanded her again to go for food.

"I'm faint," he said, "and the girl's tired and hungry—but she has grit; she don't whimper and snivel as any other child would do. Get something for us to eat. We'll stay here. Where are we, Marta? Do you know?"

"The town is called Resina," Marta replied, as she tried to make him comfortable before obeying his command. Before she started she bade Pappina watch over Guiseppe carefully while she was away, but there was nothing for the child to do but sit quiet and await Marta's return.

The woman was soon back with the food bought in the near–by village. Guiseppe only grunted when Marta sought to make him partake of the food. Little enough she had been able to buy with the few coins given her; but both Pappina and Marta were used to this. They took what they could get, and expected nothing more.

The three were soon asleep under the calm starlight and awoke only when the morning sun, peeping through the branches of the trees, shone brightly into their faces. After eating a little breakfast, they started down the road toward the Valley of Pompeii, with slow steps to accommodate the sick man. Undoubtedly Guiseppe felt himself very ill.

"Hasten, so that I can get to the Virgin of Santa Rosario before I die," he kept exclaiming, as they helped him along.

After many stops to rest Guiseppe, they arrived at the chateau of "La Favorita," with its fine park. As soon as she saw the great iron gateway Pappina darted away without a word. Guiseppe smiled as he watched her disappear and heard the rattle of her tambourine—always music in his ears because it meant to him the jingle of money as well as of bells.

La Favorita

Marta, looking up the avenue of fine trees that led to the chateau, saw a group of ladies and gentlemen, sitting on the lawn. Before them the little red–dressed figure was swaying in its dance, and she heard the sweet voice singing.

"Oh, Guiseppe," she exclaimed, "live, live, for we have her, the wonder–child! Rest while she sings and listen to her angel voice. It will bring you strength to reach the Holy Virgin's church, where you surely will be healed."

Guiseppe was glad to rest. Without a reply to Marta he sat down and listened to the strains of the song that floated to them.

"*Cara bambina!*" he murmured softly. His sickness seemed to be changing, softening him. His

eyes almost sparkled with pleasure when he saw Pappina running toward him.

"Guiseppe, they were splendid to me!" she cried. "A grand gentleman gave me this," showing a franc. "He told me to keep it myself, that it was all for me, but it's yours, Guiseppe. Oh, I can't bear to have you sick," said the child, smiling through her tears.

Guiseppe patted her little hand as he took the proffered coin.

The sight of money turned his thoughts to getting on, and soon they arrived as one little party of a hundred thousand yearly seekers of health at the gray old church of Santa Maria del Rosario.

"Shall I sing?" asked Pappina as soon as she saw the crowds.

"First we must pray," Marta answered, taking the child's hand.

As soon as they entered the broad portals of the church, Guiseppe dropped to his knees, and thus he crept, with many others who were especially seeking health, toward the altar, mumbling his prayers as he counted his beads. Reaching the altar, he flung himself down before the dull, dim image of the Virgin, praying for the blessing of health.

Pappina and Marta, after saying a short prayer, stopped for a few minutes to look at the medallions covering the walls, then followed other visitors to the place in the church where the offerings of the healed are exhibited—a motley collection of baby dresses, shawls, dolls, jewels, and other articles of every kind and description.

Pappina, after a time, grew tired of looking at this display, and begged Marta to go outside to wait for Guiseppe.

They sat down near the church and watched the crowds of pilgrims going in and coming out. For a long time there was silence.

"So long ago," murmured Marta.

"Yes," answered Pappina, "he's been praying hours, hasn't he?"

"I was not speaking of Guiseppe, Pappina, but of my life so long ago, when I was maid to the Countess Filota. We took this same trip, but we rode in carriages. We did not come to this church. We stopped at the ruins of Pompeii."

"Where are they, Marta?"

"There, *carina*. You can see them dimly in the distance," she said, pointing toward them, "perhaps half a mile from here. How I should like to see them again! I wish we had time to go."

The woman was silent. She seemed to be dreaming of by–gone days. Pappina waited for a time for Marta to speak, then she gently laid her hand on that of her friend, saying: "Go on Marta, tell me about them."

"You are such a child, *carina*. You wish to know about the ruins? Every one who visits Italy comes to Vesuvius and Pompeii—Vesuvius the mountain, and Pompeii the city that once waked and slept at the foot of the mountain. One day the sky grew dark, completely hidden by the volumes of smoke that rose like a huge pine tree from Vesuvius. The stones, lava and ashes entirely buried the city and the people, and now when men dig in the ruins they find—"

"I'm well, Marta! I'm well, Pappina! Praise the Santa Maria del Rosario! Come."

It was Guiseppe who was hurrying toward them. He led the way to a spot a short distance from the church. He set up the Punchinellos; the light of money hunger again burned in his eyes, and until the worshipers thinned out he kept playing the puppets at intervals between Pappina's songs and dances. In the good spirits due to the miracles performed in the healing, the healed gave generously to the showman.

"Come," he commanded Marta and the child late in the afternoon. "We must move on to Cava. To–morrow is fete day there and we must reach the place to–night."

Guiseppe was himself again.

He took no notice of Pappina's lagging footsteps, showed no appreciation of her thoughtfulness during his illness, being absorbed in visions of her tambourine full of coins on the morrow. He walked so rapidly that Marta and Pappina could hardly keep up with him.

Reaching Pagani, he stopped near the main road of the little hamlet.

"Sing," he commanded in an ugly tone.

Pappina was tired. Guiseppe had been so cross all the way from Pompeii that she did not care to please him.

"I won't!" she answered in quite as ugly a tone as the man had used to her.

"Won't sing, eh? No songs, no supper," he muttered, half tempted to shake her in his rage.

Pappina was even more hungry than tired, so she sang and danced, without any spirit, to the few people who gathered around them just a very tired, dusty little girl singing for her supper.

The smallness of the sum collected enraged Guiseppe, and as soon as the people left he began to upbraid her.

"You're a disgrace to me and yourself," he said. "I might as well have let my puppets dance. You did no better." With that he made his way to a little shop near by.

Pappina bit her lips.

"If I were not so hungry," she whispered to Marta, her eyes blazing as she gazed after Guiseppe, "I'd show him, but I'm so hungry!"

"Come on," growled the man as he emerged from the shop and gave them their share of the food he had purchased. "It's six miles to Cava, and we must get there to–night, so eat as you go. Come on, I say, and don't go to sleep as you walk, you two."

So, worn and footsore, they moved on toward Cava.

CHAPTER V

At Cava

Pappina was unaccustomed to long walks. She felt lame, her flesh was sore, and furthermore she could not forget Guiseppe's unkindness. It hurt her that he had forced her to sing and dance for her food, and then had scolded her for her lack of animation.

"He said I was no better than his puppets. I hate him!" she muttered to herself as she trudged along in the growing dusk. "That franc was mine; that fine gentleman gave it to me. I wish I hadn't given it to Guiseppe. It was mine. If any one gives me money again I'll keep it for myself. I'll hide it away for Marta and me. Guiseppe may starve—I shan't care. I hate him."

So the little girl was thinking all the way from Pagani to Cava. The road was hard and rough. Occasionally Pappina, her aching feet hurt by a sharp stone, would utter a little cry, "*Olà* [Oh]!" as she jumped aside, but except for these few exclamations there was complete silence. Marta, in deep study, again and again stretched out her bony hand and laid it caressingly on the head of the tired little girl trudging uncomplainingly yet sullenly along the deserted road.

Guiseppe was determined to reach Cava that night. His snapping black eyes looked keenly ahead for the spires and the lights of the village.

As he saw them dimly in the distance he inwardly rejoiced that the day's tramp was almost over. A half–mile from the village he halted beneath a large tree which protectingly spread its branches beside the road.

He leaned the Punchinello box against the trunk of the tree and, still without speaking, threw himself on the ground.

In spite of her fatigue, Pappina stood with her hands clasped, looking at the distant lights of Cava. Marta, rolling together her apron and her shawl as a pillow for Pappina's head, watched the child and waited for her to speak or move. Pappina did neither.

"She is such a tired little girl," Marta said after a few moments, as she took Pappina gently by the hand. "*Vieni, carina, resta* [rest]."

For a moment Pappina hung back, then she clung to Marta in the dark and whispered: "For you, Marta, for you, because you are good to me."

Marta took the child in her arms and carried her to a resting–place. She kissed the little hand, her whole heart going out to Pappina in love and compassion as she blessed her with the words "*Dio vi benedica. Buona notte, carissima* [God bless you. Good–night, dearest]."

Only Guiseppe rested well. Marta felt too keenly the wrong done Pappina to sleep at all.

"He'll kill the baby," her thoughts ran. "He shows her no mercy. Oh! what can I do? There'll be trouble—I feel it, I know it. I must protect her. How sweet, how patient, how gentle she is when he is good to her!"

Marta heard the deep breathing of Guiseppe sleeping, heard Pappina muttering in her disturbed slumber: "I hate him! I hate him!"

Guiseppe was awake at the first peep of day. Seeing Marta bending over Pappina, he commanded her: "Shake the willful child; bid her get up at once. It's fete day."

Marta during her night's revery had determined to protect Pappina at any cost to herself, so she pleaded for the child:

"Yes, Guiseppe, it is fete day, and for that reason you had better let Pappina rest for a little while. She is exhausted from her long tramp yesterday. She will have much excitement, singing and dancing all day, even late in the evening. We can find our breakfast and I will bring Pappina's to her. Let her rest, I pray you, Guiseppe; let her rest."

Marta stood before her husband, her worn face shining with earnestness. Guiseppe looked at her in surprise; then laughed brutally.

"Bravo, Marta!" he cried. "I didn't know you had it in you. You want the child to sleep, eh?" Then closing his eyes just a little, like a tiger before he springs, he went on: "So you will not awaken her? Then it is Guiseppe, the tyrant—eh, Marta?—who must rudely arouse the sleeping princess from her morning slumber."

As he finished speaking he moved toward Pappina, who was tossing restlessly on her hard couch, but Marta sprang between him and the child.

"Guiseppe, I have always obeyed you, have I not?" she entreated in a low voice. "Look at Pappina: her restlessness shows how tired she is. Guiseppe, hear me! I beg you to let her sleep and be rested for her hard day's work." Marta leaned forward and placed her hands on the man's arm as she went on: "I have asked few favors, demanded none, but now for this once, Guiseppe, I pray you grant me my request! Let her rest!"

Guiseppe, hesitating, ran his hand several times through his black hair as he looked from Marta to Pappina, still asleep on the ground. He knit his brow, struggling with himself as though it were a hardship to grant his wife a favor.

"Guiseppe," Marta bravely began again, but he interrupted her.

"Come on," he said roughly. "I'll humor you this time. I'll let her sleep."

