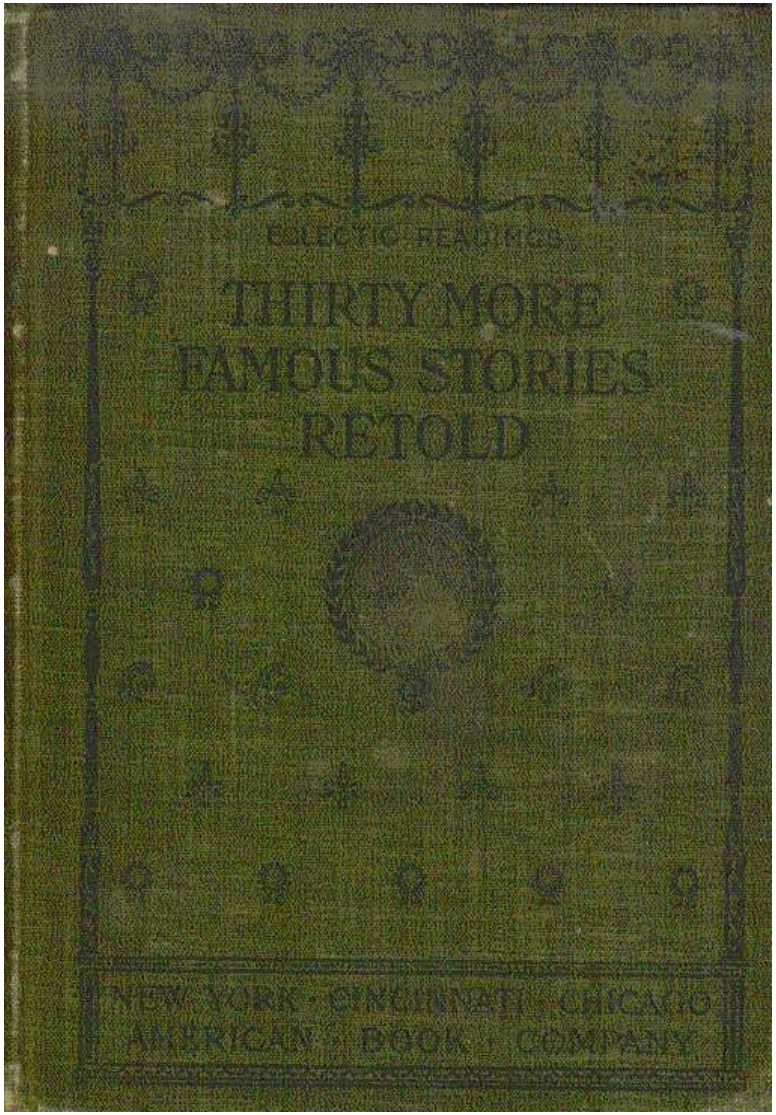

THIRTY MORE

FAMOUS STORIES RETOLD

BY

JAMES BALDWIN

AUTHOR OF "FIFTY FAMOUS STORIES RETOLD," "BALDWIN'S READERS," "ABRAHAM LINCOLN," "THE STORY OF SIEGFRIED," ETC.

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TO THE BOYS AND GIRLS

It is now more than a year since you read my "Fifty Famous Stories." Those stories, as you will remember, are quite short and easy. Before you had finished your second year at school you could read every one of them without stopping to study the meaning of the words. Many thousands of children have read those fifty stories, and then they have asked for more; and this is my excuse for the present volume.

You are older now, and you have learned many things which you did not know when we first became acquainted. You are able to read almost everything. And so, in telling you "Thirty More Famous Stories," I have chosen more difficult subjects and have not been so careful to select the shortest and easiest words. Still, you will not find this book hard to read, neither do I think it will prove to be less interesting than the earlier volume.

Nearly all the stories are true, and there are not more than three or four that might not have happened. In every one there is something worth learning and remembering.

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CHAPTER I

COLUMBUS AND THE EGG

Christopher Columbus discovered America on the 12th of October, 1492. He had spent eighteen years in planning for that wonderful first voyage which he made across the Atlantic Ocean. The thoughts and hopes of the best part of his life had been given to it. He had talked and argued with sailors and scholars and princes and kings, saying, "I know that, by sailing west across the great ocean, one may at last reach lands that have never been visited by Europeans." But he had been laughed at as a foolish dreamer, and few people had any faith in his projects.

At last, however, the king and queen of Spain gave him ships with which to make the trial voyage. He crossed the ocean and discovered strange lands, inhabited by a people unlike any that had been known before. He believed that these lands were a part of India.

When he returned home with the news of his discovery there was great rejoicing, and he was hailed as the hero who had given a new world to Spain. Crowds of people lined the streets through which he passed, and all were anxious to do him honor. The king and queen welcomed him to their palace and listened with pleasure to the story of his voyage. Never had so great respect been shown to any common man.

But there were some who were jealous of the discoverer, and as ready to find fault as others were to praise. "Who is this Columbus?" they asked, "and what has he done? Is he not a pauper pilot from Italy? And could not any other seaman sail across the ocean just as he has done?"

One day Columbus was at a dinner which a Spanish gentleman had given in his honor, and several of these persons were present. They were proud, conceited fellows, and they very soon began to try to make Columbus uncomfortable.

"You have discovered strange lands beyond the sea," they said. "But what of that? We do not see why there should be so much said about it. Anybody can sail across the ocean; and anybody can coast along the islands on the other side, just as you have done. It is the simplest thing in the world."

Columbus made no answer; but after a while he took an egg from a dish and said to the company, "Who among you, gentlemen, can make this egg stand on end?"

One by one those at the table tried the experiment. When the egg had gone entirely around and none had succeeded, all said that it could not be done.

Then Columbus took the egg and struck its small end gently upon the table so as to break the shell a little. After that there was no trouble in making it stand upright.

"Gentlemen," said he, "what is easier than to do this which you said was impossible? It is the simplest thing in the world. Anybody can do it—*after he has been shown how*."

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CHAPTER II

"UPON A PEAK IN DARIEN"

FIRST STORY

After Columbus had shown the way to America a great many Spaniards came over. They came to Haiti and Cuba and Porto Rico and the smaller islands near them. Like Columbus they believed that these lands were near the eastern coast of Asia. They believed that they were a part of India, and therefore spoke of them as the Indies. Afterwards, when their mistake became known, these islands were named the West Indies and the true islands of India were called the East Indies.

Far to the southwest of Cuba, Columbus had discovered a long coast which he named Darien. It was the neck of land which we call the Isthmus of Panama, but he supposed that it was a part of the mainland of Asia. A few years later some Spanish sailors visited Darien and carried word back to Haiti that there was gold there. Now at that time a Spaniard would go to the end of the world for gold, and therefore this news caused great excitement among the young men who had come across the ocean for the purpose of adventure.

"To Darien! to Darien!" was the cry; and soon a company was formed and two ships were made ready to sail to that land of promise.

The voyage was a delightful one from the start. The sea was calm, the wind was fair, and the vessels sped swiftly on their way. Soon the pleasant shores and green mountains of Haiti were lost to view. Only little rocky islets could be seen. The ship was heading straight into the Caribbean Sea.

Then, what was the surprise of the crew of the larger ship to hear strange rappings in the hold! A voice also was heard, like that of some one calling for help. What could it mean? The sailors could not see any one, and yet the sounds could not be mistaken.

"Please help me out!" The voice seemed to come from among some barrels in which provisions were stored.

"A man is in one of the barrels," said the captain.

Soon the barrel was found and opened. Out of it leaped a young man, richly clad in a velvet cloak and a silk doublet embroidered with gold. He was a handsome fellow. His eyes were keen and bright, and his face had a determined look, like that of one who is used to having his own way about things. At his side hung a long sword, and in his belt was a dagger.

Several of the men knew him; and so he did not need to say that his name was Vasco Nuñez de Balboa. They knew that he was a dashing adventurer, always doing and daring, and always borrowing and spending money. But why was he in the barrel?

"The truth of the matter is this," he said; "I am in debt to almost everybody in Haiti. The officers were looking for me and would have taken me to prison. So I persuaded one of my friends to put me in a barrel and send me on board with the salt beef. And now here I am, bound with the rest of you for the rich coast of Darien."

The captain was very angry. He threatened to put Balboa ashore on one of the rocky islets. "Shame! shame!" cried the rest of the party. "Let him go with us. He will be a great help." And so the captain grew kinder and agreed to take him.

Balboa's manners were so pleasant, and he proved to be so able and brave, that soon nearly all on the ship looked up to him as their leader. When they reached Darien and began to seek for a good place to settle, Balboa gave them much help.

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He had been on the coast before, and he guided them to a safe harbor.

The captain proved to be so overbearing that the men at last refused to obey him. They chose Balboa to be their commander, and the captain was glad to go back to Haiti in one of the ships.

Balboa made a treaty with a powerful Indian chief who lived in a grand house and ruled all the country around. He married the chief's daughter; and at the wedding feast the chief gave the Spaniards a great quantity of gold and many slaves.

The Indians did not care much for gold. They did not know that it was worth anything. When they saw the Spaniards molding it into bars and quarreling over it, they were astonished. "If you think so much of that yellow stuff," they said, "why don't you go where there is plenty of it?" And then they told Balboa that far to the south, on the other side of the mountains, there was a great sea, and on the shores of the sea there lived a people who had so much gold that they used it to make cups and bowls and even pans and kettles.

Balboa made up his mind to go at once in search of that sea. With two hundred men and a pack of bloodhounds, to chase unfriendly Indians, he set off toward the mountains. The distance was not great, but the country was very rough, the forest was almost impassable, and the party had to move slowly. After many days they came to the highest ridge of the mountains. Balboa climbed to the top of the loftiest peak and looked around. South and west of him he beheld a great sea. It was so near that it seemed almost at his feet; and it stretched away and away into the distance until it seemed to meet the blue sky.

No white man had ever beheld that sea before; none had even so much as heard of it. The Spaniards afterwards called it the South Sea, because in going to it across the isthmus it seemed to lie south of the land; but we know it as the largest of all the oceans, the mighty Pacific.

From that peak in Darien, Balboa looked down with mingled feelings of awe and exultation.

"With eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific,—and all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien."

Balboa had no idea that he had discovered an ocean. He supposed that the great water was merely a gulf or bay washing the coast, perhaps of India, perhaps of China. He hastened to get down to the shore. He stood on the beach, and as the waves broke about his feet he raised his sword in the air and declared that he took possession of the new-found sea in the name of the king of Spain.

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Balboa with his men soon returned to the other side of the isthmus. He sent word to Spain of the discovery he had made. But ships and men and a new governor were already on their way to Darien; for word had reached the king that plenty of gold was to be had there.

The new governor was an old man, as fierce and heartless as a tiger. No sooner had he arrived in Darien than he began to oppress and kill the Indians. Thousands of them perished through his cruelty. Balboa was grieved to the heart; he felt pity for the poor savages. By the first homeward-bound ship he secretly sent complaints to the king about the governor's doings. Then he set to work getting ready to explore the South Sea.

Four small ships were taken apart at Darien, and Balboa caused the pieces to be carried over the mountains. At the shore on the farther side these pieces were again put together, and the ships were launched upon the sea. They were the first European vessels that ever floated on the Pacific.

But they were not yet ready to sail. They still needed a few bolts to strengthen them and some pitch to stop the leaks. While Balboa was waiting for these things the governor sent for him. The old tiger had heard of the complaints that had been sent to the king.

Balboa was ready to obey orders. He recrossed the mountains and was met by the officers who had been sent to arrest him. "You have plotted against me, you have tried to turn the king against me," said the savage governor. "You shall die the death of a traitor."

Before the sun went down, the brave, dashing, handsome Balboa was dead.

CHAPTER III

"UPON A PEAK IN DAIREN"

SECOND STORY

After Balboa's discovery of the Pacific Ocean, seventy years went by. Then, one day, another bold adventurer stood upon a peak in Darien.

The name of this man was Francis Drake. He was known far and wide as the most daring sailor on the seas. He was an Englishman, and he hated Spain and the Spaniards with a bitter hatred. Like Balboa, he visited Darien in search of gold; but he meant to get it from those whom he called his enemies—to take it away from them by force.

He stood near the top of a high cliff, not far from the line where the famous Panama Canal is now being built. Below him there was a deep ravine, and along the ravine there

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was a mule path. This mule path was the road along which the Spaniards carried their treasures over the mountains to the seaport of Darien, to be loaded on ships and sent to Spain. Close to this pathway, crouching behind rocks and trees, were Captain Drake's followers—a few rough sailors armed to the teeth and a band of light-footed Indians with spears and clubs. They seemed to be expecting some one to pass that way; for they moved very cautiously and kept their weapons in their hands ready for use, while they watched their leader on the steep mountain wall above them.

As Drake stood near the edge of the cliff he saw before him a tall tree with spreading branches reaching like gaunt, bare arms toward the sky. "Ah!" said he, "what better outlook could one want than this?"

Sailor as he was, it was easy enough for him to clamber up the gnarled trunk. Soon he was standing on the very topmost branch. As he looked around him, what a glorious view did he behold! On every side were wooded mountain tops, green with tropical verdure. Between them were deep ravines and broad valleys, with thick forests of giant trees and sprawling vines and tangled underwoods, through which the feet of man had never passed. Far to the north he caught faint glimpses of the sea on which he had lately sailed, and he knew that in a snug harbor somewhere on the coast of that sea his ship, safe hidden from Spanish eyes, was waiting for his return.

But it was not for the northern view that he cared. He turned and looked in the other direction. Never had he seen a grander sight. There, in plain view before him, was the great western ocean, the mighty Pacific, which the Spaniard Balboa had discovered, and which Spain had ever since claimed as her own.

The waters danced and sparkled in the sunlight, just as they had done in Balboa's time, and they stretched south and west a marvelous distance, until at last sea and sky seemed mingled in one. The heart of the bold sailor was strangely moved as he lazed upon this scene; for he was the first of Englishmen to behold that greatest of all waters.

As he looked he could see the ships of Spain, like specks upon the water, sailing into the port of Panama, and bringing the treasures of Peru and of the golden East to swell the wealth and increase the power of the Spanish king. Tears came to his eyes. He clenched his hands with strong determination. His breath came quickly as he thought of the hated Spaniards and of their claim to the ownership of half the world.

Then, forgetting where he was, he knelt down among the branches. "O God," he prayed, "help me to humble the pride of Spain, and help me to promote England's glory on the seas. And I vow to give my time and strength to this cause, and never to rest till I shall sail an English ship on the waters of this great ocean."

" 'I myself will make him a knight.' "

A call from his men in the ravine below aroused him; and as he hastened to descend from the tree he heard the tinkle of bells far down the mountain pass. A train of mules laden with gold and silver from the mines of Peru was slowly

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approaching. It was to waylay and capture such a train that he and his followers had come to this peak in Darien; and here, now, was his opportunity.

An hour later Captain Drake was dividing the treasure among his followers. There was so great a weight of precious metals that they could not carry it all, but were obliged to bury a part in a secret place in the forest.

The story of the bold capture was carried to Panama and the other Spanish towns on the isthmus, but Drake was soon safe back on board of his ship. The fear of the bold sea rover spread to every port on the coast, and from that day the pride of Spain began to be humbled.Two years later Captain Drake fulfilled his vow by sailing an English vessel on the mighty Pacific. Along the coasts of Chile and Peru he sailed. He captured Spanish towns, he waylaid Spanish treasure ships, he carried terror into all the Spanish provinces. Then, when his vessel was loaded with so much treasure that she could carry no more, he turned his course to the west, and was the first Englishman to sail across the Pacific. Westward and still westward he sailed. He passed on the south of the Philippines, he touched at the Spice Islands, he traversed the Indian Ocean, he sailed around Africa, and finally returned in safety to England. It was a wonderful voyage—the first English voyage round the world.

Queen Elizabeth was so delighted when she heard of Drake's exploits that she cried out, "He shall be SIR Francis Drake. I myself will make him a knight."

And Sir Francis Drake it was; and from his time the power of England on the sea began to be felt.

CHAPTER IV

THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

Among the Spaniards who flocked to America in the hope of finding gold, there was a certain officer whose name was Juan Ponce de Leon. He had distinguished himself in the Spanish army and was very rich. He also had much influence with the king—so much, in fact, that he was soon appointed governor of all the eastern part of Haiti.

While attending to his duties in Haiti, he learned that at some distance farther eastward there was a rich island abounding in gold and other precious metals. The Indians called this island Borinquen; it was the same land which Columbus had discovered a few years before and called Porto Rico.

Ponce de Leon was so much pleased by the reports which were brought to him of the great wealth of Porto Rico

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that he at once made up his mind to get that wealth for himself. The king of Spain was very willing to please him and to have a share of the profits, and therefore appointed him governor of Porto Rico. Ponce was not a man to waste time in any undertaking. With eight stanch ships and several hundred men, he at once set sail for his new province and in due time landed upon the island.

The natives were kind and gentle. They welcomed the white men to their pleasant country and tried to help them in such ways as they could. Ponce de Leon repaid them as the Spaniards at that time usually repaid a kindness,—he robbed them of all they had and made slaves of as many as he could. Then at length the harassed savages turned against their oppressors and tried to drive them from the island; but what could they do against enemies so cunning and strong?

Ponce was as heartless and unfeeling as any wild beast. Soon the once happy island was filled with distress and terror. The Indians were hunted from their homes. Thousands of them were killed, and the rest became the slaves of their conquerors.

Ponce began to form a settlement at a place now called Pueblo Viejo; but he soon changed his plans and removed to a fine harbor on the north shore of the island. There he laid out the city of San Juan. He built for himself, near the mouth of the harbor, a grand house which he called Casa Blanca, or the White Castle; and there he made his home for some time.

But, with all his wealth, Ponce was not happy. He had lived so carelessly and wildly that his youth went from him early. At fifty years of age he was a miserable old man. There was no more joy in the world for him.

One day as he was sitting unhappy in the White Castle, a thing occurred that kindled a spark of hope in his despairing mind. He overheard an Indian slave say, "In Bimini no one grows old."

"Bimini! What is Bimini?" he asked.

"It is a beautiful island that lies far, far to the north of us," was the answer.

"Tell me about it."

"There is a fountain there, a spring of clear water, the most wonderful in the world. Every one that bathes in it becomes as young and strong as he was in his best days. No one grows old in Bimini."

"Have you ever been there?"

"Ah, no. It is too far away for any of our people to make the voyage. But we have heard talk of the fountain all our lives."

Ponce asked other Indians about Bimini and its magic fountain. All had heard of it. It. was a land fragrant with flowers. It lay far to the northwest—too far for frail canoes to venture. But the great ships of the white men could easily make the voyage in a few days.

Ponce made up his mind to discover the fountain. He first got the king's permission to conquer Bimini, wherever it might be. Then with three ships and a number of followers he sailed toward the northwest. He passed through the great group of islands known as the Bahamas; and, wherever there were natives living, he stopped and made inquiries.

"Where is Bimini? Where is the magic fountain of youth?"

They pointed to the northwest. It was always a little farther and a little farther. No one had ever seen the fountain, but Ponce understood that every one had heard of it.

At length, after leaving the Bahamas far behind them, the Spaniards discovered a strange coast where the land seemed to be covered with flowers. Was this Bimini?

Nobody could tell. The coast stretched so far northward and southward that Ponce felt sure it was no island but the mainland of a continent. The day was Easter Sunday,

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which in Spain is called Pascua de Flores, or the Feast of Flowers. For this reason, and also because of the abundance of flowers, the Spaniards named the land Florida.

Ponce de Leon went on shore at many places and sought for the wonderful fountain. He drank from every clear spring. He bathed in many a limpid stream. But his lost youth did not come back to him.

He sailed southward and around to the western coast of Florida, asking everywhere,—

"Is this Bimini? And where is the fountain of youth?"

But the Indians who lived there had never heard of Bimini, and they knew of no fountain of youth. And so, at last, the search was given up, and Ponce returned disappointed to Porto Rico.

Nine years passed, and then he sailed again for Florida. This time he took a number of men with him in order to conquer the country and seize upon whatever treasures he might find there. More than this, he expected to explore its woods and rivers and seek again for the mysterious fountain of youth. The Florida Indians did not have any treasures; but they were brave and loved their homes. They would not be conquered and enslaved without a struggle. They therefore fell upon the Spaniards when they landed, and drove them back to their ships.

Ponce de Leon was struck by an arrow. He was wounded in the thigh.

"Take me back to Spain," said he, "for I shall never find the fountain of youth."

His ship carried him to Cuba; but no skill could heal his wound. He lingered in pain for a long time, and then died, bewailing his lost youth.

CHAPTER V

"EUREKA!"

There was once a king of Syracuse whose name was Hiero. The country over which he ruled was quite small, but for that very reason he wanted to wear the biggest crown in the world. So he called in a famous goldsmith, who was skillful in all kinds of fine work, and gave him ten pounds of pure gold.

"Take this," he said, "and fashion it into a crown that shall make every other king want it for his own. Be sure that you put into it every grain of the gold I give you, and do not mix any other metal with it."

"It shall be as you wish," said the goldsmith. "Here I receive from you ten pounds of pure gold; within ninety days I will return to you the finished crown which shall be of exactly the same weight."

Ninety days later, true to his word, the goldsmith brought the crown. It was a beautiful piece of work, and all who saw it said that it had not its equal in the world. When King Hiero put it on his head it felt very uncomfortable, but he did not mind that—he was sure that no other king had so fine a headpiece. After he had admired it from this side and from that, he weighed it on his own scales. It was exactly as heavy as he had ordered.

"You deserve great praise," he said to the goldsmith. "You have wrought very skillfully and you have not lost a grain of my gold."

There was in the king's court a very wise man whose name was Archimedes. When he was called in to admire the king's crown he turned it over many times and examined it very closely.

"Well, what do you think of it?" asked Hiero.

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"The workmanship is indeed very beautiful," answered Archimedes, "but—but the gold—"

"The gold is all there," cried the king. "I weighed it on my own scales."

" 'Well, what do you think of it?' asked Hiero."

"True," said Archimedes, "but it does not appear to have the same rich red color that it had in the lump. It is not red at all, but a brilliant yellow, as you can plainly see."

"Most gold is yellow," said Hiero; "but now that you speak of it I do remember that when this was in the lump it had a much richer color."

"What if the goldsmith has kept out a pound or two of the gold and made up the weight by adding brass or silver?" asked Archimedes.

"Oh, he could not do that," said Hiero; "the gold has merely changed its color in the working." But the more he thought of the matter the less pleased he was with the crown. At last he said to Archimedes, "Is there any way to find out whether that goldsmith really cheated me, or whether he honestly gave me back my gold?"

"I know of no way," was the answer.

But Archimedes was not the man to say that anything was impossible. He took great delight in working out hard problems, and when any question puzzled him he would keep studying until he found some sort of answer to it. And so, day after day, he thought about the gold and tried to find some way by which it could be tested without doing harm to the crown.

One morning he was thinking of this question while he was getting ready for a bath. The great bowl or tub was full to the very edge, and as he stepped into it a quantity of water flowed out upon the stone floor. A similar thing had happened a hundred times before, but this was the first time that Archimedes had thought about it.

"How much water did I displace by getting into the tub?" he asked himself. "Anybody can see that I displaced a bulk of water equal to the bulk of my body. A man half my size would displace half as much.

"Now suppose, instead of putting myself into the tub, I had put Hiero's crown into it, it would have displaced a bulk of water equal to its own bulk. All, let me see! Gold is much heavier than silver. Ten pounds of pure gold will not make so great a bulk as say seven pounds of gold mixed with three

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pounds of silver. If Hiero's crown is pure gold it will displace the same bulk of water as any other ten pounds of pure gold. But if it is part gold and part silver it will displace a larger bulk. I have it at last! Eureka! Eureka!"

