



SHARED READER

LEVEL 5



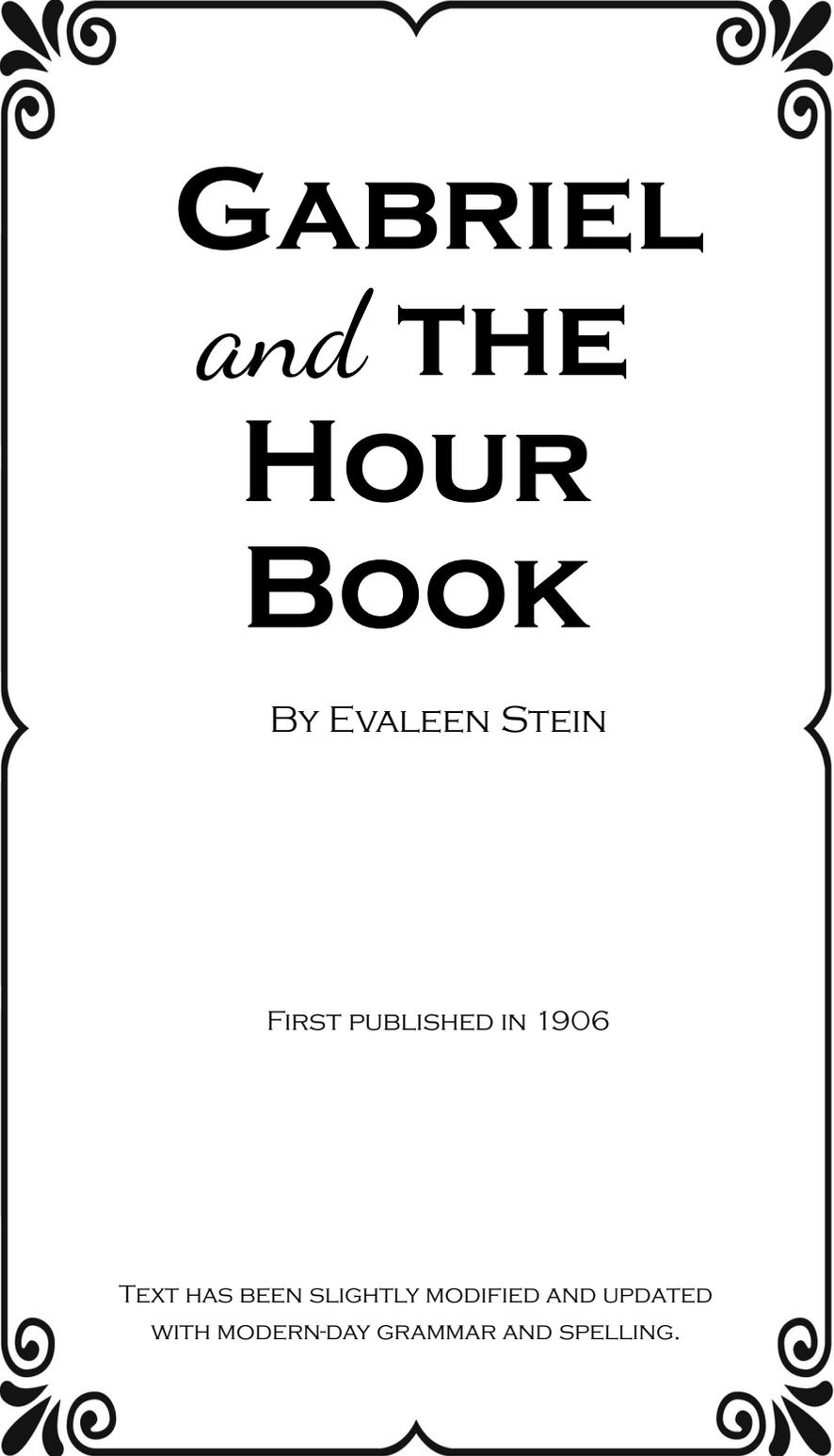
For use with the Level 5 Language Arts and Literature course


The Good and Beautiful
CURRICULUM



Table of Contents

<i>Evaleen Stein Biography</i>	3
<i>Gabriel and the Hour Book</i> by Evaleen Stein	5
<i>Knights of Art: Giotto</i> by Amy Steedman.....	61
<i>The Christmas Porringer</i> by Evaleen Stein.....	69
<i>Vinzi, a Story of the Swiss Alps</i> by Johanna Spyri.....	127
<i>Rescue Dog of the High Pass</i> by Jim Kjelgaard.....	257



GABRIEL
and **THE**
HOUR
BOOK

BY EVALEEN STEIN

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1906

TEXT HAS BEEN SLIGHTLY MODIFIED AND UPDATED
WITH MODERN-DAY GRAMMAR AND SPELLING.

LESSON 2

Chapter 1

THE LITTLE COLOR GRINDER

It was a bright morning of early April, hundreds of years ago, and through all the fields and meadows of Normandy the violets were just beginning to peep through the tender green of the young grass. The rows of tall poplar trees that everywhere, instead of fences, served to mark off the farms of the country folk waved in the spring wind like great, pale green plumes; and among their branches the earliest robins were gaily singing as a little boy stepped out from a small thatched cottage standing among the fields and took his way along the highroad.

Gabriel Viaud was a peasant lad; anyone could have known from the shirt of blue homespun, and the wooden shoes which he wore. That he felt the gladness of April time, could easily be known by the happy little song he began to sing to himself and by the eager delight with which he now and then stooped to pluck a blue violet or to gather a handful of golden flowers.

A mile or two behind him, hidden by a bend in the road, lay the little village of St. Martin-de-Bouchage. While in the soft, blue distance ahead of him, rose the gray walls of St. Martin's Abbey, whither he was going.

Indeed, for almost a year now the little boy had been trudging every day to the abbey where he earned a small sum by waiting upon the good brothers who dwelt there and who made the beautiful painted books for which the abbey had become famous. Gabriel could grind and mix colors for the brothers, prepare the parchment on which they did their writing, and many other little things that helped them in their work.

The lad enjoyed his tasks at the abbey, and, above all, he delighted in seeing the beautiful things at which the brothers were always busy. Yet, as he now drew near the gateway he could not help but give a little sigh, for it was so bright and sunny outside. He smiled, though, as he looked at the lovely

bunches of blossoms with which he had quite filled his hands and felt that at least he was taking a bit of the April in with him as he crossed the threshold and entered a large room.

“Good morrow, Gabriel,” called out several voices as he came in, for the lad was a general favorite with the brothers; and Gabriel, respectfully taking off his blue peasant cap, gave a pleasant “good morning” to each person.

The room in which Gabriel stood had plain stone walls, a floor of paved stone, and little furniture—except a number of solidly made benches and tables. These were placed beneath a row of high windows, and the tables were covered with writing and painting materials and pieces of parchment; for the brotherhood of St. Martin’s was very industrious.

In those days—it was four hundred years ago—printed books were very few and almost unknown to most people. Printing presses had been invented only a few years ago, so by far the greater number of books in the world were still made by the patient labor of skillful hands; the work usually being done by the monks of whom there were very many at that time.

These monks, or brothers, as they were often called, lived in monasteries and abbeys and were men who banded themselves together in brotherhoods, taking solemn vows never to have homes of their own or to mingle in the daily life of others but to devote their lives to religion; for they believed that they could serve God better by thus shutting themselves off from the world.

And so it came about that the brothers, having more time and more learning than most other people of those days, made it their chief work to preserve and multiply all the books that were worth keeping. These the brothers wrote out on parchment, for paper was very scarce so long ago, and then ornamented the pages with such beautiful painted borders of flowers and birds and saints and angels, and such lovely initial letters, all in bright colors and gold, that to this day large numbers of the beautiful books made by the monks are still kept among the choicest treasures of the museums and great libraries of the world.

And few of all those wonderful old illuminations (for so the painted

ornaments were called) were lovelier than the work of the brotherhood of St. Martin's. Gabriel felt very proud even to grind the colors for them, but, this day, as he passed over to one of the tables and began to make ready his paint mortar, the monk who had charge of the writing room called to him, saying:

"Gabriel, do not get out thy work here, for the abbot hath just ordered that someone must help Brother Stephen who is alone in the old chapter house. He hath a special book to make, and his color grinder is fallen ill; so go thou at once and take Jacques's place."

So Gabriel left the writing room and passed down the long corridor that led to the chapter house. This was a room the brothers had kept for years as a meeting place when they and the abbot, who governed them all, wished to talk over the affairs of the abbey; but as it had at last grown too small for them, they had built a new and larger one, and so the old chapter house was seldom used any more.

Gabriel knew this, and he wondered much why Brother Stephen chose to work there rather than in the regular writing room with the others. Gabriel supposed, however, that Brother Stephen preferred to be alone for some reason of his own.

LESSON 3

Gabriel did not know that the monk, at that moment, was sitting moodily by his work table, his eyes staring aimlessly ahead of him and his hands dropped idly in his lap. Brother Stephen was feeling very cross and unhappy and out of sorts with all the world, and this was the reason: poor Brother Stephen had entered the abbey when he was a lad scarcely older than Gabriel. The monk had come of good family but had been left an orphan with no one to care for him, and, for want of another home, he had been sent to the abbey to be trained for the brotherhood; for in those days there were few places for fatherless and motherless children to go.

As Brother Stephen grew up, he took the solemn vows which bound him to the rules of the brotherhood without realizing what it all would

mean to him; for Brother Stephen was a born artist, and, by and by, he began to feel that while life in the abbey was well for most of the brothers, for him it was not well. He wanted to be free to wander about the world, to paint pictures of many things, and to go from city to city and see and study the work of the world's great artists.

It is true he spent the greater part of his time in the abbey working on the illuminated books, and this he loved; yet it did not wholly satisfy him. He longed to paint other things, and, above all, his artist nature longed for freedom from all the little rules of daily life that governed the days of the brotherhood.

Brother Stephen had brooded much over this desire for freedom, and only the day before he had sought out the abbot of St. Martin's and asked to be released from the vows of obedience which he had taken years before but which now he found so hard to live up to. To his great disappointment, though, the abbot had refused to grant Brother Stephen's request.

The abbot had several reasons for this refusal. One of them was that he himself dearly loved all the little daily ceremonies of the abbey, and he could not understand why anyone who had once lived there could prefer a life in the world. He really thought it was for Brother Stephen's own good that he should stay in the brotherhood.

And then, too, perhaps there was another reason less to the abbot's credit, and this reason was that of all the beautiful illuminated books for which the Abbey of St. Martin's had become so famous, none were quite so exquisitely done as those made by Brother Stephen. So perhaps the abbot did not wish to lose so skillful an artist from the work room of the abbey, and especially at this particular time. For just before Brother Stephen had had his talk with the abbot, a messenger from the city of Paris had come to the abbey bearing an order from the king, Louis XII, who reigned over France, and Normandy also, which was a part of France.

The king was to wed the Lady Anne of Bretagne the following winter, and as Lady Anne was a great admirer and collector of beautiful painted books, the king thought no gift would please his bride quite so much as a piece of fine illumination; and he decided that it should be an hour book.

These books were so called because in them were written different parts of the Bible, intended to be read at certain hours of the day; for most people at that time were very devout, and the great ladies, especially, were very fond of having their hour books made as beautiful as possible.

As King Louis thought over the best places where he might have his bride's gift painted, at last he made up his mind to send to the monks of St. Martin's. He commanded that the hour book be done in the most beautiful style and that it must be finished by the following December.

The abbot was delighted with the honor the king had shown the abbey in sending this order, and he determined that Brother Stephen should stay and make the entire book, as no one else wrote so evenly or made quite such lovely initials and borders as did he.

When the abbot told this to Brother Stephen, however, it was a pity that he did so in such a cold and haughty way that altogether Brother Stephen's anger was aroused, for he had a rather unruly temper; and so, hurting under the disappointment of not receiving his liberty and feeling that the book for Lady Anne was one cause of this, he had spoken angrily and disrespectfully to the abbot and refused to help with the king's order.

At this, the abbot became angry and declared that Brother Stephen should be compelled to paint the hour book whether he wished to or not and that he must do it as punishment for his unruly conduct. The abbot threatened, moreover, that if Brother Stephen did not obey, he would be placed under the ban of the Church, which was considered by all the brotherhood as a dreadful misfortune.

And so, with this threat hanging over him, that very morning—just before Gabriel reached the abbey—Brother Stephen had been sent to the old chapter house where he was ordered to work by himself and to begin the book at once. To complete his humiliation, and for fear he might try to run away, the abbot caused Brother Stephen to be chained to one of the legs of the heavy work table, and this chain he was to wear every day during working hours.

Now all this made Brother Stephen very angry and unhappy, and his

heart was full of bitterness toward the abbot and all of the brotherhood and the world in general, when all at once he heard Gabriel's knock at the door; and then, in another moment, the door was softly pushed open, and there on the threshold stood the little boy.

LESSON 4

Chapter 2

BROTHER STEPHEN'S INSPIRATION



Gabriel knew nothing of Brother Stephen's troubles, and so he was smiling happily as he stepped into the room, holding his cap in one hand while his other arm hugged to him his large bunch of violets and golden blossoms. Indeed, he looked so bright and full of life that even Brother Stephen felt the effect of it, and his frown began to smooth out a little as he said, "Well, my lad, who art thou?"

"I am Gabriel Viaud, Brother Stephen," answered the boy, "and I have come to help you. They told me Jacques is fallen ill. What would you like me to do first?"

To this, Brother Stephen scarcely knew what to reply. He was certainly in no mood for work. He was still very, very angry and thought himself terribly misused by the abbot. Brother Stephen greatly dreaded the abbot's threats, but he had almost reached the point of defying the abbot and the king and everybody else no matter what dreadful thing happened to him afterward.

But then as he looked again at the bright-faced little boy standing there and seeming so eager to help, Brother Stephen began to relent more and more. Besides, he found it decidedly embarrassing to try to explain things to Gabriel.

So, after a little pause, he said to the boy, "Gabriel, I am not ready for thee at this moment; go sit on yonder bench. I wish to think out a matter which is perplexing me." Then as Gabriel obediently went over to the bench and seated himself, Brother Stephen added, "Thou canst pass the time looking at the books on the shelf above thee."

So while Brother Stephen was trying to make up his mind as to what he would do, Gabriel took down one of the books and was soon absorbed in its pages. Presently, as he chose a new one, he gave a little involuntary exclamation of delight. At this Brother Stephen noticed Gabriel and said,

“Ah! What hast thou found that seems to please thee?”

“Oh, sir,” answered Gabriel, “this is the most beautiful initial letter I have ever seen!”

Now Gabriel did not know that the book had been made a few years before by Brother Stephen himself, and so the lad had no idea how much it pleased the brother to have his work admired.

Indeed, most people who do good work of any kind oftentimes feel the need of praise, not flattery, but the real approval of someone who understands what they are trying to do. It makes the workman or artist feel that if his work is liked by somebody, it is worthwhile to try to do more and better.

Poor Brother Stephen did not get much of this needed praise, for many of the other monks at the abbey were envious of him and so were unwilling to admire his work. The abbot was so cold and haughty and so taken up with his own affairs, that he seldom took the trouble to say what he liked or disliked.

So when Brother Stephen saw Gabriel's eager admiration, he felt pleased indeed; for Gabriel had a nice taste in artistic things and seemed instinctively to pick out the best points of anything he viewed. And when, in his enthusiasm, he carried the book over and began to tell Brother Stephen why he so much admired the painting, without knowing it, Gabriel really made Brother Stephens feel happier than he had felt for many days. Brother Stephen began to have a decided notion that he would paint King Louis' book after all. And just then, as if to settle the matter, Brother Stephen happened to glance at the corner of the table where Gabriel had laid down his bunch of flowers as he came in.

It chanced that some of the violets had fallen from the cluster and dropped upon a broad ruler of brass that lay beside the painting materials. And even as Brother Stephen looked, it chanced also that a little white butterfly drifted into the room through the bars of the high, open window. After vaguely fluttering about for a while, at last, attracted by the blossoms, it came and, poising lightly over the violets on the ruler, it began to sip the honey from the heart of one of them.

As Brother Stephen's artistic eye took in the beauty of effect made by the few flowers on the brass ruler with the butterfly hovering over them, he, too, gave a little exclamation, and his eyes brightened and he smiled; for he had just got a new idea for an illuminated border.

"Yes," he said to himself, "this would be different from any I have yet seen! I will decorate King Louis' book with borders of gold; and on the gold I will paint the meadow wildflowers, the bees and butterflies, and all the little flying creatures."

Now before this, all the borders of the abbey books had been painted, in the usual manner of the time, with scrolls and birds and flowers more or less conventionalized. That is, the artists did not try to make the birds and flowers look exactly like the real ones but twisted them about in all sorts of fantastic ways. Sometimes the stem of a flower would end in the curled-up folds of a winged dragon, or a bird would have strange blossoms growing out of his beak or perhaps the tips of his wings.

These borders were indeed exquisitely beautiful, but Brother Stephen was just tired of it all and wanted to do something quite different; so he was delighted with his new idea of painting the field flowers exactly like nature, but placing them on a background of gold.

As he pictured in his mind one page after another thus adorned, he became more and more interested and impatient to begin at once. He forgot all about his anger at the abbot; he forgot everything else except that he wanted to begin King Louis' book as quickly as possible!

LESSON 5

And so he called briskly to Gabriel, who meantime had reseated himself on his bench, "Gabriel, come hither! Canst thou rule lines without blotting? Canst thou make ink and grind colors and prepare gold?"

"Yes, sir," said Gabriel, surprised at the monk's eager manner, "I have worked at all these things."

"Good!" replied Brother Stephen. "Here is a piece of parchment thou canst cut and prepare, and then rule it thus," he said as he showed Gabriel how he wished it done—with scarlet ink. "But do not take the brass ruler!