So it came about that Pappina awoke under the big tree in the early morning sun to find herself alone. Suddenly a great fear seized her. Perhaps Marta and Guiseppe had gone off and left her. She sprang up and ran to the road, looking wildly about for them. In her terror she did not notice the Punchinello box leaning against the tree, and she started toward the village, crying

aloud: "Marta, Marta!"

Her tears flowed freely, and between her sobs she continued to cry for Marta and occasionally for Guiseppe. It was with Guiseppe's name half–spoken on her lips that the little frightened child stopped crying.

"Guiseppe! Gui—oh! I hate him! I hate him more than I did last night!" The memory of how he had treated her the day before came over her like a flood. "It is fete day at Cava; he said so. All I earn is mine, and when I sing the Garibaldi I shall have my tambourine full of money. Oh, how glad I am! Then I can go home."

As she hurried on, her plan grew clearer. She would strike out for herself. Then suddenly she stopped again, like a butterfly halted and shifted in its course by a vagrant wind.

"Oh, Marta! If you were only with me, I should not care," she sobbed.

Buffeted by conflicting feelings, Pappina sped on toward the village of Cava.

Marta ate but little. She started back to find Pappina, leaving Guiseppe to finish his breakfast alone.

"She'll like what I have brought her," she took pleasure in thinking as she approached the spot where they had camped for the night. She saw no signs of Pappina astir. "She's still asleep, tired out, poor baby! I'm so glad Guiseppe let her rest."

She smiled on the friendly tree as she neared its welcome shade. She peeped around the trunk; no one was there. Down went the bowl of milk with a crash to the ground.

"Pappina gone!" She stood speechless and terrified. Recovering herself, she ran through the bushes, crying: "Pappina, Pappina, Pappina! Where are you, *carina?*"

No answer came to her cries.

"Oh, what shall I do? What shall I do?" she moaned as she ran to and fro, wringing her hands. "What will Guiseppe say? How can I tell him Pappina is gone? He'll say it is all my fault. How can I endure his rage and disappointment? And my Pappina!—oh, I should not care for Guiseppe's anger if I knew she was safe."

Poor Marta! For the first time in years she gave way to tears. Her whole frame shook with sobs.

Guiseppe, meanwhile, having finished his meal, was growing impatient at Marta's delay. The streets were filling with people.

"What detains them?" he asked himself. Then the thought occurred to him that perhaps Marta's warning had come true and the child was sick again. "God forbid that she is ill!" the man ejaculated as he piously crossed himself.

He heard the sound of the bugle calling the soldiers for drill. Priests and children were assembling for the march into church. Women and men in festival garb were hastening to mass. Bands, boys, and venders were everywhere. Guiseppe paced impatiently up and down, growing more nervous every moment. Then another thought came to him:

"Perhaps they've forgotten I'm waiting. Marta may have forgotten. She's getting to be a bigger fool every day over that headstrong child. Well, the minx certainly has grit, and such spirit! *Per bacco!* She's lamb and tigress combined. If she were like other children I could beat her, but—well, I'll be hanged if I could beat Pappina!"

Guiseppe's anxiety was increasing every second. "The crowds are even now going to mass," he muttered. "I'll go and meet them." He started with rapid strides toward the spot where the three of them had spent the night. He halted on hearing Marta's sobs. A great fear overcame him; then, recovering himself, he rushed on like a madman toward the tree where Marta sat, sobbing in her grief and fear. He took in the situation at once.

"What!" he exclaimed, "Pappina not here! Where is she?"

He stood dazed. The calamity of losing Pappina on fete day crushed him. Then, arousing himself, he shook Marta roughly by the shoulder and showered imprecations upon her.

"You fool! You dog! And to–day is fete day. You're in league with the little imp against me."

"Oh, Guiseppe—"

"Don't speak to me! I humored you, and what do I get in return? You rob me of my living. Thief! Snake!" In his anger he kicked over the Punchinello box. "And I've only these poor puppets left," he cried.

"Guiseppe, have pity!" Marta begged, shrinking as far away from him as she could. "The crowd may be great, but we shall find her. I will rest neither night nor day till we have found Pappina."

In the meantime Pappina had darted through different lanes and streets seeking the center of the town, but such a little girl could not find her way about alone, and her freedom began to frighten her. Also, she was growing very hungry, for she had had no breakfast.

Just as she was beginning to be sorry she had not Marta to turn to in time of need, she saw a milk–seller milking her cow in front of a house.

The milk–sellers in Italy, especially in small towns, use their cows as milk wagons. They halt the animals before the doors of their customers, and milk what the purchasers want.

Pappina approached the rosy–cheeked woman who sat milking.

"I am hungry," she said, eyeing the milk wistfully. "If I sing for you, will you give me a drink of milk?"

The milk–vender had many children of her own. She looked kindly into Pappina's eager, flushed face as she replied:

"You need not sing to earn the milk. All Betty's milk is sold, but she will give an extra glass for a hungry little girl; won't you, Betty?" She stroked her cow as she spoke.

Pappina drank the milk, sang a little song, and, refreshed, moved happily on.

"First I will go to mass," she promised herself as she pursued her way. "Then the crowd will fill my tambourine and I can go home to my mother. Oh, I want so to see them all!"

In her confusion she retraced her steps. Suddenly she caught sight of Guiseppe, who was gesticulating wildly.

"Oh," she cried, "I hate him! Perhaps he remembered that it is fete day and went back for me. I won't let him find me. I must run and hide."

She turned and fled, looking back occasionally to see if she had been followed.

It is impossible to tell where or how long she would have run, had not her attention been attracted to a strangely dressed man. He was clad in a long robe of sackcloth, and around his waist was a girdle of rope from which hung a wooden cross. A crown of thorns was on his head and a heavy cross was strapped to his back. He carried a bundle from which he took little crosses now and then. These crosses he nailed to every door where no one objected—a warning lest the gayeties of the fete celebration should make people forget the welfare of their souls.

Pappina was so absorbed in watching him that she did not notice Marta's approach.

"*Carina, carina!*" the woman cried, clasping the child to her.

Pappina began to cry.

"I don't want to go back to Guiseppe," she sobbed. "I love you, Marta, but I hate Guiseppe. If you take me back he'll try to beat me."

It took Marta some time to calm Pappina, to make her understand that it was all a mistake that she had been (as she thought) deserted.

"Look at my eyes, *carina*. Are they not still red from weeping? There is no happiness for me away from the little one who holds my heart."

They went to join Guiseppe and the throng moving to the church. As they approached the showman, Pappina clung tightly to Marta's hand; her steps grew slower. She looked into Marta's face.

"Must we go to him?" she asked plaintively. "He looks so cross, Marta."

"Yes, yes, we must go, but you must not fear. Guiseppe will be glad to have you back."

Being thus reassured, Pappina smiled at Guiseppe as he came to meet them, but her smile was met by a cold stare from the man.

"So you found her," he said curtly to Marta. "It is well for you both. Come on."

"I know I shall always hate Guiseppe," Pappina said softly to Marta. "If he's bad to me I won't sing."

All along the way to church they passed booths filled with tempting viands. When Pappina caught sight of a fine big pig hanging on a stick she stopped.

"Guiseppe, I'm starved for a piece of pig."

Guiseppe scowled. "I've already had trouble enough with you for one day," he said. "You are here to sing, to dance, to earn money; do you hear? Come at once."

"Yes, Guiseppe, I hear you, but you know I can't sing when I'm hungry. I do no better than your puppets. You said so yourself."

She waited a moment for his reply. He made none. Lifting her dark eyes, Pappina looked pleadingly into Guiseppe's face.

"Buy me some," she begged. "I'll sing, then, the very best I can. Won't you, please, Guiseppe?"

Guiseppe was in no mood for trifling. He stretched forth his hand and took Pappina roughly by the arm. As they started to leave the booth the vender called: "*Un soldo! Un soldo!*" The child stopped.

"Guiseppe, do you hear? Only a penny."

"*Un soldo! Un soldo!*" again cried the vender.

"Only a *soldo*, dear Guiseppe," Pappina pleaded, "and I do so want some! Let me sing for some."

"Stop now and sing for a half–penny's worth of pig! Simpleton! If you must have some, here—" He took a *soldo* from his money–bag. So Pappina got her piece of pig.

Guiseppe, Marta and Pappina joined the worshipers, leaving before mass was over in order to find a good place in which to begin the Punchinello show as soon as the throng had finished its devotions.

As the people began to leave the church, Guiseppe started the show. One play was over by the time the priests, bearing bright banners, had marched from the sanctuary. Guiseppe was preparing to begin the second play when Pappina sprang suddenly to his side.

"Stop, Guiseppe, I beg you! Let me sing for them." She pointed to the hundred children dressed in white who were marching out of the church. Without waiting for permission to sing Pappina laid her tambourine on her breast, clasped her hands over it as if in prayer, raised heavenward her eyes and sang:

"*Ave Maria, gratia plena.*"

As though an angel's voice had reached them, the priests and children halted in their march, the motley crowd stood spellbound with bowed heads. Even Guiseppe, after his first surprise, crossed himself. The tears were streaming down Marta's face.

"*Ave Maria, gratia plena.*" Clear and sweet rang the child's voice. "*Ave Maria*, Amen."

From the lips of the priests and the white–robed children came spontaneously in response, "Amen," and the crowd gathered about the diminutive singer murmured softly, "Amen."

For a moment there was a deep silence, then one by one, as though moving to an altar, those who had listened to her singing, almost reverently deposited their offerings in Pappina's tambourine.

The spirit of devotion awakened on the street, made it seem almost a sacrilege to continue with the Punchinellos.

The music of drums and fifes came faintly from the distance. Nearer and nearer the slender *carabinieri* approached, the silver trimmings on their black uniforms glistening in the sun. On horseback and on foot they came, and passed. Round the corner with rapid tramp came the *bersaglieri* (sharpshooters). They drew up in two lines and executed with precision the orders of their lieutenant, the cock's plumes on their stiff black hats fluttering in the light breeze. Confetti, serpentine, even bon–bons, were thrown about in profusion.

So began fete day in Cava, and so it passed as other fete days throughout the land of Italy, differing from them only in the gloriously beautiful illuminated cross at the very summit of Monte Castello. On the peak of this mountain lives the "Hermit of Monte Castello." Each year he begs funds sufficient to illuminate grandly his mountain home on fete day.

The Bersaglieri

Guiseppe had kept Pappina singing and dancing all day, till it would seem her throat and feet must surely both give out. Marta dared not interfere. "Will the day never end?" she kept asking herself. She rejoiced when the festivities began to wane, when the streets became deserted, when one by one the lights went out.

"Well," said Guiseppe, looking about him, "seems as if every one but us has gone. I suppose we shall have to get along and find a place to sleep."

"Is there not money enough—can we not afford to remain in Cava over night, to have beds?" Marta timidly asked. "The ground is so hard for the child," she added.