Forgetful of everything else he leaped from the bath. Without stopping to dress himself, he ran through the streets to the king's palace shouting, "Eureka! Eureka! Eureka!" which in English means, "I have found it! I have found it! I have found it!"

The crown was tested. It was found to displace much more water than ten pounds of pure gold displaced. The guilt of the goldsmith was proved beyond a doubt. But whether he was punished or not, I do not know, neither does it matter.

The simple discovery which Archimedes made in his bath tub was worth far more to the world than Hiero's crown. Can you tell why?

CHAPTER VI

SIR ISAAC NEWTON AND THE APPLE

Sir Isaac Newton was a great thinker. No other man of his time knew so much about the laws of nature; no other man understood the reasons of things so well as he. He learned by looking closely at things and by hard study. He was always thinking, thinking.

Although he was one of the wisest men that ever lived, yet he felt that he knew but very little. The more he learned, the better he saw how much there was still to be learned.

When he was a very old man he one day said: "I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore. I have amused myself by now and then finding a smooth pebble or a pretty shell, but the great ocean of truth still lies before me unknown and unexplored."

It is only the very ignorant who think themselves very wise.

One day in autumn Sir Isaac was lying on the grass under an apple tree and thinking, thinking, thinking. Suddenly an apple that had grown ripe on its branch fell to the ground by his side.

"What made that apple fall?" he asked himself.

"It fell because its stem would no longer hold it to its branch," was his first thought.

But Sir Isaac was not satisfied with this answer. "Why did it fall toward the ground? Why should it not fall some other way just as well?" he asked.

"All heavy things fall to the ground—but why do they? Because they are heavy. That is not a good reason. For then we may ask why is anything heavy? Why is one thing heavier than another?"

When he had once begun to think about this he did not stop until he had reasoned it all out.

Millions and millions of people had seen apples fall, but it was left for Sir Isaac Newton to ask why they fall. He explained it in this way:—

"Every object draws every other object toward it.

"The more matter an object contains the harder it draws.

"The nearer an object is to another the harder it draws.

"The harder an object draws other objects, the heavier it is said to be.

"The earth is many millions of times heavier than an apple; so it draws the apple toward it millions and millions of times harder than the apple can draw the other way.

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"The earth is millions of times heavier than any object near to or upon its surface; so it draws every such object toward it.

"This is why things fall, as we say, toward the earth.

"While we know that every object draws every other object, we cannot know why it does so. We can only give a name to the force that causes this.

"We call that force GRAVITATION.

"It is gravitation that causes the apple to fall.

"It is gravitation that makes things have weight.

"It is gravitation that keeps all things in their proper places."

Suppose there was no such force as gravitation, would an apple fall to the ground? Suppose that gravitation did not draw objects toward the earth, what would happen?

To you who, like Sir Isaac Newton, are always asking "Why?" and "How?" these questions will give something to think about.

CHAPTER VII

GALILEO AND THE LAMPS

In Italy about three hundred years ago there lived a young man whose name was Galileo. Like Archimedes he was always thinking and always asking the reasons for things. He invented the thermometer and simple forms of the telescope and the microscope. He made many important discoveries in science.

One evening when he was only eighteen years old he was in the cathedral at Pisa at about the time the lamps were lighted. The lamps—which burned only oil in those days—were hung by long rods from the ceiling. When the

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lamplighter knocked against them, or the wind blew through the cathedral, they would swing back and forth like pendulums. Galileo noticed this. Then he began to study them more closely.

He saw that those which were hung on rods of the same length swung back and forth, or vibrated, in the same length of time. Those that were on the shorter rods vibrated much faster than those on the longer rods. As Galileo watched them swinging to and fro he became much interested. Millions of people had seen lamps moving in this same way, but not one had ever thought of discovering any useful fact connected with the phenomenon.

When Galileo went to his room he began to experiment. He took a number of cords of different lengths and hung them from the ceiling. To the free end of each cord he fastened a weight. Then he set all to swinging back and forth, like the lamps in the cathedral. Each cord was a pendulum, just as each rod had been.

He found after long study that when a cord was 39 1/10 inches long, it vibrated just sixty times in a minute. A cord one fourth as long vibrated just twice as fast, or once every half second. To vibrate three times as fast, or once in every third part of a second, the cord had to be only one ninth of 39 1/10 inches in length. By experimenting in various ways Galileo at last discovered how to attach pendulums to timepieces as we have them now.

Thus, to the swinging lamps in the cathedral, and to Galileo's habit of thinking and inquiring, the world owes one of the commonest and most useful of inventions,—the pendulum clock.

You can make a pendulum for yourself with a cord and a weight of any kind. You can experiment with it if you wish; and perhaps you can find out how long a pendulum must be to vibrate once in two seconds.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FIRST PRINTER

I

One evening in midsummer, nearly five hundred years ago, a stranger arrived in the quaint old town of Haarlem, in the Netherlands. The people eyed him curiously as he trudged down the main street, and there were many guesses as to who he might be. A traveler in those days was a rarity in Haarlem—a thing to be looked at and talked about. This traveler was certainly a man of no great consequence. He was dressed poorly, and had neither servant nor horse. He carried his knapsack on his shoulder, and was covered with dust, as though he had walked far.

He stopped at a little inn close by the market place, and asked for lodging. The landlord was pleased with his looks. He was a young man, bright of eye and quick of movement. He might have the best room in the house.

"My name," he said, "is John Gutenberg, and my home is in Mayence."

"Ah, in Mayence, is it?" exclaimed the landlord; "and pray why do you leave that place and come to our good Haarlem?"

"I am a traveler," answered Gutenberg.

"A traveler! And why do you travel?" inquired the landlord.

"I am traveling to learn," was the answer. "I am trying to gain knowledge by seeing the world. I have been to Genoa and Venice and Rome."

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"Ah, have you been so far? Surely, you must have seen great things," said the landlord.

"Yes," said Gutenberg; "I have walked through Switzerland and Germany, and now I am on my way to France."

"How wonderful!" exclaimed the landlord. "And now, while your supper is being cooked, pray tell me what is the strangest thing you have seen while traveling."

"The strangest thing? Well, I have seen towering mountains and the great sea; I have seen savage beasts and famous men; but nowhere have I seen anything stranger than the ignorance of the common people. Why, they know but little more than their cattle. They know nothing about the country in which they live; and they have scarcely heard of other lands. Indeed, they are ignorant of everything that has happened in the world."

"I guess you are right," said the landlord; "but what difference does it make whether they know much or little?"

"It makes a great difference," answered Gutenberg. "So long as the common people are thus ignorant they are made the dupes of the rich and powerful who know more. They are kept poor and degraded in order that their lords and masters may live in wealth and splendor. Now, if there were only some way to make books plentiful and cheap, the poorest man might learn to read and thus gain such knowledge as would help him to better his condition. But, as things are, it is only the rich who can buy books. Every volume must be written carefully by hand, and the cost of making it is greater than the earnings of any common man for a lifetime."

"Well," said the landlord, "we have a man here in Haarlem who makes books. I don't know how he makes them, but people say that he sells them very cheap. I've heard that he can make as many as ten in the time it would take a rapid scribe to write one. He calls it *printing*, I think."

"Who is this man? Tell me where I can find him," cried Gutenberg, now much excited.

"His name is Laurence—Laurence Jaonssen," answered the landlord. "He has been the coster, or sexton, of our church for these forty years, and for that reason everybody calls him Laurence Coster."

"Where does he live? Can I see him?"

"Why, the big house that you see just across the market place is his. You can find him at home at any time; for, since he got into this queer business of making books, he never goes out."

II

The young traveler lost no time in making the acquaintance of Laurence Coster. The old man was delighted to meet with one who was interested in his work. He showed him the books he had printed. He showed him the types and the rude little press that he used. The types were made of pieces of wood that Coster had whittled out with his penknife.

"It took a long time to make them," he said; "but see how quickly I can print a page with them."

He placed a small sheet of paper upon some types which had been properly arranged. With great care he adjusted them all in his press. Then he threw the weight of his body upon a long lever that operated the crude machine.

"See now the printed page," he cried, as he carefully drew the sheet out. "It would have taken hours to write it with a pen. I have printed it in as many minutes."

Gutenberg was delighted.

"It was by accident that I discovered it," said old Laurence. "I went out into the woods one afternoon with my grandchildren. There were some beech trees there, and the

little fellows wanted me to carve their names on the smooth bark. I did so, for I was always handy with a penknife. Then, while they were running around, I split off some fine pieces of bark and cut the letters of the alphabet upon them—one letter on each piece. I thought they would amuse the baby of the family, and perhaps help him to remember his letters. So I wrapped them in a piece of soft paper and carried them home. When I came to undo the package I was surprised to see the forms of some of the letters distinctly printed on the white paper. It set me to thinking, and at last I thought out this whole plan of printing books."

"And a great plan it is!" cried Gutenberg. "Ever since I was a boy at school I have been trying to invent some such thing."

He asked Laurence Coster a thousand questions, and the old man kindly told him all that he knew.

"Now, indeed, knowledge will fly to the ends of the earth," said the delighted young traveler as he hastened back to his inn. He could scarcely wait to be gone.

The next morning he was off for Strasburg.

At Strasburg young Gutenberg shut himself up in a hired room and began to make sets of type like those which Laurence Coster had shown him. He arranged them in words and sentences. He experimented with them until he was able to print much faster than old Laurence had done.

Finally, he tried types of soft metal and found them better than those of wood. He learned to mix ink so it would not spread when pressed by the type. He made brushes and rollers for applying it evenly and smoothly. He improved this thing and that until, at last, he was able to do that which he had so long desired—make a book so quickly and cheaply that even a poor man could afford to buy it.

And thus the art of printing was discovered.

CHAPTER IX

JOHN GUTENBERG AND THE VOICES

One night John Gutenberg worked until very late at his press. He was printing a large folio edition of the Bible in Latin. For weeks he had given all his thoughts to this great work, and now he was completing the last sheets. He was worn out with fatigue, but proud of that which he had accomplished. He leaned his head upon the framework of his press, and gave himself up to thought.

Suddenly from among the types two voices were heard. They were speaking in low but earnest tones, and seemed to be talking about Gutenberg and his invention.

"Suddenly from among the types two voices were heard."

"Happy, happy man!" said the first voice, which was gentle and sweet and full of encouragement. "Let him go on with the work he has begun. Books will now be plentiful and cheap. The poorest man can buy them. Every child will learn to read. The words of the wise and the good will be printed on thousands of sheets and carried all over the world. They will

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be read in every household. The age of ignorance will be at an end. Men will learn to think and know and act for themselves.

They will no longer be the slaves of kings. And the name of John Gutenberg, inventor of printing, will be remembered to the end of time."

Then the other voice spoke. It was a stern, strong voice, although not unpleasant, and it spoke in tones of warning. "Let John Gutenberg beware of what he is doing. His invention will prove to be a curse rather than a blessing. It is true that books will be plentiful and cheap, but they will not all be good books. The words of the vulgar and the vile will also be printed. They will be carried into millions of households to poison the minds of children and to make men and women doubt the truth and despise virtue. Let John Gutenberg beware lest he be remembered as one who brought evil into the world rather than good."

And so the two voices went on, one claiming that the printing press would bless all mankind, the other saying that it would surely prove to be a curse. John Gutenberg felt much distressed. He did not know what to do. He thought of the great harm that might be done through the printing of bad books—how they would corrupt the minds of the innocent, how they would stir up the passions of the wicked.

Suddenly he seized a heavy hammer and began to break his press in pieces. "It shall not be said of me that I helped to make the world worse," he cried.

But as he was madly destroying that which had cost him so much pains to build, he heard a third voice. It seemed to come from the press itself, and it spoke in tones of sweet persuasion.

"Think still again," it said, "and do not act rashly. The best of God's gifts may be abused, and yet they are all good. The art of printing will enlighten the world. Its power for blessing mankind will be a thousand times greater than its power for doing harm. Hold your hand, John Gutenberg, and remember that you are helping to make men better and not worse."

The upraised hammer dropped from his hands. The sound of its striking the floor aroused him. He rubbed his eyes and looked around. He wondered if he had been dreaming.

CHAPTER X

JAMES WATT AND THE TEAKETTLE

A little Scotch boy was sitting in his grandmother's kitchen. He was watching the red flames in the wide open fireplace and quietly wondering about the causes of things. Indeed, he was always wondering and always wanting to know.

"Grandma," he presently asked, "what makes the fire burn?"

This was not the first time he had puzzled his grandmother with questions that she could not answer. So she went on with her preparations for supper and paid no heed to his query.

Above the fire an old-fashioned teakettle was hanging. The water within it was beginning to bubble. A thin cloud of steam was rising from the spout. Soon the lid began to rattle and shake. The hot vapor puffed out at a furious rate. Yet when the lad peeped under the lid he could see nothing.

"Grandma, what is in the teakettle?" he asked.

"Water, my child—nothing but water."

"But I know there is something else. There is something in there that lifts the lid and makes it rattle."

The grandmother laughed. "Oh, that is only steam," she said. "You can see it coming out of the spout and puffing up under the lid."

"But you said there was nothing but water in the kettle. How did the steam get under the lid?"

"Why, my dear, it comes out of the hot water. The hot water makes it." The grandmother was beginning to feel puzzled.

The lad lifted the lid and peeped inside again. He could see nothing but the bubbling water. The steam was not visible until after it was fairly out of the kettle.

"How queer!" he said. "The steam must be very strong to lift the heavy iron lid. Grandma, how much water did you put into the kettle?"

"About a quart, Jamie."

"Well, if the steam from so little water is so strong, why would not the steam from a great deal of water be a great deal stronger? Why couldn't it be made to lift a much greater weight? Why couldn't it be made to turn wheels?"

The grandmother made no reply. These questions of Jamie's were more puzzling than profitable, she thought. She went about her work silently, and Jamie sat still in his place and studied the teakettle.

How to understand the power that is in steam, and how to make it do other things than rattle the lids of teakettles—that was the problem which James Watt, the inquisitive Scotch boy, set himself to solve. Day after day he thought about it, and evening after evening he sat by his grandmother's fireside and watched the thin, white vapor come out of the teakettle and lose itself in the yawning black throat of the chimney. The idea grew with him as he grew into manhood, and by long study he began to reason upon it to some purpose.

"There is a wonderful power in steam," he said to himself. "There was never a giant who had so much strength. If we only knew how to harness that power, there is no end to the things it might do for us. It would not only lift weights, but it would turn all kinds of machinery. It would draw our wagons, it would push our ships, it would plow and sow, it would spin and weave. For thousands of years men have been working alongside of this power, never dreaming that it might be made their servant. But how can this be done? That is the question."

He tried one experiment after another. He failed again and again, but from each failure he learned something new. Men laughed at him. "How ridiculous," they said, "to think that steam can be made to run machinery!"

But James Watt persevered, and in the end was able to give to the world the first successful form of the steam engine. Thus, from the study of so simple a thing as a common teakettle, the most useful of all modern inventions was finally produced.

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CHAPTER XI

DR. JOHNSON AND HIS FATHER

SCENE FIRST

It is in a little bookshop in the city of Lichfield, England. The floor has just been swept and the shutter taken down from the one small window. The hour is early, and customers have not yet begun to drop in. Out of doors the rain is falling.

At a small table near the door, a feeble, white-haired old man is making up some packages of books. As he arranges them in a large basket, he stops now and then as though disturbed by pain. He puts his hand to his side; he coughs in a most distressing way; then he sits down and rests himself, leaning his elbows upon the table.

"Samuel!" he calls.

In the farther corner of the room there is a young man busily reading from a large book that is spread open before him. He is a very odd-looking fellow, perhaps eighteen years of age, but you would take him to be older. He is large and awkward, with a great round face, scarred and marked by a strange disease. His eyesight must be poor, for, as he reads, he bends down until his face is quite near the printed page.

"Samuel!" again the old man calls.

But Samuel makes no reply. He is so deeply interested in his book that he does not hear. The old man rests himself a little longer and then finishes tying his packages. He lifts the heavy basket and sets it on the table. The exertion brings on another fit of coughing; and when it is over he calls for the third time, "Samuel!"

"What is it, father?" This time the call is heard.

"You know, Samuel," he says, "that to-morrow is market day at Uttoxeter, and our stall must be attended to. Some of our friends will be there to look at the new books which they expect me to bring. One of us must go down on the stage this morning and get everything in readiness. But I hardly feel able for the journey. My cough troubles me quite a little, and you see that it is raining very hard."

"Yes, father; I am sorry," answers Samuel; and his face is again bent over the book.

"I thought perhaps you would go down to the market, and that I might stay here at the shop," says his father. But Samuel does not hear. He is deep in the study of some Latin classic.

The old man goes to the door and looks out. The rain is still falling. He shivers, and buttons his coat.

It is a twenty-mile ride to Uttoxeter. In five minutes the stage will pass the door.

"Samuel, will you not go down to the market for me this time?"

The old man is putting on his great coat.

He is reaching for his hat.

The basket is on his arm.

He casts a beseeching glance at his son, hoping that he will relent at the last moment.

"Here comes the coach, Samuel;" and the old man is choked by another fit of coughing.

Whether Samuel hears or not, I do not know. He is still reading, and he makes no sign nor motion.

The stage comes rattling down the street.

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The old man with his basket of books staggers out of the door. The stage halts for a moment while he climbs inside. Then the driver swings his whip, and all are away.

Samuel, in the shop, still bends over his book.

Out of doors the rain is falling.

SCENE SECOND

Just fifty years have passed, and again it is market day at Uttoxeter.

The rain is falling in the streets. The people who have wares to sell huddle under the eaves and in the stalls and booths that have roofs above them.

A chaise from Lichfield pulls up at the entrance to the market square.

An old man alights. One would guess him to be seventy years of age. He is large and not well-shaped. His face is seamed and scarred, and he makes strange grimaces as he clambers out of the chaise. He wheezes and puffs as though afflicted with asthma. He walks with the aid of a heavy stick.

With slow but ponderous strides he enters the market place and looks around. He seems not to know that the rain is falling.

He looks at the little stalls ranged along the walls of the market place. Some have roofs over them and are the centers of noisy trade. Others have fallen into disuse and are empty.

The stranger halts before one of the latter. "Yes, this is it," he says. He has a strange habit of talking aloud to himself. "I remember it well. It was here that my father, on certain market days, sold books to the clergy of the county. The good men came from every parish to see his wares and to hear him describe their contents."

He turns abruptly around. "Yes, this is the place," he repeats.

He stands quite still and upright, directly in front of the little old stall. He takes off his hat and holds it beneath his arm. His great walking stick has fallen into the gutter. He bows his head and clasps his hands. He does not seem to know that the rain is falling.

The clock in the tower above the market strikes eleven. The passers-by stop and gaze at the stranger. The market people peer at him from their booths and stalls. Some laugh as the rain runs in streams down his scarred old cheeks. Rain is it? Or can it be tears?

Boys hoot at him. Some of the ruder ones even hint at throwing mud; but a sense of shame withholds them from the act.

No white man had ever beheld that sea before; none had even so much as heard of it. The Spaniards afterwards called it the South Sea, because in going to it across the isthmus it seemed to lie south of the land; but we know it as the largest of all the oceans, the mighty Pacific.

"He is a poor lunatic. Let him alone," say the more compassionate.

The rain falls upon his bare head and his broad shoulders. He is drenched and chilled. But he stands motionless and silent, looking neither to the right nor to the left.

"Who is that old fool?" asks a thoughtless young man who chances to be passing.

"Do you ask who he is?" answers a gentleman from London. "Why, he is Dr. Samuel Johnson, the most famous man in England. It was he who wrote *Rasselas* and the *Lives of the Poets* and *Irene* and many another work which all men are praising. It was he who made the great *English Dictionary*, the most wonderful book of our times. In London, the noblest

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lords and ladies take pleasure in doing him honor. He is the literary lion of England."

"Then why does he come to Uttoxeter and stand thus in the pouring rain?"

"The stranger has stood a whole hour in the market place."

"I cannot tell you; but doubtless he has reasons for doing so;" and the gentleman passes on.

At length there is a lull in the storm. The birds are chirping among the housetops. The people wonder if the rain is over, and venture out into the slippery street.

The clock in the tower above the market strikes twelve. The renowned stranger has stood a whole hour motionless in the market place. And again the rain is falling.

Slowly now he returns his hat to his head. He finds his walking stick where it had fallen. He lifts his eyes reverently for a moment, and then, with a lordly, lumbering motion, walks down the street to meet the chaise which is ready to return to Lichfield.

We follow him through the pattering rain to his native town.

"Why, Dr. Johnson!" exclaims his hostess; "we have missed you all day. And you are so wet and chilled! Where have you been?"

"Madam," says the great man, "fifty years ago, this very day, I tacitly refused to oblige or obey my father. The thought of the pain which I must have caused him has haunted me ever since. To do away the sin of that hour, I this morning went in a chaise to Uttoxeter and did do penance publicly before the stall which my father had formerly used."

The great man bows his head upon his hands and sobs.

Out of doors the rain is falling.

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CHAPTER XII

WEBSTER AND THE WOODCHUCK

On a farm among the hills of New Hampshire there once lived a little boy whose name was Daniel Webster. He was a tiny fellow for one of his age. His hair was jet black, and his eyes were so dark and wonderful that nobody who once saw them could ever forget them.

He was not strong enough to help much on the farm; and so he spent much of his time in playing in the woods and fields. Unlike many farmers' boys, he had a very gentle heart. He loved the trees and flowers and the harmless wild creatures that made their homes among them.

But he did not play all the time. Long before he was old enough to go to school, he learned to read; and he read so well that everybody liked to hear him and never grew tired of listening. The neighbors, when driving past his father's house, would stop their horses and call for Dannie Webster to come out and read to them.

At that time there were no children's books such as you have now. Indeed, there were but very few books of any kind in the homes of the New Hampshire farmers. But Daniel read such books as he could get; and he read them over and over again till he knew all that was in them. In this way he learned a great deal of the Bible so well that he could repeat verse after verse without making a mistake; and these verses he remembered as long as he lived.

Daniel's father was not only a farmer, but he was a judge in the county court. He had a great love for the law, and he hoped that Daniel when he became a man would be a lawyer.

It happened one summer that a woodchuck made its burrow in the side of a hill near Mr. Webster's house. On warm, dark nights it would come down into the garden and eat the tender leaves of the cabbages and other plants that were growing there. Nobody knew how much harm it might do in the end.

Daniel and his elder brother Ezekiel made up their minds to catch the little thief. They tried this thing and that, but for a long time he was too cunning for them. Then they built a strong trap where the woodchuck would be sure to walk into it; and the next morning, there he was.

"We have him at last!" cried Ezekiel. "Now, Mr. Woodchuck, you've done mischief enough, and I'm going to kill you."

But Daniel pitied the little animal. "No, don't hurt him," he said. "Let us carry him over the hills, far into the woods, and let him go."

Ezekiel, however, would not agree to this. His heart was not so tender as his little brother's. He was bent on killing the woodchuck, and laughed at the thought of letting it go.

"Let us ask father about it," said Daniel.

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"All right," said Ezekiel; "I know what the judge will decide."

They carried the trap, with the woodchuck in it, to their father, and asked what they should do.

"Well, boys," said Mr. Webster, "we will settle the question in this way. We will hold a court right here. I will be the judge, and you shall be the lawyers: You shall each plead your case, for or against the prisoner, and I will decide what his punishment shall be."

Ezekiel, as the prosecutor, made the first speech. He told about the mischief that had been done. He showed that all woodchucks are bad and cannot be trusted. He spoke of the time and labor that had been spent in trying to catch the thief, and declared that if they should now set him free he would be a worse thief than before.

"A woodchuck's skin," he said, "may perhaps be sold for ten cents. Small as that sum is, it will go a little way toward paying for the cabbage he has eaten. But, if we set him free, how shall we ever recover even a penny of what we have lost? Clearly, he is of more value dead than alive, and therefore he ought to be put out of the way at once."