Here is one of ivory thou canst use instead.”

As Gabriel went to work, Brother Stephen, taking a goose quill pen and some black ink, skillfully and carefully began to make drawings of the violets as they lay on the ruler, not forgetting the white butterfly which still hovered about. The harder he worked, the happier he grew. Hour after hour passed until at last the dinner time came, and Gabriel, who was growing very hungry, could hear the footsteps of the brothers as they marched into the large dining room where they all ate together.

Brother Stephen, however, was so absorbed that he did not notice anything until, by and by, the door opened and in came two monks, one carrying some soup and bread and a flagon of wine. As they entered, Brother Stephen turned quickly and was about to rise when, all at once, he felt the tug of the chain still fastened about the leg of the table. At this harsh reminder, his face grew scarlet with shame, and he sank back in his chair.

Gabriel started with surprise, for he had not before seen the chain, partly hidden as it was by the folds of the brother's robe. As Gabriel looked, one of the two monks went to the table and, with a key which he carried, unlocked the chain so Brother Stephen might have a half hour's liberty while he ate. The monks, however, stayed with him to keep an eye on his movements, and meantime they told Gabriel to go out to the abbey kitchen and find something for his own dinner.

As Gabriel went out along the corridor to the kitchen, his heart swelled with pity! Why was Brother Stephen chained? Gabriel tried to think and remembered that once before he had seen one of the brothers chained to a table in the writing room because he was not diligent enough with his work—but Brother Stephen! Was he not working so hard? And how beautiful, too, were his drawings! The more Gabriel thought of it the more indignant he grew. Indeed, he did not half enjoy the bread and savory soup made of black beans that the cook dished out for him. Gabriel took his wooden bowl and, sitting on a bench, ate absently, thinking all the while of Brother Stephen.

When Gabriel had finished, he went back to the chapter house and found the other monks gone and Brother Stephen again chained. Gabriel felt much embarrassed to have been obliged to see it, and when Brother

Stephen, pointing to the chain, said bitterly, “Thou seest they were afraid I would run away from my work,” the lad was so much at a loss to know what to say that he very wisely said nothing.

Now Brother Stephen, though he had begun the book as the abbot wished, had by no means the meek and penitent spirit which also the abbot desired of him and which it was proper for a monk to have.

And so if the truth must be told, each time the other monks came in to chain him, Brother Stephen felt more than anything else like seizing both of them and thrusting them out of the door, or at least trying to do so. But then he could not forget the abbot’s threat if he showed disobedience. Brother Stephen had been brought up to dread the ban of the Church more than anything else that could possibly happen to him because he believed that this would make him unhappy, not only in this life, but in the life to come. And so he smothered his feelings and tried to bear the humiliation as patiently as he could.

Gabriel could not help but see, however, that it took Brother Stephen some time to regain the interest he had felt in his work, and it was not until the afternoon was half gone that he seemed to forget his troubles enough really to have heart in the pages he was making.

When dusk fell, Gabriel picked up and arranged his things in order and, bidding Brother Stephen good night, trudged off home.

LESSON 6*Chapter 3***GABRIEL INTERVIEWS THE ABBOT**

he next day of Gabriel's service passed off much the same as the first, and so it went for almost a week. The boy saw, though, day by day that Brother Stephen's chain became more and more unbearable to him and that he had long fits of brooding when he looked so miserable and unhappy that Gabriel's heart fairly ached for him.

At last the lad, who was a sympathetic little fellow, felt that he could stand it no longer but must try and help Brother Stephen in some way.

"If I could only speak to the abbot himself," thought Gabriel, "surely he would see that Brother Stephen is set free!"

The abbot, however, was a very stately and dignified person, and Gabriel did not quite see how a little peasant boy like himself could find an opportunity to speak to the abbot or how he, Gabriel, would dare to say anything even if he had a chance.

Now it happened the very morning that Gabriel was thinking about all this, that he was out in the abbey kitchen beating up the white of a nice fresh egg which he had brought with him from home that day. He had the egg in an earthen bowl and was working away with a curious wooden beater, for few people had forks in those days. And as he beat up the white froth, the abbey cooks also were very busy making pastries, roasting huge pieces of meat before the great open fireplace, and baking loaves of sweet Normandy bread for the monks' dinner.

But Gabriel was not helping them; no, he was beating the egg for Brother Stephen to use in putting on the gold in the border he was painting. For the brothers did not have the imitation gold powders of which we see so much today, but instead, they used real gold which they ground up very fine and took much trouble to properly prepare. And when they wanted to lay it on, they commonly used the white of a fresh egg to fasten it to the parchment.

So Gabriel was working as fast as he could, for Brother Stephen was waiting, when all at once he happened to look out the kitchen door which opened on a courtyard where there was a pretty garden, and he saw the abbot walking up and down the gravel paths and now and then stopping to see how the tulips and daffodils were coming on.

As Gabriel looked, the abbot seated himself on a stone bench, and then the little boy, forgetting his awe of the abbot and thinking only of Brother Stephen and his chain, Gabriel ran out as fast as he could, still holding his bowl in one hand and the wooden beater in the other.

As he came up to where the abbot was sitting, Gabriel curtsied in such haste that he spilled out half his egg as he eagerly burst out:

“O Reverend Father! Will you not command Brother Stephen to be set free from his chain?”

The abbot at first had smiled at the droll figure made by the little boy, whom the abbot supposed to be one of the kitchen scullions, but at this speech he stiffened up and looked very stern as Gabriel went on breathlessly.

“He is making such a beautiful book, and he works so hard, but the chain is so dreadful to him, and I was sure that if you knew they had put it on him, you would not allow it!”

Here the abbot began to feel a trifle uncomfortable, for he saw that Gabriel did not know that he himself had ordered Brother Stephen to wear the chain. But the abbot mentioned nothing of this as he spoke to Gabriel.

“Boy,” the abbot said, severely, “what affair of thine is this matter about Brother Stephen? Doubtless if he is chained, it is a punishment he hath merited. ‘Tis scarcely becoming of a lad like thee to question these things.” And then, as he looked sharply at Gabriel, the abbot added, “Did Brother Stephen send thee hither? Who art thou?”

At this Gabriel hung his head. “Nay, sir,” he answered, simply, “he does not know and perhaps he will be angry with me! I am his color grinder, and I was in the kitchen getting the egg for his gold.” Here suddenly Gabriel remembered his bowl, and looking down in dismay he exclaimed, “Oh, sir, I have spilled the egg, and it was fresh-laid this morning by my white

hen!” Here the boy looked so honestly distressed that the abbot believed that Gabriel spoke the truth, and so the abbot smiled a little as he said, not unkindly, “Well, never mind about thy hen—go on; thou wast in the kitchen and then what?”

“I saw you in the garden,” answered Gabriel, “and—and—I thought that if you knew about the chain, you would not like it.” Here the abbot began to look very stern again. “And,” Gabriel added, “I could not bear to see Brother Stephen so unhappy. I know he is unhappy, for whenever he notices the chain he frowns, and his hand trembles so he can hardly paint!”

“Ah,” said the abbot to himself, “if his hand trembles that is another matter.” For the abbot knew perfectly well that in order to do successfully anything so delicate as a piece of illumination, one must have a steady hand and untroubled nerves, and he began to think that perhaps he had gone a little too far in punishing Brother Stephen. So the abbot thought a minute and then to Gabriel, who was still standing before him not quite knowing what to do, the abbot merely said, “Go back to thy work, lad, and mind thy colors; and,” he added with haughty dignity, “I will do as I think best about Brother Stephen’s chain.”

LESSON 7

So Gabriel went back to the kitchen feeling very uncomfortable, for he was afraid he had displeased the abbot and so, perhaps, done more harm than good to Brother Stephen. While Gabriel was quite sure he had displeased Brother Stephen, for he had kept Brother Stephen waiting a long while and, worse still, had spilled the best egg there was in the kitchen! However, the lad begged one of the cooks to let him have another egg and, whisking it up as quickly as he could, Gabriel made haste to carry it to the chapter house.

As he pushed open the door, Brother Stephen said sharply, “How now! I thought they had chained thee to one of the tables in the kitchen!”

“I am so sorry,” said Gabriel, his face very red, “but—I—I spilled the first egg and had to make ready another.”

He hoped Brother Stephen would not ask him how he happened to spill it, for by this time he began to realize that the high-spirited monk

probably had reasons of his own for submitting to the punishment of the chain and that very likely he would be displeased if he knew that his little color grinder had asked the abbot to free him. So Gabriel felt much relieved when, without further questions, Brother Stephen went on with his work, in which for the moment he was greatly absorbed.

And thus the day went quietly on until early in the afternoon when, to the great surprise of both of them, the door slowly opened, and in walked the abbot himself.

The abbot was haughty as usual, and, as Brother Stephen saw him come in, he raised his head with an involuntary look of pride and resentment; but neither spoke as the abbot stepped over to the table and examined the page on which the monk was working.

This particular page happened to be ornamented with a wide border of purple flowers copied from some Gabriel had gathered the day before in a swampy corner of one of the meadows. Their fresh green leaves and rich purple petals shone with royal effect against the background of gold while hovering over them and clinging to their stems were painted honeybees with gauzy wings and soft, furry-looking bodies of black and gold.

As the abbot saw how beautiful it all was, and how different from any other of the abbey illuminations, he smiled to himself with pleasure. For the abbot, though he never said a great deal, yet very well knew a good piece of artistic work when he saw it. Instead of merely smiling to himself, however, it would have made Brother Stephen much happier if the abbot had taken the trouble to say aloud some of the nice things he was thinking about the work.

For Brother Stephen felt very bitter as he thought over all he had been made to bear, and even as the abbot looked, he saw, sure enough, that Brother Stephen's hand trembled as Gabriel had said; for the poor monk had hard work to control his feelings.

Now the abbot really did not mean to be unkind. It was only that he did not quite know how to unbend, and perhaps feeling this, he soon went out.

Gabriel, who had been very much afraid the abbot might say something to him about their conversation of the morning, felt greatly relieved when the door closed behind him. The rest of the afternoon Gabriel and Brother Stephen worked on in silence.

LESSON 8*Chapter 4***THE HOUR BOOK**

he next morning when Gabriel reached the abbey, to his great joy he found the chain gone (for the Abbot had so ordered after his visit to the chapter house) and Brother Stephen already hard at work and happy as a bird. For like many other artist souls, when things went wrong, Brother Stephen suffered dreadful unhappiness; while, on the other hand, when pleased, he was full of boundless delight; and so, being relieved from the chain, he was in one of his most joyous moods.

He smiled brightly as Gabriel entered, and the April sunlight streaming in through the high narrow windows sparkled so radiantly and so filled them with the life and energy and gladness of the springtime that each of them felt as though he could do no end of work and that King Louis' book should be one of the most beautiful things in all the world!

And that morning was but the beginning of a long series of happy days that Brother Stephen and Gabriel were to spend together. At first the monk knew nothing of how it happened that he was freed from the humiliation of the chain, but one day he heard about Gabriel's talk with the abbot from one of the brotherhood who had chanced to be in the garden that morning and had overheard them.

At first Brother Stephen was rather displeased, for he did not like it that the little boy had begged of the abbot something which he himself was too proud to ask. But when he thought it over and reflected that it was out of sheer kindness that Gabriel had made the request, Brother Stephen's heart strangely warmed toward the lad. Indeed, through all his life in the abbey, no one had ever really cared whether he was happy or unhappy; and so poor Brother Stephen had had no idea how very pleasant it would be to have even a little peasant boy take an interest in him. And as day after day went by, he began to love Gabriel as he had never before loved anyone.

Yes, those were very happy days for both of them and very busy ones, too. Every morning Gabriel would come to the abbey with his hands filled with the prettiest wild flowers he could find on the way, and from these

Brother Stephen would select the ones that pleased him best to paint. Sometimes it would be the sweet wild hyacinths of pale blue, sometimes the yellow marsh marigolds, the little deep pink field roses, or some other of the innumerable lovely blossoms that every season brought. And with them all, as he had said, he put in the small flying creatures—butterflies and bees, scarlet ladybugs and pale green beetles whose wings looked like scraps of rainbows. Sometimes, in his zeal, he even painted the little snails with their curled up shells and the fuzzy caterpillars that happened to come in on Gabriel's bouquets, and you really would never believe how very handsome even these looked in the gold borders when Brother Stephen got through with them.

And so, day by day, the book grew in perfect beauty. And as Brother Stephen worked, there was much for Gabriel to do also. For in those days, artists could not buy their ink and paints all ready for use as they do today, but they were obliged to prepare by hand almost all their materials; and a little assistant such as Gabriel had to keep his hands busy and his eyes open, too.

For instance, the matter of the ink alone Gabriel had to have on his mind for weeks. One could not then buy it ready made in a bottle as we do now, without the least trouble. The monks or their color grinders had to make it themselves.

And this is the way Gabriel had been taught to do it: morning after morning of those early spring days as he trudged along on his way to the abbey, he kept sharp watch on the young hawthorn trees by the roadside; and when their first buds showed and while they were still tiny, he gathered armfuls of the boughs and carried them to the abbey where he spread them out in a sunny corner of the courtyard to stay until quite dry. Then he had to put them in a stone mortar and pound off all the bark, and this he put to steep in great earthen jars of water until the water might draw all the sap from out the bark. All this took several weeks to do.

And then Gabriel spent a number of busy days in the great kitchen. There he had a large saucepan, and in it he placed, a little at a time, the water in which the bark was steeping; and then raking out some coals from the blazing fire of logs, he set his saucepan over them and watched the barky water until it had boiled down very thick, much as one boils down

syrup for preserves.

Then he dipped out the thick liquid into little bags of parchment, which he had spent days stitching up very tightly so that nothing could leak out. After the little bags were filled, he hung them out-of-doors in the bright sunlight; and as the days grew warmer and warmer, the sun soon dried their contents so that if one of the little bags were opened, it would be found filled with a dark powder.

And then, last of all, when Brother Stephen wished some fresh ink for his writing or for the delicate lines about his initial letters or borders, Gabriel would take a little of the dry powder from one of the bags and, putting it in a small saucepan over the fire, would melt it with a little wine. And so at last it would be ready for use: a fine, beautiful black ink that hundreds of years have found hard work to fade.

Then there was the gold to grind and prepare. That was the hardest work of all and fairly made his arms ache. Many of the paints, too, had to be worked over very carefully, and the blue especially, and other brilliant colors made from vegetable dyes, must be kept in a very curious way. Brother Stephen would prepare the dyes, as he preferred to do this himself, and then Gabriel would take little pieces of linen cloth and dip a few in each of the colors until the linen would be soaked; and afterward, when they had dried in the sun, he would arrange these bits in a little booklet of cotton paper which every night Brother Stephen, as was the custom with many of the monks, put under his pillow so that it might keep very dry and warm; for this preserved the colors in all their brightness. And then when he wanted to use some of them, he would tell Gabriel to cut off a bit of the linen of whatever color Brother Stephen wished and soak it in water, and in this way he would get a fine liquid paint.

For holding this paint, as dishes were none too plenty in those days, mussel shells were generally used, and one of Gabriel's tasks was to gather numbers of these from the banks of the little river that ran through one of the abbey meadows. That was very pleasant work, though, and sometimes, late in the afternoons of those lovely summer days, Brother Stephen and Gabriel would walk out together to the edge of this little river: the monk to sit on the grassy bank dreaming of all the beautiful things he meant to paint while Gabriel hunted for the pretty purple shells.

And oftentimes the lad would bring along a fishing pole and try his luck at catching an eel, for even this, too, had to do with the making of the book. For Brother Stephen generally used white of egg in putting on the gold of his borders, yet for certain parts he preferred a glue made from the skin of an eel, and this Gabriel could make very finely.

LESSON 9

So you see there were a great many things for a little color grinder to do, yet Gabriel was very industrious, and it often happened that he would finish his tasks for the day and still have several hours to himself. And this was the best of all, for at such times Brother Stephen, who was getting along finely, would take great pleasure in teaching Gabriel to illuminate. Brother Stephen would let the boy take a piece of parchment and then giving him beautiful letters and bits of borders, would show him how to copy them. Indeed, Brother Stephen took so many pains in his teaching that very soon Gabriel, who loved the work and who had a real talent for it, began to be quite skillful and to make very good designs of his own.

Whenever he did anything especially nice, Brother Stephen would seem almost as much pleased as if Gabriel were his own boy, and, hugging him affectionately, Brother Stephen would exclaim:

“Ah, little one, thou hast indeed the artist soul! And, please God, I will train thy hand so that when thou art a man it shall never know the hard toil of the peasant. Thy pen and brush shall earn a livelihood for thee!” And then Brother Stephen would take more pains than ever to teach Gabriel all the best knowledge of his art.