"Marta, you have less sense every day," was Guiseppe's angry reply. "Bed for the child, eh? Next thing you'll be wanting me to carry around a cradle for her to sleep in. You'll want her to ride in a carriage. Aren't the nights warm and pleasant? The ground is good enough for me to sleep on; it's good enough for you; and it's good enough for the child."

Marta made no further appeal, but taking Pappina in her arms carried her where Guiseppe led.

"I've had a happy day. Oh, I liked the lights, the music and the people, but I'm so tired," Pappina told Marta as she laid her head on her improvised pillow and went at once to sleep.

Guiseppe took out his greasy pouch, and chuckled as he counted time and again his gains.

"It's been a good day, Marta, the best I've ever had. *Per bacco*, how she sang the Ave Maria! A good day." He patted his money bag. "A good day. Good–night, Marta."

Guiseppe, too, was soon asleep. And Marta? She shared neither Guiseppe's joy nor Pappina's happiness. She longed to be back in Naples, to take the child away from the applauding public. She kept saying to herself:

"It's a crime to make her the object of so much attention. It may spoil her, ruin her. What can I do? If only together we might run away to England, to America!"

In her fear of Guiseppe even the thought frightened her. She hated her weakness in not refusing to let the child continue such a life. Years of servitude to her tyrannical husband had made her afraid to express any wish or will of her own.

"I will pray," she said softly. "I will ask God to save my baby Pappina from this strain, these hardships, and the wrong we are doing her."

She knelt by Pappina's side. Taking one of the child's hands in hers, she prayed fervently for God's blessing on the little one and for the realization of her heart's desire—to see Pappina free from Guiseppe's selfish tyranny.

Because of her great faith in prayer, a peace stole upon her, a confidence that Pappina would be protected and liberated in some way best for all.

"We will wait," she murmured to herself. "A prevision will be made. We will wait."

CHAPTER VI

Hardships at Salerno

Guiseppe was barely awake on the morning after the fete when he took out his money–bag to recount his gains.

"I'll sell these old puppets," he said to himself. "What do the few *soldi* they bring in amount to, compared with Pappina? If the minx only remains as bewitching as she is now, I'll not complain. Hang it all! Why can't every day be fete day!"

He glanced at the child, curled up on the ground, asleep.

"I may as well let her rest. It isn't much of a trip to Salerno, and I don't suppose it matters much when we get there; nothing special on hand there that I know of. I hope we'll find plenty of foreigners everywhere we go. They appreciate Pappina."

Guiseppe filled his pipe and as he smoked he wove a bright dream of wealth. Happy thought! He smiled broadly and joyfully rubbed his hands together.

"I'll take her to America!" he chuckled to himself. "Why not? The Punchinellos too!" His countenance fell. "No, no," he muttered, "I can't talk in English for the puppets. How, how am I to manage that?"

He became so absorbed in his thoughts that he forgot the pipe he was smoking. It dropped from his mouth as he exclaimed gleefully:

"Aha! I have it! A hand–organ in America with my beautiful Pappina! She'll make our fortune."

He picked up his pipe and jumped quickly to his feet, calling to Marta.

"Get up, Marta, and wake the beauty! Up, I say! Let's be off. Make haste, Marta. We'll soon be rich; do you hear?"

Pappina, hearing his loud call, sprang up at once. She rubbed her eyes, trying to make sure she was awake.

"Was I dreaming, Guiseppe, or did you—did I really hear you say we'll soon be rich?" she asked.

Guiseppe hesitated a moment before replying: "*Si, si, carina.* If you'll always sing and dance as you did yesterday, we will go to America where there is no end of money."

"Oh, I'd like that!" and Pappina clapped her hands.

Something in her movements reminded Guiseppe of a song he used to sing.

"Come, girl," he said cheerfully, "here's a song—a new one that just suits you. Funny I never thought of it before! Listen, my beauty, and see how quickly you can learn it. It will bring gold, and gold brings everything. It will take us across the ocean to America. Come—stand up—so!"

Pappina needed no second bidding. She took her position opposite Guiseppe, alert to follow every tone, word, and gesture. Many times the man stopped to laugh at and applaud Pappina for her wonderful aptness, and his praises made her more keen to imitate him perfectly.

The child's dark hair hung in disorder about her animated face, her great black eyes were aglow as she sang, danced and recited, going over the song again and again, she and Guiseppe both so interested that neither realized the flight of time.

Marta dared not interrupt them. She watched Pappina with pain in her heart, saying almost continually to herself:

"*Grand dio! Quando, quando* [Great God! When, when]?"

Gold! Riches! They meant nothing to her. Her one desire was to see Pappina liberated from this life she felt sure would destroy her health, innocence, and beauty.

Hark! "*Le parlete d'amore*," that beautiful air from "Faust," came floating to their ears. The fresh, clear voice rang through the morning air.

"*Odi, chi e* [Listen, who is it]?" Pappina exclaimed, peering down the winding road. A young girl came around a bend, leading a small pig, and the child darted toward her. A few yards from the singer she paused, uncertain whether to continue or not, but being reassured by a bright smile from the girl, she hastened on. Reaching the maiden, she stopped, and looked wonderingly at the pig.

"What is it you have?" she asked timidly, for it is only in the country that girls have pet pigs, and Pappina had never seen one.

"What have I? Why, don't you know, little one? It is my pet pig." The young girl laid her hand caressingly on the animal's head as she spoke.

Tender little Pappina had never in her short life had anything to pet, not even a doll. She took hold of the ribbon around the pig's neck.

"How pretty!" she exclaimed. "He won't hurt me, will he? What's his name?"

"I named him Savio, because he is so wise."

"Isn't he beautiful! May I pet him?"

Pappina had not waited for permission, but was patting the pig's head. As she stroked his bristles she prattled to the girl.

"You see," she said confidingly, "we are poor now, but we are going to America, and we are going to get rich. Guiseppe said so this very morning. When we come back I want to buy Savio. You'll let me have him, won't you? I'll be good to him. I'll buy him a new ribbon every day, and a necklace, too—that is, if there's money enough," she added thoughtfully.

The girl, Susanna, laughed heartily as she replied:

"When you come back from America, you shall have my dear Savio. Now I must be going. Good–by." She waved her hand to Pappina as she moved on.

Guiseppe and Marta stood watching Pappina with amusement, but as she started to follow Susanna and Savio, Guiseppe called: "Pappina, Pappina."

Pappina either did not or would not hear. Louder and louder Guiseppe shouted her name. Susanna stopped.

"Is it not you he calls?" she asked. "Are you not Pappina?"

"Yes, yes, but I want to walk just a little way with you and Savio. You'll let me, won't you?"

"Pappina!" Guiseppe's voice sounded harsh and angry.

"You had better go back, little one. *Addio.*"

For a moment Pappina stood looking after Susanna, then with a burst of song turned and ran back to Marta and Guiseppe. She did not heed Guiseppe's scowl, but smiled into his face.

"Guiseppe," she cried, "I must learn the new song at once. I want to earn lots of money, so we can go to America, and get rich, and have pet pigs. Wasn't he just beautiful? His name is Savio, and she says I may have him when we come back from America. Oh, you don't know how much I want a pig like Savio!"

Guiseppe could not help smiling at Pappina's prattle. He put his hand under her chin and lifting her radiant little face toward his, he teasingly asked:

"Wouldn't you rather have Savio cooked like the piece of pig you had at Cava? *Ebbene!* Now for the song. Where did we stop?"

"I have been thinking," Marta timidly interrupted, "that perhaps, if we are going to America, and if—if you both wish me to do so, I could teach Pappina an English song." She glanced at Guiseppe as though fearful he might laugh at the idea, but to her relief he looked pleased.

"How about it, little one?" he asked, turning to Pappina. "Would you like to learn to sing an English song?"

Pappina always showed her greatest delight by clapping her hands. She clapped them now.

"*Che gioia* [What joy]!" she cried. "Oh, Guiseppe, let me learn it now, this very minute! won't you please, Guiseppe? Because you know we are sure to need it in America. Come, quickly, Marta."

Marta grew nervous.

"I cannot sing," she cried, "I have no music in my voice, but I—"

"Never mind your voice! Pappina will do the singing. Are you both ready? Then why don't you begin?" Guiseppe spoke impatiently.

Marta tremblingly began. The words were barely out of her mouth when Pappina repeated them eagerly, but always with an "ah" at the end making them all like Italian words. Marta smiled at the pronunciation, but Guiseppe was delighted.

"Bravo, bravo!" he cried. "Teach it well, Marta! She can sing it here for all the English and Americans we meet. It will charm them to hear her sing in their own tongue; it will mean money, and it's money that will take us to America."

Childlike, Pappina soon grew tired of trying to learn the song. She wanted to be journeying on to new people, sights, and scenes. Guiseppe, too, became impatient to be off in quest of that which would take them to "the land of money," as he called America again and again.

He was walking, as usual, with bowed head, his eyes on the ground, when he suddenly sprang to the side of the road and with the toe of his boot pushed back the dry grass that was partially concealing a string of gold beads. He picked them up.

"Aha!" he cried, holding them up for view, "they are gold! Luck is with us. Gold! I can sell them." He put them into a pocket of his coat.

"Guiseppe, I want them. Give them to me." Pappina dug her little sun–browned hand into his pocket and brought up the bright beads. Guiseppe snatched them from her. Pappina stamped her foot. "Guiseppe, I want those beads!"

"You can't have them."

"Guiseppe, give them to me! Please, dear Guiseppe!"

She begged, threatened and cried, but all in vain.

"Enough, enough, I say! Come on," Guiseppe commanded, as he started forward.

"I'll not stir till you give me those beads," the child declared.

Guiseppe came back to her and raised his hand threateningly, but stubborn Pappina declared again:

"I'll not sing for you ever, Guiseppe, if you keep those pretty beads. I'll never, never sing for you again, and then we can never go to America. I'd sooner give up the pet pig than those gold beads."

Marta grew bold. "Oh, please let her have them," she pleaded.

"Hold your tongue!" her husband answered roughly. "You'd have me give her my head if she asked for it."

Guiseppe again lifted his hand threateningly and had started toward Pappina when a carriage drove up. The merry party in it—foreigners on their way from Cava to Salerno—had already noted his menacing air, Marta's pained look, and the beautiful child pouting by the wayside.

They stopped. Only Marta understood their English words.

"Poor little thing, she looks ready to cry. Do find out about them," begged one of the ladies of

the party.

"Do you understand English?" her husband asked Guiseppe.

"Yes, sir," Marta answered for her husband.

"What have you to entertain us?"

"We have the Punchinellos, and we have the child, who sings and dances."

"We had enough of the Punchinellos in Naples. Let the little girl give us a song," cried an Englishman, taking a coin from his pocket. Others did the same. "A song, a song!" they cried.

Marta translated to Guiseppe.

"Pappina, sing," he commanded.

"No."

Guiseppe felt an anger he dared not show.

"Pappina, sing for America," he begged.

The obstinate little girl shook her head.