Ezekiel's speech was a good one, and it pleased the judge very much. What he said was true and to the point, and it would be hard for Daniel to make any answer to it.

Daniel began by pleading for the poor animal's life. He looked up into the judge's face, and said:—

"God made the woodchuck. He made him to live in the bright sunlight and the pure air. He made him to enjoy the free fields and the green woods. The woodchuck has a right to his life, for God gave it to him.

"God gives us our food. He gives us all that we have. And shall we refuse to share a little of it with this poor dumb creature who has as much right to God's gifts as we have?

"The woodchuck is not a fierce animal like the wolf or the fox. He lives in quiet and peace. A hole in the side of a hill, and a little food, is all he wants. He has harmed nothing but a few plants, which he ate to keep himself alive. He has a right to life, to food, to liberty; and we have no right to say he shall not have them.

"Look at his soft, pleading eyes. See him tremble with fear. He cannot speak for himself, and this is the only way in which he can plead for the life that is so sweet to him. Shall we be so cruel as to kill him? Shall we be so selfish as to take from him the life that God gave him?"

The judge's eyes were filled with tears as he listened. His heart was stirred. He felt that God had given him a son whose name would some day be known to the world.

He did not wait for Daniel to finish his speech. He sprang to his feet, and as he wiped the tear from his eyes, he cried out, "Ezekiel, let the woodchuck go!"

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CHAPTER XIII

FRIAR BACON AND THE BRAZEN HEAD

I. THE WIZARD

More than seven hundred years ago there was a professor in the University of Oxford whose name was Roger Bacon. People called him Friar Bacon; for he was a monk, and in those days only monks and priests had anything to do with learning.

Friar Bacon was the greatest scholar in all Europe. He knew so much more than his brother professors and monks that some of them said he was a wizard and got all his learning by the practice of magic. The common people looked upon him with awe; and when they chanced to meet him, or saw him at a distance, they muttered a charm to ward off any evil spell that he might cast upon them. The friar cared but little for all the talk that was going on. He smiled, and continued his studies and experiments just as before. "It makes little difference what they say," he said.

One day he made a mixture of saltpeter, charcoal, and sulphur, and invited several of the professors to come and look at it. What was their amazement, when he touched it with the smallest spark, to see the whole mixture go up in air with a blinding flash and a fearful roar! It was only gun-powder; but people were then ignorant of that useful and fearful compound, and they would have nothing to do with it for yet two hundred years.

"We told you so!" shouted the frightened monks as they rushed out of the room. "He is a wizard. No honest man could kindle a blaze so blinding or make a sound so fearful. Why, the very earth trembled, and the smoke was like that from a volcano. If this man is allowed to go on he will destroy us all."

The end of the whole matter was that they put him out of the university and said that they would have no more of his magical doings. And to make sure that he would let them alone, they locked him up in a narrow cell and gave him only bread and water, and little enough of that. Some even talked of fagots and fire as the very best things to cure a wizard; but they dared not be too severe with the friar lest they should displease the Pope.

Now the Pope knew Friar Bacon very well. In fact, the two had been students at the same school in Paris when both were young. They had formed a friendship at that time which was never to be broken. The Pope was a wise and broad-minded man, and he did not object to a little magic of the kind in which Friar Bacon delighted; and when the fame of Bacon's learning came to his ears he felt himself honored by being the friend of such a man.

The action of the monks and professors at Oxford was anything but pleasing to him. "The foolish fellows!" he exclaimed. "They would punish the wisest man of the age simply because he shows them their own ignorance." And he commanded that the friar should be given his freedom and be permitted to go where he chose.

The professors could do nothing but obey. With solemn looks, but with oily words on their tongues, they unbolted the door of the prison cell and bade their prisoner come out and enjoy the sunshine again. "We would not do you any harm for the world," they said; "and to prove our friendship for you, we will pay your expenses to London, or even to Paris, if you wish to go there. The University of Oxford is but a poor place for a man of your talents. Another person has already been chosen to fill your chair."

This they said, hoping to get rid of him.

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II. THE MANUSCRIPT

Friar Bacon was not ready, however, to go far from Oxford. In the tower of an old monastery near by he found a room which exactly suited his wants, and there he resolved to stay until he had finished some experiments that he wished to try. He had a learned friend, Friar Bungay, who came daily to visit him; and his servant Miles kept the room in order and attended to all his wants. He was happier there, with his books and his instruments and his chemicals, than he could have been in London or in Paris.

Every night, until long after the midnight hour, the light of the friar's little lamp could be seen glimmering through the narrow window of his study and feebly twinkling in the darkness. The country people who saw it at a distance shook their heads, and whispered that the old wizard was busy with his magic again. And then they talked of the fearful things that had been seen and heard around the gloomy old tower. One man who had ventured quite close to it on a dark night had beheld blue flames dancing on the eaves and sheets of fire leaping from the roof. Another had heard dreadful shrieks and sharp, deafening sounds like thunder-claps issuing from the tower. A third had seen a star shoot from the friar's window and lose itself far up in the sky. Such tales filled many a simple heart with awe.

Within his room, surrounded by his books and his instruments, Friar Bacon was content to let the world think of him as it would. One day Friar Bungay brought to him an old Arabic manuscript which some wandering knight had picked up in Spain or perhaps in far-away Palestine. The two friends set to work at once to make out its meaning. It was yellow and creased and covered with many a mysterious sign, but Friar Bacon did not lay it aside until he had read almost every word of it.

"It is strange, very strange," said he to Bungay, "but I believe it can be done."

"What!" cried Bungay, "can lifeless brass be made to speak and tell secrets that have been hidden from the wisest of men?"

"So says this manuscript," answered Bacon; "and here are careful directions for making an instrument that will give the dead metal a tongue;" and he translated them again for his friend.

"The thing seems not unreasonable," said Bungay.

"Let us try it," said Bacon.

III. THE BRAZEN HEAD

For seven years the two monks toiled in secret. Every day the furnace which they had built in the tower glowed with white flame, and from the chimney top such clouds of black smoke issued as caused the hearts of the country folk to beat again with fear. Old kettles and precious plates and ornaments gathered in foreign lands were broken up and melted. The brass hilts of old swords were thrown into the melting pot. Then came days upon days of molding and shaping and fitting. And at last the eyes of the two friends were gladdened by the sight of the object of all their labor. It was the head of an image of brass—faultlessly made, beautiful in every line, a wonder to look upon.

Then began the true work of the magician. The head was fastened upon a pedestal of marble. Clockwork was placed inside of it. Wires were attached to the tongue, the eyeballs, and other parts of the image. These were carried to mysterious jars of chemicals hidden away in a dark closet. Everything was done with care, strictly according to the directions given in the manuscript.

When at last the work was ended, the two friars took turns in watching the brazen head day and night. For more than a month there was never a minute that one of them was not sitting before it, and listening for any sound that it might

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utter. Then, worn out by his watching, Friar Bungay became ill and Friar Bacon watched alone. But neither friars nor philosophers can live long without sleep, and on the fifth night he was wholly exhausted.

"If I can keep awake but twelve hours longer," he muttered, "the wonderful voice will speak and the great secret will be known."

But he could not keep awake. His eyes closed in spite of himself; his head sank upon his breast; he fell gently back in his chair, and was asleep. In a moment he roused himself only to do the same thing again. Over and over this happened, until at last it lacked but three hours of midnight.

"I can hold out no longer," he sighed. "Ah, if only Friar Bungay could come!"

Then a new thought came into his mind. He rang a bell, and in a few minutes the servant Miles came sleepily in, carrying a heavy cudgel.

"Miles," said the friar, "will you do me a great favor to-night?"

"I will do anything that I can, master," answered Miles, rubbing his eyes; "but I can neither fly nor swim. What is it you would have done?"

"Do you see this brazen head?" said the friar; and as he spoke he touched a secret spring which caused sparks of light to flash from the image's eyes.

"Oh, master, you know that I see it," said Miles, stepping back in alarm.

"Well, then, you must know that for nine and thirty nights Friar Bungay and myself have watched this head. Sooner or later, yes, perhaps even before another morning dawns, its lips will utter a secret of the greatest importance to every Englishman. And sad will it be for us if we fail to hear what is said."

"Yes, master," said Miles, trembling as he glanced about the room.

"You need not be afraid of the brazen head," said the friar, as he touched another spring. "It may do strange things, but it will harm no man." A sound like rolling thunder filled the room, the image's eyes flashed again, and a cloud of blue smoke came pouring from its nostrils. Miles turned white with fear, and would have run out at the door had not the friar held him by the arm.

"Do not be afraid," he said. "The head will not hurt you. It does these things at my bidding. If you do not touch it, it will remain quiet in its place, just as it is now."

"I see, master, I see," said Miles; "and it is not myself that will be afraid of a collection of brass. Why, I have fought

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in forty battles in France and in Flanders, and never yet have I known fear."

"You are certainly a brave man, Miles, and that is why I have called you. The favor that I ask of you is this: Will you watch here for me for an hour or two while I get a little needed rest? You know that Brother Bungay has failed me these five nights, and I cannot keep awake longer."

"Is it to watch the house that you wish me? There is certainly nothing hard in that. I will hold my good cudgel in my hand, and keep my eyes on every door and window so that no robbers will dare to come near."

"But it is the brazen head that I wish you to watch. Keep your eyes on it, and if it should begin to speak, then call me quickly."

"The brazen head, is it? Sure, and it cannot hurt me, for you have said so. But you will let me keep the cudgel, in case the robbers might come, won't you?"

"Oh, certainly, Miles."

"Then trust me, master. Go and take your rest, and I will watch like a sentinel at his post."

"I do trust you, Miles. Good night!" And the weary friar went sleepily to his chamber and threw himself upon his bed.

IV. THE WATCHMAN

Miles sat down close to the door with his cudgel in his hand. For a while he kept himself awake by looking about at the strange objects which his master used when carrying on his studies. They were not unknown to him, for he had seen them daily when serving the friar's meals; but now in the dim light of the flickering lamp they seemed to him like uncanny beings ready to pounce upon him and destroy him. He grasped his cudgel with a firmer grip, and looked at the brazen head. The face of the image seemed to be beaming with a kindly smile, and Miles felt much braver.

"The head cannot hurt me," he said to himself; "and so why should I fear those other things? No, no, I am not afraid."

In the farthest corner upon his right was the carefully closed cask in which was stored the wonderful black powder that had so frightened the Oxford professors. Miles crossed himself when he saw it, and drew a little farther away. Then his eyes rested on a strange piece of glass, round like a wagon wheel, through which the friar sometimes looked when studying the stars. On a table close by were flasks of all sizes and shapes, crucibles for melting metals, and instruments whose use was known only to magicians. While Miles was lost in thought about these strange things a slight noise caused him to look again at the brazen head. Its face still bore the smile that had braced his courage up, and he grew bold enough to speak to it.

"Ah, you head of brass," he said, "you are nothing but yellow metal. You were made of the old kettles and sword hilts that I brought to my master. How foolish for any one to waste his time in watching you! How silly of my master to starve himself and me, in order to buy brass for your making! A magician like him ought to know better. A snap of his fingers would bring us food and raiment fit for kings; but, instead, he spends his time with you, and we have nought but scraps to eat and rags to wear. Come, Master Brassy-head, out with your secret! And let it be a recipe for my master to tell him how to get rich."

Just as he spoke the last words a bright flash as of lightning lit up the brazen face, and a low sound like muttering thunder filled the room. The mouth of the image opened, its lips seemed to move, and in a voice scarcely louder than a whisper, it uttered the words—

"TIME IS!"

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Miles grasped his cudgel very hard and stood close by the door, ready to run. But, as the image sat bolted fast to its pedestal, and moved not, he soon grew very brave again.

"Is that all you can say, old Brassy-head?" he asked. " 'Time is,' did you say? Well, that would be fine news to carry to a scholar like Friar Bacon. You will have to tell a better secret than that before I waken him to hear it."

Again the thunder rolled, and a brighter flash of lightning filled the room. Again the mouth opened, the lips moved, and a voice like the rattling of a brass kettle muttered,—

"TIME WAS!"

Miles put one hand on the door latch and with the other shook the cudgel at the image.

"Only to think," he said, "that my master and Friar Bungay should spend seven years in making a head which can tell no other secret than that! Why everybody knows that TIME WAS. Fie upon you for a brazen fraud, old Brassy-head! If you would only speak a little Hebrew or Latin, I should begin to think that you really have a secret to tell, and I should waken my master to hear it."

Miles in his great fright fainted and fell in a senseless heap by the door. There was a dreadful crash, a blinding cloud of smoke, and then all was still. Friar Bacon, roused by the noise, rushed into the room. The brazen head lay on the floor, shattered into a thousand pieces.

"Miles! Miles!" cried the distracted friar.

The serving man slowly raised himself on his knees and groaned.

"Did the head speak?" asked the master. "Tell me quickly."

Scarcely had he spoken when the room was lighted up with the brightness of day. The face of the image was no longer smiling, but it bore a dreadful frown. The floor swayed and trembled. The head appeared to lift itself from its pedestal, and in a voice of thunder it cried,—

"TIME IS PAST!"

"Yes, master, he did speak," muttered Miles, shaking with terror. "But he said nothing worth remembering."

"What did he say?"

"Why, at first he said, 'Time is,' and as that is a secret which everybody knows, I urged him to say more. Presently he spoke up again and said, 'Time was'; and then, before I could run and call you, he roared out, 'Time is past,' and fell over against me with such a crash as to knock my senses out of me."

"Oh, wretched fool!" cried Friar Bacon, angrily pushing the man from the room. "Leave my sight! your foolishness has caused the wreck of all my hopes. The labor of seven years is lost. Had I been wakened, I would have set machinery in motion to prevent this ruin; and the brazen head

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would have told me how to do most wonderful things. It would have told me how to build a wall around England and make her the strongest of all nations. It would have told me—But now, all is lost. I will make no more experiments; I will burn my books; I will close my study. The rest of my life shall be spent, like that of any other monk, in the quiet cell of a monastery; and when I die my poor name will be forgotten."

CHAPTER XIV

"As Rich As Croesus"

Some thousands of years ago there lived in Asia a king whose name was Crœsus. The country over which he ruled was not very large, but its people were prosperous and famed for their wealth. Crœsus himself was said to be the richest man in the world; and so well known is his name that, to this day, it is not uncommon to say of a very wealthy person that he is "as rich as Crœsus."

King Crœsus had everything that could make him happy—lands and houses and slaves, fine clothing to wear, and beautiful things to look at. He could not think of anything that he needed to make him more comfortable or contented. "I am the happiest man in the world," he said.

It happened one summer that a great man from across the sea was traveling in Asia. The name of this man was Solon, and he was the lawmaker of Athens in Greece. He was noted for his wisdom; and, centuries after his death, the highest praise that could be given to a learned man was to say, "He is as wise as Solon."

Solon had heard of Crœsus, and so one day he visited him in his beautiful palace. Crœsus was now happier and prouder than ever before, for the wisest man in the world was his guest. He led Solon through his palace and showed him the grand rooms, the fine carpets, the soft couches, the rich furniture, the pictures, the books. Then he invited him out to see his gardens and his orchards and his stables; and he showed him thousands of rare and beautiful things that he had collected from all parts of the world.

In the evening as the wisest of men and the richest of men were dining together, the king said to his guest, "Tell me now, O Solon, who do you think is the happiest of all men?" He expected that Solon would say, "Crœsus."

The wise man was silent for a minute, and then he said, "I have in mind a poor man who once lived in Athens and whose name was Tellus. He, I doubt not, is the happiest of all men."

This was not the answer that Crœsus wanted; but he hid his disappointment and asked, "Why do you think so?"

"Because," answered his guest, "Tellus was an honest man who labored hard for many years to bring up his children and to give them a good education; and when they were grown and able to do for themselves, he joined the Athenian army and gave his life bravely in the defense of his country. Can you think of any one who is more deserving of happiness?"

"Perhaps not," answered Crœsus, half choking with disappointment. "But who do you think ranks next to Tellus in happiness?" He was quite sure now that Solon would say "Crœsus."

"I have in mind," said Solon, "two young men whom I knew in Greece. Their father died when they were mere children, and they were very poor. But they worked manfully to keep the house together and to support their mother, who was in feeble health. Year after year they toiled, nor thought of anything but their mother's comfort. When at length she died, they gave all their love to Athens, their native city, and nobly served her as long as they lived."

Then Crœsus was angry. "Why is it," he asked, "that you make me of no account and think that my wealth and

power are nothing? Why is it that you place these poor working people above the richest king in the world?"

"O king," said Solon, "no man can say whether you are happy or not until you die. For no man knows what misfortunes may overtake you, or what misery may be yours in place of all this splendor."

Many years after this there arose in Asia a powerful king whose name was Cyrus. At the head of a great army he marched from one country to another, overthrowing many a kingdom and attaching it to his great empire of Babylon. King Crœsus with all his wealth was not able to stand against this mighty warrior. He resisted as long as he could. Then his city was taken, his beautiful palace was burned, his orchards and gardens were destroyed, his treasures were carried away, and he himself was made prisoner.

"The stubbornness of this man Crœsus," said King Cyrus, "has caused us much trouble and the loss of many good soldiers. Take him and make an example of him for other petty kings who may dare to stand in our way."

Thereupon the soldiers seized Crœsus and dragged him to the market place, handling him pretty roughly all the time. Then they built up a great pile of dry sticks and timber taken from the ruins of his once beautiful palace. When this was finished they tied the unhappy king in the midst of it, and one ran for a torch to set it on fire.

"Now we shall have a merry blaze," said the savage fellows. "What good can all his wealth do him now?"

As poor Crœsus, bruised and bleeding, lay upon the pyre without a friend to soothe his misery, he thought of the words which Solon had spoken to him years before: "No man can say whether you are happy or not until you die," and he moaned, "O Solon! O Solon! Solon!"

It so happened that Cyrus was riding by at that very moment and heard his moans. "What does he say?" he asked of the soldiers.

"He says, 'Solon, Solon, Solon!' " answered one.

Then the king rode nearer and asked Crœsus, "Why do you call on the name of Solon?"

Crœsus was silent at first; but after Cyrus had repeated his question kindly, he told all about Solon's visit at his palace and what he had said.

The story affected Cyrus deeply. He thought of the words, "No man knows what misfortunes may overtake you, or what misery may be yours in place of all this splendor." And he wondered if some time he, too, would lose all his power and be helpless in the hands of his enemies.

"After all," said he, "ought not men to be merciful and kind to those who are in distress? I will do to Crœsus as I would have others do to me." And he caused Crœsus to be given his freedom; and ever afterwards treated him as one of his most honored friends.

CHAPTER XV

THE GORDIAN KNOT

In the western part of Asia there is a rich and beautiful region which in olden times was called Phrygia.

The people of that country were related to the Greeks, and they were well-to-do and happy. Those who lived in the mountains had mines of gold and quarries of fine marble. Those who dwelt in the valleys had fruitful vineyards and olive orchards. Those whose homes were among the hills kept great flocks of sheep, the wool from which was the best in the world.

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For a long time these simple-hearted people had no king. Every man was willing to do what he knew was the best for all, and so there was no need of a ruler. But by and by, as they grew wiser, every man began to do that which he thought was best for himself alone. The gold diggers ate the grapes and olives of their neighbors in the valleys. The vine growers killed the sheep of the dwellers in the hills. The shepherds stole the gold which the mountaineers had dug from their mines. And then a miserable war began, and the land that had been so prosperous and happy was filled with distress and sorrow.

There were still many wise and good men in the country, and these were much grieved at the sad state of affairs. "It would be better," said they, "if we had a king as other people have. He would punish the doers of wrong, and would make laws for the good of all."

But they could not choose a king among themselves. Each man claimed that he himself was the best fitted to be the ruler of the rest; and, had it not been for one of the wisest among them, they would have ended by fighting one another.

"Since we do not know what to do," said this wise man, "let us ask the gods. Let us send to the oracle of Apollo and make our troubles known. Perhaps it will tell us what to do."

All were pleased with this plan, and a messenger was sent to consult the oracle.

The temple of Apollo was far across the sea and many weeks passed before the messenger returned. Then all the best people from the mountains, the plains, and the hills met together near the chief town to hear what the oracle had told him.

"The oracle did not tell me very much," said the messenger. "It merely repeated these two lines of poetry:—

" 'In lowly wagon riding, see the king
Who'll peace to your unhappy country bring.'

I could not get another word from it."

The people were much puzzled by this answer of the oracle. They could not understand it, and yet they felt sure that it meant something. While all were standing around the messenger and wondering and talking, suddenly the loud creaking sound of wheels was heard. They looked and saw a slow-moving ox wagon creeping along the road. The wagon was loaded with hay, and on the hay sat a humble peasant with his wife and child. Everybody knew the peasant well. It was Gordius, the faithfulest workingman in all that country. His poor little hut, with its vine-covered roof, could be seen half hidden among trees at the foot of the hill.

Suddenly, as the creaking wagon drew near, one of the wise men cried out:—

"In lowly wagon riding, see the king!"

And another completed the rhyme,—

"Who'll peace to our unhappy country bring."

The people heard and understood. With a great shout they ran forward and greeted the bewildered peasant. They ran in front of his wagon. He was obliged to stop in the middle of the road.

"Hail to our king!" said some; as they bowed down before him.

"Long live the king of the Phrygians!" shouted others.

"My friends, what does all this uproar mean?" asked Gordius, looking down from his high seat on the hay. "I pray you not to frighten my oxen with your noise."

Then they told him what the oracle had said, and declared that he must be their king.

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"Well," he finally answered, "if the oracle has said that I am your king, your king I must be. But first, let us do our duty to the great beings that have brought all this about."

Then he drove straight on to the little temple of Jupiter that overlooked the town. He unyoked the oxen and led them into the temple. Just as people did in those days, he slew them before the altar, and caught their blood in a great wooden bowl. Then, while he prayed, he poured the blood out as a thank offering to mighty Jupiter.

"The wagon, too," said he, "will I give to the great Being by whom kings are made and unmade;" and he drew it into the inner part of the temple. Then he took the ox yoke and laid it across the end of the wagon pole and fastened it there with a rope of bark. And so deftly did he tie the knot about the yoke that the ends of the rope were hidden and no man could see how to undo it.

Then he went about his duties as king.

"I don't know much about this business," he said, "but I'll do my best."

He ruled so wisely that there was no more trouble among the people. The laws which he made were so just that no man dared to disobey them. The land was blessed with peace and plenty from the mountains to the plains.

All strangers who came to the temple of Jupiter were shown King Gordius's wagon; and they admired the skill with which he had fastened the yoke to the wagon pole.

Only a very great man could have tied such a knot as that," said some.

You have spoken truly," said the oracle of the temple; "but the man who shall untie it will be much greater."

"How can that be?" asked the visitors.

"Gordius is king only of the small country of Phrygia," was the answer. "But the man who undoes this wonderful work of his shall have the world for his kingdom."

" 'It is this that I cut all Gordian knots.' "

After that a great many men came every year to see the Gordian knot. Princes and warriors from every land tried to untie it but the ends of the rope remained hidden, and they could not even make a beginning of the task.

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Hundreds of years passed. King Gordius had been dead so long that people remembered him only as the man who tied the wonderful knot. And yet his wagon stood in the little temple of Jupiter, and the ox yoke was still fastened to the end of the pole.

Then there came into Phrygia a young king from Macedonia, far across the sea. The name of this young king was Alexander. He had conquered all Greece. He had crossed over into Asia with a small army of chosen men, and had beaten the king of Persia in battle. The people of Phrygia had not the courage to oppose him.

"Where is that wonderful Gordian knot?" he asked.

They led him into the temple of Jupiter and showed him the little wagon, with the yoke and wagon pole just as Gordius had left it.

"What was it that the oracle said about this knot?" he asked.

