Shakespeare and the Heart of a Child

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Gertrude Slaughter

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GERTRUDE SLAUGHTER

Two Children in Old Paris

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"ARGOSIES WITH PORTLY SAIL."

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By

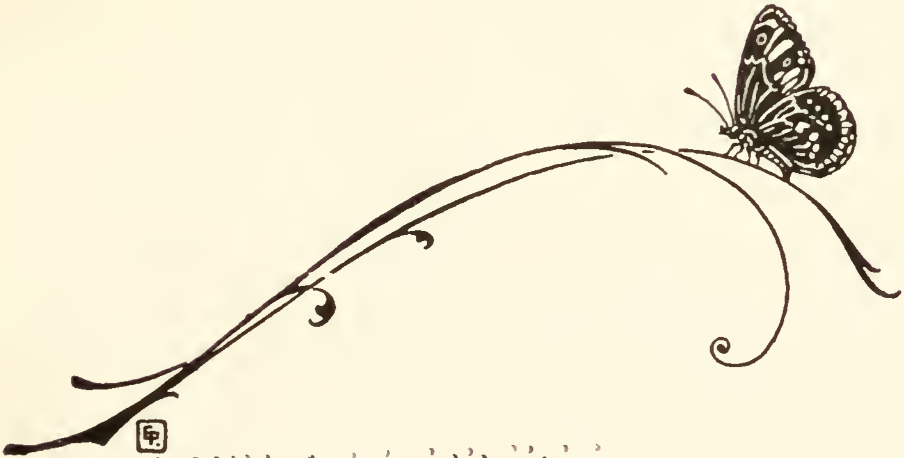
Gertrude Slaughter

AUTHOR OF

"TWO CHILDREN IN OLD PARIS"

Illustrated by

Eric Pape



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Prologue

The little girl who is the subject of this book was a child of freedom. Although she loved Shakespeare with an ever-growing affection, she was never tied to books. Her first desire always was to "explore," whether in the attic at home, or in the woods and fields, or in strange cities, or in books.

Her earliest explorations were out-of-doors. She had that close intimacy with nature which only children and poets may possess. When she was a mere baby she would trudge about for hours holding some cherished blossom or some green leaf tipped with red clasped tight in her little hand, content to watch and listen and finding every moment some new thing to admire. She was sensitive to nature's moods. The wind was her playfellow on boisterous days; on a sultry, cloudy morning, she whispered, "It listens like rain." And, at a later age, she declared, "Everybody who is well and can be out-of-doors must be perfectly happy."

But to separate nature from human life is as unnatural to children as to poets. To this child and her little sister, the sea held strange stories and the woods were hung with mysteries. They had their fairy house in the nearest pine grove, where seashells gathered the dew for the fairies' baths and pigeon vines wreathed the magic circle where they came every night to dance, and stones and ferns formed grottoes for their conclaves. When the old seal who had looked at them so often, with dripping whiskers, from the rocks in the bay was rolled up dead on the shore, their thoughts flew to the little ones left behind, under the waves, and they chanted

"The White Seal's Lullaby," hoping in their hearts that the baby seals were cuddled down comfortably,

Asleep in the arms of the slow-swinging seas.

Everything around them was alive; and their interest was in life.

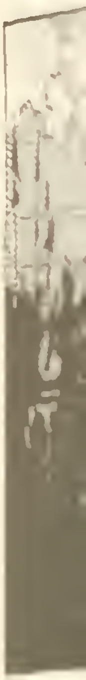
Shakespeare was the natural transition. When you are on friendly terms with Pan, you are ready for Puck and Ariel; and the horsemen riding upon the clouds above the streets of Rome, ghosts, and the weird sisters on the heath have a fearful fascination for you. And when, with the same convincing truth, living men and women are revealed to you, clothed in reality yet floating in an atmosphere of romance, set in bright scenes "fresh to all ages," where high decorum stands up beside burlesque and jollity and the ways of courtly life are made manifest through the smiles and tears of men and women who speak strangely beautiful words, and yet are true to life,—what is left to be desired? For every child loves a good story with a natural passion. Every child is moved by tragedy and humor, and cares not how close they touch each other. And every child feels the power of the mighty line and the inevitable phrase.