"I told you, Guiseppe," she answered, "I'll never sing till you give me those beads."

Guiseppe stood for a moment with his hand on the beads, irresolute. He heard the jingle of coins waiting to be paid for the song.

Pappina was quick to notice that his hand was in his pocket.

"Guiseppe, won't you give me the beads?" she pleaded. "I want them so much. Please, dear Guiseppe!"

She stretched out her hand for them just as the gentleman who was driving took up the lines to continue the drive.

"Stop, we are ready," cried Guiseppe, handing the beads to Pappina. She fastened the string around her neck, took up her tambourine, and sang.

True little Neapolitan, in her delight over the new necklace she sang and danced with such spirit that even Guiseppe was surprised. The tourists, having paid well for Pappina's songs, went on their way.

"That pretty lady in blue," said Marta as the travelers departed, "was wondering if we treat you well, Pappina. She said she wished she could speak Italian and find out if you are our own child, and if you are happy in your life, or only singing to keep from being beaten, as so many little singers have to do."

Pappina laughed merrily.

"Why didn't you tell her that I always love you, Marta?" she cried. "And sometimes I love Guiseppe."

She went to Guiseppe and reaching up on her tiptoes, patted his cheek.

"*Caro* Guiseppe," she said, "I love you to–day because you gave me the beads. Perhaps to–morrow I shall hate you, and—really, Guiseppe—I can't help it. Sometimes you're so mean I could kill you, but to–day, Guiseppe," fondling her beads, "I love you almost as well as I do Marta."

Pappina's words and little caress pleased Guiseppe, but he let neither her nor Marta see his pleasure. He took up the Punchinellos, merely saying: "I guess we'll be moving."

It was a happy little group that continued its way toward Salerno. Pappina took off her beads every few minutes to admire them.

"How good you are, Guiseppe!" she repeatedly said to him. Her happiness brought a smile to Guiseppe's hard face.

Marta likened her to a humming–bird, as she flitted in song from flower to flower, plucking first one for Marta, then one for Guiseppe.

Pappina was too full of life and joy to–day to plod along with Marta behind Guiseppe. She kept running ahead of the two. Something unusual attracted her notice and as she did not have the patience to stand and wait for them, she ran back to meet them, exclaiming as she seized their hands:

"Hurry! There's the cutest little church down the road. Come quickly! We must all pray."

"It's a wayside shrine," Marta told her.

"Not a church? Then can't we go there and pray?" Pappina said with a disappointed look.

"Yes, dear. Everywhere through this country we find these shrines. They are built for just such wanderers as we, that we may always remember to pray."

"There's a light. See, Marta."

"There is always a candle or a little lamp burning at the altar, where we pray to either a picture or a statuette of the Madonna."

By this time they were at the entrance. Pappina turned to Guiseppe and took his hand.

"If you hadn't given me the beads," she said, "I shouldn't want to pray."

After their devotions were over the three continued their journey to Salerno, so prettily situated in a cozy little corner of Salerno Bay, and backed by gigantic mountains which remind one of a father protecting his child. They walked into the town, down the narrow, irregular streets.

As they paused at a corner Pappina struck her tambourine, ready to start her song.

"No, no, not yet, little one," Guiseppe said. "This is not the place for you. You and Marta sit down and wait for me here. I'll look about a bit and find out what is going on in the town."

They watched him as he walked briskly down the street. Once he looked back and waved his hand to Pappina, who in turn threw him a kiss.

"I just love Guiseppe when he is good!" cried the child. "I hope he won't be gone long," she added, as her eyes followed his retreating figure.

Stern and forbidding as Guiseppe usually looked, when he wished to be agreeable he had an air that charmed all whom he met. He had bright stories at his command and could tell them as became a man of his former calling. To–day he chose to be a hail fellow well met as he walked about Salerno seeking information that would lead to his financial interest.

By chance he met an old friend from Naples.

"Aha, Guiseppe Capasso!" the man cried. "What good fate leads me to you, or you to me, as it may be?"

"The luck is mine, signor," with a hearty hand–shake Guiseppe replied. "Out of Naples, where I was born and bred, I feel indeed a stranger in a strange land."

"Come, Guiseppe, let's celebrate our fortunate meeting. A game or two—what do you say, my friend?"

Together they visited a wine shop and there they drank and gambled at "Mora." Guiseppe lost.

"I'll drink and forget," he cried. So he went from one wine shop to another, drinking, losing, cursing his losses, drinking again to forget his ill–luck.

When Marta saw him coming toward herself and Pappina, she knew at once what the trouble was. She knew also that too much wine put him in an ugly mood. She placed her arm about Pappina and kissed her brow.

"Oh, *carissima*," she whispered, "if you love me, be patient with Guiseppe! He may abuse you, but remember that I love you."

Even before Marta had finished, Guiseppe was speaking.

"There's no fete day here till September, St. Matthew's Day," he said. Turning to Pappina, he continued: "Look here, girl, we are going where there will be a crowd of people promenading to–night. We are going to the Quay—they call it Corso Garibaldi. I'll have none of your impudence in that crowd to–night—none of your stubbornness; do you understand? When I say sing, you will sing. When I say dance, you will dance. Do you hear?"

"*Si*, signor," came faintly from Pappina's white lips. As she spoke she glanced at Marta, stifling her anger for the sake of the woman she loved.

"Then remember." He shook his fist in her face. She flushed scarlet, but said nothing. Guiseppe evidently was expecting a reply. He waited a moment, then continued his tirade: "Why don't you speak, girl? You stand there, red in the face, ready to kill me, and say nothing. Have out with it; what you've got to say I want to hear right now. I'll have none of your impudence to–night."

There was no reply from the child, who stood looking in amazement at Guiseppe, as she tightly held Marta's bony hand.

"Oh, afraid of me for once, are you?" he sneered. "Marta, the minx is afraid of me. Bravo! Bravo! I'll drink to her health as soon as we find a wine–shop. Ha, ha, Marta! She's a coward, after all."

He stooped to pick up a coin he had dropped. Pappina, unable longer to control herself, sprang at him in a furious rage. She gave him one fierce slap across the cheek. With a cry of pain, he turned on the child. Marta caught hold of him.

"Guiseppe, Guiseppe," she cried, "you'll lose her if you strike her."

Still he attempted to reach Pappina, blind in his drunken fury. Marta held him with an iron grip.

"Don't!" she screamed. "Don't! You shan't! She'll run away. Stop, Guiseppe! You know you can't strike her and keep her."

Guiseppe shook Marta fiercely. Her sparse brown locks loosened and fell about her livid face, but still she held him, and the drunken man was no match for her. He struggled to break away, but Marta seemed to possess superhuman strength. Her grip on his arm was so strong that it pained him.

"Let go, you fiend!" he cried.

"Never, Guiseppe, till you promise you will not harm her. She is only a child."

"You hurt me! Let go, I say!"

"Then promise."

"Fiend, let go! I promise."

Guiseppe broke away from Marta. He glared at Pappina, who stood facing him defiantly her head thrown back, her eyes blazing, her arms folded.

"You little vixen!" Guiseppe shouted, "I'll make you rue this day! You shall pay dearly for this!" Smothering his anger, he took up the Punchinellos. "Come," he commanded, "we will play to the crowds—all night, if I will it. Come on, I say."

CHAPTER VII

Another Reconciliation

Guiseppe, his cheek still smarting from Pappina's blow, strode along toward the Quay and its beautiful walk, Corso Garibaldi.

In spite of his intoxication, Guiseppe was conscious of a new respect for Marta, awakened by her fearless defence of the child she loved.

"They are both against me," he muttered. "Marta—staid, timid Marta—she becomes a lioness when she fights for Pappina. Who would believe it? But she is right, Marta's right. I can't beat the minx and keep her. They are two against me, two against me."

Time and again he turned his head and glared fiercely from under his shaggy eyebrows at Pappina, and without his usual bullying look at Marta. His gaze was met unflinchingly by both, who, as he said, seemed banded against him.

Pappina would not admit, even to herself, that she was afraid of Guiseppe in his drunken, quarrelsome condition, but Marta noticed that the little hand in hers trembled and held her own more tightly whenever Guiseppe turned toward them.

Worn and tired from the long tramp, Pappina inquired of Marta: "Where is he going? I can't walk much farther. I feel weak, Marta."

"*Poverina* [poor little one], I do not know, but we are together and you are safe with me," Marta replied as they followed Guiseppe through the merry crowd that was enjoying the pleasures of the walk and the beauties of the moonlit bay.

When he reached the theater, he stopped and put down the Punchinellos. Assuming a bravado air, he ordered Pappina to sing.

"You remember what I said?" he asked. "You shall sing all night if I will it so. Marta knows me. She can tell you that I say what I mean and mean what I say. It is not the Punchinellos to–night, it is you." He shook his fist in Pappina's face.

Rebellious, tired, and hungry, she quickly lifted her clenched fist to strike again, but Marta enfolded the little doubled–up hand in hers.

"It is best to obey to–night," she whispered. "Sing for me, my bird, for I love you."

Marta's loving words appealed to Pappina as nothing else would have done. She rose quickly and sang the best she could. The poor little girl put no animation in the vivacious song she tried to sing; it might have passed for a funeral dirge.

After the long tramp it was hard for the child to stand and sing; to dance was impossible. There was a plaintiveness in her voice and in her manner. She was but a baby, forced beyond her strength; made to sing for her food.

Her face looked drawn and white, even her lips were colorless. At times her voice could scarcely be heard. When she staggered in her efforts to dance, as she did many times, she looked helplessly and appealingly at Marta.

Guiseppe's eyes were on the crowd only. He noticed their interest in the singer, and nothing more. When Pappina finished the song, he shouted: "Give! Give! Here, little one, pass your tambourine."

Marta knew and the people knew. The tambourine was passed.

"Fill, so the brute will take her home." Only Marta of our three wanderers understood these words, spoken in English.

Guiseppe quickly took possession of the money. "I am thirsty. Wine, wine!" he exclaimed, "I must have wine. Who wouldn't drink, with her—" He pointed to Pappina and left the sentence unfinished. "Wait for me here, and don't move or I'll kill you both."

He was out of sight in a moment, disappearing into a wine shop. They heard his boisterous laugh within. Marta took Pappina's hand in hers.

"*Carissima*," she said, "you are so hungry and so tired! Guiseppe is not himself. He forgets."

A new light shone in Pappina's eyes. She was given new strength. This time she would sing, not from fear of Guiseppe, perhaps not from love of Marta. She was just a worn–out, tired little child whose tender age should have ensured her protection at home—only seven years old, but forced to battle with the world, seeking refuge through her songs from storms and hunger, a weatherbeaten bird. For her there was now no place called home, no place to lay her tired little head. She knew that to sing and dance meant money, and that she and Marta were hungry and in need of money for supper. She took her tambourine from Marta, threw it high in the air, caught it, and began to dance.