"It said that the man who should undo it would have the world for his kingdom."

Alexander looked at the knot carefully. He could not find the ends of the rope; but what did that matter? He raised his sword and, with one stroke, cut it into so many pieces that the yoke fell to the ground.

"It is thus," said the young king, "that I cut all Gordian knots."

And then he went on with his little army to conquer Asia.

"The world is my kingdom," he said.

CHAPTER XVI

WHY ALEXANDER WEPT

Alexander with his little army overran all the western part of Asia.

"The world is my kingdom," he said.

He conquered Persia, which was then the greatest and richest country known. He burned the mighty city of Tyre. He made himself the master of Egypt. He built, near the mouth of the Nile River, a splendid new city which he called, after his own name, Alexandria.

"What lies west of Egypt?" he asked.

"Only the great desert," was the answer. "To the farthest bounds of the earth there is nothing but sand, sand, burning sand."

So Alexander led his army back into Asia. He overran the country beyond the great river Euphrates. He crossed the grassy plains that lie along the shores of the Caspian Sea. He climbed the snowy mountains that seem to overlook the world. He gazed northward upon a desolate land.

"What lies beyond?" he asked.

"Only frozen marshes," was the answer. "Mile after mile, mile after mile, to the farthest bounds of the earth there is nothing but fields of snow and seas of ice."

So Alexander led his army back toward the south. He overran a large part of India. He subdued one rich city after another. At last he came to a mighty river called the Ganges. He would have crossed the river, but his soldiers would not follow him.

"We go no farther," they said.

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"What lies to the east of this wonderful stream?" asked Alexander.

"Only tangled forests," was the answer. "Mile after mile, mile after mile, to the farthest bounds of the earth there is nothing else."

So Alexander caused ships to be built. He launched them on another river called the Indus, and with his army floated down to the sea.

"What lies farther on?" he asked.

"Only trackless waters," was the answer. "Mile after mile, mile after mile, to the farthest bounds of the earth there is nothing but the deep sea."

"Truly, then," said Alexander, "all the inhabited world is mine. West, north, east, south, there is nothing more for me to conquer. But, after all, how small a kingdom it is!"

Then he sat down and wept because there were not other worlds for him to conquer.

CHAPTER XVII

KING RICHARD AND BLONDEL

I. KING RICHARD

King Richard the Lion-Hearted, with a great army of English knights and fighting men, went on a crusade to the Holy Land. The object of the crusade was to drive the Saracens out of Jerusalem and make it safe for Christian pilgrims to visit the holy places in that city.

Richard was a brave warrior. He was afraid of nothing, and no savage beast was more fond of fighting. Never was he more happy than when in battle, knocking the heads of his foes with his huge battle ax and shouting the Norman war cry, "God help us! God help us!"

Many were his exploits in the Holy Land. His deeds of cruelty and of daring were such that even his name was a terror to the Saracens. But with all his rudeness and roughness and savage love of bloodshed, he was not wholly bad. Now and then he would act so kindly, or show such gentleness of heart, that men would forget his grievous faults.

Much fierce fighting did the crusaders find to do. The walls of Jerusalem were so well guarded by the Saracens that King Richard's men could find no way to get inside. They had to encamp on the barren hills outside and wait for help to come.

One morning Saladin, the noble leader of the Saracens, rode out of the city to see King Richard. The king went out from his camp to meet him; and each was so pleased with the other that soon they were fast friends. Later in the day Richard rode by the side of Saladin into the city. Through the narrow, winding streets they passed until they came at last to the Holy Sepulcher, where men said the body of the Saviour had been laid. There they shook hands and parted.

Soon after this Richard made a truce with the Saracens. He promised to withdraw his army from the Holy Land; and it was agreed that there should be no more fighting until after three years, three months, three days, and three hours had passed by.

With some of his bravest knights King Richard embarked on a small ship and sailed for home. At first the sea was calm and the wind wafted the king swiftly on his way. But after a few days a storm arose. The waves rolled mountain high. The ship was driven this way and that, until at last it was wrecked on an unknown shore.

Most of the men who were with the king were drowned. It was as much as he could do to reach the land alive. He was bruised by the rocks and choked by salt water

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and chilled by the rushing wind. For the rocks and the water and the wind have no more respect for a king than for any other man.

The country in which Richard found himself was wild and rough. Alone and quietly he made his way through woods and over mountains, not daring to tell who he was. For in those rude times no stranger was safe in a foreign land; and a ship-wrecked king would have been a fine prize. So, as a poor pilgrim returning from the Holy Land, he trudged onward, looking very ragged and forlorn and keeping out of the way of people as much as he could. Now and then he found food and lodging at the hut of some poor woodsman, but often he had no shelter under which to rest at night. He did not know how far it was to England, yet he kept going, toward the northwest, and every day he felt that he was a little nearer home.

He had traveled in this way for some time, when he came to a more thickly settled country. There was a road, with now and then a field or a house by it. The few people he met looked at him in a way that he did not like, but he kept straight on and said nothing.

One afternoon he came within sight of a strong castle with high towers and thick gray walls of rough stone. A little way from the castle there was a village of half a dozen houses, and at the entrance to the village there was a small inn.

"Whose castle is that?" he asked of a boy who was driving some cows along the road. The boy stared at him, as though he thought him mad, and then answered, "Why, everybody knows it's the Duke of Austria's castle."

Now, Richard had good reason for not wishing to see the Duke of Austria. But he could not well turn back, and he followed the boy and the cows down to the village.

When they came to the inn they went through a wide gateway into a courtyard where some knights were exercising their horses. As luck would have it, one of the knights was the duke himself. He stared hard at Richard as he came trudging in behind the cows.

"Hello, you fellow!" cried the duke. "Who are you, and what do you want here?"

"I am a poor woodcutter from the forest," answered Richard, "and I have come to offer you my services. There is no man in Austria who can handle an ax better than I."

"Indeed!" said the duke, looking very keenly at his visitor. "I think I saw you wield an ax once. It was made of twenty pounds of English steel. I saw you wield it, not among the trees, but against the heads of Saracens. Am I not right?"

Richard knew that he was discovered. The Duke of Austria had seen him a hundred times in the Holy Land, and would have known his face anywhere.

"Yes, you are right," answered Richard. "As king of England I have often wielded such an ax, and I would fain wield it again when in the presence of the Duke of Austria."

"Do you remember Ascalon?" asked the duke.

"I remember it well," said Richard; "and I remember the wall that I helped to build there with my own hands. I remember, too, the kick that I gave the Duke of Austria because he was too lazy to work on that same wall."

"Very well," said the duke. "You shall now have that kick back with interest." Then turning to his men he cried, "Ho, guards! Seize this fellow. Put him in chains, and shut him up where the sunlight will never trouble him."

Richard, with his back to the wall, made a strong fight for freedom. But what could he, with his bare hands, do against so many armed men? He was soon overpowered, and dragged away to the duke's castle, where he was thrown into a dismal dungeon at the bottom of the tower.

II. BLONDEL

For more than a year the English people heard no tidings of their king. They knew that he had started home from the Holy Land. They had heard, too, of his shipwreck, and it was rumored that he was held as a prisoner in some distant land. But nobody knew where that land was.

Now Richard in his happier days at home had trained up a young rhymer, or minstrel, whose name was Blondel de Nesle. Before going to the Holy Land, he had spent many a pleasant hour in Blondel's company, listening to his beautiful songs. For the young minstrel had a rare, rich voice, full of the most charming melody; and no other singer in England or France could excel him. Sometimes Richard himself had composed little songs which he and Blondel sang together; and a strong love, like that of two brothers, had sprung up between the minstrel and the king.

Very sad was Blondel when no news could be heard of Richard. He wandered hither and thither about the king's lonely palace, and would not open his mouth to sing for anybody. At last he said, "I know that my master is a prisoner in a strange land. I will seek him; I will find him; I will save him."

With his harp in his hand he set out on his quest. He traveled through many lands in that part of Europe where he would be most likely to find his master. He made friends wherever he went. For in those days minstrels were welcome in every palace and in every hut, and Blondel's wonderful voice delighted all who heard it.

One day he stopped at a little inn by the edge of a great forest. It was quite near to a strong castle which was surrounded by high walls of rough, gray stones.

"Whose castle is that?" he asked of the inn-keeper.

"It belongs to the Duke of Austria," was the answer. "But the duke has other and finer places, and it is now a year since he was last here. While he is away the Count Tribables is master of the castle."

Then Blondel inquired if there were any prisoners in the castle; for he asked that question in every place he visited.

"Only one," answered the innkeeper. "He is kept in the dungeon at the bottom of the tower. I know not who he is. The duke keeps a close watch upon him and feeds him well, and so I think he must be somebody."

That evening Blondel sang before the Count Tribables and his family in the gray castle. All who heard him praised his fine voice and loved him for his gentle manners. They begged him to stay a while; for he had made the dreary old place merrier than it had been for many a day.

The next morning Blondel wandered around to the great tower. He saw a slit in the wall which he knew was the only means by which light was let into the dungeon below. He sat down on a block of stone and tuned his harp. Then he began to sing a song which he and King Richard had sung together in the old happy days before his master had gone crusading:—

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"Your beauty, lady fair,
All view with strange delight;
But you've so cold an air,
None love you as they might.
Yet this I'm pleased to see,
You love none more than me."

This was the first half of the song; and when he had sung it he paused. Then, far down in the dismal dungeon, he heard the clear but mournful voice of King Richard singing the rest:—

"My heart you'll sorely wound
If favor you divide
And smile on all around,
Unwilling to decide.
I'd rather hatred bear
Than love with others share."

Blondel sprang to his feet, his heart filled with delight. "O Richard! O my king!" he cried in ecstasy. Then he hurried away, to do what he could to secure his master's liberty. He went to the emperor of Germany and to the king of France, and finally back to England, telling how Richard was cruelly kept in prison by the Duke of Austria.

The king of France would have been glad to leave Richard in prison; for he was one of his bitterest foes. The emperor of Germany was but little more friendly; yet many of his knights and warriors said that it was a shame to treat the king of England so meanly.

Then the French king accused Richard of having tried to poison him when both were crusading in the Holy Land. Upon this, the emperor ordered that Richard should be brought out of his dungeon and made to plead his case before the high court of Germany. He hoped in this way to get rid of the troublesome prisoner.

Richard pleaded his case so well that many who heard him wept. Pale and weak from his long imprisonment, he told how the Duke of Austria had abused him. He showed how the French king had plotted to have him put to death. Then he spoke of the battles he had won in the Holy Land, shouting the war cry of "God help us! God help us!"

The high court had nothing to gain by declaring him guilty. And so it was decided that he should be set free on the payment of a large ransom to the emperor and the duke.

It was Blondel and Queen Eleanor, Richard's mother, who helped to raise the ransom. With his harp and his fine voice, Blondel so wrought upon the feelings of the English people that they paid more willingly the price that was required of them. They gave the value of one fourth of all the movable property that they owned, and we may well doubt whether any king was worth so much. Then Queen Eleanor herself carried the money to Germany and put it in the hands of the emperor and the duke. And when Richard the Lion-hearted was at last a free man again, in his own country, it was Blondel who first welcomed him back.

CHAPTER XVIII

KING JOHN AND PRINCE ARTHUR

I

There was once a king of England whose name was John. He was a trifling, worthless fellow, and as mean a man as ever wore a crown.

He was not the rightful king of England; for by the English law the crown ought to have gone to his nephew, Prince Arthur. But the prince was only a child, and in those rude, rough times the young and the weak had but little chance against the wicked and the strong. It was an easy matter for John to push the lad aside, take possession of his castles and treasures, and then proclaim himself king.

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He allowed Arthur to go to Brittany in France, and there the little prince lived for some time in a castle which had been his mother's. John himself often went to France; for in those days a large part of that country was ruled by the English king.

The French king, Philip, was very jealous of John, and there was nothing that he wanted so much as to drive him out of his possessions and take them for his own. But he was a great coward, and although he was always talking about making war upon King John, it was seldom that he found courage enough to do anything. One day as he was thinking about the matter, it occurred to him that it would be a good plan to persuade Prince Arthur to help him. So he invited the boy to come and see him at Paris.

"My dear young prince," he said, "how would you like to be king of England?"

"I should like it above all things," answered the boy, "for indeed it is my right. Had not my uncle taken that which belongs to me, I should even now be wearing the English crown."

"How many fighting men do you think you could muster in case of war?" was King Philip's next question.

"From my own castle, perhaps five hundred," said Arthur.

"Well, then," said Philip, "it will be an easy thing for you to win back your kingdom of England. Only do as I say, and all will be well."

And then he told the prince how he should arm his men and lead them out to fight against the soldiers of King John.

"When the country people see that you are in earnest they will all hasten to help you," said he. "Soon you will have a large army, and all your uncle's castles in France will fall before you. In the meanwhile I will cross the English Channel with my French army, and will attack King John in his own country. He cannot withstand both of us. He will give up everything that he has taken from you. And then you shall be king of England."

Prince Arthur was delighted with the plan, and he promised Philip that he would do what he could. But it is doubtful if he would have done anything had it not been for wicked men who wished to use him for their own selfish purposes.

II

It was a proud day for Arthur when he rode out at the head of his little army and marched away to fight for the crown of which he had been so wrongfully deprived. It was a foolish undertaking, and hopeless from the start; and the men who were with the little prince ought to have told him so. But, no doubt, they had their own selfish ends to gain, and were willing that he should be deceived.

He had never been happier than when he rode through the meadows that morning, the sunlight flashing from his bright armor, the tall grass rustling in the breeze, the birds singing by the roadside. Alas, he was never to be so happy again.

The people did not join him on the road as he expected, and King Philip seemed to be in no hurry to send him help. But the little prince was brave and hopeful, and he led his army straight across the country to a small town where King John's mother was staying. "If you can capture the king's mother," said some of his advisers, "the king will give up everything for her sake." But he ought to have known that John had no such love as that for anybody.

The town was easily captured by the prince's followers; but all the great people shut themselves up in the castle that stood close by, and dared their enemies to come near them.

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While Prince Arthur and his knights were besieging the castle and trying to find some way to get inside of it, King John himself came to the rescue with an army many times larger than the prince's.

What could the prince do? Some of his men turned against him and went over to the king's army. With the rest he shut himself up in the town, and there, for several days, he defended himself like a young hero. But one night, when a dreadful storm was raging, a number of the king's soldiers climbed over the walls and got into the town. Before the alarm could be given, they were masters of the place. The prince was seized upon while he was in bed. Some of his knights were killed while trying to defend him. Others were made prisoners and afterwards thrown into dark dungeons, where they died.

"Come to my arms, my dear nephew," said King John when Arthur was led before him. "Right glad I am to hold your hand again. You have played a lively game with your loving uncle, and your uncle will reward you as you deserve." And with that he sent the prince to the castle of Falaise, to be kept there until further orders.

"I'll tell you what, Hubert," said he to his head officer, "that boy is the very bane of my life. I can do nothing, think of nothing, but that he is always in my way. Do you understand me, Hubert? You are his keeper."

"Yes," said Hubert, "and I'll keep him so well that he shall never trouble you again."

But Hubert was a gentle knight and had no intention of doing the boy any harm. He gave him the best room in the castle of Falaise and treated him as tenderly as though he were his own son. The prince, however, was very unhappy. He spent much of his time looking out of the narrow windows of his prison and wishing that he could once more see his dear old home in Brittany.

III

The king had hoped that Hubert would find means to put Arthur to death, and when he learned that the lad was still alive he was more troubled than before. He called some of his friends together—men who were as wicked and worthless as himself—and asked their advice.

"What shall we do with that boy?" he asked. "He is the torment of my life. So long as he is alive there will be men to plot and plan to make him king. How shall we be rid of him?"

"Put his eyes out," said one.

"Send some one with a dagger to visit him," said another.

"Throw him into the river to be king of the fishes," said a third.

King John liked the idea of the dagger. He told William de Bray, a Norman knight, that if he would stab the young prince he should be richly rewarded with lands and gold. But Sir William turned on his heel and left the king, saying, "I am a gentleman and not a murderer."

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Then the king thought of putting out the boy's eyes. He found two ruffians who were willing to do the deed for pay, and sent them down to Falaise. They took with them the king's order, which they gave to Hubert:—

"You are commanded to burn the boy's eyes out with red-hot irons. See that you fail not. The men who carry this to you will do your bidding in the matter."

Hubert read it and then showed it to the prince.

"Arthur," he said, "I have a message from you uncle. I pray you look it over and tell me what you think of it;" and then he turned away while the prince read.

"Hubert!" said Arthur.

"Well, my prince!"

"Shall I tell you what I think of it? I think that you will not burn out my eyes."

"But the king commands, and I must obey. He will take my life if I refuse."

"Then do it, dear Hubert, to save yourself. But how can you? These eyes never harmed you. They never so much as frowned upon you, nor never shall they. Is there no other way?"

Hubert made no answer, but motioned to the ruffians to come in. They came, with the red-hot irons in their hands. The prince ran to Hubert and clasped him about the knees.

"Oh, save me, Hubert! save me!" he cried, "If it must be done, do it yourself; but send these men away. I promise that I will be very still. I will not flinch when the iron burns me; I will not cry out. But do it yourself, kind Hubert."

The child's distress and terror were more than the tender-hearted Hubert could endure. He sent the ruffians away. "Give me the irons," he said, "I will do it myself." And they, to tell the truth, were glad enough to be off without doing the barbarous deed.

Hubert led Arthur to another part of the castle, into a room that was seldom visited. "I would not harm your eyes for all the treasure that your uncle owns," he said. "But no one must know that I have saved you. The men must carry back false reports, and you must stay here in hiding. I have taken great risks in disobeying your uncle."

When the ruffians went back to the king and said that his orders had been carried out, he was very much pleased. He felt sure now that the prince was out of the way and would give him no more trouble; and for a time all went well with him.

IV

At length Hubert was called away to fight in distant lands; and Arthur was left in the lonely castle, not daring to stir out or to show himself beyond the walls. One day a wicked talebearer who had been entertained and fed at Falaise Castle carried the news to the king that the prince was still alive and well.

King John was furious. "Hubert shall die for this!" he cried. Then he sent men to Falaise to find Arthur's hiding place. They carried the boy far away to one of the king's castles on the Seine River. There he was put in charge of a very cruel keeper. He was shut up in a narrow room above the river, where the only sounds to be heard were the lapping of the waves and the sighing of the wind.

One night the prince was wakened from his sleep by his keeper, who told him that friends were waiting for him at the water gate. He hastened to dress himself, and then followed the keeper down the narrow stairway to the door that opened out upon the river. The night was dark; and he wondered if Hubert had come to rescue him from his prison. He could see near the door the dim shadow of a boat with two men in it. They were muffled in long cloaks and were sitting very quietly.

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"Step into the boat," whispered the keeper.

The prince obeyed, and sat down in the stern. Then the man who held the oars pushed the boat off into the stream, and it was soon floating swiftly far away from the castle.

"Is that you, Hubert?" whispered the prince to the man who sat in front of him. The man loosened his cloak and lifted his face. Then, as the moon peeped out from behind a cloud, Arthur saw that it was his uncle and that he held a dagger in his hand.

In the morning while the gray mists were still hanging above the river, King John and his boatman were seen floating down the river towards the place where the king's army was encamped. But Prince Arthur was not in the boat; nor did any one ever see him again.

CHAPTER XIX

KING JOHN AND THE MAGNA CARTA

King John was so selfish and cruel that all the people in his kingdom both feared and hated him.

One by one he lost the dominions in France which the former kings of England had held. Men called him Lackland, because in the end he had neither lands nor castles that he could rightfully call his own.

He robbed his people. He quarreled with his knights and barons. He offended all good men. He formed a plan for making war against King Philip of France, and called upon his barons to join him. When some of them refused, he burned their castles and destroyed their fields.

At last the barons met together at a place called St. Edmundsbury to talk about their grievances. "Why should we submit to be ruled by such a king?" said some of the boldest. But most of them were afraid to speak their minds.

Stephen Langton, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was with them, and there was no bolder friend of liberty than he. He made a stirring speech that gave courage even to the most cowardly.

"Are you men?" he said. "Why then do you submit to this false-hearted king? Stand up and declare your freedom. Refuse to be the slaves of this man. Demand the rights and privileges that belong to you as free men. Put this demand in writing—in the form of a great charter—and require the king to sign it. So shall it be to you and your children a safeguard forever against the injustice of unworthy rulers." The barons were astonished at the boldness of this speech. Some of them shrank back in fear, but the bravest among them showed by their looks and gestures that they were ready to make a bold stand for liberty.

"Come forward!" cried Stephen Langton. "Come, and swear that you will never rest until King John has given you the rights that are yours. Swear that you will have the charter

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from his hand, or that you will wage war upon him to the very death."

Never before had Englishmen heard such a speech. The barons took the oath which Stephen Langton prescribed. Then they gathered their fighting men together and marched upon London. The cowardly king was frightened.

"What do these men want?" he asked.

They sent him word that they wanted their rights as Englishmen, and that they would never rest until he had given them a charter of liberties signed by his own hand.

"Oh, well! If that is all, you shall surely have it," he said.

But he put them off with one excuse and another. He sent a messenger to Rome to ask the Pope to help him. He tried, by fine promises, to persuade Stephen Langton to abandon the cause he had undertaken. But no one knew the falseness of his heart better than the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The people from all parts of the country now came and joined the army of the barons. Of all the knights in England, only seven remained true to the king.

The barons made out a list of their demands; and Stephen Langton carried it to the king. "These things we will have," they said; "and there shall be no peace until you grant them."

Oh, how angry was King John! He raved like a wild beast; he clenched his fists; he stamped upon the floor. But he saw that he was helpless. At last he said that he would sign the charter at such time and place as the barons might name.

"Let the time be the 15th of June," they said, "and let the place be Runnymede."

Now Runnymede was a green meadow not far from the city of London, and thither the king went with his few followers. There he was met by the barons, with an army of determined men behind them.

The charter which Stephen Langton and his friends had drawn up was spread out before the king. He was not a scholar, and so it was read to him, line by line. It was a promise that the people should not be oppressed; that the rights of the cities and boroughs should be respected; that no man should be imprisoned without a fair trial; that justice should not be delayed or denied to any one.

Pale with anger, the king signed the charter, and then rode back to his castle at Windsor. As soon as he was in his own chamber he began to rave like a madman. He rolled on the floor; he beat the air with his fists; he gnawed sticks and straws; he foamed at the mouth; he cursed the barons and the people for treating their king so badly.

But he was helpless. The charter was signed—the MAGNA CHARTA, to which Englishmen still point as the first safeguard of their rights and liberties.

As might have been expected, it was not long before John tried to break all his promises. The barons made war upon him, and never again did he see a peaceful day. His anger and anxiety caused him to fall into a fever which nothing could cure. At last, despised and shunned as he deserved to be, he died. I doubt if there was an eye in England that wept for him.

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CHAPTER XX

FREDERICK BARBAROSSA

I

Three score and nine years old was the red-bearded king, Frederick Barbarossa. He was by right the master of Germany. He had subdued Italy and had been crowned in the imperial city of Rome. Throughout Europe his name was known and feared; in his own country he was the hero of heroes.

He might have ended his days in quiet and peace, but such was not the wish of the iron-hearted warrior. War was his chosen pastime; war was his delight; and the glory of his country was his ambition.

From the Holy Land, far over the sea, a call for help was sounded. The Saracens of the desert had captured Jerusalem; they had seized upon the Holy Sepulcher, so dear to every Christian heart; the sacred banner of the cross had been trailed in the dust.

Throughout Europe there was great alarm. Devout men went from land to land preaching a crusade for the delivery of the holy places. Christian princes raised mighty armies and, crossing the seas, fought bravely to drive the unbelieving Saracens back to their native deserts.