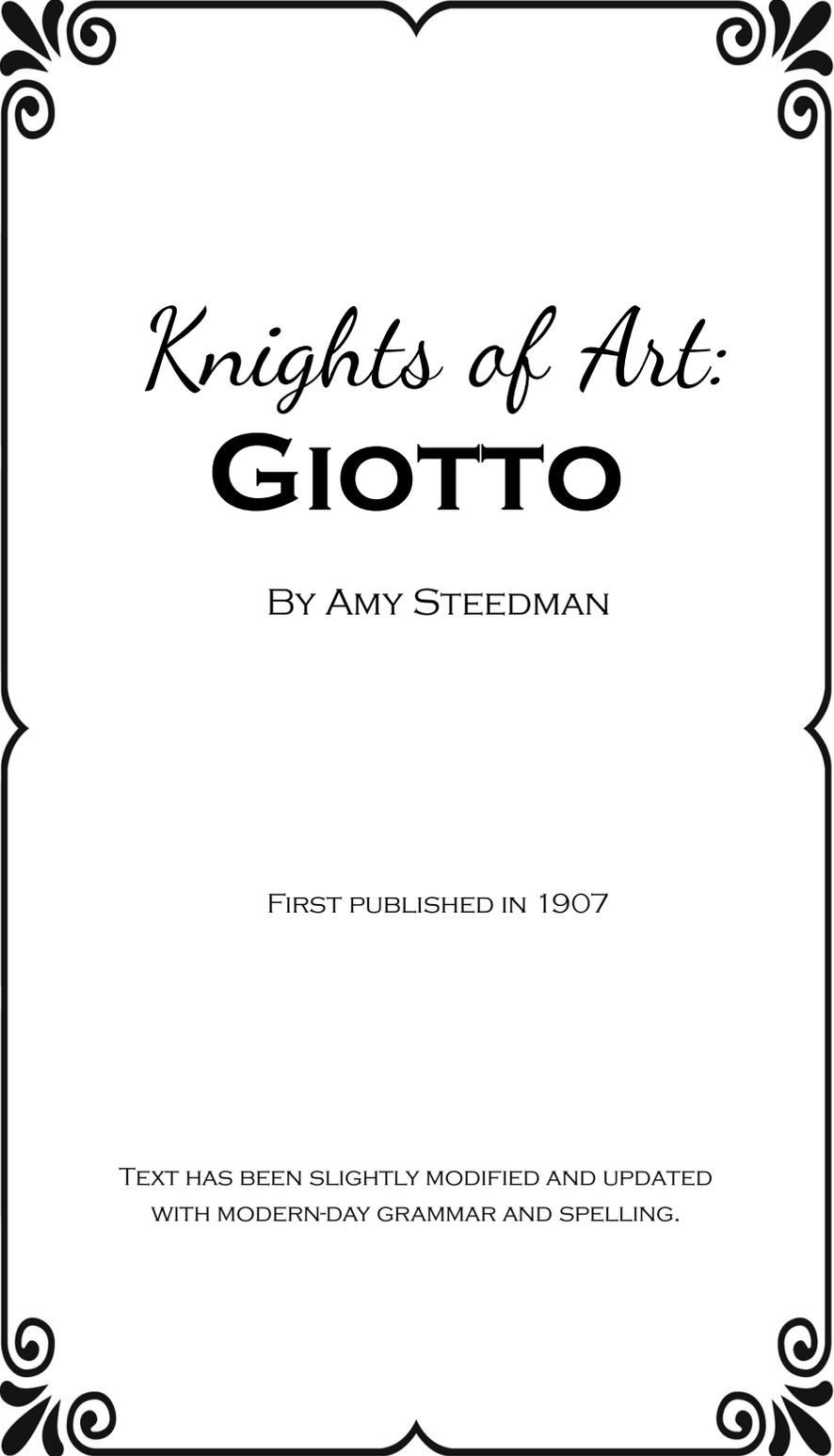
Nor did Brother Stephen content himself with teaching the boy only to paint, but in his love for Gabriel, Brother Stephen desired to do still more. He had no wealth some day to bestow upon the lad, but he had something that was a very great deal better; for Brother Stephen, like many of the monks of the time, had a good education, and this he determined to share with Gabriel.

Brother Stephen arranged to have Gabriel stay at the abbey for his supper as often as he could be spared from home, and hour after hour of the long summer evenings Brother Stephen spent teaching the lad to read

and write, which was really quite a distinction; for it was an accomplishment that none of the peasants and very few of the lords and ladies of that time possessed. Gabriel was quick and eager to learn, and Brother Stephen gradually added other things to his list of studies; and both of them took the greatest pleasure in the hours thus passed together.

Sometimes they would go out into the garden and, sitting on one of the quaint stone benches, Brother Stephen would point out to Gabriel the different stars, tell him about the fragrant growing plants around them, or, perhaps, repeat to him some dreamy legend of old, old Normandy.

And then, by and by, Gabriel would go home through the perfumed dark, feeling vaguely happy; for all the while through those pleasant evenings with Brother Stephen, Gabriel's mind and heart were opening brightly, as the yellow primroses that blossomed by moonlight over all the abbey meadows.



Knights of Art:
GIOTTO

BY AMY STEEDMAN

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1907

TEXT HAS BEEN SLIGHTLY MODIFIED AND UPDATED
WITH MODERN-DAY GRAMMAR AND SPELLING.

Note: There are no reading assignments in this reader for lessons 22-24

LESSON 25

Part 1

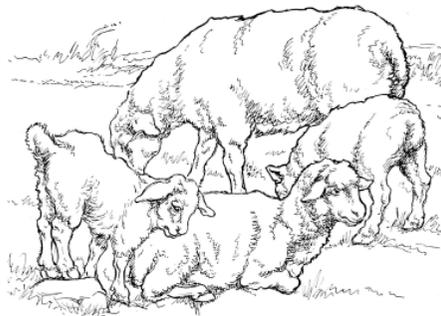
.....

The monks in monasteries, like Brother Stephen in *Gabriel and the Hour Book*, were not the only artists during the Middle Ages. You are now going to study an artist from the Middle Ages named Giotto [jaw - dough]. First, read this explanation of art during this time period.

There is much art from this time that is very beautiful and has much to be appreciated. Eastern Christianity and Islamic faiths held that realistic images violated the Commandments about making graven images, and so it was a point of obedience that their art was unrealistic to avoid idolatry. There are still faiths that embrace this idea. The Greek Orthodox Churches are adorned with beloved icons. Their goal was never ugliness. This is not true, however, of much of modern art - in which we can truly mourn for the loss of an appreciation that art should be beautiful.

So it happened that when Giotto was ten years old, his father sent him to take care of the sheep upon the hillside. Country boys had no schools to go to or lessons to learn, and Giotto spent long, happy days in sunshine and rain as he followed the sheep from place to place wherever they could find grass enough to feed on.

But Giotto did something else besides watching his sheep. Indeed, he sometimes forgot all about them, and many a search he had to gather them all together again. For there was one thing he loved doing better than all things, and that was to try to draw pictures of all the things he saw around him.

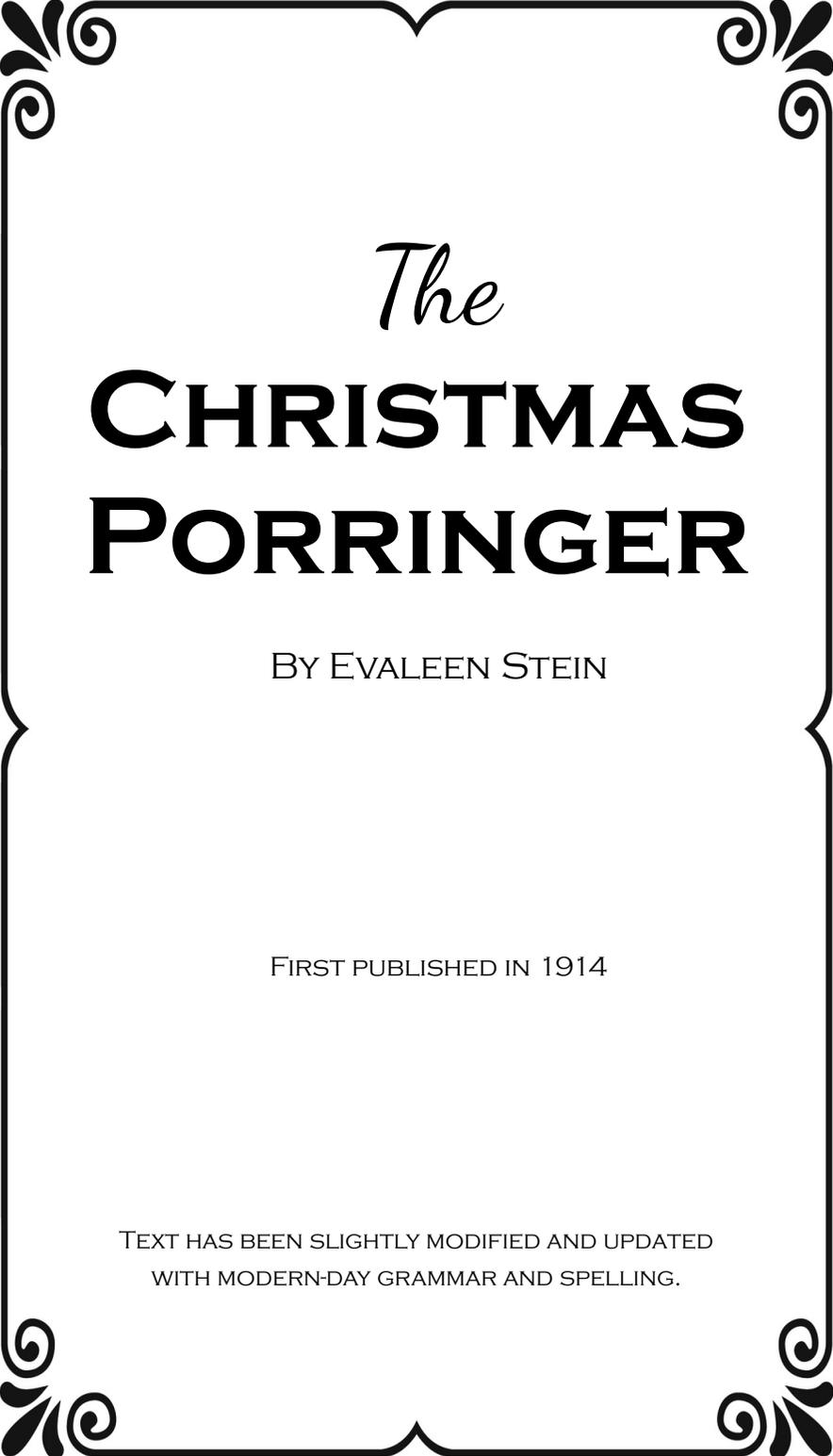


It was no easy matter for the little shepherd lad. He had no pencils or paper, and he had never, perhaps, seen a picture in all his life. But all this mattered little to him. Out there, under the blue sky, his eyes made pictures for him out of the fleecy white clouds as they slowly changed from one form to another. He learned to know exactly the shape of every flower and how it grew; he noticed how the olive trees laid their silver leaves against the blue background of the sky that peeped in between, and how his sheep looked as they stooped to eat, or lay down in the shadow of a rock.

Nothing escaped his keen, watchful eyes, and then with eager hands, he would sharpen a piece of stone, choose out the smoothest rock, and try to draw on its flat surface all those wonderful shapes which had filled his eyes with their beauty. Olive trees, flowers, birds, and beasts were there, but especially his sheep, for they were his friends and companions who were always near him, and he could draw them in a different way each time they moved.

Now it fell out that one day a great master painter from Florence came riding through the valley and over the hills where Giotto was feeding his sheep. The name of the great master was Cimabue, and he was the most wonderful artist in the world, so men said. He had painted a picture which had made all Florence rejoice. The Florentines had never seen anything like it before, and yet it was but a strange-looking portrait of the Madonna and Child, scarcely like a real woman or a real baby at all. Still, it seemed to them a perfect wonder, and Cimabue was honored as one of the city's greatest men.

The road was lonely as it wound along. There was nothing to be seen but waves of gray hills on every side, so the stranger rode on, scarcely lifting



The
**CHRISTMAS
PORRINGER**

BY EVALEEN STEIN

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1914

TEXT HAS BEEN SLIGHTLY MODIFIED AND UPDATED
WITH MODERN-DAY GRAMMAR AND SPELLING.

LESSON 28*Chapter 1***KAREN ASKS ABOUT CHRISTMAS**

Over the old Flemish city, the wintry twilight was falling. The air was starry with snowflakes that drifted softly down, fluttering from off the steep brown roofs, piling up in corners of ancient doorways, and covering the cobblestones of the narrow streets with a fleecy carpet of white.

At a corner of one of the oldest of these and facing on another no wider than a lane, but which bore the name of The Little Street Of The Holy Ghost, a number of years ago there stood a quaint little house built of light yellow bricks. It had a steep gabled roof, the bricks that formed it being arranged in a row of points that met at the peak beneath a gilded weather vane shaped like an arrow. The little house had no dooryard, and a wooden step led directly from its entrance to the flagstones that made a narrow, uneven walk along that side of the street.

Icicles hung from the edge of the brown roof and twinkled in a crystal fringe around the canopy of the little shrine up in the corner of the dwelling. For, like so many others of the old city, the little house had its own shrine. It was a small niche painted a light blue, and in it, under a tiny projecting canopy of carved wood, stood a small figure of the Virgin Mother holding the Christ child in her arms. Now and then a starry snowflake drifted in beneath the canopy and clung to the folds of the Virgin's blue robe or softly touched the little hands of the Christ child nestling against her breast.

And, by and by, as the wind rose and blew around the corner of the house, it began to pile up the snow on the sills of the casement windows whose small panes of glass lighted the room within, where sat an old woman and a little girl. The woman was clad in a plain black gown, such as is still worn by the humbler of the Flemish dames, and on her silvery hair was a stiffly starched cap of white.

The little girl was dressed much the same, save that her light brown hair was not hidden but braided in two plaits that were crossed and pinned up

very flat and tight at the back of her head.

The woman was bending over a rounded pillow covered with black cloth, which she held in her lap. It was stuck full of stout pins, and around these was caught a web of fine threads, each ending in a tiny bone bobbin. And beneath her skillful fingers, as they deftly plied these bobbins in and out, a delicate piece of lace was growing, for it was thus that she earned bread for herself and the little girl.

Indeed, the lace of Bruges, made by the patient toil of numberless of her poorer people, has for many centuries been famous for its fineness and beauty. And those who so gain their livelihood must often begin to work while they are still children, even as young as the little girl who sat there in the twilight by the window of the little yellow house.

She, too, was bending over a black-covered pillow, only hers was smaller and had fewer bobbins than that of the white-capped woman beside her; for the child was just beginning to learn some of the simpler stitches. But though the bit of lace on the pillow showed that she had made good progress, she was working now slowly and had already broken her thread twice, for her mind was full of other thoughts.

She was thinking that the next night would be Christmas Eve, and that she would set her little wooden shoes by the hearth, and that if she had been good enough to please the Christ child, he would come while she was asleep and put in them some red apples and nuts, or perhaps—perhaps he might bring the little string of beads she wanted so much. For Flemish children do not hang up their stockings for Santa Claus as do the children of our land, but instead, at Christmas time, they set their little shoes on the hearth, and these they expect the Christ child himself to fill with gifts.

As the little girl by the window now thought and thought of Christmas, her fingers dropped the thread at last. Looking up from her task with her blue eyes full of dreams, she said softly, "Grandmother, will the Christ child surely come again tomorrow night? And do you think he will bring me something?"

"Why, yes, Karen, thou hast been a good child," answered Grandmother, who was trying hard to finish a difficult part of her lace pattern before the dark fell.

“And, Grandmother,” went on Karen, after thinking a little longer, “is it really his own birthday?”

“Yes, yes, child,” said Grandmother.

“Then,” said Karen, as a bewildered look crept into her eyes, “why is it that he brings gifts to me, instead of me giving something to him? I thought on people’s birthdays they had presents of their own. You know on my last one you gave me my blue kerchief, and the time before, my pewter mug.” Karen considered a moment more, and then she added: “Is it because we are so poor, Grandmother, that I have never given the Christ child a Christmas present?”

Grandmother’s flying fingers paused for an instant, though still holding a pair of the tiny bobbins, as she answered, “It is true we are poor, Karen, but that is not the reason. No one gives such gifts to the Christ child. Thou must give him obedience and love; dost thou not remember what Father Benedicte told thee? And then, too, thou knowest thou art to carry a wax candle to the cathedral for a Christmas offering at the shrine of the Blessed Virgin and Child.”

“But,” continued Karen perplexedly, “does no one give him something for his very own?”

“There, there, child,” said Grandmother, with a note of weariness in her patient voice, “I cannot work and answer thy questions!”

Then Grandmother bent still closer over the flower of lace which she was trying so hard to finish, and the little girl became silent.

After a while, from the beautiful tall belfry that soared into the sky from the center of the city, the chimes rang out the hour. No longer able to see in the gathering dusk, Grandmother rose and laid aside her work.

“Come, Karen,” she said, “put up thy work, and get thy shawl and go fetch some water for the teakettle.”

The little girl carefully placed her lace pillow on a shelf at one side of the room, and taking a knitted shawl from a peg near the doorway, she ran to the dresser and lifted down a copper teakettle, polished till it shone. Then she unbarred the door and sped out into the snowy dusk.

LESSON 29

She had but a short distance to go to the quaint pump that served the neighborhood. It stood among the cobblestones of the narrow street, and had been made long, long ago, when the workmen of even the commonest things loved their craft and strove to make everything beautiful that their fingers touched. So the pump had a wonderful spout of wrought iron shaped like a dragon's head. As Karen tugged at the long, slender handle of the same metal, she laughed to see how the icicles hung from the dragon's mouth like a long white beard. She liked to pretend that he was alive and wanting to eat her up, and that she was very brave to make him fill her teakettle, for Karen loved fairy stories and lived a great deal in her own thoughts.

Meantime, the dragon had not eaten her, and the copper teakettle was brimming over with cold water, seeing which she stooped and, lifting it in both hands, carefully carried it back to the little yellow house and set it on the hearth where Grandmother had raked out some glowing coals. Then she lit a candle and helped prepare their simple evening meal of coarse brown bread and coffee, though this last was for Grandmother. For Karen, there was a pewter mug full of milk.

When they had finished their supper, Grandmother placed her lace pillow on the table close to the candle and again busied herself with her work; for the wife of Burgomaster Koerner had ordered the lace, and it must be finished and sent to her home the next day.

And Grandmother sorely needed every penny she could earn; for, since Karen had neither father nor mother, there was no one but herself to gain a livelihood until the little girl grew older and could help carry the burden. To be sure, Grandmother was not really so old as she looked, but many years of toil over the lace pillow had bent her back and taken the color from her face.