The gaping crowd that had watched her efforts before stood almost aghast as she swayed and tipped and toed, till one would have thought her little feet would refuse to take another step. Then, pausing a moment to take breath, she started to sing the rollicking song Guiseppe had just taught her—with gestures and grimaces, stopping to speak, dashing into song, now laughing so infectiously that every bystander joined with her.

She finished the song in an uproar of laughter, applause, and shouts of "Bravo, bravo!"

The enthusiastic listeners fairly threw *soldi* at her. Pappina wanted them for supper for Marta and herself. They had tramped all day with but a bite of bread in the early morning. Pappina's haggard little face glowed with pleasure as she took the well–filled tambourine to Marta.

"See, Marta, yours to–night—not Guiseppe's—yours!"

"No, not mine; it is yours alone, *carissima*."

"Then it is yours and mine. Come, let's go. Macaroni, Marta! Hurry, dear Marta."

"Pappina, *mia carissima*, Pappina!" Marta walked a few steps then stopped. "Should Guiseppe return and find us gone!" Even as she spoke she did not feel her usual fear.

"But I am starved, Marta. I must eat, unless, dear, good Marta, you who love me say I mustn't."

Marta hesitated for a moment, looking down the street to see if her husband was returning. He was nowhere in sight. Her love for Pappina conquered her fear of Guiseppe's displeasure.

"Wait for me here," she said. "I will go and bring us food."

With all haste it was purchased and eaten. It was long after they had finished their simple meal that Guiseppe returned from his revelry.

His mood was changed. He had drank so much wine he could scarcely stand up. He loved the little girl who had filled his purse. He laid his hand caressingly on her head. She shuddered at his touch, and clung close to Marta, who looked fearlessly into Guiseppe's face and said sternly:

"I am used to your thoughtlessness, used even to cruelty; but Pappina is worn out, and she must have her rest."

"Eh! What's that you say? She's tired? Macaroni and a bottle of wine will build her up. Come on, sweet one." Stretching out his hand to Pappina, he continued: "Throughout the town those who have seen you and heard you to–night sing your praises. They believe you are mine. *Ebbene!* So you are, sweet one—so you are."

"Guiseppe," and Pappina looked pleadingly into his half–closed eyes, "Guiseppe, if you love me so much, take me where we shall sleep to–night. I'm not hungry, Guiseppe, but I'm so tired. I want to go to sleep."

Worn out, Pappina began to cry. Marta quickly gathered the child into her arms and carried her to a place Guiseppe selected as suitable to spend the night.

Sabbath morning! So beautiful it dawned that it seemed to be wooing man, woman and child to worship the God who could give to his children so perfect a day. Flowers, grass, birds and sky, with the bright Bay of Salerno in the glint of the morning sun, all attested to the wonders of a marvelous world with its perfection in every phase of nature as it appeared this Sunday in Salerno.

Guiseppe slept in a drunken stupor. Marta was afraid to speak, even in a whisper, for fear of disturbing his slumber. Pappina, harboring a feeling of hatred stronger than ever, grew tired of waiting for Guiseppe to awaken.

"Marta," she said softly.

"Sh!" Marta raised her finger to silence Pappina, who for a time sat quiet. Then the stillness began to irritate her.

"Marta," she began again and once more Marta tried to silence her, but this time in vain. "I won't 'sh,' for it must be time to go to church, and surely he," (pointing to Guiseppe), "ought to pray."

Guiseppe, hearing her voice, sat up and looked about him in a dazed way out of his bleary eyes. Pappina, seeing him thus, needed courage to speak at all, but with her characteristic fearlessness she said:

"Come, Guiseppe, it's Sunday. We must go to church."

"Sunday! Let me sleep. Sunday, did you say? There's nothing to do on Sunday except pray. I'll sleep. If you two simpletons want to pray, go on to church and let me alone. Get along, I'll wait." He fell over on the ground and was soon snoring loudly.

Hand in hand Marta and Pappina walked away.

"I dared not ask Guiseppe for money. You saw, *carina*, he is not yet himself."

Pappina's face was wreathed in smiles as she stooped down to bring up *soldi* she had hidden in her shoe the night before. It was not the cleanest hand in the world that handed the money to Marta, but the little grime on it did not prevent Marta from seizing it and covering it with kisses.

"I am so glad, so glad, *carina!*" she exclaimed. "Now you need not go hungry to church."

After a hasty breakfast they were soon in the celebrated St. Matthew's Cathedral. Marta, fearful of Guiseppe's displeasure if he were to awaken and be kept waiting too long, wished to say a short prayer and return at once, but Pappina was anxious to follow the people and see the things that interested them. She suddenly seized Marta by the arm and almost dragged her out of the church. There was a look of terror on the child's face.

"*Carina*, what is it?"

"Those ladies—you saw them, Marta! The man with them—you said he was a guide—didn't you hear what he was telling them?" She covered her face with her hands. "Oh, I cannot bear to think of it!"

"No, I did not hear. Tell me, what did he say that frightened you? Perhaps you didn't understand."

"Oh. I did. I heard every word. He told them that three saints' heads had been cut off right by that column where we were standing. It scared me so that now I am afraid to go back, and I wanted so much to go to the tomb of the Pope. The guide said one is buried in the church. You have seen so much, Marta—have you ever seen a Pope's tomb?"

"No, *carina*, but we must go back now, at once, to Guiseppe."

"Back to Guiseppe," Pappina repeated slowly, "back to Guiseppe." She grew thoughtful. "Marta, must we go back to Guiseppe? May we not run a way?"

"Oh, my sweet baby, we must—we must go back to Guiseppe!"

They met him walking to meet them. He smiled kindly as they approached him. He even held out his hand to Pappina, but she paid no attention to his overture for friendship and forgiveness.

"Have you already said your prayers?" he asked, looking at Marta.

"Our prayers were short," she replied. "We thought you would not like to be kept waiting."

"And Pappina! She has no use for Guiseppe this morning." He took one of her curls in his hand as he spoke.

"You were bad yesterday, Guiseppe," Pappina answered with a jerk of her head that snatched the curl from his hand.

"You are right, *bambina*, you are right. Forgive me. Guiseppe was a regular brute yesterday; wasn't he?" he asked in a tone that seemed to crave denial from the child.

"You were, Guiseppe," she replied with a sunny smile as she took hold of his hand, "you really were; but if you are sorry, I'll forgive you."

CHAPTER VIII

Along the Coast and in Amalfi

They were all sitting on the ground under a broad spreading tree; Guiseppe was smoking and Marta teaching Pappina the alphabet. Little sticks and bits of grass were brought into use for the construction of the letters.

Pappina was much interested for a while, but she was altogether too impatient a child to keep at one thing for any length of time.

"I'm sure I've learned enough for one day, Marta." With her foot she scattered the letters to the four winds. Then, turning to Guiseppe, she asked: "Where are we going next? I want to go where there are people to sing to."

"You'll find plenty at Amalfi."

"Amalfi? Is that the name of the town we are going to?" Guiseppe nodded. "Why, I thought this road was called Amalfi—something or other—what is it, Marta?"

"It is called the Amalfi Coast, but there also is a town called Amalfi. That is where we are going next."

The Amalfi coast

Pappina arose, and brushed off the loose grass clinging to her dress. She stood for a moment in front of Guiseppe, looking about as though uncertain what to do with herself. As he smiled kindly upon her she ventured to ask:

"Come, Guiseppe, aren't you tired of sitting here so long, just smoking that old pipe? Mayn't we go now?" Seeing no move on his part, she added, "Please, Guiseppe," as she stretched out her hands to assist him to rise.

He playfully blew a cloud of smoke in her face.

"Don't be so impatient, little one," he answered. "No hurry. Here, Marta, take her down to the water and show her how to skip stones."

Joyously Pappina took Marta by the hand and together they almost ran to the promontory. It was some time before the child wearied of this new recreation. Marta, remembering that the English song was still unlearned, improved this opportunity to sing it again and again as she skipped the stones. Soon Pappina was singing it with her, and the little song was learned.

When Pappina ran back and sang it for Guiseppe, he laughed heartily, which evidence of good humor gave Pappina the courage to plead:

"Come, Guiseppe, do! Marta says it is beautiful along the coast, and that there are great rocks with the sweetest violet flowers growing out of them. Come, Guiseppe, I want to pick some of those flowers."

"But, *carina*," Marta reminded her, "did I not tell you that these blossoms live only on the rocks and die if plucked? Besides, you cannot reach—"

"Sit down, *bambina*," interrupted Guiseppe. "When I finish this pipe, we will trudge along to Amalfi."

Pappina was reluctant to wait, but she sat down beside Guiseppe, and amused herself trying to catch the curls of smoke which he was puffing from his pipe.

"Hold up your foot, little one." Guiseppe took up her foot as he spoke. "See, Marta, the girl has nearly tramped and danced her shoes off. I suppose that means new ones again, *bambina*."

It took little kindness to make Pappina forget ill usage, little to make her happy. She moved close to Guiseppe's side in her impetuous way, and leaned her head against his arm. He saw the tears in her eyes. Again taking one of her feet in his hand, he said with gentleness:

"Marta, think of the miles this child has walked There's not much sole left, and the leather—look at it! Well, what do you think. Marta? Do you suppose we can find shoes in Amalfi to fit such little feet?"

"Why, Guiseppe," exclaimed Pappina, "you don't really mean I shall have another new pair! I've been so bad, too. You know I've been horrid, but so have you, Guiseppe, and its only Marta who's been good, and we—" She took one of Guiseppe's hands in hers, kissed it, and began to cry.

"There, there, *bambina*, we've both been bad. We'll start all over again. Don't cry. Here,

Marta, suppose you take her down to the water again. See, a little way down there the children are in bathing. You may as well let Pappina go in. It will do her good and rest her. She doesn't complain, for she's not the whimpering kind, but she looks tired out."

Pappina dried her tears and Marta soon had her in the bright water. This was the first time Pappina had ever been in bathing, and at first she was afraid. Marta quickly calmed her fears, and her merry laughter reached Guiseppe's ears, luring him to the shore.

When Pappina was called, much to Marta and Guiseppe's surprise, there was no teasing to stay in longer; just a big splash. She came up half strangling, shook herself, and was out of the water refreshed and bubbling with happiness. When dressed, she ran to Guiseppe and seized his two hands.

"Let's dance, Guiseppe," she cried.

Before he realized it, Pappina was gleefully whirling him round and round. Guiseppe found himself quite out of breath from laughter and dancing. Soon, however, he pantingly released himself.

"I feel so fine after my bath that I could run all the way to Amalfi," the child cried, "I'm sure I could! Guiseppe, because you let me go in the water, I love you enough to eat you this very minute. Come, mayn't we go now?"

Guiseppe, lighting his pipe, made playful answer:

"There's a little lady I know who made a stiff old man dance till he was all out of breath, and now he has to rest a bit before he starts to tramp again."