At such a time could Frederick Barbarossa remain idle at home? Could he rest quietly who had spent fifty years in the turmoil of war? As well could the mountain torrent stand still on the brow of a precipice. He sounded the word of command; he put himself at the head of his armed hosts; he led them forth to the defense of the Holy Land. Neither mountains nor seas nor sun nor storm delayed his march; and dismay filled the hearts of the Saracens when they heard of his coming.

On a day in early spring his army arrived upon the banks of a broad stream in Asia Minor. The land of the Saracens was on the farther side; the banners of the Saracen army were seen in the distance. But the stream was deep and rapid, fed by ice-cold torrents from the melting snows of the mountains. There was neither ferry nor ford; and the soldiers paused, fearing to go forward.

Then Frederick rode up and down upon his prancing war steed. A thousand knights, clad in glittering suits of mail, were behind him. They were the flower of Germany, the bravest and best of the heroes of the Rhineland. The emperor's long beard streamed in the wind like the tail of a flaming red comet. His gleaming sword flashed like lightning as he waved it above his head. His voice was like rolling thunder as he turned in his saddle and called to his eager followers.

"Beyond this stream," cried he, "lies the goal towards which we have been pressing. I see the banners of the Saracens upon the hill tops. I hear their cries of defiance. Even now I smell the battle, and see the enemy fleeing before us. Why do we pause here? Let every brave man follow me!"

He turned his horse quickly and plunged into the stream. His thousand mailed knights upon their impatient horses followed him. The roaring waters leaped high to meet them. Horsemen and steeds battled bravely with the flood. They were borne down by the torrent; their heavy armor dragged them to the bottom; not one was able to reach the farther shore.

Frederick Barbarossa was the last to be overcome. With the strength of a giant he fought his way to the middle of the stream. Then a great wave seized upon him. It hurled him from his steed, and bore him helpless along in the trough of the rushing current. The foot soldiers, watching from the shore, soon lost sight of the hero. The last they saw of him was

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his red beard streaming far behind, and his glittering sword, which he still held upright.

They watched until there was no longer any sign of armored knight or warrior king, for the waters had closed over all. Then, as if moved by a single thought, they cried out in dismay and grief; they wept for their lost leader; they bewailed their own hard fate, thus left without guide or commander, in a strange and unfriendly land. Strong men gave way to despair, and brave warriors who feared no danger were overcome with sorrow.

As they ran in confusion hither and thither, shrieking and lamenting, a wonderful vision appeared to them. A holy monk, clad in long robes and holding a crucifix in his hand, stood upon the river bank at the spot from which Frederick the hero had leaped into the waves. He beckoned to them to listen.

"Why do you weep for your lost leader?" he said. "He is not dead. He has gone back to his own country and yours—to Germany; and with him are his mailed knights. In the Kyffhäuser Mountain, in the great hall of the immortals, Frederick Barbarossa rests with his chosen heroes. He will sleep there until the eagles shall cease to fly around the mountain peaks. He will rest there until the time is ripe for the doing of mighty deeds. Then the bell shall toll the hour, the trumpet shall sound, and he will ride forth with his mailed knights to conquer the world. Weep no more; but return to your fatherland to wait for the day and the hour when your warrior king shall call you!"

And having spoken these words the strange monk vanished.

"Let us obey him and return to our homes," was the cry. But, alas, there were few in that great host who would ever see their fatherland again.

II

Days passed and years and circling centuries, but no man knew where to find the hall of the immortals in which Frederick Barbarossa was sleeping with his chosen heroes.

When half a thousand years had gone by, a shepherd chanced one day to wander into a lonely glen far up the side of the Kyffhäuser Mountain. A sheep had strayed from the flock and he had traced it thither, to a part of the mountain which he had never seen before. Suddenly the path which he was following ended. In the rocky wall before him he saw a narrow opening, like a doorway, half hidden by vines and overhanging boughs. Was this a cave, and could the stray sheep have wandered into it?

He peered through the doorway. It opened into a long, narrow passage, and beyond the end of the passage the shepherd thought he saw the sunlight glimmering among green trees.

"Ah, my stray lamb," he said, "you have found your way to new pastures, I see. I will follow you and learn what sort of place it is."

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He went boldly in, thinking that the passage would open out into a sunny glen on the other side of the mountain. The way was long, and for a while he trudged carelessly along whistling a gay tune Then he began to sing in clear, joyous tones a little song that he himself had composed:—

"A throstle in a linden tree
Sings tir-ra, lir-ra, lir-ra;
He sings for you, he sings for me,
And he sings tir-ra, lir-ra.

"All day I watch my lambs and sheep,
And whistle tir-ra, lir-ra;
'Tis better far to laugh than weep,
So I sing tir-ra, lir-ra.

"At home my loved ones wait for me,
While I sing tir-ra, lir-ra;
And when at eve—"

The singing stopped suddenly. The shepherd had reached the end of the passage, and the sight which he saw almost caused him to faint. He was standing in the door of a broad hall, the roof of which was upheld by columns of green marble. The walls and the floor were inlaid with sparkling jewels, and it was the light from these, reflected from the green columns, that the shepherd had mistaken for sunlight among green trees.

At a marble table in the center of the hall sat Frederick Barbarossa. His head was resting upon his hands; his face was beaming with the light of other days; his red beard had grown through the table and lay in long, wavy masses upon the floor. Ranged along the wall on either side of the king sat a thousand mail-clad warriors. Beside them were their arms, glittering bright as on the day when they set out for the Holy Land. The hand of sleep was upon them all. They breathed softly; they dreamed of war and victory; the smile of triumph was on their faces. Long time had they waited there for the word that was to lead them forth.

The coming of the shepherd, singing his joyous song, had disturbed the king. Slowly he raised his head; he opened his eyes; he looked around upon his sleeping heroes. Then he cried in tones that echoed through the mountains: "Comrades! Comrades!"

The warriors awoke and leaped to their feet; they seized their lances and their swords; their armor rattled like the sudden bursting of thunder when a storm rages among the hills. A hum of joy ran through the hall.

"Do the eagles still circle above the mountain peaks?" asked Barbarossa, raising his sword toward the sparkling roof of the hall.

And a voice which seemed far, far away, echoed, "The eagles still circle above the mountain peaks!"

The shadows again settled upon the face of the king. He raised his hand to silence the awakened warriors. "Sleep on, comrades," he said; "the hour has not yet come."

With one accord they laid their weapons aside; the light of joy faded from their faces; they sank upon the ground; with closed eyes they slept as soundly as before.

The king remained awake for a little while. Then, with a sigh, he again rested his elbows upon the marble table. He leaned his head upon his hand. His fiery beard trailed upon the floor; his face beamed bright as when he was young; he slumbered, waiting for the appointed hour.

Strange, weird sounds were heard in the great hall. The wind whistled through the crevices in the rocks; it roared in the dome-shaped roof; it shrieked around the figures of the sleeping warriors. Voices of unseen beings were echoed back and forth, from wall to wall and from column to column. Then soft music filled the air and soothed the slumbering heroes, driving every harsher sound from the enchanted hall.

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During all this time the shepherd stood entranced, without the power to move or speak. How he escaped from the place he never knew. But when he came to himself he was lying on the grass in the meadow where he was accustomed to keep his flock, and his sheep were quietly feeding around him.

CHAPTER XXI

THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK

There was once a king of France so splendid and powerful that he has ever since been called the Grand Monarch. His name was Louis, and as there had been thirteen kings of that name before him, he is known in history as Louis the Fourteenth.

Now this grand King Louis had many fine palaces and strong castles. In his palaces was everything that could make life joyous and gay. In some of his castles there were gloomy prisons where men whom he did not like were shut up. One of these prison castles was on a small island called Sainte Marguerite. A dark and lonely place it was, built close by the shore of the sea. The prisoners gazing out of the narrow windows saw only the water and the sky; and the only sound they heard was that of the waves lapping on the cold stones.

The king was only a boy with long curls brushing his cheeks, when a strange man was put in this prison. Who he was, or why he was there, nobody could tell. The secret was known only to the king and perhaps two or three others. No one was allowed to talk with him. No one ever saw his face; for this mysterious prisoner always wore a black mask which men said was made of iron. There were holes in the mask through which he could see, and the part over his mouth could be lifted up when he ate or drank; but never, by day or by night, was he allowed to take it off.

Men sailing in boats near the castle sometimes saw the strange prisoner at his iron-barred window. Often he would stand there for hours, gazing out upon the sea. Sometimes he was seen sitting by the window and playing sad tunes on a guitar. But never for a moment was his face uncovered.

"Who is this man in the iron mask?" people asked. Nobody could tell. Some guessed that he was the king's cousin who had done some rash things and offended the grand Louis. Some said that he was the king's own twin brother. Others said that perhaps he was a certain English prince whom his people wished to keep out of the way. But the secret was well kept, and nobody to this day knows who the mysterious prisoner was.

Perhaps the prisoner tried to escape. Perhaps he tried to remove the iron mask. But, if so, he was guarded so closely that no one outside of the castle ever heard about it.

One day as a fisherman was rowing underneath the prison window, something round and bright fell into his boat. He picked it up. It was a beautiful silver plate, with words written all over the under side of it. The writing seemed to have been scratched there with the point of a knife. It was bright, as though it had just been done.

The fisherman could not read. Poor people did not read in those days. But he knew that the plate came from the man in the iron mask. The jailer often served the prisoner's dinner in silver dishes. The prisoner had hidden one of the plates, and when he was alone had written his history on it. Then he had thrown it out of the window, hoping that some pitying friend might find it.

The fisherman was frightened almost out of his wits as he looked at the plate. What if the king should hear about it! Would he not think that the fisherman was plotting with the prisoner? Many a poor fellow had been shut up in a dungeon for less than that. He rowed to the shore as quickly as possible.

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He ran to the castle and called for the governor. The governor was astonished when he saw the plate.

"Where did you get this?" he asked.

The fisherman told him how it had fallen into his boat.

"Did you read what is written here?"

"No, sir. Such men as I do not know how to read;" and the fisherman trembled as he said it.

"Has any one else seen the plate?" asked the governor.

"No one, sir. I held it under my coat and came to the castle as quickly as possible."

When the governor had made sure that the man was telling the truth, he sent him away. "You are lucky," he said, "not to know how to read. For if you had learned the secrets written on this plate, you would never have gone out of this castle."

After that, the man in the iron mask was seen less often at the window. The tunes which he played on the guitar were sadder than before. He became quieter day by day, and at length fell sick.

A doctor was brought to the prison to see what could be done for him, and it was this doctor who afterwards wrote an account of the man in the mask. But he never learned the secret of the prisoner's name, and he never saw his face.

"He was a fine-looking man, with a dark skin and a very pleasant voice," said the doctor. "He never spoke of himself and never complained."

At last, after having been kept in prison twenty-five years, the man in the iron mask died. His name and the story of his life will forever remain a mystery.

CHAPTER XXII

THE FALL OF TROY

I. THE LONG SIEGE

On the farther side of the Ægean Sea there once flourished a fair, rich city, the most famous in the world. This city was called Ilium by its own people, but in story and song it is known as Troy. It stood on a sloping plain some distance back from the shore, and was surrounded by high, strong walls which no enemy could scale or batter down. Within the gates were the homes of the people, houses great and small, a fine stone palace for the king and his sons, and a beautiful temple of Athene, the guardian of the city. Outside the walls were gardens and farms and woodlands; and in the distance rose the green slopes and rocky heights of Mount Ida.

Troy was a very old city. For hundreds of years it had been growing in power and pride, and no man knew when or how the foundations of its greatness had been laid. "Ilium will endure forever," said the boastful Trojans as they looked at its solid walls and its noble buildings. But, alas, sad changes at length took place, and cruel war destroyed many a proud hope.

From beyond the sea came hosts of Greeks, armed for war and bent upon the conquest of the city. They came because one of the princes of Troy, Paris by name, had done a grievous wrong to Greece. He had stolen and carried away from her shores the most beautiful of all her women, even Helen, the wife of Menelaus of Sparta. The cry was for vengeance; and heroes and warriors from every city and town joined hands and vowed vengeance upon Troy. They came in a thousand little ships, with sails and oars, and landed on the beach at the foot of the plain. They built huts and tents along the shore; they kindled fires; they threw up a breastwork of

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earth and stones around their camp; they defied the warriors of Troy to come out on the plain and meet them in battle.

Thus the siege was begun, and for more than nine years the city was surrounded by determined foes; but the walls were strong, and the men who defended them were brave. Many fierce battles were fought outside of the gates. Sometimes the victory seemed to be with the Greeks, sometimes with the Trojans; but neither could gain any great advantage over the other. The Trojans could not drive the invaders from their shores; the Greeks could not force their way into the city. One hero after another was slain, now on this side, now on that. Great were the losses of besiegers and besieged, and great the suffering and grief; but still the struggle went on.

"Athene protects us," said the hopeful people of Troy. "So long as the Palladium is with us, our city cannot be taken."

The Palladium was a beautiful statue which stood in the temple of Athene. In it the Trojans placed their hopes, for they believed that it had the strange power of protecting its friends.

"It is useless for us to fight longer," said some of the Greeks; "for we can never prevail while the Palladium is in Troy."

"We have already stayed too long," said others. "Let us abandon this hopeless siege and return to our homes."

But Ulysses, the shrewdest of all the heroes of Greece, was unwilling to give up. On a dark and stormy night he made his way by stealth into the city; he passed the guards unnoticed; he crept into the temple of Athene while all the watchers were asleep; he seized upon the Palladium and carried it in triumph to the camp by the shore.

"Now we shall surely prevail," said the Greeks; "for the Palladium is ours."

But still the Trojans persevered and guarded well their gates; and still the weary siege went on.

One morning in the early summer all Troy was awakened at daybreak by shouts from the sentinels on the walls.

"What is the matter now?" asked men, women, and children, as they hurried into the streets.

"They are gone," said one of the sentinels.

"Who are gone?"

"Why the Greeks, of course."

"Oh, no! That is too good to be true."

"Then come up here and see for yourselves."

Soon a hundred eager men and women were standing on the wall, straining their eyes in the gray light of dawn, and trying to discern the hated tents by the beach and the black-hulled ships along the shore.

"They are not there," said the sharp-sighted sentinel. "No sign of Greek can be seen—no ship nor tent nor smoking camp fire. Thanks to Athene, they have left us at last."

"Look again," said some of the doubtful ones. "Perhaps the fog hides them from your view."

"There is no fog," answered the sentinel. "But I see a strange, dark object among the reeds, close by the inlet where the boys used to go swimming. I wonder what it can be."

All looked toward the spot indicated. Surely enough there was something among the reeds. It was smaller than a ship and larger than a man. In the dim light of the morning, it looked like a sea monster lately emerged from the waves.

"Perhaps it has devoured the Greeks and their ships," suggested a bustling little man. "Ah, but what a fine large meal it must have had!"

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Just then the sun rose above Mount Ida, shedding a rosy golden light upon sea and shore and making every object on the beach plainly visible. There was no longer any doubt about the strange appearance in the reeds.

"It is a horse!" shouted one and all.

"But not a real horse," said the sharp-sighted sentinel—"it is much too large. It is a huge; grizzly, ill-shapen image which the Greeks have left behind them, perhaps to frighten us. And now I remember that for several days there was something unusual going on behind the reeds and bushes there—workmen hurrying back and forth, and much noise of hammering and pounding. They were building this very image."

Just then Laocoön, a prince of Troy, joined the company on the wall. He was an old man, wrinkled and gray—a priest of Apollo, wiser and more discreet than most of his fellows. After looking long and carefully at the strange image, he turned to the crowd around him and said, "It is a trick. My children, beware of the cunning Greeks. They have prepared this image to deceive you. I warn you to have nothing to do with it."

II. THE DESERTED CAMP

About the middle of the morning, Priam, the old king of Troy, caused a proclamation to be sounded in the streets:—

"Our enemies have departed, and peace and safety are ours once again. At noon the gates of the city shall be opened, and our people may resume their peaceful occupations."

Forthwith there was a great bustling and stirring in every corner of the city. It was as though day had dawned after a long and fearful night. How sweet it was to feel free from dread, and to go about one's business in peace! The women began to sweep and air their long-neglected houses, talking loudly and singing as they attended to their various tasks. The shopkeepers brought out their goods and announced fine bargains to the first buyers. The smiths kindled fires in their forges, and began to hammer old spears into reaping hooks and other implements of peace. The fishermen overhauled their nets. The farmers counted their rakes and hoes and plows, and talked about the fine crops they would have on lands that had lain idle so long.

But not all the people were thus busy preparing for the occupations of peace. Long before the hour of noon a great company of idlers and sightseers, soothsayers and warriors, half-grown boys, and indeed many respectable men, had gathered before the gate on the seaward side of the town, anxious to get out of the long-pent-up city. No sooner was the gate opened than there was a wild rush across the plain toward the shore. Men as well as boys were anxious to see whether the Greeks had left anything behind them that was worth having.

They wandered along the beach, looking in every nook and corner of the old camp, but finding nothing more than a few bits of crockery, a broken sword hilt or two, and a few worthless ornaments. But they kept well away from the inlet where the reeds grew. The boldest of them could not be persuaded to go near the huge wooden horse which stood there. For Laocoön, the priest, had warned them again to beware of it; and so they were content to stand at a distance and gaze at the strange, unshapely object and wonder what evil trick the Greeks had intended by leaving it behind.

Suddenly on the other side of the camp a great shouting was heard. Then some countrymen, who had been hunting in the marshes, were seen approaching with a prisoner.

"A Greek! a Greek!" was the shout; and men and boys ran forward to see the captive and join in abusing him. The poor fellow was led by a thong of oxhide twisted around his neck; and, as he stumbled along over the sand, the rude crowd jeered at him and jostled him and pelted him with sticks and sand and whatever objects they could lay hold of. The blood

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was trickling down his scarred face, his eyes were swollen, his left ear was mangled and torn, and his right arm seemed useless. But his persecutors, as they saw his condition, shouted only the louder, "A Greek! a Greek! Away with him!"

Then, all at once, the uproar ceased and a great silence fell upon the rude rabble; for, standing in his chariot quite near the spot, was one of the officers of the king.

"What prisoner is this whom you are thus abusing?" he asked.

"We think he is a Greek," answered his captors, "We found him in the tall grass by the slimy marshes; and as he was already wounded and half blind, it was easy for us to take him, although we were unarmed."

"Already wounded!" said the officer. "That is indeed strange." Then turning to the prisoner, he asked, "How is this? Tell me whether you are a Greek or whether you are a friend of Troy. What is your name, and what is your country?"

"My name," said the prisoner, "is Sinon, and although I am by birth a Greek, yet I have no country. Until ten days ago I counted myself a friend of Greece, and fought valiantly among her heroes. But see these grievous wounds, this ear, this bleeding face, these eyes. Can I remain friendly to those who thus maimed me and would fain have taken my life also?"

"Tell us about it," said the officer; "and tell us truly if the Greeks have sailed to their homes never to vex us again." And he motioned to the young men to loosen the thong about the prisoner's neck.

"Yes, I will tell you," answered Sinon, "and I will be brief. When Ulysses, the craftiest of men, stole the Palladium from your temple, the Greeks felt sure that the city would soon fall into their hands. But as day after day passed by, and they gained not a single fight before the gates, they began to despair. Then a council was held, and it was decided to give up the siege and sail for home. Immediately great storms arose on the sea. The south wind blew continuously for days together. The waves dashed over the beach and destroyed more than one of our tents. It was impossible for any ship to put to sea, and we all lay idle and despairing within our storm-beaten camp. Then the chiefs of the Greeks called the soothsayers and bade them tell what was the cause of these things, and by what means we should be able in the end to return home. Calchas was the first soothsayer to speak.

" 'Athene is angry,' he said, 'because her statue, the Palladium, was stolen from her temple. That is why the storms rage so fiercely on the sea; and they will continue to rage until you do something to atone for the wrong that she has suffered.'

" 'Tell us what we must do,' said the chiefs.

" 'You must make a statue of a horse and leave it on this shore as a token of your shame and repentance,' answered Calchas. 'Never can your ships return to Greece until that is done.'

"Then another soothsayer was called. Ulysses had instructed him what to say. 'The ships of Greece,' said he, 'can never sail until a hero well known in the councils of the Greeks shall be sacrificed to Apollo.'

" 'Who is the hero that must thus be sacrificed?' asked the chiefs.

" 'It is Sinon,' answered the soothsayer, being urged on by Ulysses. For the man of wiles desired my death, being offended at me without cause.

"I was at once bound with thongs and confined in a tent on the outskirts of the camp. I was told that at sunrise on the following day I was to die. But in the dead of night I broke the cords and would have escaped unhurt had I not been discovered by Ulysses. Fiercely he attacked me as I fled from the camp, and with unpitying blows he gave me the wounds that you see upon my body. Yet in the darkness I eluded him and found shelter in the slimy marshes by the shore. There I

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lay hidden till I saw the last of the ships sail away. But, as I was creeping out of my hiding place these rude fellows seized me and dragged me hither. Now, as to whether I am a friend of the Greeks you may readily know."

III. THE DOOM OF LAOCOON

"But what about the horse?" cried the rabble of Trojans. "What about the horse?"

"The horse," said Sinon, "wars built as the soothsayer, Calchas, had directed. Otherwise, the ships could never have sailed. There it is now, standing among the reeds. The soothsayers declared that it would carry happiness and prosperity and peace wherever it should go. But the Greeks were unwilling that it should ever be a benefit to Troy. Therefore they built it so wide and high that it cannot be taken through your gates. They placed it among the reeds by the shore, hoping that the waves might undermine it and carry it away to the deep sea."

"Ah, that is their plan is it?" cried the excited Trojans. "Well, we shall see whether Troy is not made happy and prosperous by such a piece of work." And, forgetting Sinon, the whole company, with the king's officer at its head, rushed madly to the spot where the great horse stood.

"Beware, my countrymen, beware!" cried the voice of old Laocoön, as he struggled through the crowd. "This is a trick of the Greeks. The horse will not bring you happiness and prosperity, but rather misery and ruin. Cast it into the sea, burn it to ashes, but do not receive it into the city."

With these words he hurled his spear at the huge image. The weapon struck it full in the breast, and those who stood nearest declared that they heard deep hollow groans and a sound like the rattle of shields issuing from the throat of the monster.

"To the sea with it! To the sea with it!" cried a few who believed in the old priest.

But the greater number shouted, "To the city with it! To the city with it! We will yet outwit the Greeks!"

Some ran to the city for ropes and wheels, and others hastened to make a breach in the wall large enough for the monster to pass through.

The followers of Laocoön were too few and feeble to object or resist; and the old priest, with his two sons as assistants, withdrew from the crowd and went out on the beach to offer a sacrifice to Apollo, as was the custom of his country. He had built an altar of smooth stones and was preparing the sacrifice, when fearful cries were heard among the people by the shore, and all fled away in a panic of terror. Laocoön, looking up, saw the cause of the alarm.

In the sea two huge serpents were swimming. They appeared to be coming from the island of Tenedos, four miles away, and they were approaching the beach with wondrous speed. No doubt Laocoön thought they were common water snakes and would not come upon the land; for, after watching them a moment, he turned again to his altar and began offering the sacrifice. Swift as light the serpents sped toward the shore. Rearing their heads high in the air, they emerged from the waves and glided over the sandy beach. Before Laocoön saw his danger, the slimy creatures had reached the altar. In another moment they had wrapped their horrid folds around the arms, the necks, the bodies of the unfortunate priest and his sons. Lifeless and crushed, the victims fell down beside the altar they had builded; and the serpents, as though satisfied with their work, glided away and hid themselves under some rocks where the Greeks had carved a figure of Athene.