While Karen's father had lived, they had known more of comfort; but when he died and the mother had followed soon afterward, leaving her baby girl to Grandmother's care, there had been but little left with which to buy their bread. That had been eight years before, but Grandmother had struggled bravely on. She was one of the most skillful of the scores of lace makers of the old city, and so she had managed to keep the little yellow house in which she had always lived, and to shield Karen from knowing the bitterest needs of the poor.

But Grandmother was weary, and as now she bent over the fairy-like web of lace in which she had woven flowers and leaves from threads of filmy fineness, she was glad that the piece was almost finished and that she would have the blessed Christmas day in which to rest.

While Grandmother's fingers flew back and forth among the maze of pins, Karen was busy tidying up the hearth and the few dishes which she neatly set back on the old-fashioned dresser near the fireplace. Then she drew a little stool close to the hearth, and, resting her chin on one hand, looked dreamily into the fire.

She was still thinking of Christmas Eve. And the more she thought, the more she wanted to give something to the Christ child, for she was a generous-hearted little girl and loved to share any little pleasures with her friends, especially those who had been so good to her. And she considered the Christ child the most faithful friend she knew, "For," she said to herself, "as far back as I can remember, he has come every Christmas while I was asleep, and has always put something in my wooden shoes! And to think that no one gives him any present for himself!" Karen could not see how giving him one's obedience or love (for, of course, every one expected their friends to love them anyway!), or offering a wax candle in the shrine at the cathedral, could take the place of some little gift that he might have for his very own.

Surely, she thought, the Christ child must like these things just as other children do. If only she had some money to buy something for him, or if only she had something of her own nice enough to offer him! She went over in her mind her little possessions. There was her blue kerchief, her pewter mug, her rag doll, and her little wooden stool, but none of these things seemed just right for the Christ child. And, besides, she felt that he was so wonderful and holy that his present should be something not only beautiful, but also quite new and fresh.

Poor Karen gave a sigh to think she had not a penny to buy anything. Hearing her, Grandmother looked up from her work and said, "What is the matter, child?" When Karen said nothing, she asked, "Where is thy knitting? 'Tis yet a little while till bedtime. See if thou canst remember how to make thy stitches even, the way I showed thee yesterday."

"Yes, Grandmother," answered Karen. After going into the little room

that opened off from the living room, she came back with a bit of knitting and, again seating herself on the wooden stool, began carefully to work the shining needles through some coarse blue yarn—for little Flemish girls even as young as she were not thought too small to be taught not only the making of lace, but how to knit, and their hands were seldom allowed to be idle.

Indeed the folk of the humbler class in Bruges had to work long and industriously to keep bread on their tables and a shelter over their heads.

The city had once been the richest and most powerful in all Flanders, and up to her wharves great ships had brought wonderful cargoes from all over the world. The rulers of Bruges and her merchant citizens had lived in the greatest splendor. The wealthy people were wealthier and the poorer people less poor in those old days. But then had come bitter wars and oppression. The harbor had slowly filled up with sand brought down by the river Zwiijn, till at the time when Karen lived, Bruges was no longer the proud and glorious city she had once been, but was all the while becoming poorer and poorer.

It was true there were many ancient families who still lived at ease in the beautiful old carved houses facing on shady squares or built along the edges of the winding canals that everywhere threaded the once busy city, though the quiet water of these now scarcely rippled, save when the trailing branches of the overhanging willow trees dipped into them or a fleet of stately white swans went sailing along. But in the poorer parts of the city, the people must work hard, and there were whole streets where everyone made lace; and all day long women and girls, old and young, bent over the black-covered pillows just as Karen's grandmother was at that moment doing.

Grandmother's fingers steadily plied the tiny bobbins in and out long after Karen had put away her knitting and crept into the little cupboard bed which was built into the wall of the small room next to the living room.

At last, as the candle burned low, the lace was finished. Carefully unpinning it from the pillow, Grandmother laid it in a clean napkin, and then she raked the ashes over the embers of the fire on the hearth. Soon her tired eyes closed in sleep as she lay in the high-posted bed close to Karen.

LESSON 30*Chapter 2***BUYING THE PORRINGER**

The next morning was bright and clear, and the sunshine sparkled over the freshly fallen snow and touched all the icicles with rainbow light.

Karen and her Grandmother were astir early. The little girl fetched down some wood from the small attic over the living room where they kept their precious supply for the winter, and then she set the table as Grandmother prepared the porridge for their breakfast.

After breakfast Grandmother took her lace pillow and began arranging her pins and bobbins for another piece of work. When Karen had dusted the simple furniture and swept the snow from the doorstep, she put on her knitted hood and shawl. Then, pinning together the napkin in which Grandmother had placed the piece of lace, she set out for the home of Madame Koerner.

Down the narrow street she passed, and then across an old stone bridge that spanned one of the lazy canals that wandered through the city. The ice had spread a thin sheet over this, and the beautiful white swans that swam about on it in the summer-time had gone into the shelter of their little wooden house, which stood on the bank under a snowy willow tree. One of the great shining birds, looking herself like a drift of snow, stood at the door of the little shelter house preening her feathers in the sunlight. Karen waved her hand to her with a smiling "Good morning, Madame Swan!" for she loved the beautiful creatures, numbers of which are still seen on all the waterways of Bruges. She always spoke to them, and sometimes she brought them crumbs from her bits of coarse bread at home.

Beyond the bridge she sped on past rows of tall brown houses with here and there a little shop crowded in between, and presently her way led across the Grande Place, a large, irregular square in the center of the city. Here there were many shops and people passing to and fro, and among them went numbers of great shaggy dogs harnessed to little carts filled

with vegetables or tall copper milk cans, and these they tugged across the cobblestones to the ancient Market Halles from which towered the wonderful belfry of which every one in Bruges was so proud.

Karen paused to listen while the silvery chimes rang out, as they had rung every quarter hour for more than three hundred years.

Then she passed on into a long, quiet street where the houses stood farther apart and had rows of trees in front of them. Some of them had high walls adjoining them, and behind these were pretty gardens, though now, of course, all were covered with the wintry snow.

Presently Karen stopped at a wooden gate leading into one of these gardens, and pushing it open made her way along a winding path to the door of a tall house with many gables and adorned with rare old carvings. This was the home of Madame Koerner. The house really faced on the street, but the little girl did not like to go to the more stately entrance, and so chose the smaller one that opened into the garden. She knocked timidly, for she was a little in awe of Madame Koerner, who seemed to her a very grand lady. But the maid who opened the door knew Karen and led her in and took her at once to the upstairs room where Madame Koerner sat with a fine piece of needlework in her lap.

Madame Koerner smiled kindly at the little girl, who had several times before brought Grandmother's lace to her. "Good morning, Karen," she said. "I am so glad to have the lace, for now I can finish this cap, which I want for a Christmas gift." As she unfolded the napkin and looked at the lace, she cried, "Oh, how lovely it is! No one in all Bruges does more beautiful work than thy Grandmother, little one! And some day, I dare say, thou too wilt do just as well, for I know thou art learning fast." And she smiled again, and patted Karen's hands as the little girl held out the lace for her to see.

Karen colored with pleasure to hear Grandmother's work praised, as indeed it deserved, for the delicate scrolls and flowers and leaves of it looked as if made of frost and caught in a net of pearly cobwebs.

Madame Koerner was so pleased with it that when the little girl laid it down, she looked in her purse and gave her a generous gold piece for Grandmother, and then she added a smaller piece of silver for Karen herself. "That is for thee, little one," she said. "And I hope thou wilt have a very

happy Christmas.”

Karen thanked her shyly, and as with shining eyes she turned to go, Madame Koerner said, “Go out through the kitchen, child, and tell Marie, the cook, to fill thy napkin with some of the little cakes she is baking.”

LESSON 32 Note: There is no reading assignment for Lesson 31.

So when once more Karen tripped out into the street, her heart was very light and her mind full of happy thoughts as she tightly clasped in one hand the gold piece for Grandmother, and in the other the franc of silver which Madame Koerner had given for her own, and the napkin filled with the Christmas cakes. These were the kind that all Flemish children delight in, and were made of fine gingerbread and filled with candied orange peel and red cherries.

As Karen came near the Grande Place and saw the Market Halles, her eyes fairly danced, for she knew the Christmas market was going on there, and all the way from Madame Koerner’s she had kept saying to herself: “Now I can buy a present for the Christ child and one for Grandmother!”

Outside the Halles the cobblestones had been swept clean of snow, and a few hardy dealers had placed their wares for sale out of doors. But these were chiefly sellers of leather harnesses for the patient Flemish dogs, of wooden shoes and coarse baskets, and some had piled in front of them small bundles of firewood and fagots. But none of these wares interested Karen, and so she stepped inside the Halles where one might find all manner of things for sale. Here were stalls piled with different colored cloths, with kerchiefs and laces. In others were displayed great earthen pots and pans and other gear for the kitchen. And there were sellers of Christmas trinkets, and wax candles, and what not, and sellers of the milk in the tall copper cans the dogs had drawn thither in their little carts, and of winter vegetables, and food and sweetmeats of various kinds.

“See!” called a white-capped woman who sat behind a stall heaped with little cakes. “Here are caraway cookies fit for the king’s children, and only four sous the dozen!”

But Karen felt very rich with the Christmas cakes in her napkin, and so was not to be tempted. As she stepped slowly along, looking first at one side

and then the other, presently she came to a stall where colored beads and trinkets of many kinds were arranged on a long strip of scarlet cloth. As she saw these, she could not help but stop and look longingly at a little necklace of blue beads, the very kind she had wanted for so long a time!

At this stall sat another white-capped woman dealer, who, seeing the wistful look in Karen's face, said: "Well, my child, if thou canst give me ten sous, thou canst take home with thee this pretty trinket. 'Tis a fair match for thine eyes, little maid!"

Karen's blue eyes began to brim with tears, for she knew ten sous were only half a franc, and she did want the beads so very, very much! But after one more longing look, she resolutely passed on, still tightly holding her silver franc. For as much as she wanted the necklace, she was determined that the Christ child and Grandmother should have their gifts, and she was afraid even her wonderful franc might not be enough for all.

So she went on, still looking carefully at each stall she passed, and all the while growing more and more perplexed trying to decide which were the very prettiest things she could buy. She had gone more than half the length of the market and was becoming bewildered and a little frightened as she hugged her shawl about her and made her way as best she could among the different groups of buyers and sellers. And then, by and by, her face lighted up with pleasure as she stopped in front of a pottery dealer's stall. This was presided over by a kindly faced man in a workman's blouse. On a smooth board in front of him were all kinds of the coarser wares of Flanders, and also some pieces made by the peasant folk of Normandy and Brittany, countries not far away, and among these smaller pieces Karen had spied a little porringer.

It was just an humble little earthen dish such as the peasants of Brittany make for their children to use for their bread and milk, but it was gaily painted, and Karen thought it the most beautiful porringer she had ever seen. Its flat handles were colored a bright yet soft blue, and around the inner edge of its bowl were bands of blue and red, and right in the bottom was painted a little peasant girl. She wore a blue dress and a white and orange colored apron, and on her head was a pointed white cap. She carried in one hand a red rose, and on either side of her was a stiff little rose tree with red blossoms. It was all crudely done, yet had a quaint charm of its

own, a charm lacked by many a more finely finished piece. As it stood there leaning against a tall brown jar behind it, the little girl in the porringer seemed to smile back at Karen as she paused, rapt in admiration.

For Karen was quite sure that at last she had found the very thing for the blessed Christ child. Indeed, she felt it was the one thing, of all the things she had seen, that she most wanted to buy for him. And then, too, just beyond the porringer, a little farther down on the board, she saw a small, green jug that she was sure Grandmother would like. She wondered if they cost very much, and hardly dared to ask the pottery dealer. But presently she summoned up her courage, and, pointing to the little porringer and the jug, she said in a timid voice, "Please sir, tell me, can I buy these for my franc?" And she held out to him her little palm, where lay the silver franc all warm and moist from the tight clasp of her rosy fingers.

The dealer looked at her anxious face and smiled at her as he said, "Dost thou want them so very much, little one? Truly thou canst have them for thy franc. My price would be some fifteen sous more, but for the sake of thy sweet face and the blessed Christmas time, thou shalt have them." And he put them into Karen's arms as she smiled her delight.

The little girl was so happy that she fairly skimmed over the snowy cobblestones. When she came to the old bridge spanning the icy canal, the white swan was still standing on the bank blinking in the sunlight, and Karen called out merrily, "Dear Madame Swan, I have bought the most wonderful things!" And then she laughed a little silvery laugh, for her heart was so light, it was fairly bubbling over with happiness.

When she reached the little yellow house, she bounded up the step, and, standing on the sill close to the door, she called "Grandmother! Grandmother! Please let me in! I cannot open the door!"

Grandmother, hearing her, hurried to unlatch it, and Karen burst in with, "Oh, Grandmother, see these beautiful Christmas cakes that Marie gave me! And here is a gold piece for your lace!"

Then, having freed one hand, she pulled her shawl tightly together over the other things, and smiling delightedly, cried "And Madame Koerner gave me a silver franc for my very own, and I spent it in the Market Halles!"

“Thou hast already spent it?” asked Grandmother reprovingly. “Karen! Karen! Wilt thou never learn to save thy pennies? What hast thou bought?”

“Oh,” answered Karen as her face fell, “I wanted one of them to be a secret till tomorrow! They are Christmas presents! But I wanted to show the other—” Here she broke off confusedly. She had meant to say that she wanted to show the porringer to Grandmother, but now she had not the heart. “But, Grandmother,” she went on earnestly, “it was my own franc, and I love to buy gifts! And you know I couldn’t last year because I had no pennies.”

“Well, well, child,” said Grandmother softening, “thou hast a generous heart, only thou should not have spent all thy franc. Thou hadst done better to put some by for another time.”

Karen said nothing, though the tears of disappointment sprang to her eyes. She had wanted so much to show the porringer and share her joy in it with Grandmother. But now she felt that it would not be approved of since Grandmother thought her so foolish to spend all her franc, and especially since she had said that no one gave Christmas presents to the Christ child. But though that had seemed to settle the matter for Grandmother, it only made Karen the more anxious to do so. She said to herself that if no one gave the Christ child presents, it was all the more reason why she should—surely somebody ought to! And so she was not in the least sorry that she had not saved any of her franc. And she tried to think, too, that perhaps Grandmother would like a Christmas present herself. For all she said the money should not have been spent, perhaps when Grandmother saw the little green jug, she would think it so pretty that she would be glad that Karen had bought it. But she was not to see it till Christmas morning, for Karen meant to put it in her shoe just as the Christ child did for children.

So presently, her face brightening up while Grandmother went on with her work, she ran into the other room, and, pulling open a deep drawer from a clothes press that stood against the wall, she thrust the precious gifts under the folded clothes to stay hidden until she wanted them.

LESSON 33

After dinner Grandmother began to prick the pattern for the new piece of lace she was beginning, and Karen knitted a while until it was time for the vesper service in the old Cathedral of Saint Sauveur, whose tall tower rose

above the steep housetops not far away.

When the bells began chiming, Grandmother and the little girl, laying aside their work, made themselves ready. And each carrying a white wax candle, which Grandmother had taken pains to provide some time before, they trudged off down the street.

When they reached the cathedral and entered through the great carved portal, the late afternoon light was falling in softly colored bars through the multitude of richly stained windows. As Karen gazed around at the many shrines where hundreds of wax tapers brought by other worshipers were already dotting the brightly colored air with their tiny golden flames, they looked so beautiful that for a moment she wondered if perhaps, after all, the Christ child might not like the wax candles best. But the more she thought, she decided that he would surely be pleased to have something for really His own. For, of course, the candles were partly for God and the Blessed Virgin, and so she was glad she had the porringer that should be entirely His.

After the vesper service was over and they were back again in the little house, the rest of the day passed very quickly for Karen. After supper Grandmother dozed a while in her chair beside the hearth, and then Karen ran into their sleeping room and hurriedly took out the porringer and the green jug from their hiding place in the clothes press. Grandmother had put on some old slippers in place of the heavy wooden shoes she had worn all day, and these sabots were standing on the floor near her bed.

The room was dark, but Karen felt around till she found the sabots, and then she gave a little suppressed laugh of pleasure as she thrust the little green jug as far as it would go in one of them. She knew Grandmother would not find it till morning, for they never thought of having a light by which to go to bed; a candle for the living room was all they could afford.

After placing the green jug in Grandmother's shoe, Karen stood for a moment thinking where she would put the porringer. She wanted the Christ child to find it without any trouble, for He must be in a great hurry with so many children's houses to visit and sabots to fill. She thought first that, when she took off hers for the night and stood them on the hearth to wait for Him, she would set the porringer beside them. But then she remembered that at midnight, when He would come, the room would be quite dark, for Grandmother would put out the candle and cover up the fire with ashes.

And while, of course, the Christ child expected sabots to be ready for Him on the hearth and so could fill them in the dark, just as she had put the jug in Grandmother's, still, He might miss the porringer since He would not be expecting it, and so would not look for it.

Then, all at once, Karen remembered that out of doors it was moonlit, for when she had fastened the wooden shutters at the front windows, the moon was rising round and silvery above the peaked roofs across the way. As she thought of this her perplexity vanished, and again a smile came to her lips as she said to herself: "I will set it outside on the doorstep, and the Christ child will be sure to see it when he comes, and, of course, He will know it was meant for Him, for He knows all about Christmas presents!"

Karen was greatly pleased with this plan. And so, giving one more look at the little girl in the porringer, she took up two of the Christmas cakes from the dish on the table, and, squeezing them into its bowl, she went to the door and softly unbarred it. Then, setting the porringer on the doorstep where the moonlight touched it, she again shut and fastened the door.

Grandmother roused from her doze before long and sent Karen to bed, while she herself stayed up to knit to the end of her skein.