Pappina heaved a little sigh as she sat down by Marta and began to make pictures out of the white clouds in the bright blue Italian sky.

"Do you see that animal?" she asked, pointing to the clouds. "There's the head, and over there—see—doesn't that look like the tail? What is it, Marta?"

Marta studied the cloud a moment before replying: "It looks more like a crocodile than anything else."

"Please, Marta, tell me again about that awful crocodile."

Guiseppe looked questioningly at Marta.

"I was telling her yesterday that we should go through Maori," she explained. "I went there years ago with Countess Filota."

"What has that to do with the crocodile?"

"Tell him, Marta," Pappina begged. "He'll like the story."

"Once upon a time, so the story goes, there lived an immense crocodile in the cave near Maori. It was said and believed that he who dared kill the crocodile would immediately turn into a fierce dragon. People preferred to chance being eaten rather than to kill him at such a risk. He was said to feed only upon Christians."

"Why didn't he eat the bad people?" asked the child.

Guiseppe laughed.

"Just as you were going to eat me a few minutes ago," he said, "because I let you go in the water! Well, we may as well tramp along. We've lots of places to go and plenty of rough roads to travel. No matter where we go, there'll be people to amuse. The more money we get the sooner we'll go to America. Come, Marta; come, Pappina. Where are the puppets? Here's the whole show now, and all of us are happy—eh, *bambina?*"

Marta hastily tied up the few effects into a small, neat bundle. Guiseppe picked up the Punchinellos, while Pappina, as usual, had only her tambourine.

They sauntered contentedly along up the rising road, across the bridge over the valley, reaching Vietri at sunset. There, under one of the beautiful terraces that abound on this coast, they remained over night.

Pappina was the first to awaken. For some time she took pleasure in watching the many colors of the water and the boats coming and going. She saw in the distance a throng of early bathers—men and women swimming in the clear bright bay, or basking on the beach in the early morning sun. The bright hues of the bathing–suits first attracted Pappina's attention. As soon as she saw the gay colors she wished to go and watch the bathers.

"I'm going to watch them," she whispered softly to Marta. "I'll be back soon, Marta."

Marta shook her head.

"You had better not go, *carina*," she answered. "Guiseppe may not like it if he awakens and finds you gone."

"I won't run away," the child persisted. "Truly, Marta, I'll be back soon. I'm happy now, Marta; tell Guiseppe so, and that I'll surely be back in a little while. Perhaps I'll be back before he wakes up. It's all right for me to go, isn't it, Marta?"

"Go, but don't stay long, *carina*."

Pappina was so accustomed to carry her tambourine everywhere she went that from force of habit she took it with her this morning. Her dress was shabby from hard wear, but her eyes were gloriously bright as she lifted them to smile into the faces of the fine ladies and gentlemen down for their early morning swim.

They noted the abundant life that shone from her eyes, the unconsciousness of her manner. The worn frock only added charm to her looks, contrasting with her loveliness as she stood near the throng, not daring to approach.

It was her shyness that brought to her the attention of these foreigners, who had grown accustomed to being followed by children begging for money or ready to sing for *soldi*. A group

on the beach watched her, lost in admiration.

"Have you ever in all your life seen such eyes?" It was an American lady who spoke. "Talk to her; see what she is here for. She has her tambourine; is she a wandering minstrel, do you think? Or don't they have such things in Italy?"

Pappina little thought they were talking about her as she stood laughing at the pranks of the people in the water. She was interested in them all—the dark and the fair; the slight and the stout; those coming and those going; all seemingly satisfied with life as they found it in the brilliant season's height at Vietri.

"There's the sweetest sight I've seen in all Italy!" exclaimed one of the bathers. "Let's ask for a song."

Pappina, when she saw one of the gentlemen approaching her, turned to run, half–afraid of the big man in his striped bathing–suit, but hearing a lady's voice calling her, she looked back. She saw that the gentleman was closely followed by some half–dozen ladies, so she smilingly and timidly approached them.

"Will you give us a song?" the gentleman asked her in English.

Pappina shook her head as she said in her own tongue:

"I am Italian and I do not understand what you say."

He struck her tambourine.

"*Si, si*, signor." Pappina guessed what they wanted. She sang a song. They begged for another, so she gave them the little song in English which Marta had taught her. Her accent amused them, and they laughed heartily as they gave her money.

Amalfi

"It's mine, all mine!" she cried as she left the foreigners. "But Guiseppe is so good he may have it all. I'll put it in my shoe and take it out piece by piece. He must guess what each one is. Oh, won't it be fun, and how glad he'll be!"

She laughed aloud as she hid her money. Her heart was so light that her joy broke from her lips in snatches of song as she tripped blithely back to Marta and Guiseppe.

Meanwhile Guiseppe had awakened in unusual ill–humor.

"Marta," he growled, "those confounded sticks hurt my back all night! Why didn't you clear them away? You must have seen them. I notice there are none where your idol slept."

He looked around. "Where is she, anyway?"

"She went, only for a moment, to watch the bathers."

"Watch the bathers? She has run away: that's what she has done."

Stopping to tie her shoe, Pappina heard Guiseppe's gruff voice swearing at Marta. He was standing in front of his wife, so neither could see the child coming down the road.

Marta's voice, perfectly calm, reached Pappina.

"Too bad she doesn't run away," the woman said, "but she'll return."

For days Marta had been growing braver, less fearful of Guiseppe. There was no sign of fright on her face even when Guiseppe shook his fist at her.

"You grow a bigger fool every day," he was saying. "You let her go. When I find her I'll beat her. If I'm good to her one day she walks over me the next. I'll beat you both, you fool, do you hear?"

"*Sono qui* [I am here], Guiseppe," came faintly from Pappina's trembling lips. "Don't be cross, Guiseppe. I didn't think you would care."

Guiseppe turned toward her fiercely; he started to upbraid her, but there was such an expression of submissive beauty on her face, that he stopped and wheeled suddenly about.

"Get along," he muttered. "I'll walk behind to–day for a change."

Pappina forgot about the money, even that she had it, until it hurt her foot as she walked.

"I'll never tell," she vowed to herself. "It's mine, and some day when he's so mean and horrid that we can't stand him any longer, Marta and I will run away."

Several times, in a forgiving spirit, Pappina went back to Guiseppe and walked by his side, trying to be friendly with him. Her efforts each time were met with a scowl that sent her again to Marta, who always gave her a welcoming smile.

Guiseppe grumbled almost constantly to himself. Marta, fearing trouble, said to Pappina:

"Won't you try once more, *carina?* It is best for us all to have no discord."

"I want to be friends with Guiseppe," replied Pappina.

She waited again for the man. This time she look hold of his hand and, looking archly into his face, asked: "Is he going to be cross all day?"

He pulled his hand away.

"Don't you like me this morning?" There was no reply. "Not a bit, Guiseppe?"

No one but such a bear as Guiseppe was just then could have resisted this fairy, who smiled so steadfastly into his face.

"*Basta*," he said sternly. This rebuff was sufficient for Pappina. She took her place by Marta's side and they walked on in silence, trudging over four and a half miles to the little fishing village of Cetara.

On the beach was a group of fishermen, with their wives and children—the women busily mending their fishing–nets, the men smoking and chatting; all enjoying life together.

As soon as Guiseppe saw them he hastened his footsteps, overtook Marta and Pappina, and was soon far ahead of them, down on the beach with the fishermen.

When Marta and Pappina reached the group they stopped and stood hesitating whether or not to join Guiseppe. There was no sign from him.

"Perhaps he is waiting for you," Marta said to Pappina.

The child went toward Guiseppe, but as soon as she reached him he turned from her as though her presence annoyed him. Thinking to please him, she began to sing, but he raised his hand and silenced her.

"Stop!" he growled. "This is the place for the puppets, not you."

His bad temper showed even in the puppet performance. The little he received from the fishermen did not improve his mood. Without a word to any one he took up the Punchinellos and, muttering to himself, walked doggedly, on, passing without a stop through Majori, Minori and Altrani, angry at the whole beautiful world.

There were so many things to interest Pappina that she forgot Guiseppe's unkindness. The orange trees and lemon plantations were a beautiful picture that called forth constant exclamations of admiration and delight.

By–and–by, however, the money hurt her foot so severely that she could not enjoy anything. She was glad when the long tramp was over and they were at last at Amalfi.

Guiseppe threw himself down exhausted. Marta sat down beside him, and Pappina behind both. She wanted to take off her shoe and she was determined Guiseppe should not see the money. Her little foot was blistered from the rubbing of the coins.

"Oh, what shall I do with them? They hurt me so! He'll surely see them and take them from me if I don't put them back in my shoe." So she replaced them, ate her supper, went to sleep, and dreamed all night that she was walking on thistles.

The following morning, Guiseppe did not seem at all inclined to move on. Neither Marta nor Pappina cared to speak to him, nor he to them. Along in the afternoon, the silence began to be distressing to Pappina.

"What do you suppose he is going to do?" she asked Marta. "I won't ask him; he's so cross I won't speak to him."

Marta shook her head.

"We shall just have to wait," she whispered. "Try to be patient."

Not far away, boys were coming from a large building, bearing on their heads long boxes or boards. Pappina watched them for a time; then she asked Marta what they were doing.

"They are bringing out *paste* [letter noodles]," Marta explained. "Do you see how they spread it out in the sun? That is so it will dry."

"I wish we were nearer, so I could see them better. May I go?"

"No, *carina*; I am sure Guiseppe will not let you, and I—no, I am sorry, *carina*, but I dare not let you go."

"But I want to go much so, Marta. Won't you please ask him?"

"It will only make him crosser, *carina*."

"I dare not ask him, for he will not even look at me," the child went on. "If you only knew how much I want to go, you would ask him. Please, please ask him, Marta!"

Pappina had been losing her courage and Marta steadily growing braver. When she decided to grant Pappina's request, she felt quite fearless of Guiseppe as she went to his side.

"Guiseppe, have you noticed those boys?"

"I couldn't help noticing them, could I? They've been doing the same thing all day."

"Shall we walk over there and watch them?"

"Watch them! What for?"

By this time, Pappina had found courage to join Marta, who continued:

"I thought perhaps you would like to go. Pappina is interested in what they are doing; would you care if she goes for a while?"

Guiseppe made no reply. "I'll come back, Guiseppe," Pappina pleaded. "I know I'm bad and cross, but I have never told you a lie, never one." There was no reply. "I want so much to go. Oh, won't you please let me, Guiseppe?"

Pappina's earnest little face was raised appealingly toward his, but he did not even glance at her as he replied:

"Get along. I'll be glad to be rid of you for an hour. One hour—no longer—or there'll be trouble; do you hear?"

"*Si*, signor, I'll be back."

Guiseppe's consent was hardly given before she was off. For some time she watched the boys bringing out the paste, but it made her hungry.

"I'm starved," she said to herself. "I will spend one of my *soldi* for macaroni."