The Trojans, who had watched this dreadful scene from a distance, stood for a while speechless with fear, not knowing who might be the next victims. At length, seeing that the serpents remained hidden, they began to breathe more

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freely; and, as their courage slowly returned, some among them cried out, "Behold how the mighty Athene has punished the man who dared to insult her by striking the great horse with his spear!" "May such be the fate of all others who would oppose the will of the ever living powers!" cried a white-bearded soothsayer. "Let us offer thanks to our protector, the wise and kind Athene; and let us hasten to draw her horse into the city, where it can have the protection which is its due. Then shall Troy be forever blessed."

Forthwith the fears of the past hour were forgotten. All began to talk at the same time, and all were intent upon taking the great horse to the city as soon as possible. Ropes were fastened to its neck and forelegs. Wooden rollers were placed under each corner of the platform on which it stood. Men with axes and hoes ran forward to clear a trackway across the plain to the place in the city wall where the breach had been made. Then the strongest and most willing seized hold of the long ropes and began to pull. Others pushed against the hind part of the platform. Still others stood by and offered kind advice to the workers. Some prayed to Athene.

IV. THE DREADFUL SURPRISE

At length, after a great deal of tugging and sweating by those at the ropes, the huge image began to move, the rollers beneath it creaked and groaned, and every Trojan shouted so loudly that the sound was heard far out to sea.

Slowly but steadily the multitude advanced across the plain, dragging the wonderful horse which they believed would bless the city. The sun had set before they passed through the breach in the wall; and the darkness of night was beginning to fall when the lumbering wheels ceased their noise. The great horse came to a standstill in a quiet corner close by the temple of Athene.

"My friends," said the king's officer, "we have done a fine day's work, and Athene's horse rests near the place where it shall remain. Now, indeed, the happiness of Troy is insured. Let every person depart to his own home; for to-night, the first time in ten years, we shall sleep in security, fearing no foe."

With joyful shouts and friendly good nights the crowd separated, and every man went quietly to his own house. Soon the city was wrapped in darkness, and the streets were silent and empty. And Athene's horse stood grim and gaunt and motionless beside the temple wall.

About midnight a man crept stealthily out of the temple and made his way to the breach in the wall. In one hand he carried a basket of pitch, in the other a small torch which he had lighted at the temple fire. With much caution he climbed to the top of the wall. He hid his torch in a cranny, and swung the basket of pitch by a chain on the outer edge of the stone coping. Then he sat still and waited. Soon the sky began to grow lighter and the shadows in the city less dark. Presently

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the moon rose, bright and round. The roofs of the houses, the broad top of the city wall, the dull, deserted plain, the silent sea—all were silvered over with her soft, mellow beams.

The man on the wall looked eagerly toward the sea. What were those dark objects which he saw moving swiftly over the water and drawing rapidly toward the shore? A thousand ships, black-hulled and low, driven by twenty thousand oars. The cunning Greeks had not started for home, as the Trojans foolishly believed. They had gone only to the island of Tenedos and had lain there all day, hidden in the coves and inlets of the reedy shore. Soon their vessels would again be drawn up in their old places by the deserted camp.

" 'Follow me, my men!' "

The man on the wall seemed to understand it all. He lifted the torch from its cranny and dropped it carefully into the basket of pitch. A lurid flame arose. As it lighted up the plain and the outside of the wall, it shone also upon the face of the man. His eyes were red, his face was wounded and swollen, the half of his left ear was gone. It was Sinon.

Lights were seen on the ships; and then Sinon hurried down to the spot where the great horse was standing silent in the moonlight. With the flat of his short sword, he struck its foreleg three times. There was a noise above as of the rattling of armor. Then a panel in the horse's breast slid aside. A man's head, encased in a gleaming helmet, appeared at the opening.

"Is all well, Simon?" asked a deep voice.

"All is well, Cousin Ulysses. Our ships are even now moored to the shore, and our friends are marching across the plain. The foolish Trojans lie sleeping in their homes, little dreaming of what awaits them."

A rope ladder was let down, and Ulysses descended to the ground. Then fifty other heroes followed him, seeming glad to be in the open air again.

"But, Sinon," said Ulysses, "what mean those scars on your face, those half-blind eyes, and that mangled ear? Did the Trojans abuse you thus?"

"They abused me, but they made not these wounds," answered Sinon. "I made them myself, that I might the more easily persuade them to fall into our trap."

"I understand, Sinon," said Ulysses. "People call me the man of wiles, but that title must now belong to you. And now, for the ending of the whole business! Follow me, my men, and let fire and sword do their worst!"Why should I tell the rest? The Trojans awoke from their dreams of peace to see their homes in flames, to hear the shouts of the triumphant Greeks, to know that for them there was naught but captivity and sorrow and death. Thus the long siege came to an end, and thus the fair, rich city beyond the Ægean Sea was overthrown.

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CHAPTER XXIII

PENELOPE'S WEB

I. THE RETURNING HEROES

Of all the heroes that fought against Troy, the wisest and shrewdest was Ulysses, the young king of Ithaca. Yet he went not willingly to the war. It would have pleased him better to remain at home with his fair wife, Penelope, and his baby boy, Telemachus. He was far happier pruning his grapevines and plowing among his orchard trees than he could ever be in the turmoil of battle, wielding the sword or thrusting the spear. But the princes of Greece demanded that he should help them, and rather than be deemed a coward he consented.

"Go, Ulysses," said Penelope, "I will keep your home and kingdom safe until you return."

"Do your duty, Ulysses," said his old father, Laertes. "Go, and may wise Athene speed your coming back."

And so, bidding farewell to Ithaca and all that he held dear, he sailed away. Forgetting the quiet delights of home, he thenceforth gave all his thoughts to war.

Ten years passed before the weary siege of Troy was ended. When at length the city was laid in ashes, the Greeks embarked in their ships, and each chieftain with his followers sought, in his own way, to return to his native land. Fondly then did the thoughts of Ulysses turn to his loved wife and his child, now a sturdy lad with winning ways; and he longed to see again the rugged hills and pleasant shores of Ithaca.

"Spread the sails, my men, and row hard," he said to his fellows ; "for Penelope waits at home for my return, and keeps my kingdom for me."

Statue of Penelope.

But scarcely were his little ships well out to sea ere fearful storms arose. The vessels were tossed hither and thither at the mercy of the winds and waves. They were driven far, far out of their course. The sailors lost their reckoning, and not one could tell which way to steer for Ithaca. By strange, wild shores they sailed, past lands where barbarous people dwelt; and every puff of wind and every stroke of oars drove them farther and farther away from the port which they sought.

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II. THE IMPORTUNATE SUITORS

Now, one by one, the other heroes reached their homes, and the news of their coming was carried to every part of Greece. But of Ulysses and his companions there came no word whether they were living or dead. Daily did Penelope and young Telemachus and feeble old Laertes stand by the shore and gaze with aching eyes far over the waves. No sign of sail or of glinting oars could they discern. Months passed by and then years, and still no word.

"His ships are wrecked, and he lies at the bottom of the sea," sighed old Laertes; and after that he shut himself up in his narrow room and went no more to the shore.

"Surely Ulysses has perished," said the men and women of Ithaca; "else some news would come to us of his whereabouts."

But Penelope still hoped and hoped and hoped. "He is not dead," she said; "and until he comes I will hold this fair kingdom for him."

Every day his seat was placed for him at the table; his house coat was hung by his chair; his chamber was aired and dusted; his great bow that hung in the hall was polished and kept supple.

Ten years passed thus with constant watching. Telemachus had become a young man, graceful and tall and gentle-mannered; and his mother's queenly beauty had not faded with the lapse of time, but grace and dignity were added to her girlish loveliness. Throughout all Greece fair Penelope's fame was sounded. Men talked of nothing but the charms of her face and form, the sweetness of her manners, and the nobleness of her mind.

"But how foolish of her," said they, "to be forever looking for Ulysses. Everybody knows that he is dead. She ought to marry some one of the young chieftains of Greece and share with him the kingdom of Ithaca; for no woman in the world is more richly endowed than she."

The chieftains and princes who were looking for wives took the hint at once. One after another they sailed to Ithaca, hoping to win the love of Penelope and also the riches which were said to be hers. The first to arrive was Antinous, a young spendthrift, haughty, overbearing, and insolent. After him came Agelaus, a foppish fellow, proud of his slender figure and fine clothes and long, curling hair. The third was a rich old merchant, Leocritus, fat and pompous, and glorying in his wealth. Scarcely were these landed safely in Ithaca before many others arrived, whose names have been forgotten, as they deserved to be.

Straight to the palace they went, with their servants and belongings, not waiting for an invitation. For they knew that they would be treated as honored guests, whether they were welcome or not.

"Penelope," they said, "it is not the custom in our country for a widow to live long unwedded. We have come as suitors for your hand, and you dare not turn us all away. Choose, now, the man among us who pleases you best, and the rest will forthwith depart." And then each one began to tell of his own good qualities, of his noble family, his powerful friends, his wealth, and his courage.

But Penelope answered sadly, "Princes and heroes, this cannot be; for I am quite sure that Ulysses still lives, and I must hold his kingdom for him till he returns."

"Return, he never will," answered the suitors. "So make your choice, as becomes your duty."

"Give me yet a week, a month, to wait for him," she pleaded. "In my loom I have a half-finished web of soft linen. I am weaving it for the shroud of our father, Laertes, who is very old and cannot live much longer. If Ulysses fails to return by the time this web is finished, then I will choose, although unwillingly."

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"Will you work upon this web every day?" asked Antinous.

"Every day," she answered, "I will sit at my loom and weave the web. It would be a sin, indeed, if Laertes should go to the grave while the shroud is unfinished."

"Let her delay her choice as she desires," said Agelaus. "In the meantime, we will enjoy ourselves."

Forthwith the suitors made themselves at home in the palace. They seized upon the best of everything. They feasted daily in the great dining hall, eating and wasting the provisions that had been stored away with greatest care against the homecoming of Ulysses. They helped themselves to the wine in the cellar and to the fruits and flowers in the garden. They were rude and uproarious in the once quiet and beautiful chambers of the palace. They were insolent and overbearing to the servants and friends of Penelope, and they kept the people of Ithaca in constant terror by reason of their lawless deeds.

III. THE DISCOVERED SECRET

Every day Penelope sat at her loom and wove. "See how much I have added to the length of the web," she would say when the evening came. But in the night, while the suitors were asleep, she raveled out all the threads she had woven in during the day. Thus, although she was always at the work, the web was never finished. And Telemachus, while his mother toiled, sat moodily in the hall or strolled about the palace, angry and sad, and praying for his father's return.

So long as the wine and provisions held out, the suitors seemed to care but little about the web. "We can wait," they said; "and while she is weaving the shroud, we will spend our days in eating, drinking, and making merry."

At the end of a month, however, the cellar was almost empty. The fatted beeves had been killed and eaten; and it was hard for the kitchen maids to find food for the daily feasts. Then the suitors began to wonder and complain.

Ulysses makes himself known to Telemachus

"How soon may we expect that web to be finished?" they impatiently asked.

"I am busy every day," answered Penelope, "and yet the web grows very slowly. But see how fine and soft it is, and how delicate the meshes. Such a piece of work cannot be completed in a day."

Agelaus, however, was not satisfied. In the dead of night he crept quietly through the great hall and the long

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passageways, and peeped into the weaving room. There, by the light of a little lamp, sat Penelope, busily unraveling the work of the day and whispering to herself the name of Ulysses.

The spying suitor stayed but a little while, watching her movements. Then he stole silently back to his own place. "The trick is a good one," he said to himself, "but it will not last long."

The next morning the secret was known to every one of the unwelcome guests. When Penelope came down into the hall, as was her wont, they greeted her with jibes and laughter.

"Fair queen," they said, "you are very cunning; but we have found you out, and all your gentle tricks are known to us. The web that has been so long in weaving must be finished to-day; and you must make your choice this very evening. We shall wait no longer."

"Oh, ask not that which is impossible," pleaded Penelope. "Give me yet a little more time. Give me one more day; and I promise you that the web shall then be finished. To-morrow evening the moon will be at its full. Do but wait until then, and you shall have my answer.""We will wait until that hour," said Antinous, haughtily; "but not a moment longer."

"No, not a moment longer," echoed all the rest.

IV. THE TARNISHED WEAPONS

The next afternoon the unwelcome guests were assembled in the great hall as usual. The feast was set, and they ate and drank and sang and shouted as never before. They made such an uproar that the very timbers of the palace shook, and the shields and swords that hung on the walls rattled against each other.

While the turmoil was at its height, Telemachus came in, followed by Eumæus, his father's oldest and most faithful servant. The guests were so busy enjoying themselves that their entrance was scarcely noticed.

"My young master," said Eumæus, "those shields and swords have hung long in their places, waiting for the return of your father."

" 'Argos, old friend!' he whispered."

"Yes," answered Telemachus, "and they are becoming tarnished with the smoke and dust. Let us take them down and put them in the great chest in the treasure room. They will be much better kept there."

"It is a good thought, master," said the old servant. "I will carry the shields and the bows, and you may bring the swords."

"Very well, Eumæus; and let us do the task at once. But my father's great bow that hangs at the head of the hall must not be touched. My mother polishes and supples it every day, and she would sadly miss it if it were removed."

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To lift the weapons from the walls was no hard matter; but there were a number of them, and the prince and old Eumæus had to go and come many times before all were removed.

"What are you doing with those swords and shields?" cried Antinous, as they were going out with the last load.

"We are putting them in the big chest in the treasure room. They were being ruined with hanging here so long in the dust and smoke," answered Telemachus, not deigning to stop.

"The lad is uncommonly cheerful to-day," remarked one of the younger suitors.

"Perhaps he is expecting his father," said old Leocritus, with a sneer.

V. THE STROLLING BEGGAR

At that moment a strange beggar entered the courtyard. He was dressed in rags; his feet were bare, his head was uncovered, his hands trembled as he slowly walked toward the doorway of the great hall. Some of the servants who saw him laughed at his poverty, and bade him begone; but others pitied his distress and checked their rudeness. "Deal gently with him," they said; "for mayhap he brings news of our master, the lordly Ulysses. He looks as though he had traveled far."

An old greyhound, Argos, was lying on a heap of ashes by the kitchen door. Twenty years before he had been the swiftest and most beautiful of hunting dogs—the pet and companion of Ulysses. But now, grown old and helpless, he was neglected and abused. His teeth gone, his eyes grown dim, his legs shaky and useless, he had no longer any joy of life. When he saw the beggar slowly moving through the yard, he raised his head to look. Then a strange light came suddenly into his old eyes. His tail wagged feebly, and he tried with all his failing strength to rise. He looked up lovingly into the beggar's face, and uttered a long but joyful howl like that which he was wont to utter in his youth when greeting his master.

The beggar stooped and patted his head. "Argos, old friend!" he whispered. The dog staggered to his feet, then fell, and was dead with the look of joy still in his eyes.

"What ails the old dog?" asked Antinous; for the sound of his howling was heard even in the feast hall.

"Doubtless he is bewailing the loss of his mistress," said Agelaus; and all the suitors laughed.

A moment afterward the beggar stood in the door.

"Well, well!" cried Leocritus. "What newcomer is this who thus pushes himself among his betters?"

"What do you want here, Old Rags?" said another of the suitors, hurling a crust at his head. "Don't you know that this is the king's palace? Begone!"

"Yes, begone!" shouted old Eumæus, trying to appear harsh.

"I wish to speak with the son of Ulysses," said the beggar, humbly.

"Then speak, for I am he," said Telemachus, frowning and seeming angry. "Make your story short."

"O noble youth," said the beggar, "you are strong and fair, and life is all before you. But I am old and have fallen upon evil days. I pray that you will have pity on my distress." Then in a low voice he added, "Have you removed all the weapons as I bade you? And are they safe in the great chest?"

"All except the great bow which hangs at the head of the hall," whispered Telemachus. "What say you? Shall we strike now?"

"Shall we strike now?" said old Eumæus, drawing near and speaking below his breath.

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"What is it the old vagrant is telling the boy?" cried Antinous. "Out with him!"

"Yes, out with him!" cried the younger suitors, crowding forward with threatening gestures.

"Let him stay," said Leocritus. "Let him stay. We shall have great sport with him. Perhaps he, too, has come to claim the hand of fair Penelope. Say, is it not so, my humble friend?"

The beggar made no answer. He grasped his staff with a firmer grip and gazed across the hall where was the lofty stairway that led to the queen's chambers. Down the stairs came Penelope, stately and beautiful, with her servants and maids around her.

"The queen! the queen!" cried the suitors. "She has come to redeem her promise."

"Telemachus, my son," said Penelope, "what poor man is this whom our guests treat so roughly?"

"Mother, he is a strolling beggar whom the waves cast upon our shores last night," answered the prince. "He says that he brings news of my father."

"Then he shall tell me of it," said the queen, "But first he must rest and be fed and receive the attentions due to every guest." With this she caused the beggar to be led to a seat at the farther side of the room, and she bade Telemachus bring him food and drink with his own hands. "Here, Melampo," she said to one of her maids, "bring a bowl and water with which to wash the poor man's feet."

"Not I," said the proud maid; "I touch no beggar's foot."

"Then I will do the queen's bidding," said Dame Eurycleia, the old nurse who had cared for Ulysses when he was a child.

Forthwith she brought a great bowl and warm water and towels; and kneeling on the stones before the stranger she began to bathe and wash his feet. Then suddenly, with a scream, she sprang up, overturning the bowl in her confusion. "O master! the scar!" she muttered hoarsely, but so low that only the stranger heard her. And then, to turn away suspicion, she added in a louder tone, "How awkward I have become in my old age, that I should do so careless a thing! Now I shall have to refill the bowl."

"Dear nurse," whispered the seeming beggar, "you were ever discreet and wise. You know me by the old scar that I have carried on my knee since boyhood. Keep well the secret, for I bide my time and the hour of vengeance is nigh."

"O Ulysses, my master," she answered softly, "I knew that you would come."

This man in rags was indeed Ulysses, the king. Alone in a little boat he had been cast, that very morning, upon the shore of his own island. He had made himself known first to old Eumæus and then to his son Telemachus, but to no other person; and it was by his orders that the weapons had been removed from the great hall.

But the old nurse was prudent and shrewd. With the empty bowl in her hands, she hobbled from the hall to refill it, muttering loud complaints against the troublesome beggar. And Telemachus, bending over his father, whispered hoarsely, "Shall we not strike now?"

VI. THE WEB IS FINISHED

In the meanwhile the suitors had gathered again around the feast table and were more boisterous than before. "Come, fair Penelope!" they shouted. "Come and grace our banquet with your presence. The beggar can tell his tale to-morrow, for we shall delay no longer. The moon is full, and your promise must be redeemed. Come! choose a husband from among us. For know you this, that Ulysses, even though he lives, shall never again enter this house."

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"Yes, choose! choose!" cried the younger men, as the queen passed slowly to the head of the hall.

"Choose me," said Agelaus, the fop; "for not even Apollo can match me for grace of form and figure."

"Choose me," said rich Leocritus, "and the treasures of land and sea shall be yours."

"Choose me," said Antinous, the insolent; "for you dare not arouse my displeasure, and you shall be mine whether you choose or not."

"Chiefs and princes," said Penelope, in trembling tones, "it is not fit that I should decide this question. Let us leave it to the gods. Behold, there hangs the great bow of Ulysses with which he was wont to do most valiant deeds ere cruel fate called him to Troy. Let each of you try his strength in bending it, and I will choose that one who can shoot an arrow from it the most skillfully."

"Well said!" cried all the suitors, "and we agree to it. Hand us the bow, Telemachus, and let us make the trial."

First Antinous took the bow in his hands, and struggled long to bend it. Then, losing patience, he threw it upon the ground and strode away. "None but a giant can string a bow like that," he said.

Then, one by one, the other suitors made trial of their strength; but all in vain.

"Perhaps the old beggar who has just had his feet washed would like to take a part in this contest," said Agelaus, with a sneer.

Then Ulysses in his beggar's rags rose from his seat and went with halting steps to the head of the hall. He lifted the great bow and looked with fond recollection at its polished back and its long, well-shaped arms, stout as bars of iron. "Methinks," he said, "that in my younger days I once saw a bow like this."

He took the slender bowstring of rawhide in his fingers. With seeming awkwardness he fumbled long with the bow, seeming unable to bend it. "Enough! enough, old man!" cried Antinous, striking him in the face with his hand. "Drop the bow, and stay no longer in the company of your betters."

Suddenly a great change came over Ulysses. Without apparent effort he bent the great bow and strung it. Then, rising to his full height, he shook off his beggar's rags and appeared in his own true likeness, clad in armor from head to foot, and every inch a king.

"O Ulysses! Ulysses!" cried Penelope, falling, fainting into the arms of the old nurse.

The suitors were speechless with amazement. Then in the wildest alarm they turned and tried to escape from the hall. But the arrows of Ulysses were swift and sure, and not one missed its mark. "Now I avenge myself upon those who have eaten up my substance and would destroy my home!" cried the hero.

Twang! went the bow; and Antinous, the insolent, fell headlong upon the threshold of the palace. Twang! went the bow; and Agelaus in his silken robes rolled in the dust. Twang! went the bow; and all the wealth of Leocritus availed him nothing. And thus, one after another, the lawless suitors perished—slain by the wrath of the hero whom they had wronged. The next day as Ulysses sat in the great hall with his queenly wife and his noble son Telemachus and the joyful men and maidens of his household, he told the story of his long wanderings over the sea. And Penelope, in turn, related how she had faithfully kept the kingdom for him, as she had promised, though beset by insolent and wicked suitors. Then she brought from her chamber a roll of soft, white cloth of wonderful fineness and beauty, and said, "This is the web, Ulysses. I promised that on the day of its completion I would choose a husband; and I choose you."

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CHAPTER XXIV

HOW ROME WAS FOUNDED

I. THE TWO KINGS

A very great while ago there was a city in Italy which its people called Alba Longa, or the Long White. It stood on the slope of a hill, a mile or more from the river Tiber. Its houses stretched in a straggling line down to the shore of a little lake.

The men of Alba Longa were mostly shepherds and hunters. In times of peace they tended their flocks or ranged the woods for game. In times of war—which happened often enough—every man was ready with club and pike to fight for his home.

The people were rude and barbarous in their manners, as was common in those days. They ate mutton and coarse vegetables. They drank the milk of goats. They clothed themselves in sheepskins. They slept on the floor, and never allowed their fires to go out. They seldom went far from home, and they fancied that the whole world was seen from the top of their hill.

Now, there was a king of Alba Longa whose name was Numitor. He was an elderly man, gentle and kind. He cared little for power; indeed, there was nothing he liked so well as his farm and his garden and his flocks of white-fleeced sheep. Two children were his—a promising boy of twelve and a lovely daughter whose name was Rhea Silvia. He had also a younger brother called Amulius, a low-browed, dark-faced fellow, ready to do any sort of wickedness that came into his mind.

This brother was always stirring up the young men of Alba Longa.

"If I were king, things would be different," he would say. "You should all live at your ease, and want for nothing."

At length, one day when Numitor was at his farm, Amulius proclaimed himself king of Alba Longa. He stationed soldiers at the city gates, and declared that every man who did not acknowledge his right to the kingship should be put to death. Then he sent word to Numitor:—

"You had better stay with your sheep and goats, for I am the king!"

What else could poor, weak Numitor do? Indeed, I think he was quite glad to be rid of his kingly burdens and have nought to think about but his flocks. He would have been happy if his children had been permitted to live with him on the farm. But news soon came which filled his heart with grief and clouded all the rest of his days.

His boy was dead, slain by the hand of the false Amulius. Fair Rhea Silvia had been shut up in a temple of Vesta, there to serve as a priestess all her days, and nevermore to see her dear father or the pleasant home of her childhood.

II. THE TWO BABES

After this, Amulius settled himself down to enjoy his kingship. The shepherds of Alba Longa tended their flocks, and were sad or joyous much as they had been before. They hated Amulius; but they feared him much more, and so said nothing. And poor, sorrowing Numitor stayed on his farm and busied himself with his sheep and his goats.