But long after the little girl lay in her cupboard bed, her blue eyes were wide open with excitement. On the hearth in the living room stood her little wooden shoes waiting for the visit of the Christ child, and she longed with all her might to see Him! And she longed, too, to know if He would be pleased with the porringer. But Grandmother had always told her that He did not like to be watched and would not come till children were asleep.

By and by, after what seemed to Karen a very long time, her eyes began to blink, and she fell asleep and slept so soundly that she did not know when Grandmother put out the candle and covered up the fire and came to bed. Nor did she waken later on when peals of bells from the tall belfry and the cathedral and all the many churches of Bruges rang in the Christmas, and the sweet echoes of chanting voices and the songs of innumerable choristers floated over the city as the holy midnight mass was celebrated.

The rain of music thrilled and quivered through the frosty air, and then slowly it died away; and the Christmas stars shone and twinkled, and the great silver moon flooded the quiet night with a white radiance.

LESSON 34*Chapter 3***ROBBER HANS**

The midnight music had ceased for some time, and The Little Street Of The Holy Ghost was very quiet and deserted, as indeed it had been all the evening. But presently any one looking up it might have seen a man moving swiftly along. He did not walk like honest folk but trod softly on the narrow flagstones close to the tall old houses and seemed to try to keep within their shadows, and his eyes were all the while alertly watching everything about him.

As he came in front of the little yellow house, the moon was slowly sinking behind a high gable across the street, but a last ray of silvery light fell across the doorstep and just touched the edge of the porringer as it stood where Karen had placed it.

The man's keen eyes caught the gleam of something there, and though he could not tell exactly what it was, as the moonlight was waning fast, he nevertheless stooped quickly, and seizing the porringer in his hand, thrust it into the great pocket of his ragged coat. Then he hurried on and turned the corner and soon was lost in the shadows of a narrow passageway between two old houses.

Now, this man was known among evildoers as "Hans the Robber," and many times the watchmen of Bruges had tried to catch him and punish him because he had stolen so many things from honest folk.

But always he managed to get away from them; or, if they came to the miserable hut where he lived at the edge of the city, he had some story to tell that deceived them, so they could prove nothing against him, or else he contrived to hide until they got tired searching for him.

But people suspected him and shunned him as much as possible. On this night he had gone out hoping that, while many were in the churches attending the midnight mass, he might find a chance to creep into some

house and rob the owner of whatever he could. But he had not had good success in his dishonest work. To be sure, he had stolen a silver cup from one place, but then he had been frightened off before he could secure more, and so he had decided to try another and quieter part of the city. And as he came along the deserted Little Street Of The Holy Ghost and saw the porringer on the doorstep, he took it, because he always took everything he could.

When, after dropping it into his pocket, he went around the corner and into the passageway, he reached his hand stealthily through the half-closed shutters of a tall house beside him and tried to unfasten the window so that he might steal in. But just then he heard someone stirring within, and angrily muttering to himself, he fled away.

Here and there as he hurried along, the waning moonbeams still shed a lingering light; and besides, it was getting so near dawn time that at last he decided it was no use trying to get in anywhere else that night, and so he went back to his hut. When he reached this, he first carefully hid the silver cup he had stolen by putting it in a cranny under a loose board in the floor. Then, throwing himself down on a rude bed of straw heaped in a corner, he soon fell into a heavy sleep.

When Hans the Robber awoke next morning, the hut was cold and cheerless. He rose from his wretched bed and found a few billets of wood with which he kindled some fire on the untidy hearth.

In the bare cupboard he found little save crusts of black bread, and as he ate these, he sat down on a rickety bench, which he pulled close to the fire, and drew his ragged coat closer around him.

Everything looked very dreary and desolate to him, and as he heard the Christmas bells beginning to ring, a bitter look came into his face, for it had been many years since Christmas had meant anything to Robber Hans. He shrugged his shoulders and thrust both hands into the pockets of his coat. As he did so, he felt something in one of them which he had forgotten all about, and then drawing out the little porringer, which still held the two Christmas cakes, he stared at it in surprise.

“Now, where could I have picked up that?” he said to himself as he set it down on the bench beside him. Then he remembered how he had taken

some object from the doorstep of a little yellow house that stood on a corner.

He took up one of the little cakes and broke it, and, as he was hungry, in two bites he had eaten it. As he took the other one in his fingers, he began to look at it curiously and to think.

Robber Hans had not eaten a little cake like that for years and years. All at once, with a start, old memories began to waken in his mind, for the little cake made him think of when he was a little boy and his mother had made just such wonderful little ginger cakes full of orange peel and red cherries. And then, as he looked at the empty porringer, he stared at it with an almost startled look, for he remembered how he used to eat his bread and milk from a porringer exactly like that; only instead of a little girl painted in the bowl, in his was a little boy. Robber Hans could remember precisely how that little boy looked in his blue blouse and wooden shoes, and on his head, a broad-brimmed hat of Breton straw with a red ribbon on it.

For Robber Hans as a child had lived in the old seaport town of Quiberon, in Brittany, where his father was a fisherman. His mother's home before she married had been in Bruges, and so it was that at holiday time, she always made for the little family of children the Christmas cakes like that which Robber Hans now held in his hand.

As he remembered all these things, he forgot all about being cold and hungry. Presently, laying down the little cake, he took up the porringer and looked closely at the little girl holding the red rose in her hand.

Robber Hans in those far-away days had had a little sister whom he dearly loved, and the more he looked at the little girl in the porringer, the more he thought of his little sister Cornelia, till presently he was sure that the face looking up at him from under the stiff white cap was the face of Cornelia. It did not matter whether it looked like the little sister or not, for before the eyes of Robber Hans, memory was bringing back her face so clearly that to him it seemed really there. Yes, and he was quite sure, too, that Cornelia had worn a little apron like that. And there was the rose in her hand, and he remembered how she had loved roses!

It all came back to him how, when they were children together, he had made a little flowerbed for her, close by their cottage door, and how both

of them had carried white scallop shells from the edge of the sea and laid them around it, making a pretty border, and how pleased Cornelia had been when her first little rosebush had a blossom, and how wonderfully it had flourished in the salt sea air, as do all the roses of Brittany.

LESSON 35

And then more and more things came back to his memory, and the longer he looked and thought, his own face began gradually to soften, till, by and by, the oddest thing happened—a great tear fell into the porringer and lay there like a drop of dew on one of the painted rose trees!

At this he roused himself, and, quickly brushing his hand across his eyes, he angrily thrust the porringer from him, and the bitter look came back into his face. For his memory, having started, would not stop with the pleasant days when he was a little boy in Quiberon, but went on and on, bringing freshly back to him how Father, Mother, and Cornelia all were gone, the father drowned in the stormy Breton sea and the mother and Cornelia sleeping in the windswept God's acre of Quiberon, with no one to lay on their graves even so much as a green holly leaf at Christmas time or a wild poppy flower on Midsummer's Day. He saw in memory his brothers grown up and scattered from the old home, and himself become a sailor roving the sea to many lands, and then later on drifting ashore in the Flemish country, and overtaken by misfortune after misfortune till at last he had fallen so low that here in Bruges, his mother's old home, he was known only as Robber Hans!

He rose to his feet, and, in a fit of sudden anger because of his wasted and unhappy life, he seized the little porringer which had reminded him of what he had lost, and was about to dash it to pieces on the bricks of the hearth. But, just as he raised his hand, something seemed to stop him. He could not tell why, but instead of breaking the porringer, he slowly walked over to the empty cupboard and placed it on the shelf. Then, bewildered by his own action, he stood a moment and stared at it.

Presently, as his unhappy thoughts came crowding back again, his bitterness and anger rose as before, and he wanted to be rid of the porringer. But instead of trying to break it this time, another idea occurred to him. "There!" he muttered gruffly to himself, as he turned away from the

cupboard. "It can stay there till tomorrow, and then I will take it with the silver cup and sell it at the thieves' market!"

That was a place in the old city where those who lived by stealing from others were accustomed to dispose of their spoils, and so among themselves they called it the "thieves' market." The dealer who kept the place and who bought their stolen articles knew how to send them around quietly and sell them, usually in other cities, where there was less danger of their being discovered by their rightful owners.

Robber Hans had many times before disposed of his dishonestly gotten things to the keeper of the thieves' market, and so when he made up his mind to sell the porringer along with the silver cup, he knew very well where to take them. But he knew, too, that he would have to wait till the next day, for the dealer would probably not be in his place until Christmas was over.

Having thus made up his mind how to rid himself of the porringer, and meantime having nothing to do in the hut, he thrust on his battered cap, and pulling it down over his eyes, he strode out into the street.

After wandering aimlessly about for some time, at last he made his way to a certain quay, or open space, on the edge of one of the many old canals of the city. There were numbers of these embankments which had been made, in the days of Bruges' prosperity, as mooring places for the freighted barges that carried her commerce. And though the barges had long since deserted all but a few of the quiet waterways, still the quays bore their old Flemish names. Thus, the one to which Hans had wandered was called the Quai du Rosaire. Here a moss-grown stone bridge crossed the water, and in a paved square nearby and in a tumbledown old brown house facing the square, for three days of every week a fish market was held. And here, on holidays, the rougher folk of Bruges would gather to amuse themselves.

Robber Hans crossed the paved square and entered the old house, where he was greeted boisterously as he joined the noisy company. But somehow their rough talk and rude actions did not please him as they had often done before. He was silent and moody, and at last the others taunted him so with his sour looks, that he got up from a bench where he was sitting beside a tipsy fishmonger, and, flinging back some scornful words, he left

the place and went out.

Again he wandered aimlessly along the snowy streets; till after a while, the wintry wind blew through his ragged coat, and he shivered with cold. He was, by this time, near the great square where the belfry rose from the Halles, and making his way to this, he crept into the shelter of its entrance. Then, in a little while, he ventured inside and dropped down on the long, wooden seat between its tall windows. And though many who came and went through the Halles looked at him suspiciously, no one cared to make him go away, for it was the blessed Christmas day, and so the hearts of all were kindlier for the while.

As he leaned back against the wall, by and by the warmth of the room made him drowsy, and he fell asleep. And, as he slept, there flitted through his brain a great many confused dreams. And with almost all of them, the thoughts started by the little porringer seemed somehow to be connected. Sometimes he dreamed he was a little boy again in Quiberon, and then Cornelia would seem to be running toward him with a red rose in her hand. But always when she came near to him, though she put out her hands to him, he could not touch her, and the red rose faded and fell apart. And then the dreams trailed off so dim and shadowy that when at last he awakened, Hans could not remember just what it was that he had been dreaming. He only vaguely knew that it had something to do with the porringer and that it had made him unhappy, and as he stumbled to his feet and set out for his hut, he again determined to get rid of it as soon as he could.

LESSON 36*Chapter 4***ROBBER HANS AND THE PORRINGER**

The next morning Hans thrust in his pocket the silver cup and the porringer, which he took pains not to look at again, and went out to find the dealer to whom he might sell them.

He threaded his way through the narrow, crooked streets till by and by he came to a rickety wooden house standing behind some tall old warehouses that fronted on a canal. These had once been piled high with rich stuffs in the great days of Bruges, but now they were deserted and falling into decay.

Hans, after looking cautiously about him, quickly approached the rickety house and knocked in an odd way, which was his signal so that the dealer within would know it was not one of the officers of the city come to arrest him. For, of course, it was against the law to buy stolen goods, though the laws then in Bruges were not so well looked after as they should have been. And so the dishonest trade within the old house had been carried on for some time undisturbed.

As Hans now entered the heavy wooden door, which he quickly closed and barred behind him, he found himself in a dimly lit room where the brown rafters showed hung thick with cobwebs. This was the place known to him and his kind as the “thieves’ market.” Around the walls were a number of shelves and on these were arranged all manner of things; some of them costly and others of little value, but all stolen from one place or another; for this was a favorite spot for evildoers to dispose of their plunder.

As Hans strode to the middle of the room and stood before a narrow counter that divided it, a little old man, who was busy sorting some wares behind a pile of boxes, turned around with, “Good day, Robber Hans! And what hast thou brought to Father Deaf-and-Blind?” For so the little old man, with his cunning eyes and hard, wicked face, was called by those who dealt with him, because he always pretended that he neither saw nor heard

that the things they brought to sell had been stolen from their rightful owners.

But Hans was in no mood for talk as sullenly he drew from his pocket the silver cup and without a word placed it on the counter.

“Ah!” cried the little old man, greedily seizing the cup and looking closely at it. “This mark must come off; yes, and this coat-of-arms! It will be some trouble to do that skillfully!” And then turning it round again and considering the coat-of-arms, “Let me see,” he went on inquiringly, still looking at it. “There! Now I have it! ‘Tis the mark of the Groene family. Have they ‘presented’ this to thee lately, or is it one of the ‘gifts’ of last month, when several families were so generous to thee, eh?”

This pretending that they were presents was the usual way in which Father Deaf-and-Blind asked about stolen goods, and as now he chuckled and fixed his shrewd eyes upon Hans, the latter muttered a low reply. After some chaffering, the old man took a bag from an iron box under the counter and counted out a sum of silver, which Hans swept into his pocket. Then he took out the porringer and set it beside the cup.

“Ho,” said the old man contemptuously, “I’ll warrant such peasant gear was never sheltered under the same roof as this silver cup!” For in the stately old homes of Bruges, such as that of the Groene family, where things had been handed down from generation to generation, even the pots and pans in the kitchens were of fine and costly workmanship. And the moment he looked at it, Father Deaf-and-Blind knew very well that the little earthenware porringer had been made by peasant folk for the use of humble people like themselves.

And so the old dealer, giving it another brief glance, added: “Thou must have picked up that while paying a visit to the children’s God’s-House!” For so the people of Bruges called the almshouse where the homeless children of the poor were sheltered and cared for.

Hans had turned away his eyes when he set the porringer down, for he did not want to see it again and have the old memories come back to haunt him. But now, before he knew what he was doing, he looked down in the bowl, straight into the face of the little girl, and immediately it became the face of Cornelia. And her eyes looked up so mournfully into the eyes

of Robber Hans, and the little smile on her lips was so sad, it was as if her heart was breaking! And Hans, turning very white, scarcely knew what he did as he put out his trembling hand and carefully lifted the porringer from the counter.

“Hold!” cried Father Deaf-and-Blind, who was surprised at Hans’ action, and who really thought the porringer a quaint and pretty bit of earthenware. “Tis not so bad for some burgher customer. I will give five sous for it.”

But Hans had already replaced the porringer in his pocket, and without another word he turned, and going straight to the door, he unbarred it and went out.

As the old man swiftly crossed the room to refasten the door, he muttered to himself, “I wonder what ails friend Hans this morning? He is as cross as a fishwife when the catch is bad, and he acts as if he had been robbed of his wits or else left them behind in his miserable hut!” And then he went back to the counter and began to weigh the silver cup and consider how he could best smooth away the tell-tale marks.

LESSON 37

As for Robber Hans, when again he found himself walking the snowy streets, he walked as one in a dream. It was no use trying to avoid it. The sad little face of Cornelia seemed to hover before his eyes wherever he turned. And another thing, of which he had not before thought, began to trouble him. Old Father Deaf-and-Blind’s chance speech about the children’s God’s-House had reminded him that the porringer he had stolen must have belonged to some poor child, and for the first time in a great many years, Hans really began to feel ashamed of himself. He tried again to remember just where he had picked up the porringer, and though it had not occurred to him at the time he took it, now he said to himself, “Why was it outside on the doorstep? ‘Twas a queer place to find it!”

Hans wished with all his heart that he had let it stay there, since it was making him so uncomfortable and seemed so impossible to get rid of, or even to get it out of his thoughts! For still his mind went on puzzling to account for the porringer having been on the doorstep. Finally, however, he decided that, as it was on the night before Christmas that he had taken it,

probably it was a gift that some friend had brought for a child who must live in the little yellow house, and perhaps no one had been at home to open the door, and so the porringer had been left on the step.

Having explained it to himself in this way, for the first time such an idea had troubled him since he had become a robber, the feeling came to him that he ought to take it back where it belonged. It seemed so shameful to rob a child, and a poor child at that! But, he thought, he could not take it back in broad daylight! No, he decided, if he did so, it must be after night when no one could see him.

As he was thinking all this over, without noticing where he was going, his steps had brought him to the part of the city where there were a number of shops, and he remembered that he was hungry, for he had had no breakfast. He went into one of the shops and asked for some food. The shopkeeper looked at him suspiciously. "Thou art a burly beggar!" he said. "There are far too many needy poor in Bruges to give to such as thou!"

"I am no beggar!" said Hans angrily, displaying one of his silver coins. "Here is silver for thy meat and bread, and see to it thou dost not cheat me!"

The shopkeeper, muttering to himself, supplied a dish of food, though he was glad when Hans had finished eating it and left the shop, for he did not think that he looked like an honest man or that he had come by the silver honestly. Now, on Hans' part, when in order to pay the shopkeeper he had put his hand in his pocket for a piece of the silver he had received for the stolen cup, his fingers touched the porringer first; and, he could not have told why, he took the rest of the silver out and put it in the pocket on the other side of his coat.

Perhaps, in some vague way, he did not quite like to have that ill-gotten money right there with the picture of Cornelia, for to his mind the little girl in the porringer had become so bound up with Cornelia that it might as well have really been her picture.

And then as Hans went farther along the street, he did another queer thing. He deliberately turned down a narrow way that led to one of the many old quays of the city and began to look at the ships that were lying moored close beside it.

In the days of the bygone glory of Bruges, her harbor, now choked up with sand, and her many canals had been thronged with vessels from all over the world, and every quay had been a place of busy work all day long and often through the night. And now, though most of them were deserted and moss-grown, still on the banks of one canal, which connected Bruges with the not far distant seaport city of Ostend, there were several quays to which came small fishing vessels and various ships that traded along the coast of Flanders.