After she had eaten the macaroni she decided that she had much time to see the town in the hour Guiseppe had allowed her.

She came to St. Andrew's Cathedral.

"Maybe if I pray, Guiseppe will stop being so cross. Maybe I'm cross, too," she said to herself as she ran up the long flight of stairs leading to the entrance.

Children were playing in the church. An American lady gave them *soldi* to say prayers for her son. There were ladies near Pappina who were speaking in her own tongue. She heard them say they were going to visit St. Andrew's tomb. Pappina followed them.

At the tomb she knelt, and, bowing her head, began to say her prayers. As she prayed her tired eyelids gradually closed; she lost herself. Starting up, she remembered she was in church, praying; so she began again, "Santa Maria." The little head drooped. She opened her eyes. "S–a–n–t–a M–a–r–i–a—" The weary child had knelt, prayed, and fallen asleep, beside the tomb of St. Andrew.

It was late at night that the sexton, going his rounds, was startled to see what appeared to be a bundle of something red lying by the tomb. Throwing the full rays of the lantern upon the object, he discovered that it was a little child. Many times before he had found children sleeping in the church, but never one by this sacred tomb.

"*Poverina!*" he exclaimed, awakening her as gently as possible. "*Poverina*, you cannot sleep here. I am sorry, but it is against the rules. You must run home. Come." He took her by the arm, led her to the door and put her out in the darkness.

Pappina, scarcely awake, was dazed when left alone. She heard the door close, heard the key turn. For a moment she could not think where she was, or what had happened. She only knew that it was very dark, that she was alone and afraid. She pounded on the church door.

A street in Amalfi

"Let me in, let me in," she begged. "I'm afraid."

No one came to her call; she peered up and down the street. There was no one in sight.

"I shall lose my way if I try to go back alone in the dark," she thought. Then she crouched down on the church steps and cried herself to sleep.

Early next morning, Guiseppe and Marta started to search for Pappina. As they neared St. Andrew's Cathedral Marta spied something red at the top of the steps.

"Wait, Guiseppe! I think—" she left the sentence unfinished as she dashed up the steps and snatched Pappina in her arms, uttering tender, loving words. Guiseppe followed, with scowls and mutterings.

Pappina, being thus awakened, threw her arms about Marta's neck, and cried from sheer joy at finding herself safe.

"Oh, oh, I was lost, and so frightened I dared not move! I meant to come back in an hour, Guiseppe, truly I did, but it was dark, and I could not find my way."

The sexton, hearing voices, opened the door.

"I found your little girl last night," he said. "You see, she was sleeping by the sacred tomb of St.—"

"*Diavolo!*" interrupted Guiseppe harshly. "Why didn't you kick her down the steps?"

"Guiseppe, for shame! The poor little dear!" Marta cried, as she hugged Pappina close to her.

"Don't be hard on the child," begged the sexton. "She was tired and sleepy. I'd have let her sleep inside, but it's against the rules, so I had to put her out. *Poverina*," he said, laying his hand on Pappina's head.

"*Poverina!* Bah! Put her down, Marta." Guiseppe took Pappina roughly by the arm as he continued: "I'm sick of your behavior. You must understand you are bound to me—to me. I paid money for you, and what do I get? Trouble, trouble, nothing else."

"I know it, Guiseppe. I'm sorry, but this time I couldn't help it."

CHAPTER IX

Sorrento, Where Hardships End

"Fifteen miles to Sorrento. As near as I can find out, there'll be no money for us along the way," Guiseppe muttered as they left St. Andrew's Cathedral.

"There's Positano," said Marta, "and the villas. You have passed so many and stopped at none."

Guiseppe looked surprised.

"So I have, fool that I am! Why didn't you speak of it before?"

Marta made no reply and the three walked on in silence. Guiseppe evidently was brooding over the money he had missed, for after some half hour's tramp he turned to Marta.

"Why didn't you speak?" he growled. "Lords and ladies in the villas we have passed, and no money for me! Do you think we've done so well we can afford to lose a chance? Marta, you seem to have a way of keeping your mouth shut when you should open it, but you have been free enough with your tongue lately when you should have held it."

Guiseppe was growing almost unbearable. He grumbled at everybody and everything.

When they met women carrying wood to town, wine–venders and occasionally foreigners, he received their greetings with a scowl. Once or twice tourists had tossed Pappina a few *soldi*, but no one wanted the Punchinellos.

The three visited a few villas, going up the alley, as it would be called in America, by the side of the house. The Punchinellos played, and Pappina sang and was paid and fed, but nothing satisfied Guiseppe. He grumbled continually. The harvest made on fete days had spoiled him for small gains.

"I'm sick of picking up meals wherever we can find them, and of sleeping on the hard ground," he said repeatedly to Marta, as though it were her fault that he was enduring discomforts. Guiseppe had been too many years in his home not to miss it. "Some people may like to tramp all over the country and pick up a living like dogs in an alley, but I'm sick of it, I tell you."

It was first Marta, then Pappina who was made to feel his ill–humor. Neither cared to speak either to him or each other as hand in hand they followed Guiseppe. Once in a while he would turn to look behind, with ugly words to one or both.

They made few stops. When told to sing, Pappina made every effort to please Guiseppe, but no matter how well she sang and danced he found fault with her.

They were two days on the road from Amalfi to Sorrento; Guiseppe never once softened toward either Marta or Pappina. It was not to be expected that his wife should resent his treatment, for she was used to it; but Marta was in constant fear that Pappina would lose her temper and there would be trouble. The poor woman was relieved each night when the two were asleep and there had been no outbreak from the child.

Nothing on the road interested Pappina; the luxuriant lemon and orange groves were passed unnoticed as she trudged, worn and footsore, along the hot, dusty road between the high garden walls.

As they neared Sorrento, Marta tried to interest the child.

"Look, *carina*," she said, "these deep places are called ravines. Years ago when people believed in fairies, they used to say dwarfs lived all about Sorrento in these deep ravines that enclose it."

Pappina made no reply. She seemed tired of everything except Marta. She held her good friend's hand tight and drew closer to her every time Guiseppe turned to look at them.

As soon as the town was reached Guiseppe began his growling anew.

"Sorrento! So this is the town old Genaro talks about. Crowing over me! Seems to think he knows such a lot. Bah! Tasso! Tasso—bah, I say!"

"Is that where I am to sing, Guiseppe?" Pappina asked timidly as she shook the dust from her frayed little frock.

"I'm not talking to you. You had better learn to mind you own business. Marta, I'll not leave this town till I see where the sister of that man Tasso lived, and I'll see his statue, too."

"Tasso." Marta spoke the name softly, not daring to question.

"Yes, Tasso. You don't know anything about him, and you don't need to know. If old Genaro thinks we haven't seen scenery since we've been traveling around the country, he's fooled."

Pappina looked shyly into Guiseppe's set, hard face. Her curiosity was aroused and she wanted to know about Tasso.

"Signor Genaro might ask me about Tasso," she suggested, "and I don't know anything about him, do I?"

Guiseppe looked at Pappina for a moment as though it were on his lips to rebuke her, turned on his heel and started to walk away, then came back.

"You're right for once, girl," he said, grudgingly. "Genaro might ask you, and I want you both to let him see you know about Tasso. It won't hurt either of you to learn something. Tasso was a famous poet. Well, let me see—what was it old Genaro told me? Oh, yes; I remember. He was very wild and ran away from home. The house where he was born and the rock on which it stood were swallowed by the sea, but his sister's house is here and the thing to do is to see that and to go to the Piazza and see his statue."

"Now I remember," said Marta. "I went with the countess. She told me that he came back to

his sister's house disguised as a shepherd, and that is why her home is of interest to tourists."

"Bah! What do they care—what do I care—about a poet who has been dead over three hundred years? I'll go—I'll go. I'll give old Genaro to understand that I saw everything worth seeing. Marta, keep your eye on the upstart, or she'll be going too. Mind what I tell you."

He mopped his brow, handed the Punchinellos to Marta, and was off. Pappina heaved a sigh of relief as she watched him go down the street. When he was quite out of sight, she took off her shoe and showed Marta the money she had hidden away. There were two francs and small coins in plenty.

"Don't tell Guiseppe; will you, Marta? It's for you and me to run away with to America when Guiseppe gets too bad. Take it, Marta, and keep it for us."

Tarantella dancers

The tears came to Marta's eyes and her voice shook as she replied:

"No, no, it's yours, *bambina*. Hide it back in your shoe. Marta likes to know her little one has money snugged away where she can use it if she needs it."

Guiseppe soon returned in the same bad humor in which he had been all the way to Sorrento.

"Those Americans have sent for the Tarantella dancers to come to the Vittoria Hotel to–night to dance the Tarantella for them. They say they dance it better here than in Naples. We will take the upstart there and see what she is worth. Fix her up. There'll be a crowd."

He looked at Pappina. Her face was drawn and white, her hair disordered, her frock soiled, wrinkled and torn.

"What's the matter with the girl?" he asked. "She looks like a hungry beggar. See her shoes, her dress all dirt and stains. Confound you, Pappina, where's your beauty gone? You are all eyes to–day, when you ought to look like something." He grabbed her fiercely by the arm and shook her. Pappina's hot Italian blood boiled.

"You coward!" she hissed the words. She doubled up her little fist and raised it to strike him. Guiseppe grabbed her hand and shook her again in his fury. Marta sprang to Pappina's rescue with a savage look on her face no one had ever seen there before. Guiseppe loosened his hold on Pappina and pushed her away from him with such force she would have fallen to the ground had not Marta caught her.

"Coward! Fiend! Coward!" the child hissed through her set teeth.

"Coward, eh! Call me names, will you? We'll see after to–night. Marta, wash her impudent face; comb her hair; for heaven's sake do something! They'll think she is no more than a beggar, and they are sick of beggars. We found that out at Amalfi, where the whole town begs."

Marta washed Pappina, combed her hair, and tried to smooth out her dress and make her acceptable to Guiseppe; but he seemed determined not to be pleased.

"Can't you keep your eyelids down a little?" he said to the child. "I tell you, you are all eyes to–day—great big, black, staring eyes! Pinch up her cheeks, Marta; see if you can't get some color in them."

Pappina looked pleadingly first at Marta then at Guiseppe, then burst into tears.

"Stop your crying, you wild–eyed beggar! Lost your spirit, too? What are you good for, I'd like to know, with beauty and spirit both gone!"

Pappina dried her tears and choked back her sobs, while Marta stood as if paralyzed. She longed to soothe the child, yet dared not, her old fear of Guiseppe upon her again.

"There'll be great dancing at the Vittoria to–night. Get up and show me what you can do. You needn't sing; I want to see your dancing."

Pappina did not move.

"Are you deaf, too? Didn't you hear me? I say dance!"

"Guiseppe," came faintly from the frightened child, "I will try to please you to–night, but I cannot dance now. Be good to me; then I shall be happy and dance all night if you wish me to."