Five, six, seven years passed by, and then strange news was told in Alba Longa. Rhea Silvia, it was said, had escaped from her temple prison. She had gone away with an unknown warrior who was never seen except when dressed in a coat of mail and fully armed. Some said that this warrior was Silvanus, the protector of all cattle; but most believed that he was Mars, the mighty lord of war and battles. As for me, I

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think he was some hero of a neighboring tribe who had known and loved Silvia in happier days, and who now wished to rescue her from her prison and make her his wife.

Great was the excitement in Alba Longa, and great was the alarm of the false king Amulius. All through the land close search was made for Rhea; but no sign or trace of her could be found.

"I shall never be safe while she lives," said Amulius; and he doubled the guards around the city. But Numitor stayed with his flocks and seemed to know nothing of what had occurred.

Another year passed by. It was the time of the spring floods, and the Tiber had overflowed its banks. The lowlands were under water. The shepherds had driven all their flocks to the hills.

One morning King Amulius was standing alone in his palace looking out at the drenched earth and the pouring rain. Suddenly there was a great uproar at the door, and two shepherds entered bearing a covered basket in their arms.

"What have you there?" cried the king.

They removed the cover. He looked in and saw two tiny babies, wrapped in an embroidered cloak. Their eyes blinked, and they began to cry as the light fell upon their faces.

"Yesterday," said the shepherds, "the Tiber suddenly flooded all our pasture lands. As we were hurrying toward the hills with our sheep we beheld a woman standing on a rock in the midst of the flood. We drew nearer, and saw that she was none other than Rhea Silvia, the daughter of old Numitor. When we would have seized her she leaped into the river, and the swirling waters carried her beyond our reach. But on the rock she left her cloak; and wrapped in the cloak, as you see them now, were these twin baby boys."

"I doubt you not," said Amulius, "for the cloak is the same that Rhea Silvia wore when a girl. Why did you not fling the brats into the river and let them die with their mother?"

"We dared not do so without your command," was the answer.

"Well, then," said the king, furious with rage, "I command it now. Carry them back to the place where you found them, and make sure that they are drowned. Out of my sight, and be quick about it!"

The shepherds again drew the cloak over the faces of the crying infants, and hurried away to do the king's bidding.

III. THE TWO SHEPHERDS

"I cannot bear to see the pretty babes drown before my eyes," said one of the shepherds.

"Neither can I," said the other. "They make me think of my own twin boys at home."

"I could not see a lamb struggling in the waves without trying to save it," said the first.

"Only yesterday," said the second, "I saved two young wolves from drowning. And now what am I about to do?"

Thus the men talked to each other while they went on their undesired errand. Just as they reached the river they saw, floating in an eddying pool, a small trough, such as shepherds used when feeding their lambs in winter.

"I have it now," said the second shepherd. "Let us put the babes in the trough and send it floating into the current. They will be drowned, but not by us nor while we are looking on."

"You are right! You are right!" answered his companion. "Seize the thing as it comes near the shore, and let us end this ugly business."

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They dipped the water out of the trough and wiped it dry and clean. Then they wrapped the babes in their mother's cloak and laid them down, side by side, in the bottom of the rude vessel.

"Fare you well, sweet babes," said the second shepherd. "I could never look my own twin boys in the face were I to see you drown."

"Fare you well, and a long, safe voyage," said the other, as he pushed the trough far out from the shore.

Then, without once looking behind them, the two men silently turned away and returned to Alba Longa to tell Amulius that they had done his bidding.

"Now at last I can breathe freely," he said to himself.

IV. THE SHE-WOLF

Far down the stream floated the little trough boat with its tiny passengers. In the strong current it was rocked like a cradle, yet not a drop of water found its way into the frail craft. Lulled by the gentle motion and soothed by the rippling music of the waves, the babes soon fell asleep.

Then the boat drifted into smoother water. It was caught in a broad eddy and carried toward the shore. Slowly now it floated among logs and brushwood and over the flooded land. At nightfall it grounded in shallow water at the foot of a wooded hill; and the voyage was ended.

That night an old she-wolf was roaming through the underwoods by the shore, looking for her whelps which had been carried away by the flood. Suddenly she heard a feeble, wailing sound, as of some young creature in distress.

She paused and listened. Could it be her own little ones?

The sound seemed to come from some driftwood close at hand. She ran out into the shallow water, leaped upon a floating log, and looked down upon the strangest sight that wolf ever saw—two babies lying in a sheep trough and wailing, oh, so pitifully!

As the beast scrambled to the top of the log the children were attracted by the sound; they looked up and smiled and held out their tiny arms.

The wolf wondered, as only wolves can wonder. Could it be possible that these were her own lost whelps, strangely changed in form since she last saw them? At any rate they were young and helpless and hungry; and she would be a mother to them.

Her den was not far away. It was high and dry on the hillside. She would carry them thither.

With her strong jaws and huge, sharp teeth she seized the cloak to tear it away. But the infants were wrapped in it so tightly that she lifted them at the same time. What a fine way to carry them! It was much better than grasping them by the nape of the neck as she had always done with her own babies.

The babes were small and light; the wolf was big and strong, and it was easy for her to carry them. She ran joyfully up the hill, holding her head high so that they would not drag on the rocks. Into her dry, warm den she hastened, as glad as any mother returning home with her lost loved ones.

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In a few minutes the wailing of the infants ceased; they fancied themselves in the arms of their own dear mother. The night was dark. Around the foot of the hill the waves lapped against the shores. In the wolf's den all was silent.

V. FAUSTULUS

Summer came. The rains had ceased. The river Tiber was no longer a foaming torrent overflowing the plains, but only a narrow, yellow stream creeping along toward the distant sea. The mountain torrents were dried up; the earth was dusty and hot; the grass was withering on the hillsides.

Early one morning a wolf broke into the fold where the king's sheep were kept, and carried away a lamb. The head shepherd, whose name was Faustulus, gave chase to the robber. He followed her to the very cave in which she had her den. It was on the slope of the hill called the Palatine.

At the door of the cave the wolf turned and showed fight. Faustulus was ready for her. As she rushed fiercely toward him, a well-aimed blow from his ax felled her to the ground; another blow put an end to her life.

Faustulus bethought him then that he would look in the den—perhaps there were young wolves there. The door of the cave was low and narrow; but with his ax in his hand he crept forward and peered inside. At first he could make out nothing plainly; but in a little while his eyes became accustomed to the darkness and he could see quite well. What a strange sight was that which met his gaze! In the farthest corner of the cave was the wolf's lair—a rough pile of sticks and leaves and dry grass, with a torn cloak lying beside it. On the top of this rude bed sat two baby boys. They were cooing and goo-gooing as happily as though they were in their mother's lap. They were fat and hearty and appeared to be seven or eight months old; and when they saw Faustulus coming toward them they shrank back and began to scream with fear.

Faustulus picked them up in his arms. He wrapped the remains of the old cloak around them. He crawled out through the low door and, without stopping to take another look at the place, hurried home.

His wife, Acca Larentia, was astonished to see the two babes in his arms.

"Where did you find them, and what shall we do with them?" she asked.

He told her about finding them in the cave, and showed her the torn cloak.

"This is the cloak of Rhea Silvia," he said; "and no doubt these are her babes whom the king ordered to be drowned. Shall we be less kind to them than was the savage wolf?"

"Ah, no!" she answered. "Although we have twelve children of our own to care for, there is still plenty of room in our poor hut. We will keep the twins and care for them as our own."

"And nobody must know that they are not our own," said Faustulus; "for should this be told to King Amulius it would mean death to us all."

The two babies were therefore taken into the shepherd's family and given the same food and the same care and love as the other children. They were named Romulus and Remus, and they looked as much alike as two grains of wheat on the same stalk.

VI. THE RIVAL SHEPHERDS

Many years passed, and Romulus and Remus grew up to be tall young men, graceful and strong and fearless. With their foster brothers they tended the flocks on the Palatine Hill, and they were known among the shepherds as the sons of Faustulus. They hunted wild beasts in the forest by the Tiber;

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they fought with robbers; they became noted throughout the land for their fearless valor. In every enterprise they were the leaders.

Just across the valley from the king's pastures there was another hill called the Aventine. It was there that poor old Numitor had his farm, and there he pastured his sheep and his goats.

"The grass is greener and taller on the Aventine," said Romulus one day. "Let us drive our flocks over there to fatten in the fields of old Numitor."

"Agreed!" said his companions; and soon the thing was done.

It was not long, however, before the shepherds of Numitor discovered the intruders. There was a great outcry. Numitor's men rushed down the hill-side with clubs and stones and pikes, and there was a sharp fight. The king's shepherds were out-numbered four to one. They fought fiercely, but in the end were glad enough to hurry their flocks back to their own pasture.

A day or two after this, when Romulus was absent on a hunting excursion, it was discovered that the finest lamb in the king's flock was missing.

"Wolves!" said the shepherds.

"Yes," said the sharp-sighted Remus, "the two-legged wolves that keep old Numitor's sheep! If you had as good eyes as I have, you could see the lamb now, tethered to a stake just this side of the great rock over there. Stay you here, and I will go and fetch it back."

And all alone, with nothing but his staff in his hands, he strode off toward the Aventine.

"Let us go with you, Remus," cried the shepherds. "You may need help."

"Attend to your sheep, and do my bidding," Remus roughly answered.

VII. THE DISCOVERY

An hour later there was a great ado on the Aventine Hill. Remus had made his way up the slope without seeing a single enemy. He had reached the lamb and cut the cord with which it was tethered. He was about lifting it in his arms, when a dozen dark-faced fellows rushed suddenly upon him from their hiding place behind the great rock.

Remus dropped the lamb and fought manfully with his staff. But what could he do against so many? He was thrown to the ground; his hands were bound behind him; and then he was led over the hill to the farmhouse of old Numitor.

"Here is the ringleader of the gang that trespassed on your grounds," said his captors.

"Then away with him!" cried Numitor, without looking up or rising from his couch. "Take him away and make an end of him."

But before the men could turn round with their prisoner, there was a great hubbub at the door, and the king's shepherd, Faustulus, pushed his way into the room.

"My lord Numitor, my lord Numitor," he cried, "would you put your own grandson to death?" And then he hurriedly told the story of the twin babies and the wolf, and of the manner in which the boys had been brought up in his own house.

"And where is the other young man?" asked old Numitor, his memory going back slowly to his dear lost daughter Rhea Silvia.

"Here I am, grandfather," said Romulus, coming suddenly in, and going boldly forward to the old man's couch. He had returned from hunting just at the moment that the news

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of his brother's capture was told on the Palatine Hill. Calling to the shepherds to follow him, he was hurrying toward the Aventine to rescue the prisoner by force, when Faustulus had met him and told him about his parentage and urged him to another course.

"Here I am, too, grandfather," said Remus, as Numitor raised himself slowly and gazed at the two brothers with his weak old eyes.

"Whom do I see?" cried Numitor. "They have the face, the eyes, the look of Rhea Silvia; but what manly forms, what grace and strength! Yes, I must believe your story, Faustulus. They are my grandsons—their looks prove it."

"And if further proof were wanting," said Faustulus, "look upon this embroidered robe that was found with the children in the wolf's den."

Numitor took the soiled, torn garment in his hands, and his eyes filled with tears. "Alas, my dear lost daughter!" he moaned. "And cruel Amulius will slay your sons, too, when he learns they are still alive."

"Not so, not so, King Numitor!" cried a voice at the door. "Down with Amulius!"

"Romulus and Remus! Let Romulus and Remus lead us!" shouted all the shepherds and serving men. "Down with Amulius the tyrant! Hail to our King Numitor!"

Within an hour a strong force of men, armed with axes and pikes and clubs, was marching against Alba Longa; and Romulus and Remus were the leaders.

Amulius was feasting in his palace, little thinking of danger, when the brothers rushed in at the head of their shepherd army. The fight was sharp but quickly over. The people of Alba Longa were so tired of Amulius that few cared to aid him. When he found that all was lost he tried to escape; but a shepherd from the Palatine pastures felled him with a club, and an end was soon put to his wicked life.

"Our grandfather, Numitor, is again the king of Alba Longa!" cried Romulus.

"Long life to King Numitor!" shouted the rabble of shepherds. Some of them hastened to fetch the old man from his farm; and amid great rejoicings he was again seated on the throne from which he had been driven so long before.

VIII. THE NEW CITY

Romulus and Remus might have remained in Alba Longa and lived at ease in their grandfather's palace; and, indeed, the poor man needed their help badly enough. But they longed for the pleasant hills where they had spent their childhood—for the Palatine and the Aventine, with their pasture lands and their green woods.

"Grandfather," they said, "you are the king of Alba Longa and we wish you long life and prosperity. But Alba Longa is no place for us. Give us leave to go out in the wild region by the Tiber and build a new town of our own."

What could Numitor do but tell them to go wherever they pleased? And so, at the head of a company of reckless men,—some shepherds and some robbers,—they went back to the hills by the Tiber.

"We will build our town on the Palatine," said Romulus.

"No, indeed," said Remus, "we will build it on the Aventine."

They could not agree; neither could the men who were with them. At last, when they were about to come to blows, old Faustulus stepped between them.

"For your own sakes, my boys," he said, "don't be wolves, but men. Settle this question in a peaceful way. Let the augurs decide."

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"You are right," said the brothers; "the augurs shall decide. To-night we will watch for such signs as the powers above may send us."

All night long Romulus sat alone on the summit of the Palatine; all night long Remus sat alone on the summit of the Aventine. Thick clouds concealed the sky; the world was wrapped in pitchy darkness; nothing could be seen; nothing was heard. At last the dawn appeared, feeble and gray on the hilltops. Then Remus, watching from his lonely post, saw some large birds winging their way toward the woods beyond the Tiber.

"The augurs are for me," he cried to the shepherds in the valley below him. "I see six vultures flying from the Aventine."

A few minutes later the clouds rolled away and the rising sun gilded the tree tops with its golden beams. Then the shepherds heard from the summit of the opposite hill the deep-toned voice of Romulus crying,—

"The victory belongs to me. I see twelve vultures flying over the Palatine."

"The augurs decide for Romulus," said the shepherds. "The town shall be built on the Palatine, and it shall be called Rome in honor of our captain."

Romulus began at once to lay off the bounds of his little town. A few huts of brush and bark were built for the men. A better one of stones and clay was put up for the brothers. But Remus sulked and complained and tried in every way to hinder the work. "And this is the city of Rome, is it?" he sneered. "What a grand city, indeed!"

"We must have a strong wall around our city," said Romulus.

At once, with sharpened stakes and wooden spades, the men began the work. The space to be inclosed was not large, and soon a wall of earth and loose stones arose around the new city of Rome. It was but waist high, crooked, and uneven; and it was little wonder that Remus laughed at it.

"What a fine, strong wall it is!" he scornfully cried; and, running forward, he leaped over it at a bound. But his feet had scarcely touched the ground when an angry shepherd struck him fiercely with a spade. As he fell, speechless and dying, the men crowded to the spot with rough cries and savage exultation.

"Thus perish all who attempt to pass the walls of Rome!" they shouted.

CHAPTER XXV

HOW DECIUS MUS SAVED ROME

It was early morning in Italy two thousand, two hundred, and forty years ago. The first faint streaks of daylight were just beginning to appear on the top of a hill where the Roman army was resting and waiting for the dawn. It was not a large army, for Rome had not yet grown to be great and powerful; but every man in it was ready to lay down his life for his country.

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Not far away, on one of the lower slopes of Mount Vesuvius, the Latin hosts were encamped. They outnumbered the Romans three to one, and the Latin soldiers were already boasting of the victory they expected to win.

Two men were walking in front of the Roman encampment and anxiously waiting for the dawn. They were Decius Mus and Manlius Torquatus, the consuls of Rome and generals of the Roman army.

"I had a dream last night," said Decius.

"And so had I," said Manlius. "I dreamed of the battle that is soon to begin."

"And I dreamed of the way in which it is to end," said Decius. "There are to be great losses on both sides.—But tell me your dream."

"In truth it was rather a vision than a dream," answered Manlius. "As I lay on the ground with all my faithful men around me, a gray-eyed maiden, clad in shining armor and carrying a shield and, spear, came and stood beside me. 'Manlius,' she said, 'to-morrow's battle will decide the destiny of Rome, whether she shall be the mistress of the world, or whether she shall perish by the hands of her Latin foes. If you will save her, you must heed what I say. That army which loses its general in the fight shall be victorious and shall utterly overcome the other.' And with this, the vision disappeared and I awoke."

"My dream was much the same," said Decius. "The same maiden with the shield and spear and piercing gray eye appeared to me. 'Do you want to know how to-morrow's battle will end?' she asked. 'The side that does not lose its leader will surely lose its army.' And then she vanished."

"We have each had a message from the gods," cried Manlius, "and we must heed it. I understand it means that if a Roman general perish in the battle, then Rome will be saved."

"That is the way I understand it," said Decius; "and I am ready to be sacrificed for Rome."

The two consuls finally agreed that each would lead, as usual, a wing of the Roman army against the enemy, and that the one whose wing first began to waver should give his life for his country.

The sound of busy preparation was already heard in both camps. The Roman soldiers were impatient to begin the fray. The sun was scarcely above the mountain tops before the battle was raging.

Furiously the Romans fought, contesting every foot of ground. The left wing, commanded by Decius Mus, was the first to waver.

Then Decius, with great dignity, like that of a conqueror, strode alone to the summit of a little hill where both armies could see him. Standing with a javelin beneath his feet, and raising his hands and eyes toward heaven, he cried, "Rome! I give the victory to thee!"

With these words he rushed into the midst of the enemy. A dozen spears were thrust at him, and he died with the name of his country on his lips.

With a cry of vengeance the Romans followed their leader, striking and grappling and slaying, and heeding nothing but to destroy their foes. The Latins were thrown into confusion; then a panic seized them and the whole army fled.

Decius had saved Rome.

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CHAPTER XXVI

"DELENDA EST CARTHAGO!"

"Delenda est Carthago!"

A noble old Roman, eighty-four years of age, had just finished a stirring speech in the Forum, or great market place of Rome, and these were his closing words: "Delenda est Carthago!" (Carthage must be destroyed!)

His words were repeated by his hearers; they were carried into the street; they were discussed by excited men in every part of the city.

"Who says that Carthage must be destroyed?" asked one citizen of another.

"Cato the Censor says so," was the answer. "He says that two such cities as Rome and Carthage cannot long exist under the same sun. One must soon submit to the other. If Rome does not destroy Carthage, then Carthage will destroy Rome."

"Then every Roman must join with Cato and cry, 'Delenda est Carthago!' "

Cato was dreadfully in earnest about the matter. Rome had already had two long wars with the great city on the other side of the Mediterranean. Cato, when a young man of eighteen, had served as a soldier in one of these wars. In his old age, when the cities were at peace, he had been sent as an ambassador to Carthage. He was astonished at what he saw there. He had supposed that Rome was the richest and most powerful city in the world; but now he feared that he was mistaken.

He saw the harbor of Carthage swarming with ships from all parts of the world; the wharfs were piled with the wealth of many countries; the shops were filled with rich and rare merchandise; the market place was thronged with buyers and sellers; the beauty of the public buildings and the strength of the city walls surpassed anything of which Rome could boast; the wealth and power of Carthage were too great to be estimated. And so when stern old Cato returned home he felt that there was but one way to save Rome. He must arouse his countrymen to a sense of their danger. Carthage must be destroyed.

When he had finished his speech in the Forum, he wrapped his toga about him and went down into the street. Every one who saw him knew by the broad purple border on his white homespun toga that he was one of Rome's great men—that he had held some of the highest offices in the gift of the city. A narrower border denoted a citizen of less renown; no border at all signified that its wearer had not yet been honored with an office. But in those days to be a Roman even of the humblest rank was better than to be a king.

In the street Cato met many of his friends; and no matter on what subject they might talk, his last words when parting with them were, "Delenda est Carthago!"

He had been a Roman censor, and for a time had been the most powerful man in Rome. He had had the oversight of the morals of the city, and had tried hard to preserve the simple, sturdy habits of his forefathers. There was nothing that he hated more than luxury and self-indulgence; and now when he saw young men dressed in fashionable style idling in the streets, his anger was hot against? them. "Delenda est Carthago!" he cried, while reproving them for their folly. And when he saw officers of the state living in fine houses and enjoying their wealth, he sneered at them in contempt and cried out, "Delenda est Carthago!"

He did not stay long in the city, but hastened to return to his farm on the Sabine, where he had lived all his life except when in the service of Rome. And his first greeting to his family was, "Delenda est Carthago!"

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Had you seen him on his farm you would not have thought of him as the greatest of Romans. Having laid aside his toga, he appeared dressed in the rude fashion of a hard-working farmer. With a broad-brimmed hat on his head and a sheepskin cloak thrown over his shoulders, he walked out to see his cattle and crops, to gather grapes in his vineyard, and to pick olives from his olive trees. He met with his country neighbors and talked about the prospects of the wheat harvests and the best methods of making wine; but he always closed his discourses by crying, "Delenda est Carthago!"

His manner of life on the farm was very simple. Everything was just as it had been in the days of his father and of his grandfather. Cato was a hard worker to the end of his life. He plowed his fields, he sowed his grain, he helped the reapers, he gathered his hay, he fed his flocks and herds. "To do these necessary things," said he, "is to be a Roman of the old-fashioned sort."

His wife and daughters were Romans of the old-fashioned sort, too. They had the care of the home; they ground the barley and made the bread for the household; they attended to the milk and pressed the cheeses; they bottled the wine from the home grapes; they spun and wove the clothing for the family. Life on the Sabine farm was a continuous round of hard work and pleasant duties; and the coarse fare and simple diet gave to all the household good health and long and happy lives.

The great Roman's last days would have been spent peacefully enough if it had not been for the bitter hatred which he bore toward Carthage. Whenever he went down to Rome, it was to stir up among his fellow-citizens the same feelings which he himself had. Whenever he made a public address, whether it was upon politics or religion or farming, he did not fail to add a word about Carthage. And when, at length, worn out by old age, he lay down for the last time upon his hard, humble cot, his farewell message was, "Delenda est Carthago!"

CHAPTER XXVII

HANNIBAL, THE HERO OF CARTHAGE

I. THE VOW

It is a great day in Carthage. The shops and warehouses are all closed. The streets are full of people as on a holiday. The principal houses, as well as the ships in the harbor, are gay with bright-colored banners. The quays by the waterside are crowded with soldiers waiting their turn to embark on the war vessels which lie moored along the dock. Everywhere there are hurrying feet and busy hands and anxious, hopeful faces. For to-day Hamilcar, the greatest general of Carthage, is to sail with his army for Spain, and the whole city is celebrating the event.

The temples are crowded with worshipers. Officers and tradesmen are there to implore gods to bless the voyage of Hamilcar. Women and children are there to pray for the protection of their husbands or fathers who are going out to fight for the glory of Carthage. All bring gifts for the stern god, and the altars are smoking with burnt offerings.

It is noon. A grand procession passes down the street and enters the chief temple of Baal. Hamilcar himself is there, and with him are the officers of state and the most famous men of the city. They have come, according to the custom of the time, to make their due offerings to the gods. It is thus that they pray for the success of their army in Spain.

By the side of the general is his little son Hannibal, now nine years of age. Young though he is, he is already a man in thought and ambition. It is his wish to be a great warrior like his father. Every day he has begged to be allowed to go with the army to Spain.

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"I am not a child, father; for I reach almost up to your shoulder. I will be strong and brave. I will fight in the front ranks. No one shall call me weak or cowardly. I will serve you well if I may go."

But the father firmly refuses.

"Wait yet a few years, my son. The time is coming when we shall have a much greater war; for soon Carthage must destroy Rome or be destroyed by her. Be patient, Hannibal. Stay at home yet a while; nurse your hatred of the Romans; study the art of war. You shall at length lead our armies to greater victories than mine shall be in Spain."