It happened that on that day, there were two or three schooners lying at the quay to which Hans had come. He had come there because, with all the thoughts of his childhood that had been stirred to life by the little porringer, there had wakened the memory of the sea as it rolled and surged beyond the grey rocks of the Quiberon coast. He began to long for the familiar tang of the fresh salt air blowing over the curling green waves and to sail over these as he had once done in the old days when he had first set out to make his way in the world. For, like most of the folk of the Breton coast, Hans seemed to belong to the sea. And he had been a good sailor in those days. But though he had drifted away from that old life and his old friends, and had for so long a while gained his living by robbery that all thought of the past seemed dead within him, as he now looked at the vessels rocking on the water by the quay, stronger and stronger grew his newly awakened longing for the sea, till at last it swept over him like a fierce gust of the north wind that he had often seen dashing the white-capped waves against the crags of Quiberon.

And along with this great longing, all the while stronger and stronger grew another wish, though, curiously enough, Hans himself could not for the life of him have told that he had it. It was a wish to lead an honest life once more. It had really always been down in the bottom of his heart, but it had gotten so covered up and hidden by all sorts of robber thoughts, that now it was like a ray of light trying to shine through a window all covered with dust and cobwebs. And so all Hans knew about it was that he wanted more than anything else to be a sailor on one of those vessels.

LESSON 38

Hans walked along the quay till he came alongside the nearest of the schooners he had been watching, and then he hailed the captain, who was

standing on the deck.

“What do you want?” asked the captain, looking at Hans and not with favor.

“Do you need another hand on your boat?” asked Hans.

“No,” answered the captain shortly, and he turned away contemptuously without paying any further attention.

Hans’ temper began to rise as he strode along toward where the next vessel lay. Two of her crew were unloading her cargo under the direction of the captain. After looking at them a moment, “Ho!” called Hans abruptly to the men. “You handle that gear like the veriest landlubbers! Give me a chance, and I’ll show you how to unload yonder bales in a quarter the time it is taking you!”

Of course, this was a very poor way to go about it if he wanted to get work on that boat, but Hans had little tact at best, and, moreover, he had been stung by the manner of the captain of the other vessel, and so his ill humor had gotten the better of him.

At his speech the two men looked up in surprise, and seeing Hans’ ragged figure, one of them, who knew him by sight, cried out jeeringly, “Hold thy tongue, thou impudent beggar! I’ll warrant thou could lighten one of these bales in a twinkling, could thou but get thy thieving fingers upon it! Begone!”

Hans’ eyes blazed, and he strode forward with fist clenched to strike the man. But the latter was too nimble; for the two, having finished their work, ran up the gang-plank and drew it in so that Hans could not reach them, and they laughed scornfully as they taunted him from their place on the deck.

Hans was very angry and his heart full of bitterness. He turned on his heel and half started away from the quay. But, like many other people of strong will, to be crossed in what he wished to do only made Hans more unwilling to give it up. And so the harder it seemed to be to get a place on one of those vessels, the more he wanted it. Turning back again, he determined to try once more.

This time he went to the far end of the quay where a fishing vessel was

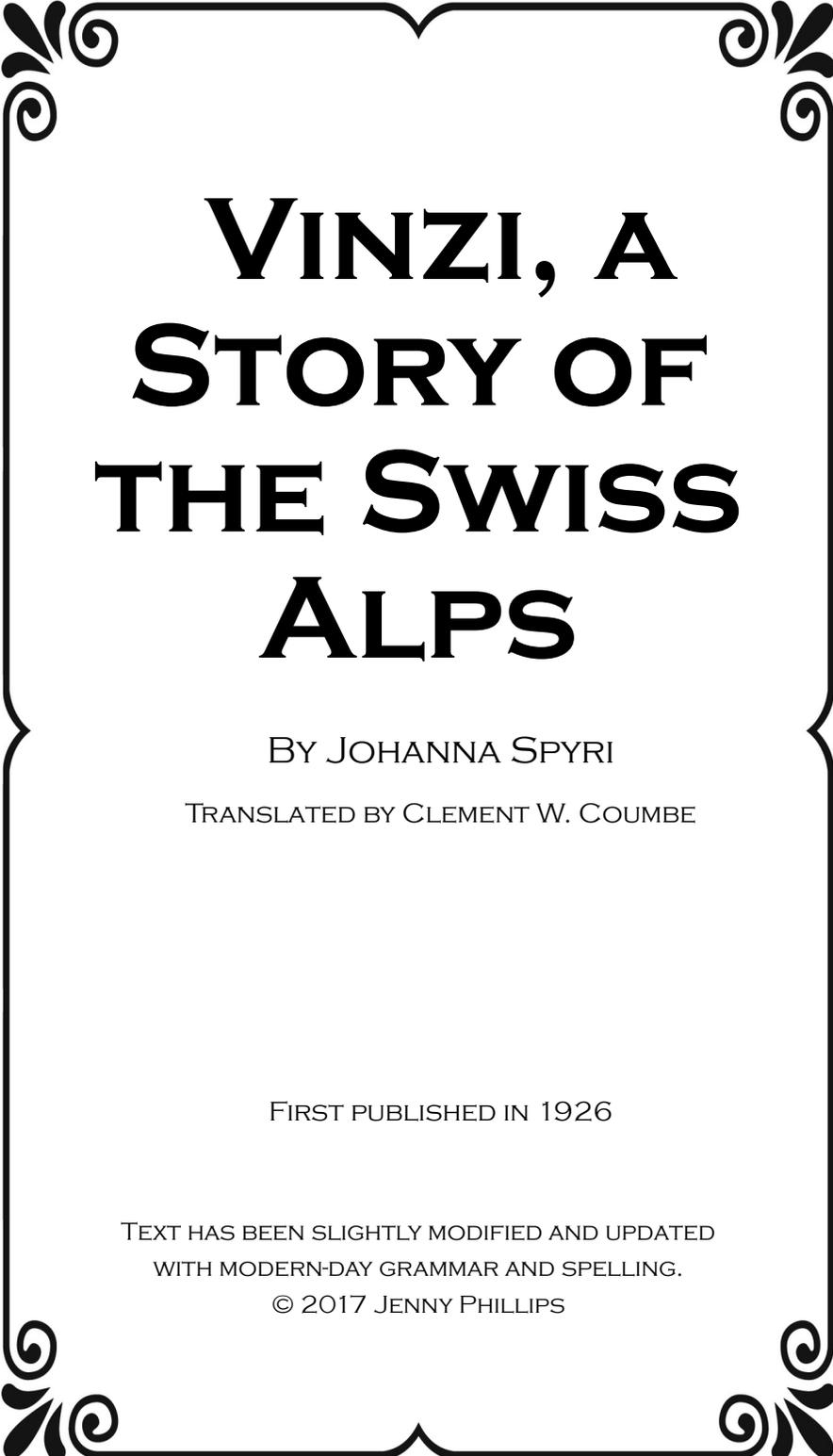
moored. The captain was standing on the bank near the side of the boat, and Hans, walking up to him, said: "I am going to ship as sailor on this vessel."

Captain Helmgar, for this was his name, gave a short laugh as he looked at the man in front of him. "Ho," he said, "not so fast, my man! I am owner of this craft, and I choose my own crew! I'll wager thou dost not know the tiller from the forecastle!"

"Just try me!" cried Hans eagerly. "Your craft is in fair order, but yonder sail was shrouded by a bungling hand!" Hans pointed to one of the masts of the vessel, where the sail was furled in a way that his practiced eye at once saw was clumsy.

At this the captain opened his eyes and stared at Hans, for it was perfectly true that one of the crew was a lazy, ignorant fellow who had no fondness for the sea and who bungled everything he touched, and Captain Helmgar was really anxious to replace him with an experienced sailor. As he now began to question Hans, he soon discovered that he knew all about ships and shipping, as did almost all the men brought up on the coast of Brittany, and then, too, that Hans' experience as sailor had been chiefly on fishing vessels.

The captain did not like Hans' raggedness and unkempt looks, and, though he knew nothing about him, was rather suspicious of his honesty. But then he needed a man, and Hans certainly seemed to know his trade. Captain Helmgar, moreover, was a good-hearted man, and thought to himself, "There is little on a fishing vessel he could steal, even if he is a thief." The captain, too, rather liked Hans' determination to ship with him. So after thinking a few minutes, he said, "Well, my man, we leave for a week's cruise tomorrow morning at eight o'clock. And if you report on time, I will take you on trial."



VINZI, A STORY OF THE SWISS ALPS

BY JOHANNA SPYRI

TRANSLATED BY CLEMENT W. COUMBE

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1926

TEXT HAS BEEN SLIGHTLY MODIFIED AND UPDATED
WITH MODERN-DAY GRAMMAR AND SPELLING.

© 2017 JENNY PHILLIPS

LESSON 54

Chapter 2

IN THE PASTURE

One Monday morning, so early that the sun was just reddening the tops of the mountains, Stefeli rushed into Vinzi's room.

"Wake up, Vinzi! Wake up quick!" she called to him. "The man has taken the cows to the pond, and Father says as soon as we have had breakfast, we must take them to the pasture so the man can go back to work. We'll take our lunch with us because it's too far to come home. Won't that be real fun? Come now, hurry!"

By this time Vinzi was awake, but he looked at his sister with his large dark eyes as though still half dreaming.

"Oh, I dreamed something so beautiful," he said. "Mother and I were in Sitten. You know I was there last summer with her. We went into a church, and everything was just as it looked then. An organ was playing music that was more beautiful than I can tell you."

"Hurry up, Vinzi, and come along! We cannot talk about organs now," urged Stefeli. "Father is already sitting at the table, and Mother has carried in the coffee. You know if Father gets cross because we do not come, it will not be any fun. Make haste!" and she ran off.

Vinzi knew the truth of Stefeli's words, so he sprang out of bed and dressed hastily. Swallowing his coffee and milk that stood at his place, he stuck his bread into his pocket before the other three had half finished their breakfast. The father watched the boy, thinking, "He can hurry when going about his business. Perhaps he will turn out all right."

The mother had packed the midday lunch for the children in a little basket and hung it over Vinzi's shoulder. Stefeli skipped along, a little switch that Vinzi had carefully cut for her in her hand. She used this to urge the browsing cows along, but never did she strike them. Once outside,

Vinzi discovered he had left his whip in the barn and had to fetch it. Every herd-boy had a switch, but only to crack it now and then so that it echoed in loud booms from the mountains. Vinzi found no pleasure in his whip, so he was careless where he put it. Now he searched one corner after another, and while he hunted his father began to frown. Then Stefeli darted up with it in her hand, for she remembered where her brother had put it last. Now the two set off, and the father called after them, "Look out, Vinzi, that none of the cows gets across the stream." And the mother followed with her warning, "Take care not to go too near the stream where the rapids are!"

"Now we must keep our eyes open so the cows stay in our own pasture, and we must see that Schwarzeli does not do too much frisking, for if she does not graze, she will get thin," said Stefeli.

Vinzi followed Stefeli and looked on as she carefully placed the little basket in the deepest shade. Then they both sat on the ground, which had been thoroughly dried by both sun and wind. The fresh morning breeze rustled through the branches and blew over the meadow, far and wide, until its sougning died in the distance. Suddenly Stefeli jumped up and darted off like an arrow.

"Schwarzeli! Schwarzeli!" the child kept calling as she pursued the shiny black heifer which was running toward the stream, tail in the air. "Schwarzeli, wait for me!" but the high-spirited creature only leaped higher and was now quite close to the stream. "If she jumps in, she will drown," thought Stefeli in fright, for they had come to the dangerous place her mother had meant in her warning. "Schwarzeli! Schwarzeli!"

Suddenly, the fugitive stood still and calmly awaited the arrival of her mistress.

"You wicked Schwarzeli, to frighten me so!" Stefeli exclaimed, grasping hold of the rope around Schwarzeli's neck. "Just wait! If you go on like this, I will bring you no more salt that you lick as though it were so much sugar!"

Schwarzeli rubbed her neck on Stefeli's shoulder as much as to reply, "I did not mean to be bad; it was so jolly to caper over the pasture."

Halfway back to the place set aside for grazing, Vinzi met them and asked in great surprise, "Why did you run away all of a sudden, Stefeli? I

heard some lovely music two or three times, and when I turned to ask if you heard it too, I saw you coming back with Schwarzeli. Oh, it is such a pity you did not hear it. I cannot describe it. It sounded like a great choir of deep, strong voices floating over the meadow, growing always softer, you know, like the sound of waters far away. It was so beautiful! Come, Stefeli, we will sit down there again, and perhaps we can still hear it.”

“Now go along, Schwarzeli, and be good,” said Stefeli as she let go of the rope and followed her brother.

However, she had scarcely settled down alongside him when she sprang up again, and this time Vinzi with her, for the brown cow had wandered over to the boundary fence and was pushing hard against the palings, trying to get through. The two children ran to bring the animal back, and soon the cow was wandering prudently about the proper field. Stefeli discovered a spot that was especially inviting, where fragrant little wild pinks nodded happily. “Come along, Vinzi, we will rest here. I am sure there will be no more wonderful music under the tree.”

LESSON 55

The children gazed contentedly on the sunlit landscape, and after a period of quiet enjoyment, Stefeli said, “I would love to be a cowherd all my life, wouldn’t you, Vinzi?”

“No, I would not,” replied Vinzi.

“Why not?” inquired Stefeli. “Surely no place is more lovely than this.”

“Yes, that is true,” Vinzi admitted. “But I would not like to look after cows all my life.”

“What do you like to do best? I have not seen you do it,” said Stefeli, astonished to think she did not know.

“Most of all, I love to hear the bells peal and hear them resound through the branches of the trees and down from the mountain heights. Do you hear the soft notes around us? Do you hear?” And his eyes grew larger and brighter as he listened.

Stefeli pricked up her ears. “That is only the gnats buzzing,” she said in a

disgusted tone.

But Vinzi continued: “And when I hear such beautiful sounds, I would like to remember them and to sing them or imitate them in some other way. I am always wondering how I can do it.”

“But that is no profession,” Stefeli interrupted.

“Well, that is what I am afraid of, too,” said Vinzi in a discouraged manner, “but I have to keep on thinking about it. I have cut a lot of pipes and have tried to see what I could imitate on them. I have five altogether. Out of one I could get deep tones, out of another high ones, and the others have middle notes. I have been thinking how I can blow on two or three at the same time so they will all sound at once, like the church bells, you know.”

“You might be a piper,” Stefeli suggested suddenly, greatly elated at her inspiration. “That would be a fine profession, wouldn’t it?”

“I don’t know,” replied Vinzi, rather uncertain. “But even if I could be, Father would not let me. He found my pipes in the barn one day and threw them all away, saying I must think about more useful things than collecting pipes and working on stuff that amounts to nothing.”

“You must not be so sad about it, Vinzi,” she said consolingly. “I am sure Father means you must not have the pipes in the barn or stable, but out here in the pasture, you certainly may have them. I will watch the cows and call you when anything is the matter. You can cut new pipes, all of which we will lay in a hole under the tree, and you will take them out only when we are here. I will help you blow them. I’ll blow on the high pipe and you on the low, and in that way, they will sound together like the bells.”

Apparently, this plan did not console him as she thought it would, for he kept gazing on the ground and said no more.

“Now we will talk about something else,” she continued resolutely, for she did not like his sad expression. But before they could start talking again, she sprang from the ground and darted away, calling, “Vinzi, Vinzi!”

Vinzi, too, ran at topmost speed toward the end of the pasture where a wooden footbridge led across the stream. A party of strangers was about to

cross when a little dog belonging to them suddenly dashed into the midst of the cows, barking violently. The frightened animals ran in all directions, and Schwarzeli, tail raised high, galloped hither and thither. This excited the dog to further onslaughts. Stefeli ran after her cows to quiet them while Vinzi struck out at the dog with his whip so that it suddenly turned tail and ran howling after the disappearing party. This had proved such a hot piece of work that the children sought the shade of the big tree and threw themselves down on the ground to get their breath.

Sitting up, Vinzi said, "I wish the dog had been on the other side, where the path leads up to the pasture. I saw a fiery red flower there, and it looked tremendously big, even from where I was—bigger than any I ever saw. If it were not so far, I'd go and fetch it, but it is too hot."

"Oh, I'll go," said Stefeli with assurance. "If it is so beautiful, it can't be too far for me."

Vinzi was going to offer to fetch the flower if Stefeli wished it so much, but the little girl had sped off so fast, he knew he could not overtake her. So he kept his seat, and now that the midday bell in the village began to ring, he quickly forgot everything else, so intently did he listen to the sound.

"There is your flower," were the words that suddenly roused him, and Stefeli laid a bright red scarf before her brother. He was so deeply buried in his thoughts that he had not noticed the flight of time, and was astonished at her quick return. He gazed thoughtfully at what he had supposed was a red flower. Where had he seen that scarf before? "Oh, now I know!" he suddenly exclaimed. "I saw it hanging on the chair in which the strange little girl was sitting at Mrs. Troll's house. It must belong to her."

Now Stefeli also recalled having seen something scarlet there, and as there had been children in the party that had crossed the bridge, they were probably the same children they saw yesterday.

Vinzi began to consider what was to be done with the scarf. He knew that whatever was found must be returned to the owner at once; therefore, the best thing would be for him to run over to Mrs. Troll's house with it. But Stefeli declared it was everybody's dinner hour, and there was plenty of time to do it before evening. As soon as dinner was mentioned, Vinzi suddenly

sensed an immense hunger, so he set right to work gathering all the twigs under the tree and built a little fire. While it was dying down, Stefeli turned the grassy place into an attractive dinner table, laying out two large slices of bread spread with golden butter and two snow white eggs, which their mother had boiled and which now only needed peeling. Then she carried the basket near the fire and put some clean round potatoes into the glowing coals. They were soon smoking and sizzling invitingly. The children waited impatiently for the moment when they could rake them from the bed of dying ashes. When they had cooled a little, they bit deeper and deeper into the snowy whiteness, though they thought the hard-baked crust was really the best part of all. The cows had been so busy grazing that now they were ready to rest a bit. Even Schwarzeli had settled down peacefully, though she tossed her little black head from time to time, showing she could not be trusted altogether.