This child who dwelt with Shakespeare loved people with an intensity which only Shakespeare could describe. Her friends were of all ages and conditions. Although so fond of the out-of-doors, that once, when she was confined to the house by some slight illness, she asked for some of "the ground those flowers grew in" so that she could "smell the dear, good earth," yet her life revolved around people and her friends were seldom absent from her thoughts. When she was but two years old, the neighbors brought her birthday gifts; and when, at the end of the day, some one asked her what presents she had received, she named, instead, the persons who had brought them.

Little by little the people of Shakespeare, filling a larger world than she could know, became as real to her as her friends. That was the great gift he brought her.

Titian once made a little girl the center of a brilliant scene. As the demure child, with her long, straight braid, mounts the Temple steps in "The Presentation of the Virgin," the people linger in the streets, lords and ladies shine resplendent under the rich colonnades, the life of the city pauses for a moment in a solemn hush and then goes on as before. But the child is indifferent to it all. Intent upon her task, as with a sort of prescience of what awaits her, she walks with slow, sure step, in all the dignity of innocence, into the Holy of Holies. And as I look at her, seeing in her not so much the Virgin with her special mission as any child climbing up to his initiation into the mysteries of life, I cannot but think that, when she has entered into the secret of the sanctuary and come forth again, she will be aware of the old egg woman who sat by the stairs unobserved as she entered; she will be concerned with the lives of the lords and ladies moving about; her interests will reach out through the courts and streets that lead away from the church into the busy city. She will come back from the heavenly vision with a new understanding of the world.

In the same way many a child has entered into Shakespeare's Temple of the human spirit and come forth charged with a knowledge far beyond his present or his future experience. It cannot all happen on a summer day. Step by step, slowly and serenely, under a clear sky, the child approaches by pleasant ways to an understanding of life. And if he finds in the revelation the tragedy of sin and self-seeking, he finds himself, in spite of that, in a delightful world—a world of great achievement and great failures, now and again forgotten in great laughter,—a world where it is good to be alive. And a sane and healthy joy of life is entrenched in the child's mind against the blows of fortune by the beauty of the medium through which the world has been revealed.