And now father and son walk side by side down the long dim aisle of the temple of Baal. Through the smoke and the dark shadows of the overhanging arches, the grim-faced idols look down upon the pair. The priests stand in their places. Drums are beaten. Discordant music fills the air.

"Place your hand on the altar, Hannibal."

The boy obeys.

The father pours out costly incense as an offering to Baal.

"Now make your vow, my son."

And Hannibal, nothing daunted, repeats before Baal and the long-robed priests the vow he has been taught to make. He vows that he will cherish undying hatred for the Romans, that day and night he will study to do them harm, and that he will never pause nor give up until their proud city has been laid in ashes.

The priests chant their approval. The smoke of the incense rises. The bugles sound, the drums are beaten, the cymbals clash. The grand procession moves slowly out of the temple; it makes its way through crowds of shouting people to the busy quay. There the farewells are spoken. The general and his officers embark in the vessel that has been waiting for them. There is much shouting; there is a great waving of banners. The long oars are dipped into the water, and the ship begins its voyage.

The boy Hannibal returns to his father's house to nurse his hatred of Rome.

II. CROSSING THE ALPS

Five, ten, fifteen years passed by, and then the words of Hamilcar came true. A great war was begun between Rome and Carthage. It was the second time that these mighty nations had engaged in a fierce struggle for the mastery.

Hamilcar was dead; and Hannibal, twenty-four years old, had taken his place as leader of the armies of Carthage. "The day that I have been waiting for has come at last," he said.

He was ready for the war. Before the Romans could collect an army he was on the march. With many thousands of fighting men and a great number of horses and elephants, he moved northward through Spain. He marched into southern France which was then called Gaul. The Romans hastily sent an army against him, but they could do nothing to hinder his progress. He crossed the great river Rhone. The Alps mountains, lofty and rugged, stood like an impassable wall before him.

In Italy, far beyond these mountains, was the city he had set out to conquer and destroy. But how should he lead his army thither? There were but two ways by which to go, and both these seemed impossible.The shorter way was by sea. But where were the ships to carry so great a host with wagons and baggage and the necessaries of war? Plainly they were not to be had.

The other way was over the Alps. But how could an army with horses and elephants and provisions climb those

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rugged heights? No one but Hannibal would have thought it possible.

Hannibal crossing the Alps

"Beyond these snow-capped mountains lies Rome!" he cried, and gave the word to press forward.

There is a narrow pass through the Alps, steep and dangerous even for the mountaineers who live there. Along this pass Hannibal led his army, for other way there was none.

Rough and narrow was the road. In places it wound around the foot of some towering rock; in places it skirted the edge of some bottomless chasm; in places there seemed to be scarcely; room for a man to pass, and yet with great labor and pains a way was made for the horses and elephants.

From the cliffs above the pathway, the people who lived among the mountains hurled great stones upon the heads of the soldiers.

Hundreds of men and animals perished, some by falling into chasms, some by being struck with the stones, and some from weariness and cold. And yet Hannibal pressed onward.

At last the fearful upward march was ended. The army had passed the summit of the mighty mountain wall. Looking down from the heights, the weary men could see the green forests and fields of Italy spread out like a map below them.

"It is there that Rome lies!" cried Hannibal.

But the Roman armies were waiting for him below. Many a hard battle did he fight, vainly trying to reach the city which he had set out to destroy. In the end his army was beaten, and he was forced to escape from Italy as best he could, taking only a small remnant of his men with him.

Rome and not Carthage was to be the mistress of the world.

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CHAPTER XXVIII

CROSSING THE RUBICON

Rome was the most powerful city in the world. The Romans had conquered all the countries on the north side of the Mediterranean Sea and most of those on the south side. They also occupied the islands of the sea and all that part of Asia that now belongs to Turkey.

Julius Cæsar, a man of wonderful courage and energy, was sent with a large army into Gaul to conquer that country also for Rome. Gaul was the region which we now call France. It was inhabited by a great many warlike tribes who fought against Cæsar with all their might but were finally forced to submit.

For nine years Cæsar and his army served Rome loyally and well. They took possession of all Gaul and made it a Roman province. They crossed the Rhine and subdued a part of Germany. They even went into Britain, which was then a wild and savage country, and were the first to make that island known to the civilized world.

But Cæsar had many enemies at home. They were jealous of him because he had done such great deeds, and because the common people in Rome and other parts of Italy praised him as a hero.

One of these persons, whose name was Pompey, had long been the most powerful man in Rome. Like Cæsar, he was the commander of a great army; but his army had done very little to win the applause of the people. Pompey saw that, unless something occurred to prevent it, Cæsar would in time be his master. He therefore began to lay plans to destroy him.

In another year the time of Cæsar's service in Gaul would end. It was understood that he would then return home and be elected consul, or ruler, of the mighty republic of which Rome was the center. He would then be the most powerful man in the world.

Pompey and other enemies of Cæsar were determined to prevent this. They induced the Roman Senate to send a command to Cæsar to leave his army in Gaul and come at once to Rome. "If you do not obey this command," said the Senate, "you shall be considered an enemy to the republic."

Cæsar knew what that meant. If he went to Rome alone, his enemies would make false accusations against him; they would try him for treason; they would not permit him to be elected consul.

He therefore called the soldiers of his favorite legion together and told them of the plot that had been made for his ruin. The war-loving veterans who had followed him through so many perils, and had helped him to win so many victories, declared they would not leave him; they would go with him to Rome and see that he received the rewards that were his due; they would serve without pay; they would even share with him the expenses of the long march. In all the legion there was only one man who proved false to Cæsar.

The march to Italy was begun. The soldiers were even more enthusiastic than Cæsar himself. They climbed mountains, waded rivers, endured fatigue, faced all kinds of danger for the sake of their great leader.

At last they came to a little river called the Rubicon. It was the boundary line of Cæsar's province of Gaul; on the other side of it was Italy. Cæsar paused a moment on the bank. He knew that to cross it would be to declare war against Pompey and the Roman Senate; it would involve all Rome in a fearful strife, the end of which no man could foresee.

But he did not hesitate long. He gave the word and rode boldly across the shallow stream.

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"We have crossed the Rubicon," he cried as he reached the farther shore. "There is now no turning back."

Soon the news was carried to Rome: "Cæsar has crossed the Rubicon;" and there was great dismay among those who had plotted to destroy him. Pompey's soldiers deserted him and hastened to join themselves to Cæsar's army. The Roman senators and their friends made ready to flee from the city.

"Cæsar has crossed the Rubicon!" was shouted along the roads and byways leading to Rome; and the country people turned out to meet and hail with joy the conquering hero.

The word was carried a second time to the city: "Cæsar has crossed the Rubicon;" and the wild flight began. Senators and public officers left everything behind and hurried away to seek safety with Pompey. On foot, on horseback, in litters, in carriages, they fled for their lives—all because Cæsar had crossed the Rubicon. Pompey was unable to protect them. He hurried to the sea coast, and, with all who were able to accompany him, sailed away to Greece.

Cæsar was the master of Rome.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE WHITE-HEADED ZAL

I

There is a mountainous country in Persia which in olden times was called Seistan. Long, long ago—so long that nobody remembers the years—that country was ruled by a mighty king whose name was Saum.

Now, although Saum was rich and great, he was very unhappy; for he had no son to rule his kingdom after him. At length, however, a baby boy was born to him. This child was faultless in form and beautiful in face and limb, but his hair was like that of an old, old man—long, and white as snow.

The infant was eight days old before its father knew of its birth. For every one was afraid to tell the king lest he

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should be angry when he learned that his son was so strangely different from other children. But on the ninth day one of the women of the household gathered courage to go into the presence of mighty Saum.

She bowed herself to the earth before him and made it known that she wished to speak. And when the king had given her leave, she cried out:—

"May heaven's blessing rest upon Saum, the hero! May his days be long and full of joy! For a son is born to the king—a child faultless in form and beautiful in face and limb. His face is as fair as the full moon in its glory. His eyes are as glorious as the sun at its rising. He has not any blemish, save that his hair is like unto the hair of an old, old man—long, and white as snow. This child, O my master, is heaven's gift to thee. Let thy heart turn to him in love, and let thy thoughts be full of gratitude to God."

Then Saum arose and went into the women's house to see his child. And the nurse brought to him the moon-faced babe that was faultless in form and limb but had hair like unto the hair of an old, old man.

The king gazed long upon the helpless little one, and his heart turned to it in love and pity. But when he had gone out of the room his pride began to touch him. He thought how all the world would laugh at him because of this his only son, so strangely different from other children. The longer he thought, the more bitterly did he grieve, and his love was turned to shame and disappointment.

"Why has the Lord of Light given me such a son?" he cried. "When men see his white hair they will laugh at me. They will turn their backs upon him, and will not have him for their king. Better it would be if I had no son."

Thus spoke Saum, the hero; and, as the days went by, his heart was hardened because of his shame and disappointment. At length he called his trustiest servant, and bade him carry the child into some lonely place and leave it there to perish.

Now on the borders of Seistan, far from the homes of men, there is a mountain called Elburz. Its top reaches to the stars, and its sides are so steep that no man has ever climbed halfway to its dizzy summit. At the foot of this mountain the king's servant left the child. He left it lying in its princely robes and smiling at the blue sky above it.

High, on the topmost rock of the mighty mountain a wonderful bird had built her nest. Simurgh was the name of this bird, and her nest was a marvel to behold. She had made it of ebony and of sandalwood, and had twined it about with twigs of aloes. Inside and out, it was like a king's house for comfort and beauty.

For a thousand years this wise bird had had her home on that lofty mountain peak. There she breathed the pure air of the skies and talked with the twinkling stars. And she was learned in the wisdom of the ages and knew the language of men.

The Simurgh saw the helpless babe lying at the foot of the mountain. She saw him as the sun went down, and heard him crying from loneliness and hunger. She spread her wings and flew lightly down. She picked him up in her talons, and carried him to her lofty nest.

She had intended to give him to her nestlings to devour as they would devour a rabbit or a lamb. But when she saw how gentle and fair he was, and how faultless in form and limb, her heart was moved with pity.

"My children," she said, "I have brought you a rare and noble gift. Here is the son of the king. I bid you to do him no harm, but to love and treat him as your brother."

She chose the tenderest of food for her little guest. In her curved beak she brought him the milk of wild goats and honey from the home of the bees. She gave him ripe, sweet

berries and whatever she could find that was good for a growing child. Her nestlings loved him as their brother, and shared with him all the pleasant things that were theirs in their lofty home.

Thus months and years went by. The Simurgh never grew tired nor slacked her care. And the white-haired babe grew into a prattling boy, and then into a youth, strong and beautiful.

II

One day some travelers were passing near the foot of Mount Elburz. They looked up and saw the great nest of the Simurgh midway between the earth and the sky. As they looked they beheld a youth walking on the rocky height and going in and out of the nest as though it were his home. The youth was fair of face and faultless in form, but his long, flowing hair was white as snow.

The travelers were filled with astonishment at what they saw, and went on, wondering, into Seistan. In every town they told of the strange sight they had seen, and the story soon spread through all the land. It was not long before a servant of the king heard it and it was repeated even to Saum, the hero.

Then one night Saum dreamed a dream. He thought that a horseman came riding from the mountains with news of the son he had so cruelly cast off. The horseman stood before him and reproached him, saying:—

"O foolish king, think now of your folly! You doomed your child to death for no other reason than that his hair was white. You feared the laughter of men; and still you are called a hero. Behold, you have been put to shame by a bird who has more pity and kindness than you for your own child. How long will you be so wicked, so cruel? Arise! Make haste to find your son."

Then Saum awoke, sad at heart and sorely grieved. He called his head men to his bedside and asked them about the youth who had been seen on Mount Elburz. And one of them who was bolder than the rest spoke up and bitterly reproached him.

"O hard-hearted king," he said, "you have been more cruel than even the tiger or the bear; for even they love their little ones and do not cast them off for some blemish. And you, unfeeling man, have rejected your child because of his white hair. Go forth quickly and repair the evil you have done. And if your child is still alive, take him to your heart and turn to the Almighty for forgiveness."

The king bowed himself to the earth in sorrow and shame. Then he gave orders that his fighting men should be put in readiness for marching. And the next day, at the head of a great army, with horses and camels and elephants, he set out for the mountains to look for his son.

When he drew near the foot of Mount Elburz, Saum lifted his eyes and beheld the nest of the Simurgh high on the topmost peak. And, as he looked, he saw the wise bird and a tall youth with flowing white hair looking down from the edge of the gray cliff. He knew then that this was his son, and he would have climbed the steep rock if such had been possible. But the most that he could do was to bow down in the dust and ask God for help.

And God heard him. For when the Simurgh saw that it was the king, she knew why he had come; and she said to the white-haired youth:—

"O nestling of my pride and love, the hour has come for us to part. For eighteen years I have been thy mother, and thou hast lived in this nest, while thy brothers have long ago flown away. But now thy father has come to seek thee; and a kingly throne is waiting for thee in Seistan, where thou shalt win great glory and renown."

Then the eyes of the youth were filled with tears.

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"Art thou weary of me, my mother?" he said. "Am I no longer good enough for this fair nest? This home on the lofty mountain peak is better than a throne. Thy wings protect me better than an army of men. I wish no glory but to stay with thee."

But the Simurgh would not listen to his plea.

"It breaks my heart to give thee up," she said; "but another destiny is thine. Be brave, my son. Go forth and do the work which the world requires of thee."

Then she took him up in her talons and gently carried him down to the spot where the king was kneeling in prayer. The mighty hero lifted his head. Great was his joy when he saw the white-haired youth standing beside him. He bent low to the Simurgh and blessed her.

"O noblest of birds!" he cried. "O bird of heaven, by whom the wicked are put to shame! May great glory and endless life be thine!"

The bird made no answer, but flew up to her home on the lofty mountain peak. And as the king looked at his son, he saw that the youth was in every way worthy of admiration. Faultless he was in form and feature, and he had no blemish save his white hair. Proud, indeed, was the heart of the hero; and all his followers, when they saw the young man, shouted for joy.

Then the young man was clothed in princely garments. A sword was buckled to his side and a spear was put in his hand. And the king named him Zal, which means the Elder.

After this the army began its return to Seistan. The drummers, on mighty elephants, rode in front. The trumpets sounded, the cymbals were clashed together, the fifes were played, and sounds of joy filled the air; for Zal, the white-haired prince, was going home.

When the news reached Seistan, the city was dressed as for a holiday, and old and young went out with music and song to greet the new-found hero who was soon to be their king.

Then the wise men of the country came, and the young prince was placed in their care to be taught all that one so noble should learn. As the days went by, Zal grew wiser and wiser, until his wisdom was the talk of the world. Then Saum, too old and feeble to rule longer, gave up his kingdom to his son. And for many long years Zal reigned with such prudence and skill that men still talk of the golden age of the white-headed king.

CHAPTER XXX

PETER KLAUS THE GOATHERD

I

In the village of Sittendorf in Germany there dwelt, a long time ago, a poor but worthy man whose name was Peter Klaus. All the people for miles around knew Peter. He was not fond of hard work. He could not have been persuaded for all the money in the world to spend his days in a shop tinkering at a trade. He liked to be out of doors. He liked to wander at his ease in the fields and the woods, enjoying the sunlight and the flowers and the songs of the birds.

Since he could not be induced to follow any occupation in the village, his neighbors sometimes hired him to take care of their goats. Every morning he drove a great flock of Billies and Nannies out upon the slopes of the Kyffhäuser Mountain; and while they browsed upon the grass, he wandered around in the groves and glens or went to sleep on the sunny slope of some great rock. In the evening he got the goats together and drove them slowly back to the village. This was just the kind of life that he liked, and he wished no grander title than that of "Peter Klaus the goatherd."

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One morning, soon after reaching the pasture, Peter missed the prettiest Nanny goat in the flock. He hunted for her among the rocks and in the thickets of underbrush; he called her; he climbed to the top of the hill whence he could see all over the country for miles around. But no stray goat could he find.

When evening came and it was time to go home, he was in great despair. Should he go home and say that he had lost one of his flock? Such a thing had never happened before. But what was his surprise upon rounding up the flock, to see the lost Nanny in its midst!

The same thing happened for several days. Every morning Nanny would disappear and nothing could be seen of her until late in the evening, when she would suddenly join her fellows and run, frisking and playing, back to the village.

Peter was much puzzled, for, do what he could he was unable to find out what the frolicking creature did with herself during the day. At length he made up his mind not to take his eyes off her during the whole day. He watched her closely and saw that, when the flock passed the corner of an old broken-down wall at the foot of a hill, she quietly dropped behind and was out of sight in a moment.

Peter examined the wall. He had seen it many a time before. People said that it was part of the ruins of an old castle. As he looked closely he saw that, just behind a hawthorn bush, there was a hole large enough for a goat, or even a man on all-fours, to pass through. This, then, was the place where Nanny disappeared so strangely; indeed, she had worn quite a path beneath the hawthorn, and the only wonder was that her master had not discovered it before.

The next day Peter watched her as before, and when she ran slyly through the wall he followed her. After creeping on his hands and knees for some distance he found himself in a long and lofty cavern. The sunlight streamed through some crevices in the rocks and made the place look quite light and cheerful. At the farther end he saw Nanny busily picking up some oats that were scattered on the floor. How did the oats come there? The plump grains were constantly trickling down from above, and the goat had nothing to do but stand and eat.

Peter could not understand it. But as he came nearer he heard the stamping of heavy feet overhead and the whinnying of horses.

"Oh, somebody has a stable up there," he said to himself; "but how can that be? I have been all over these hills, and have never seen even the sign of a house."

As he was looking about him, a door in the side of the cavern suddenly opened and a queer little fellow with a big head and saucer eyes came in.

"Good morning to you, sir," said Peter, thinking it was the stable man. "I beg you will pardon me for coming in without any invitation. Is there anything I can do to serve you?"

The little man made no answer, but looked at Peter funnily with those great eyes, and beckoned him to follow.

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Peter was too good-natured to refuse, and besides this he was curious to learn all about the strange place. So he followed his queer guide through the door and up a long flight of stairs until he again felt the warm sun on his cheeks and saw the green; grass beneath his feet.

He saw that he was now in a square courtyard surrounded by stone walls and shaded by tall trees. His guide led him through another broad cavern and then out upon a green lawn that was fenced in on every side by tall cliffs and rocky heights. Near one end of the lawn were twelve old-fashioned knights playing at ninepins. The knights were dressed in a very queer way. They wore long hose and silver-buckled shoes. Their snow-white hair and beards reached almost to their knees.

They scarcely noticed Peter, so busy were they at their game, and not one of them spoke a word. The guide motioned to Peter to pick up the nine-pins and return the bowls to the bowlers. Peter was so badly frightened by the strangeness of everything that he dared not disobey. Trembling in every limb, he hastened to serve the knights as he was bidden.He noticed as the bowls were rolled over the lawn that they made a noise like thunder rumbling among the hills, and this frightened him still more. By and by, however, he began to gain courage. As the players were never in a hurry, he learned to humor himself and to do his work as slowly as he pleased. Looking around him, he saw a pitcher of wine and twelve golden goblets on a table at the end of the lawn. He did not stop to think that the goblets were for the knights and that there was none for him; he was very thirsty, and he drank right out of the pitcher.

The wine made him very brave. He felt that he would rather pick up ninepins than mind his neighbors' goats; and every time one of the bowls rolled toward the table he would run and take another sip from the pitcher. At last, however, his head began to feel heavy; and while he was in the act of picking up the ninepins, he fell gently over upon the grass and went to sleep.

II

When Peter Klaus awoke he found himself lying on the grass where he had been in the habit of feeding his goats. He sat up and looked around. There were the same rocks upon which he had sat a hundred times; there were the same hills among which he had so often wandered; and there was the same noisy brook along which he had walked a thousand times with so much delight. But the trees and shrubs seemed strange to him—they were much larger than when he had seen them before, and there were many new ones that he did not remember.

He looked for his goats, but they were nowhere in sight. He called, but not one of them came to him. He started out to seek them, but was surprised to see that all the well-known paths among the hills were overgrown with tall grass. He rubbed his eyes to make sure that he was awake. "Strange! strange!" he muttered. "I will go back to the village and see if the beasts are there."

His legs were so stiff that walking was a hard task. He stumbled along slowly, wondering why the rheumatism should trouble him so much. After a while he came to a spot from which he could see the village spread out before him at the bottom of the valley. It was the same pretty village of Sittendorf; he could not see that it had changed. He hurried along to the main road, hoping to find his flock there. But not a goat could he see.

Before reaching the village he met a number of people; but they were all strangers to him, and they looked at him so queerly that he did not dare to ask any questions. In the village the women and children stood in their doorways and stared at him as he passed. All were strangers to him. He noticed that some of them stroked their chins and laughed; and without thinking much about it, he put his hand to his own chin. What was his surprise to find that he had a beard more than a foot long!

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"Ah, me!" thought he. "Am I mad, and has all the world gone mad too? Where am I?"

But he knew that the village was Sittendorf—for there were the church and the long street which he knew so well, and towering above them was the great Kyffhäuser Mountain looking just as it did when he was a child. He went on until he came to his own house. It was greatly altered. The roof was beginning to fall in; the door was off its hinges; the rooms were empty and bare. He called his wife and children by their names; but no one answered him. A strange dog came round the corner and snarled at him. A strange man in the next dooryard looked over the fence and told him to go away.

Soon a crowd of idlers and women and children gathered around him. They were laughing at his long beard and his tattered clothes. A woman who seemed more thoughtful than the rest asked him what he wanted.

"I don't know what I want," he answered. "I came here to find my goats and I find everything and everybody lost. Does anybody know—"

He was about to inquire for his wife and children; but he thought how odd that would seem, and stopped short. He was silent for a moment; then he looked around at the circle of strange faces and asked, "Where is Kurt Steffen, the blacksmith?"

The crowd stared at him, but no one spoke. Then an old woman who had hobbled across the street to look at him answered, "Kurt Steffen! Why, Kurt Steffen went to the wars years and years ago. Nobody has heard from him since."

Poor Peter Klaus looked around him, more dazed than ever. His lips quivered pitifully as he asked, "Then where is Valentine Meyer, the shoemaker?"

"Ah, me!" answered another old woman. "Valentine has been lying for nearly twenty years in a house that he will never leave."

Peter thought that he had seen both of the old women before—but as he remembered them they were young and handsome and of about his own age. He was about to ask another question when he saw a sprightly young mother, who looked very much like his wife, coming down the street. She was leading a little girl about four years of age, and on her arm was a year-old baby. He staggered and rubbed his eyes, and leaned against the wall for support. "Does anybody know Peter Klaus, the goat-herd?" he stammered.

"Peter Klaus!" cried the young mother. "Why, that was my father's name. It is now twenty years since he was lost. His flock came home without him one evening, and all the village searched night and day among the hills and on the mountain, but could not find him. I was then only four years old."

"And are you little Maria?" asked Peter, trembling harder than ever.

"My name is Maria," was the answer, "but I am no longer little Maria."

"And I am your father!" cried Peter. "I am Peter Klaus who was lost. Don't any of you know Peter Klaus?"

All who heard him were filled with astonishment; and Maria, with her two children, rushed into his arms crying, "Welcome, father! Welcome home again! I felt sure it was you as soon as I saw you."

And soon all the old people in the village came to greet him. "Peter Klaus? Yes, yes, it seems only yesterday that you drove our goats to the pasture. How time does fly! Welcome, old neighbor! Welcome home after being away twenty years." Such is the old, old story of Peter Klaus. Hundreds of years ago the people of Germany talked about it and laughed over it. It is perhaps even older than the second part of the legend of Frederick Barbarossa, which, as you will remember, has some resemblance to it and also relates to a mysterious cavern in the Kyffhäuser Mountain.

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