The children cleaned up their place under the tree, for paper and eggshells did not belong on the fine green carpet of their living room. And then they sat quietly and contentedly gazing over the pasture, enjoying the peace that was round about them.

“Now I might carry back the scarf we found,” said Vinzi after a while. “The cows are sure to be quiet until I get back.”

“Yes,” agreed Stefeli. “The big ones will rest for a while, and if Schwarzeli starts to run to the stream, I’ll entice her back. I have kept all the salt Mother gave us for the eggs. You did not ask for any, and Schwarzeli loves it.”

Taking the scarf which Stefeli had folded, Vinzi ran off, but it took a good quarter of an hour for him to reach Mrs. Troll’s house. The front door stood open and all was quiet inside.

LESSON 56

Hearing chopping in the garden, he thought Mrs. Troll might be there, but suddenly quite different sounds attracted him so powerfully that he mounted the stairs. Through a half open door he caught the notes of a gay melody. Stepping up, he laid his ear on the door to hear better, but in his longing, he pressed quite hard and the door flew wide open. Instantly, the small musician who sat on a high stool before the instrument swung around

and looked at him. Seeing he was quite shocked, she jumped down from the stool and ran up to him. "Oh, did you find my scarf and bring it back to me?" she asked as she caught sight of the scarlet cloth in his hand. "That is lucky for me! Miss Landrat gave me a good scolding for losing it and said that, as punishment, I must go over the same path I traveled with Papa and the other gentlemen this morning and find it. Now that you have brought it, I do not have to go, so I will give you a reward. What would you like best?"

Vinzi gazed in surprise at the wonderful child who could produce such entrancing music and now speak to him as though they had been friends for a long time. He hesitated, but at last replied timidly, "Can I wish for anything I choose?"

"Yes," replied his new acquaintance decidedly, "but ask for something I can give you, not such a thing as a ship or a horse."

"No, I don't mean anything like that," said Vinzi. "I only wish to hear the music again."

"The music? Do you mean what I was playing when you came? That really is no present. What is your name?" the little girl asked, suddenly interrupting her own line of thought.

When Vinzi mentioned his name, she replied, "And mine is Alida Thornau. Practicing gets so tedious that I play one of my little pieces between exercises. Do you have to practice, too?"

"What do you mean by practice?"

"Oh, don't you know? Then you are lucky!" she exclaimed. "You see, practicing is sitting still on a round stool and everlastingly running your fingers up and down on the piano. That is called playing the scale, and repeating it over and over is called finger practice."

"Why do you have to practice?" asked Vinzi in wonder.

"Because one has to obey," answered Alida, "and Miss Landrat ordered me to practice from two to three o'clock every day. I have no lessons here like I do in Hamburg, but every time Papa comes down here, I have to promise again to obey my governess. You see Papa is up at the baths with Mama because she is sick."

“How did you learn to play that pretty piece?” asked Vinzi who had listened to all this with intense interest.

“Oh, that is easily done when one has to practice so much. All one has to do is to play the notes that are written there,” she explained.

“Then you are fortunate to be able to do so much practicing,” said Vinzi, and he gazed at the piano with such longing that Alida suddenly remembered the reward he had asked.

“Now I will play for you,” she said.

Vinzi stared at her flying fingers in amazement, and Alida saw in the mirror above the piano how he followed her playing. That pleased her, and she repeated the Spring Song but stopped suddenly in the middle of it, whirled around on the stool and asked, “Would you like to learn to play the piano?”

Vinzi’s eyes sparkled, but only for a moment; the next he gazed at the floor and said sadly, “That I can never do.”

“Why, yes, you can very easily,” returned Alida with conviction. “I can teach you. You will soon learn all I know, and you can practice with me. That will be much more fun than for me to sit alone. Then you can play little pieces, like this one that pleases you so much.”

Vinzi’s eyes grew larger and larger with astonishment and longing. Unbelievable happiness was suddenly before him; he need only say yes. He could not grasp it.

“If it pleases you, say yes quickly, that you really wish it,” said Alida a little impatiently. “Then you must come here every day at two o’clock, like today, because then Miss Landrat takes a walk with Hugo, and I have to practice until three o’clock or sometimes even later, until they return. So we will be quite alone, and I will teach you everything.”

In a voice that trembled, he said, “There is nothing I would like better.”

“Then everything is all settled!” declared Alida with satisfaction. “Come tomorrow—or would you like to start today?”

Much as he would have liked it, Vinzi did not dare that, for Stefeli had

LESSON 83*Chapter 10***OLD FRIENDS AND NEW LIFE**

It was spring again, and the trees and hedges were in bloom. The grass was so fresh and so green that Stefeli feasted her eyes on it as she walked through the meadows with her schoolbag on her back.

Stefeli was coming home on the last day of school. No more study until winter. How lovely that day had been the year before when she had walked home with Vinzi, talking over the days ahead. Then there lay before them the whole beautiful summer with its long days on the sunny pasture. But what would happen this summer? Stefeli foresaw many long hot days in the house with the tiresome knitting, and not a single day on the pasture. When she thought about it, she sat down in the meadow and sobbed aloud.

But Stefeli never cried very long, and when she remembered that two days before she had seen half-ripe strawberries behind the barn, she jumped up quickly; she would toss her schoolbag in the hall and then gather the berries. But when she flung open the door, she stood riveted to the spot in surprise. Her mother sat talking quite confidentially with a stranger, and beside him sat a boy the size of Vinzi, who was taking a lively part in the conversation.

“Of course that is the little daughter,” the man said, glancing toward the door. “Come here, Stefeli; we are not strangers. I am Cousin Lorenz and this is Jos, Vinzi’s good friend.”

The delighted Stefeli went forward to greet them both; anyone whom Vinzi loved was particularly welcome when she was feeling so forlorn. She shook hands with Cousin Lorenz—for he looked at her with such kindly eyes—and then stepped up to Jos, who smiled at her as though to say, “We’ll get along nicely together.”

Stefeli turned to face her Cousin Lorenz and asked, “Jos is going to stay with us the whole summer; isn’t that so? Just as long as Vinzi stayed with

RESCUE DOG *of the* HIGH PASS

BY JIM KJELGAARD

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1958



TEXT HAS BEEN SLIGHTLY MODIFIED AND UPDATED
WITH MODERN-DAY GRAMMAR AND SPELLING.

LESSON 95*Chapter 3***THE GREEDY VILLAGER**

Franz sank his razor-sharp ax in the raw stump of a new-cut birch and used both hands to close his jacket against an icy wind that whistled down from the heights. He looked up at the cloud-stabbing peak of Little Sister and smiled. Yesterday the snow line had been exactly even with a pile of tumbled boulders that, according to some of the more imaginative residents of Dornblatt, resembled an old man with a pipe in his mouth. Today, it was a full fifty yards farther down the mountain.

Caesar, who never cared how cold it was, sat on his haunches, and disdaining even to curl his tail around his paws, faced the wind without blinking. Franz ruffled the big dog's ears with an affectionate hand, and Caesar beamed his delight. Franz spoke to him.

“Winter soon, Caesar, and it is by far the very finest time of all the year. Let the children and old people enjoy their spring and summer. Winter in the Alps is for the strong who can face it, and for them it is wonderful indeed.”

Caesar offered a canine grin, wagged his tail and flattened his ears, as though he understood every word, and Franz was by no means certain that he did not. The dog understood almost everything else.

Franz wrenched his ax from the birch stump, and dangling it from one hand so that the blade pointed away from his foot, he went on. As his father had said, nobody in Dornblatt could hope to live by cutting wood and that alone. Every household must have a supply, for wood was the only fuel, but since every able-bodied householder cut his own, it naturally followed that they cared to buy none.

Franz was still unable to remember when he had enjoyed himself more completely. Other men of Dornblatt regarded the annual wood cutting as an irksome chore, and life in the forest the loneliest existence imaginable.

As long as he could be in the forest, it never occurred to Franz that he was alone.

There was always Caesar, the finest of companions. There were the mice, the hares, the foxes, the various birds, and only yesterday Franz had seen thirty-one chamois on their way from the heights, that would soon be blanketed beneath thirty to forty feet of snow, to seek winter pasturage in the lowlands. There had been two magnificent bucks, plus a half a dozen smaller ones, but Franz had not mentioned the herd because there were a number of eager chamois hunters in Dornblatt. Should they learn of the chamois and succeed in overtaking them, they might well slaughter the entire herd. Chamois, Franz thought, were better alive than dead—and it was not as though there was a lack of food in Dornblatt. It had been a good year.

As he walked on, Franz pondered his expulsion from Professor Luttman's school. The sting was gone, much of the shame had faded, and there were no regrets whatsoever. Franz knew now that he simply did not belong in school, for his was not the world of books. If, on occasion, he met a former classmate, and the other asked him how he was getting on, he merely smiled and said well enough.

Franz remained more than a little troubled about Professor Luttman, though. He was a good and kind man who seldom had any thoughts that did not concern helping his pupils. Franz felt that somehow he had failed Professor Luttman.

The heavy ax hung almost lightly from his hand, as though somehow it was a part of his arm. Franz had always regarded his ax as a beautiful and wonderful tool. He could strike any tree exactly where he wished, fell it exactly where he wanted it to fall, and leave a smoother stump than Erich Erlich, who owned the finest saw in Dornblatt.

Always choosing one that was rotten, deformed, or that had been partially uprooted by some fierce wind and was sure to topple anyhow, Franz had spent his time felling trees. Then he had trimmed their branches. With a great bundle of faggots on his own back and a greater one on Caesar's, he had hauled them to his father's house. Finally, he had cut the trunks into suitable lengths, and such portions as he was unable to carry, he

and Caesar had dragged in.

His father had finally ordered him to stop. Wood was piled about the Halle house in every place where it was usually stored and many where it was not. There was enough to last the family through this winter and most of next. If any more were brought in, the Halles would have to move out.

Franz had continued to cut wood for those who were either unable to gather their own or who, at the best, would find wood cutting difficult. There was Grandpa Eissman, once a noted mountaineer, who had conquered many peaks but lost his battle with time. Old and stooped, able to walk only with the aid of his cane, Grandpa Eissman's house would be cold indeed this winter if he and he alone must gather wood to heat it. Then there was Jean Greb, who'd lost his right hand in an accident on Little Sister. There was also—

Franz knew a rising worry as he made his way toward a tree he had marked for cutting. There were not so many unable to gather their own wood that he could keep busy throughout the winter, and what then? Wood cutting was the only duty with which his father would trust him.

He thought suddenly and wistfully of the Hospice of St. Bernard. More than eight thousand feet up in the mountains, the Hospice must have been snowbound long since. There were few days throughout the entire year when snow did not fall there, and when it was deep enough, the monks and maronniers—Father Paul's strange term for lay workers—must get about on skis. Franz felt confident of his ability to keep up with them, for he had learned to ski almost as soon as he'd learned to walk. Surely the Hospice must be one of the world's finest places, but Franz seemed no nearer to going there than he had been last summer.

Father Paul had talked with him about it once more, and Franz had broached a very troublesome problem. If he were accepted as a maronnier, might Caesar go with him?

He would see, Father Paul promised, and he had gone to see. He returned with no positive answer, and Franz dared not press the issue. Surely the great Prior of St. Bernard Hospice had problems far more important than whether to accept so insignificant a person as Franz Halle as a lay worker.

LESSON 96

Franz reached the tree he had already selected, felled it with clean strokes of his ax, and trimmed the branches. Cutting them into suitable lengths, he shouldered a bundle, tied another bundle on Caesar's strong back, and took them to Jean Greb's house. Jean greeted him pleasantly. He was a youngish man with wavy blond hair and clear blue eyes.

"It is very kind of you to provide me with wood, Franz, when I find it so very difficult to provide my own."

"It is my privilege," Franz said. "If I did not go out to cut wood, I would have to languish in idleness."

Jean, who appeared to have some troublesome thought on his mind, seemed not to have heard.

"Will you come in and have some bread and cheese?" he invited.

Franz smiled. "Gladly. Wood cutting works up an appetite."

Franz dropped his own burden of wood, then relieved Caesar of his load. The big mastiff settled himself to wait until his master saw fit to rejoin him. Franz greeted Jean's pretty young wife and his three tousle-topped children and seated himself opposite Jean at the family table. Jean's wife placed bread, milk, and cheese before them.

Franz waited for his host to begin the meal and became puzzled when Jean merely stared at the far wall. Something was indeed troubling him. Presently he explained.

"I once thought Dornblatt the finest place on earth!" he exclaimed bitterly. "But there is a serpent among us!"

The puzzled Franz said, "I do not understand you."

"Emil Gottschalk!" Jean burst out. "The Widow Geiser is heavily indebted to him, and now he says that, if she does not pay the debt in full, and within ten days, he will take her farm and all else that is hers!"

"He cannot do such a thing!" the astounded Franz cried.

“Aye, but he can,” Jean said. “Which is more, he will, and there is nothing any of us may do except offer asylum to the widow and her sons!”

A short time later, Franz walked gloomily homeward, his thoughts filled with the pleasant little farm and the attractive young woman who was fighting so valiantly to keep her home. If there was anything anyone could do, somebody would have done it. Professor Luttmann was a very clever man. He would not let Emil Gottschalk take the Widow Geiser’s farm if there was a way to forestall him.

A week later the snow came to Dornblatt. It whirled down so thickly that it was impossible to see more than a few yards in any direction, and it left fluffy drifts behind it. Eighteen hours later there was another snow, and the people of Dornblatt took to their skis.

The snowfall was followed by two days of fair weather, then the first great storm of the winter came. It was so fierce that even the men of Dornblatt would not venture forth until it subsided.

Franz was at the evening meal with his family when he heard Caesar’s challenging roar. Footsteps sounded on the stairs. A moment later Hermann Gottschalk, Emil’s son and Franz’s former classmate, stumbled into the room.

“Father!” he gasped. “He is lost in the storm!”

LESSON 97

Chapter 4

NIGHT'S MISSION

Hermann Gottschalk stood a moment, took a faltering step, and almost fell. With a mighty effort, he stayed erect and spread his feet wide, the better to brace himself.

Franz's father leaped from his chair, hurried to the youth, passed a steadying arm around his shoulders, and escorted him to the chair he had just vacated. White-faced and trembling, Hermann sat limply down and leaned forward to grasp the edge of the table. Franz's father nodded toward his mother.

"A drink please, Lispeth."

Franz's mother got a cup of water, brought it to the table, and the elder Halle held the cup to Hermann Gottschalk's lips. Hermann sipped, gasped mightily, took another sip, and sighed. He relaxed his hold on the table and sank back in the chair.

"Tell us what happened," the elder Halle said gently.

Hermann's voice was a husky whisper. "Father and I had to see the Widow Geiser. It was a fine morning, and we expected no trouble as we started out on our skis. The storm was upon us suddenly, and within minutes it was so fierce that we could no longer see where we were going. It was some time before we knew we must have gone beyond the Widow Geiser's and—"

Franz's father let him rest a moment and then, "Go on," he urged.

"We turned back to Dornblatt, but again we were unable to see where we were going or guide ourselves by landmarks. Father became very tired. He fell, then fell again. Finally, he cried, 'I can go no farther! Save yourself!' I tried to carry him and could not. I knew I must get help."

“What time did you leave your father?” the elder Halle asked.

“I cannot be certain, but think it might have been an hour before night fell,” Hermann answered. “I went on, though I could not be sure at any time that I was coming to Dornblatt. Then I heard a dog bark and guided myself by the sound.”

Franz’s father asked, “How long ago was that?”

“Again I cannot be sure, but I was no great distance from Dornblatt. Immediately after hearing the dog, I broke a ski. Since that made the remaining ski useless, I threw both away and plowed through the snow. It took me much longer to reach the village than it would have had the ski not broken.”

Franz pondered the information. Emil and Hermann Gottschalk could have gone to the Widow Geiser’s only to evict her, and trust Emil to wait until after all crops were harvested and stored! But that was in the past. For the present, a man was lost in the storm.

Franz thought over the affair from every angle. It was probable that Hermann and his father had gone a considerable distance past the Widow Geiser’s before they realized they were lost and turned back. On the return trip, they had set a reasonably accurate course. Hermann had left his father an estimated hour before nightfall. Soon after darkness descended, or approximately within the past forty-five minutes, a barking dog had guided him to Dornblatt.

However, probably, since leaving his father, his rate of travel had been that of an exhausted youngster. He had also broken a ski, which, by his own admission, was responsible for more delay. Emil Gottschalk, Franz decided, was approximately forty-five-minutes’ skiing time from Dornblatt, and the proper direction in which to seek him was toward the Widow Geiser’s.

But there were so many other possibilities that entered the picture. Just how far beyond the Widow Geiser’s were Hermann and his father when they turned back? Or were they beyond her place at all? In such a storm, with both lost and neither able to see, it would be comparatively easy to travel up the slope, and, without ever reaching the Widow Geiser’s farm, both Hermann and his father might be sincerely convinced that they were

far past it. Or had they gone down the slope? Or—

The elder Halle turned to his son. “You know what we must do?”

“I know,” answered Franz.

“What route do you intend to follow?” his father asked.

“I’ll work toward the Widow Geiser’s with Caesar,” Franz told him. “I’ll try to retrace the path I think Hermann might have followed. If we do not find Mr. Gottschalk, I’ll cast back and forth with Caesar and depend on his nose.”