"Oh, it's your own way you want again, is it? For once I want mine and I'll have it, too. Dance now—at once!"

"I'll try."

She tried. Her body was quivering from excitement and fear. Her little blistered foot pained her. She couldn't dance. Guiseppe watched her angrily, Marta tearfully, as she lifted her tambourine, struck it and danced one step—two—then dropped on her knees.

"*Pieta, pieta* [pity, pity], signor," she cried. "I cannot dance now. To–night—with the music, the people and the dancers—I will dance well then; not now, Guiseppe. I pray you, dear Marta, tell him I cannot."

Guiseppe took up a big stick that was lying near him. He struck Pappina once—twice. She was on her feet like a flash. She started to run, Guiseppe seized her by her dress; it slipped through his fingers and before he had time to collect himself she was gone, speeding like a deer down the street. She was running away from Guiseppe, she neither knew nor cared where.

Down the street, turning one corner after another, on, on to the *marina*, where she was soon lost in the throng of boys and tourists. She jumped into a row–boat just as the oarsman was starting with his load of passengers for the steamer leaving Sorrento for Naples.

There were a few moments of suspense; then she was hurried aboard the steamer with the others. She was safe!

Guiseppe, as he sprang after Pappina, stumbled on his own cruel stick. When he got to his feet the child was turning a corner. He saw the little red dress and its owner disappear from his view forever. He glared in a frenzy at Marta.

"Curse her! Curse her!" he shrieked. "To–day of all days to get away from me! Marta, have you turned to stone? Why don't you move? Why didn't you run after her, instead of standing there staring like a mummy? We must have her before dark. Go—search everywhere. Move!—Don't stop till you find her."

CHAPTER X

Naples, and a New Life

Pappina stood on the deck, holding fast to the railing for support. Her face was livid, her body shook. She looked anxiously toward the shore to see if she had been followed. There were no signs of Guiseppe!

She kept her eyes riveted on the boys splashing in the water until they appeared mere specks in the distance. Then, worn out with excitement, she sank down and burst into tears. Stifling her sobs, presently the child fell asleep from sheer exhaustion.

The captain, passing that way, saw Pappina curled up on the deck. He could not see her winsome, beautiful face, for it was buried in her arms as she lay there sleeping. He saw just a child with a tattered, dirty dress and ragged little shoes. He gave her a kick.

"Get up," he said. "What are you doing here? This is no place for beggars; move on."

Pappina jumped up quickly. He had called her a beggar. She looked at him with flashing eyes.

"Beggar!" cried she. "No, signor, I'm not a beggar. You want money? I have it, I can pay." She began to unfasten one of her little worn shoes. The captain stood watching her, perplexed.

"What does it mean?" he asked himself. "She has such beauty and pride, and her clothes are so poor! She is alone and has money in her shoe. I am puzzled this time, for sure."

He tugged fiercely at his long black mustache, waiting to see what she would offer him from her store. She brought up coins and handed him a franc.

"Is that enough, signor?" she asked. "I have more."

Looking into the unfathomable depths of those great velvet eyes, the captain would have refused the wealth of Crœsus had she offered it. Her beauty and her independence conquered him.

"Keep your money, child. As long as I run the boat you ride free."

"*Grazie, buono signor* [Thanks, good sir]. May I go inside? The boat rocks so. I feel—may I lie down just a little while, signor? I have my tambourine and I can sing and dance for you by–and–by when my head—when I am not so dizzy."

"Go inside, child, and lie down. I will look after you soon."

Pappina, catching hold of chairs and benches to steady herself, staggered inside and lay down, dizzy and faint. She was too sick even to think or to wonder where the boat was taking her.

The steamer was filled with people returning from Capri and the wonderful Blue Grotto. Among the tourists was Mrs. Elinor Thurston, a childless American widow traveling abroad with friends, seeking some new interest from day to day—anything to make her forget the loss of her husband and her only child. She noticed Pappina's pale, beautiful face and her glorious eyes. There was something about the child that reminded Mrs. Thurston of her boy. She watched Pappina intently as the little girl threw herself on the floor. The forlorn figure interested her, lying with her tambourine tightly clasped in her hands.

"Poor child!" she murmured softly.

"Such a picture!" exclaimed one of the tourists. "I must take a snap–shot of this typical little Italian beauty."

Pappina, hearing voices near her, opened her eyes. Her glance fell upon the sweet face of Mrs. Thurston, who sat looking kindly at her. The child smiled faintly, closed her eyes again, and was asleep.

That smile won Mrs. Thurston. She watched to see who was with the little girl, and seeing no one she inquired of the captain:

"Tell me, who is with that beautiful child?" Her face was diffused with tender, earnest solicitude as she gazed at the little figure lying at their feet.

"No one, apparently; she seems to be alone."

The captain then related to Mrs. Thurston how the little girl had taken money from her shoe and offered it to him for her fare.

Pappina began to talk in her sleep.

"He struck me," she murmured. "It hurt me so!" They tried to make out her words, so jumbled at first, then clearer and louder, till she fairly screamed: "Guiseppe, how dare you strike me? Marta, hold him. I hate him! I wish he were dead—I do, for I hate him!"

Mrs. Thurston stooped and took hold of the child's hot little hand.

"See how flushed her face is!" she whispered. "Her pulse is too quick; she is feverish, poor child," she said with pity as she gently picked her up and placed her on a sofa.

"She is my charge and I'll stay with her," she told the friends who urged her to go on deck and enjoy the beautiful scenery.

"Scenery!" she exclaimed as she took Pappina's hand in hers. "There is nothing so beautiful as this child. I am almost hoping no one will claim her when we land at Naples, for I need her. Her eyes are like my Harold's, so—" She could not finish the sentence for the tears that welled to her eyes and the sorrow that choked her.

At Naples no one came for Pappina, alone and sick, still tossing her head in pain and fever.

"I cannot leave her," her new friend declared. "She must be cared for. Oh, how glad I am that I can do everything for her!"

Pappina, still unconscious, was carried to a carriage and taken to the International Hospital.

"See that every attention is given her," Mrs. Thurston said. "Leave nothing undone. Here is my card, and I am responsible for her. I will be back in the morning."

It was hard for Mrs. Thurston to leave Pappina, but friends were waiting for her and there was an engagement to fulfill.

The nurse put Pappina to bed, dressed in a little white nightgown, the first she had ever worn.

Early the following day Mrs. Thurston called.

"How is she?" she inquired eagerly. "Still unconscious? Take me to her. All night I have thought and dreamed of her. Her eyes have haunted me even in my sleep. Take me to her."

She asked anxiously if any one had sought the child.

"No one? Oh, joy! Perhaps I may have her for my own."

Enrichetta, the nurse, showed the welts on the child's body—two red marks from Guiseppe's stick.

"*Povera figlietta* [Poor little girl]," she said. "It is now quite certain she will have a run of fever."

The excitement and strain of the past few weeks had proved too much for Pappina. In her delirium it was always of Guiseppe she spoke. She would beg, plead and defy him, start to sing, then cry: "The tambourine will make no music. It is broken. I cannot sing or dance now, Guiseppe, for my head hurts and the sun is so hot."

It was easy to gather from her delirious talk some idea of the hard life she had led.

No artist's dream could have appeared more beautiful than she, as she lay in her bed. Mrs. Thurston came every day, sometimes twice, to see her. In Pappina she had found a real interest in life; and her motherly heart warmed toward this lovely, abused child.

True love for Pappina sprang up in her heart in the days of the child's convalescence. In the long talks the two had together there was never a word of complaint against Guiseppe. The physician and nurse in charge with Mrs. Thurston questioned her and she willingly told them all, but never with complaints.

"I think I was as bad as I could be, because, you see, Guiseppe paid money for me, and sometimes when I was tired I did not want to sing and dance. Oh, please don't make me go back to him!"

"I will find Guiseppe," declared Mrs. Thurston. "I will pay him back with interest all he paid for you, and you may be my little girl if you will."

"Your little girl! I the little girl of such a lady!" The bright look on the child's face changed as she continued:

"You haven't seen my clothes. The red dress was splendid before I spoiled it and my shoes were new once."

"Never mind the clothes. New clothes go with your new life, dear."

All the time Pappina was recovering, Mrs. Thurston was having search made for Guiseppe. Two days before Pappina left the hospital, he was found on the Toledo with his Punchinellos. Those employed to find him were looking for a Punchinello showman with a brown–haired, pale–faced English wife. All about Naples they searched, but in vain.

Finding, one day, a man who exactly answered the description given of Guiseppe, the detective stopped, watched his show a while, then accosted him.

"I seek," he said, "for Guiseppe Capasso."

"I am he," replied Guiseppe.

"I have passed you many times," continued the detective. "I sought a man with a wife, an Englishwoman who passes the hat."

"*Ohime* [Ah, me]!" exclaimed Guiseppe. "I had a wife, but she is no more. A sudden illness took her from me. Poor Marta!" Guiseppe bowed his head in sorrow.

"I came to speak of the child."

"Pappina!" cried Guiseppe. "Where is she? Poor Marta, *sposa mia* [my wife]—she died with Pappina's name on her lips." Guiseppe sobbed in sincere grief.

For a time he seemed to forget everything but the loss of his patient, long–suffering wife. Gradually it was made known to him that there was money awaiting him if he would give up all claim to Pappina. Guiseppe never paid for Pappina what Mrs. Thurston paid Guiseppe. She wanted Pappina and money was no object to her.

They thought best not to speak to Pappina of her home, but let her forget about it as soon as possible. Pietro was proud to give his child to so grand a lady, who would educate and do for her as her very own. So it came about that Mrs. Elinor Thurston adopted Pappina Pierno.

Nothing could have been sweeter than Pappina when she was dressed for the first time after her illness. Those who were with her laughed and cried to see her fondle her clothes. Such wonderful underwear, so sheer and dainty, with ribbon and lace! Her delight was almost pathetic. If Mrs. Thurston was hungry for affection she certainly found all she desired in Pappina, with her impulsive, appreciative nature.

Mrs. Thurston seemed to live only in and for the child. Such shopping days as they had! Such a trunk full of clothes as they bought—dresses, hats, coats, gloves, handkerchiefs—and perfume too, if you please!

They were a month in Naples and Switzerland; then Mrs. Thurston decided she would go home, back to America to have Pappina learn English and begin her education.

"I'm really going to America to live, and not just to run away from Guiseppe? Sometimes, mamma," shyly she said to Mrs. Thurston, "I think I must be dreaming, but if I am, I never want to awaken."

"We will keep your tambourine for our souvenir, *carissima*, and when you think you are only dreaming, just strike your tambourine."

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—In the Table of Contents, at "CHAPTER III" the original reads "Fete Day at Naples"; it has been changed to "Feste Day at Naples" as in other places in the book.

—Many of the Italian words used in this book are incorrect; they have been left as in the original.

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