“A good plan,” his father said. “And since you are the only one who has a dog that might be depended upon to find a lost man, it will be best for you to work as you see fit. I’ll rouse the villagers, and we’ll search the same area with each man assigned to his own route. Take my pistol, for when Emil is found, one shot will announce to all that the search is ended and at the same time bring help. I will carry my rifle and signal with it.”

“Loan me some skis!” Hermann pleaded. “I would search, too!”

“No,” Franz’s father said. “You are near exhaustion, and should you venture out before you’ve rested, there will be two lost in the storm. Stay here and rest in Franz’s bed.”

Franz stole a glance at his former classmate, who had always seemed such an awful snob but toward whom he could now feel only sympathy. Faced with a grave problem, Hermann had been courageous enough, and despite the fact that some villagers would be sure to consider the entire incident a judgment of God because Emil Gottschalk would have impoverished the Widow Geiser, Franz knew that it was only a judgment of the storm.

In Dornblatt, few winters ran their course without someone getting lost—and not all were found. Franz was glad that his father had said in Hermann’s hearing, “when Emil is found,” and not, “if he is found.”

LESSON 98

Franz put on his ski boots and his heavy coat with the hood, and thrust his father's immense, brass-bound, bell-mouthed pistol into his belt. Franz Halle the elder dressed in a similar fashion, slung the rifle over his shoulder, and the pair left the house together.

Comfortable in their stable beneath the house, the cattle stamped their hoofs, munched their fodder, and never cared how much snow fell. Caesar sprang from his snow tunnel, shook himself, and came forward to push his nose into Franz's mittened hand.

The two Halles took their skis from beneath the overhanging ledge, where they were stored when not in use, and harnessed them to ski boots. A ski pole in either hand, the elder Halle paused a moment before setting out to rouse the able-bodied men and boys from Dornblatt's snow-shrouded houses.

He said, "We will come as quickly as possible," and was gone.

Franz waited another moment. Within fifteen minutes, or twenty at the most, all Dornblatt would know of the lost man, and all who were able would be in the search. But there was something else here, something more sensed than seen or felt.

His father had declared that he, Franz, was fit only for cutting wood. But it was quite evident now that the elder Halle also thought his son a capable man in the mountains. If he did not, he would never let him go off alone on a night such as this.

A pride that he had seldom felt—or seldom had reason to feel—swelled within Franz. He was no scholar, and he was a complete dolt at most skills and crafts, but it was no small thing to be considered an accomplished mountaineer.

Caesar, who might easily have broken trail, was too sensible to do so when he might follow the trail already broken by Franz's skis. He stayed just far enough behind to avoid stepping on the tail of either ski.

Franz let him remain there for now. Emil Gottschalk would surely be farther from Dornblatt than this. When the time came and Caesar was



ordered to go ahead, he'd do it.

A minute afterwards, the falling snow hid the village as completely as though it had never been, and Franz and Caesar were alone in the night. The boy remained undisturbed. He had never feared the mountains or the forest, and he was not afraid now.

He started southward, traveling downslope, for the wind screamed from the north, and Hermann Gottschalk had been guided into Dornblatt by a dog's bark. Even Caesar's thunderous bark would be heard at no great distance against such a wind. But any sound would carry a long way with it. Hermann must have come in from the south.

Just how far south had he been when he heard the dog bark, Hermann himself did not know. But when he turned toward the barking dog, in

addition to plowing through deep snow, he had been fighting an uphill slope and a powerful wind. Without skis, his progress must have been painfully slow. Therefore, he could have been no great distance from the village.

Franz curled the hood of his jacket around his face to keep flying snow out of his eyes. It made little difference as far as visibility was concerned, for in the stormy night, he could see less than the length of a ski pole anyhow.

Except for those who were too old or disabled, everybody in Dornblatt must use skis or remain housebound from the time the deep snows fell until they melted. Most were past masters of ski travel, but Franz had an extra touch, an inborn feeling for snow that set him apart. He was not afraid of becoming lost or of breaking a ski, as Hermann Gottschalk had, probably when he blundered into a tree trunk.

When Franz thought he had gone far enough south, he turned west toward the Widow Geiser's. Again he used his mountain lore and knowledge of snow to analyze what might have happened.

Leaving his father, Hermann probably had tried to set a straight course. Undoubtedly, the powerful wind had made that impossible. While Hermann thought he was traveling due east, he had also gone slightly south. Franz set a course that would take him slightly north of west.

Now he must consider Emil Gottschalk. Even though he was lost in the storm, Emil, a lifelong resident of Dornblatt, was not one to surrender easily, and he would know what to do. Even though he was unable to stand, he would crawl to the lee of a boulder or copse of trees and let the snow cover him. His own warm breath would melt a hole and assure a supply of air. Even though such a bed was not the most comfortable one might imagine, any man buried beneath snow would never freeze to death.

Franz made a mental map of all the boulders or copses of trees on the course he was taking that Emil might seek. When he thought he was reasonably near the place where Emil lay, he began to zigzag uphill or down, depending on which was necessary to reach each of the shelters he had already marked in his own mind.

Whenever he came to such a place, he watched Caesar closely. But at no time did the dog indicate that there was anything worth his interest.

Franz passed the farthest point where he had calculated he might find Emil Gottschalk.

In all this time, he did not see any of the other searchers, but that was not surprising. The area to be covered was a vast one. Also, someone might have passed fairly close in the snow-filled darkness and would not have seen or heard him.

He began to worry, but kept on for another half hour, for Emil might be farther away than he had thought possible. Finally, sure that he had passed the lost man, Franz climbed higher up the mountain and turned back toward Dornblatt.

Now he set a course south of east, trying as he did so to determine exactly how far the wind might have veered Hermann from a true course. His anxiety mounted when he found nothing.

At what Franz estimated was two hours past midnight, the snow stopped falling and the stars shone. Now there was light, and even though it was only star-glow, it seemed dazzling when compared with the intense darkness that had been. Franz set a new course back toward the Widow Geiser's.

He was descending into a gully when Caesar stopped trailing and plunged ahead. Plowing his own path with powerful shoulders, he went up the gully to a wind-felled tree that cast a dark shadow.

On the tree's near side, Caesar began to scrape in the snow. Franz knelt to help, removing his mittens and digging with bare hands. He felt cloth, then a ski boot.

Franz rose and fired the pistol that would bring help from the men of Dornblatt. Then he resumed a kneeling position and continued to help Caesar dig Emil Gottschalk from his snowy couch.

LESSON 100 Note: There are no reading assignments for Lesson 99.

Chapter 5

THE “MARONNIER”

No herald robin or budding crocus announced that spring was coming to Dornblatt. Rather, at first for a few minutes just before and just after high noon, and then for increasingly longer periods each day, snow that had sat on the roof tops all winter long melted and set a miniature rain to pattering from the eaves. The snow blanket sagged, the ski trails collapsed, and every down-sloping ditch and gully foamed with snow water.

The chamois climbed from their hidden valleys to their true home among the peaks; birds returned; cattle departed for lofty summer pastures; farmers toiled from dawn to dark—and Father Paul came to visit the Halles.

He arrived while the family was at the evening meal, for during this very busy season there was almost no other time when all members of a family might be together. Franz’s father rose to welcome him.

“Father Paul! Do accept my chair and join us!”

“No, thank you.” Father Paul waved a hand and smiled. “I have already supped, and this fine chair of the Alps shall serve me very well.”

Father Paul chose a block of wood from the pile beside the stove, upended it, and seated himself. The elder Halle took back his chair and resumed his interrupted meal.

“I have just returned from Martigny, where I visited Emil Gottschalk,” Father Paul said. “He is greatly improved, and he seems reconciled to the loss of one of his feet.”

“To lose a foot is a bad thing,” the elder Halle said seriously.

“But it might have been much worse,” Father Paul pointed out. “Were it not for Franz and Caesar, Emil would have lost his life, too.”

“I did nothing,” Franz murmured.



honored.” He looked keenly at the boy. “Aren’t you a bit young to travel this path with only a dog as companion?”

“I must travel it,” Franz told him. “I go to the Hospice of St. Bernard, where I am to become a maronnier.”

“A maronnier, eh?” Father Benjamin asked. “And what inspired you to become such?”

“I am too stupid to be anything else,” Franz answered.

Father Benjamin’s laughter rang out, free as summer thunder and

LESSON 103

Chapter 7

THE HOSPICE

The wind that screamed between the high peaks, which kept a grim vigil over both sides of St. Bernard Pass, proclaimed itself monarch.

Man was the trespasser here, the wind said, and let who trespassed look to himself. The only kindness he could expect was a quick and painless death. This was the haunt of the elements.

Overawed and more than a little afraid, Franz tried to speak to Father Benjamin, who was leading the way. The wind snatched the words from his teeth, whirled them off on its own wings, and hurled mocking echoes back into the boy's ears. Franz dropped a hand to the massive head of Caesar, who was pacing beside him, and found some comfort there.

Franz thought back over the way they had come.

The inn at Cantine, where he had passed the night with Father Benjamin, was not a half hour's travel time behind them, yet it was an entire world away. The inn was still civilization. This was a lost territory. The Alpine meadows had given way to rocks and boulders, among which grew only moss and lichens. The wind was right, and no man belonged here.

Franz shuddered. They had skirted chasms where a fall meant death. They had passed beneath rising cliffs whereupon lay boulders so delicately balanced that it was almost as though an incautious breath would set them to rolling, and an avalanche with them. In the shadier places there had been deep snow, and at no point was the permanent snow line more than a few hundred yards above them.

With a mighty effort, Franz banished his fears and regained his self-control. This was the Grand St. Bernard Pass, one of the easiest of all ways to cross the Alps. The altitude was only about eight thousand feet. When Franz stood on the summit of Little Sister, he had been almost a mile higher. The old, the crippled, and children used this Pass regularly.

Franz told himself that he had been overwhelmed by the reputation of the Pass, rather than by any real danger. It went without saying that so many perished here simply because so many came here. The boy fastened his thoughts on practical matters.

Supplies for the Hospice, Father Benjamin had told him, were brought to Cantine on mules and carried from there by monks and maronniers. It was not that mules were unable to reach the Hospice—sometimes they did—but, at best, it was a highly uncertain undertaking. From about the middle of June until the autumn storms began, the Pass was considered safe enough so that rescue work might be halted during that period, but



an unexpected blizzard might come any time. Thus, though in due course the muleteer probably would be able to get his animals back down, as long as they were marooned at the Hospice, they'd be consuming valuable and hard-to-gather hay.

Father Benjamin turned and spoke, and Franz heard clearly. "We have a fine day for our journey."

Franz tried to answer, could not, and Father Benjamin smiled and waved him ahead. The boy grinned sheepishly. He should have remembered that it is almost impossible to speak against such a wind, but relatively easy to speak and be heard with it. He edged past Father Benjamin and said, "Indeed we have."

He was suddenly calm and no longer afraid. This was no foreign land, and it was not a place of devils. It was his homeland. It was St. Bernard Pass, where, of his own free will, he had wanted to become a maronnier. He belonged here.

Father Benjamin put his mouth very close to Franz's ear and shouted, "Do you still think you have chosen well?"

Franz answered sincerely, "Very well."

"Good!"

Father Benjamin indicated that he wanted to pass, and Franz let him do so. The monk turned to the ice-capped peaks on the right of the Pass.

"There are Rheinquellhorn, Zappothorn, Fil Rosso, and Pizzo Rotondo," he said, then turned to the left. "There we see Pizzo della Lumbreda, Pizzo Tambo, and Pizzo dei Piani. They will become your firm friends."

Franz shouted, "They are already my friends."

When Father Benjamin frowned questioningly, Franz smiled to show that he understood, and the pair went on. The wind suddenly sang a song instead of snarling threats. Lowlanders who understood nothing except a warm sun might flinch from such weather. But as Father Benjamin had said, it was indeed a fine day—if one happened to be a mountaineer.

Presently Father Benjamin stopped again. "The Hospice," he said.

Franz looked, more than a little astonished. He hadn't had the faintest notion of what he might expect, but certainly it was not the massive, fortress-like structure that, though still a long ways off, seemed as prominent as any of the peaks. Presently the boy understood.

LESSON 104

The Hospice must be visible from as great a distance as possible. Many an exhausted traveler, coming this far and sure he could go no farther, would find the strength to do so if he could see a refuge.

Father Benjamin pointed out the principal buildings. "The chapel," he said. "The refectory, where meals are eaten and guests entertained, the sleeping quarters, the house of the dead—"

Franz looked questioningly at him, and Father Benjamin explained, "The mortal remains of many who die in the snows are never claimed. At first they were interred beneath the Hospice floor. Now, in the event that someone will claim them some time, they go into the house of the dead. Some have been there for a hundred years."

Franz felt a proper awe. A hundred years was a long time to be dead. But to be dead a hundred years in a place such as this, which was shunned by even the cliff and cold-loving edelweiss, must indeed be dreadful! Franz consoled himself with the thought that the dead have no feeling. No doubt those who rested in warm valleys and those who waited in this grim house would both awaken when Gabriel blew his trumpet.

They drew nearer, and Franz saw a little lake from which the ice had not yet melted. That was fitting and proper and altogether in keeping. Some of these Alpine lakes were ice-free for fewer than thirty days out of the whole year.

Then they came to a stable beneath one of the buildings, and Franz met his immediate superior.

He was big as a mountain and bald as a hammer. His eyes were blue as glacier ice that has been swept clean by the broom of the wind, and at first glance, they seemed even colder. His face, for all his size, was strangely massive. Perhaps because of his very lack of other hair, his curling

mustaches seemed far longer than their eight inches. For all the cold, he wore only a sleeveless leather jacket on his upper body. It hung open, leaving his midriff, chest, and biceps bare. Rippling muscles furnished more than a hint of great strength.

Franz thought at first glance that he was a dedicated man, one who is absolutely devoted to his work, for he treated Father Benjamin with vast respect.

“Anton,” Father Benjamin said, “I want you to meet the new maronnier, Franz Halle. Franz, this is Anton Martek. He will instruct you in your duties here.”

“Is good to have you.” Anton Martek extended a hand the size of a small ham. “Your dog work? Yah?”

“Oh, yes!” Franz said eagerly. “See for yourself that he carries a pack even now!”

Caesar wagged up to Anton Martek, who ruffled the dog’s ears but continued to look at Franz.

“Packing is not all of work.” He scowled. “Is he a spit dog, too?”

“A what?” Franz wrinkled puzzled brows.

With a sweeping circle of his right arm, Anton offered a near-perfect imitation of a dog walking around and around while the meat on a spit roasted. Franz warmed to this huge man. Anton’s ice was all on the outside. Inwardly, he was gentle as the fawn of a chamois.

“Not yet,” Franz said. “But I know we can teach him.”

“Yah,” said Anton. “We teach him.”

Father Benjamin laughed. “You two seem to be getting along very well together, so I’ll leave you alone.”

Anton said respectfully, “As you will, Father,” and turned to Franz. “Come.”

Franz followed him into a stable that was windowless, except for

rectangles of wood hung on wooden hinges that now swung open to admit the sunlight. The place had a familiar smell the boy was unable to define until he remembered that the same odor dominated his mother's kitchen, and that it was the odor of complete cleanliness.

"Where are the cattle?" he asked.

Anton replied, "Down in the pasture."

"Down?"

"Yah. You villagers bring them up. We take them down. There is no pasture here."

He led Franz to a great pile of hay at one end of the stable and gestured. "You sleep here."

Franz laid his pack down and relieved Caesar of his, not at all displeased. There are, as he knew from experience, sleeping places not nearly as comfortable as a pile of hay.

"We get you some more covers soon," Anton promised. "But for now there is work. You will clean the stable."

"But—" Franz looked in bewilderment at the already spotless stable. "It is clean!"

"Ha!" Anton snorted. He stalked to a rafter, ran one huge finger along it, discovered a tiny speck of dust and showed it to Franz. "See? You will clean the stable."

Franz said meekly, "Yes, Anton."

that had been was suddenly no longer when the wind blew it into snow dust. A drift that had not been was present when the snow-laden wind wearied of its burden and dropped it.

Franz placed a hand on Caesar's head and found in the massive dog the comfort he never failed to discover there. He and Caesar had faced many storms together, though none had been as terrible as this. But, as Father Benjamin had said, it was just a snowstorm.

Suddenly, Caesar left Franz's side, bounded ahead, hurled himself on Father Benjamin, seized the priest's habit in his great jaws, and pulled him over backwards.



For a moment, Franz stood petrified, too astonished to even move. The four travelers stared, unable at once to understand what had happened or what they were staring at.

Franz recovered his wits and ran forward. He knelt beside Father Benjamin and Caesar, who maintained a firm grip on the priest's robe, and shouted, "I'm sorry, Father Benjamin! I do not know why Caesar would do such a terrible thing!"

"Make him let me go!" Father Benjamin's voice was stern and indignant.

"Let go, Caesar!" Franz commanded. "Let go, I say!"

Caesar closed his eyes, took a firmer grip and dragged Father Benjamin six inches backwards through the snow. The angry priest turned to grapple with him.

There was a soft hissing, as though a thousand snowflakes had fallen on a hot stove all at the same time. A bridge of snow, upon which Father Benjamin would have walked had he taken one more forward step, fell in and revealed the yawning chasm across which it had formed.

Caesar released his grip on Father Benjamin's habit, sat down beside the priest, and licked his hand with an apologetic tongue.

"He knew!" Father Benjamin gasped. "That is why he pulled me back!"

Franz said, "Caesar always knows the safe trails."

"Then you should have told us so, little Franz," Father Benjamin said.

"I had not wanted to trespass upon your authority," the boy explained.

Father Benjamin said, "When lives are at stake, it is never a question of authority, but one of common sense. Can Caesar guide us safely from here?"

Franz answered unhesitatingly, "Yes."

"Then let him lead."

Franz said, "Go, Caesar."

The great mastiff struck off at a thirty-degree angle to the course they