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A famous actor of Shakespeare's
day. His partner William Kempe;
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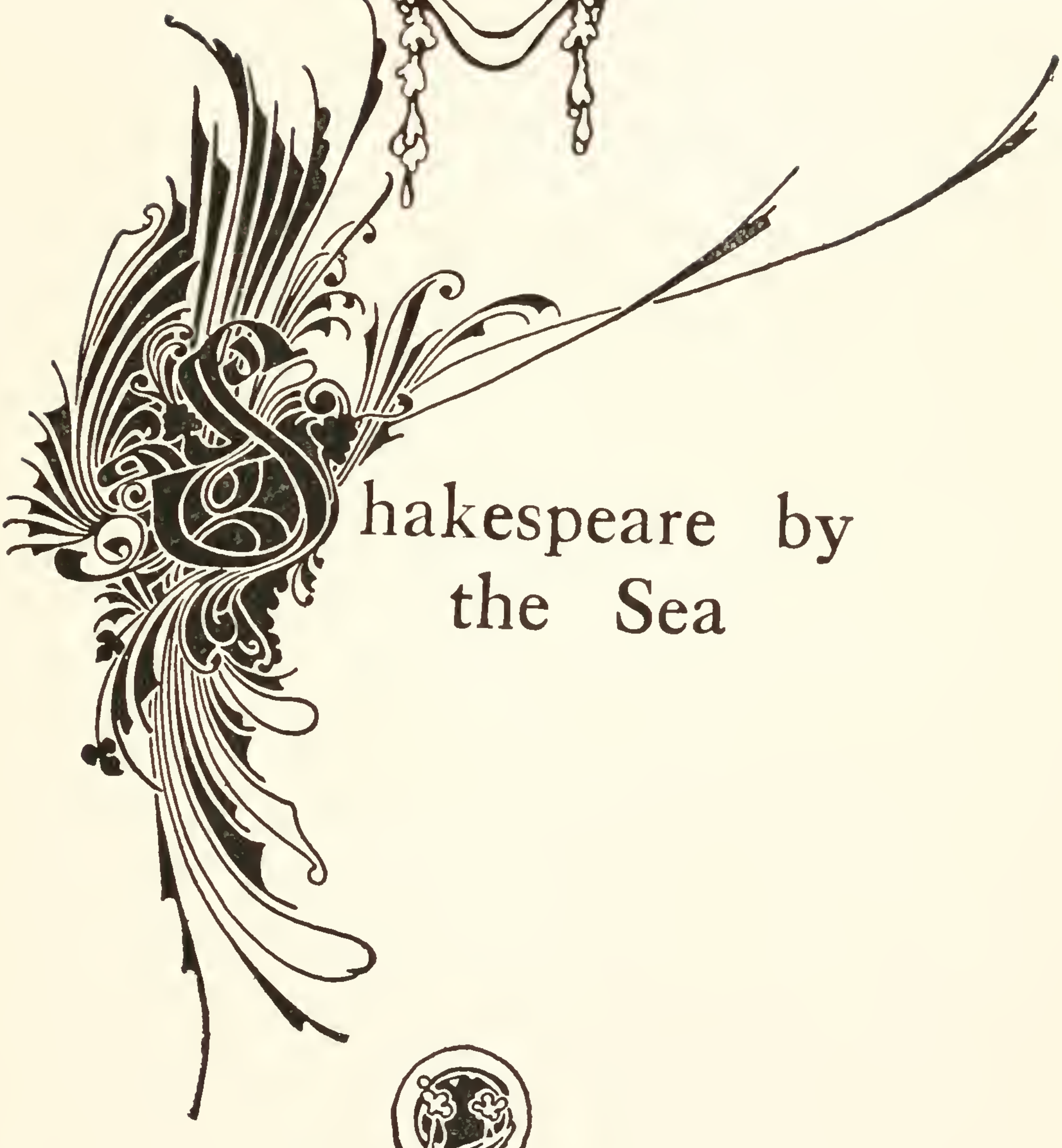


Shakespeare by the Sea

CHAPTER I

ON THE HEADLAND

> And thereby hangs a tale.
>
> *Jacques* ("As You Like It")

“I’M awfully sorry for kings,” said Barbara. She was a tall, slender girl of twelve, with clear, dark eyes that were merry and serious by turns. Just now they were serious for a moment, as she pushed back the dark hair which the wind blew in loose curls about her face. She had thrown herself down on the grassy headland, just below the house, between the woods and the sea. Uncle Waldo was beside her, propped up on a wicker couch, with a book in his hand. His beard was as white as his hair, but his cheeks were rosy like Barbara's and he had a boyish smile as he turned toward her, laying the book open on his knee.

"And why are you sorry for kings, Barbara? Is it because they are out of fashion nowadays? I am glad there is some one who can still be sorry for them. The world is not safe for kings to-day."

"Well, that king was not safe in Macbeth's castle, was he, Uncle Waldo? I was thinking of the kings we read about in Shakespeare. I was listening when you were reading aloud this morning—about that King Henry, when he couldn't sleep, and he got up and walked around in his nightgown and wished he could be a sailor boy sleeping out in the storm, way up on the mast, because *he* had so many worries he couldn't sleep on his soft bed. And he said—I heard you saying it over and over to yourself—'Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.' "

Just then Peggy came climbing up from the beach, her sturdy legs bare and sunburnt, her gown wet halfway to her arms, her golden hair flying in the wind, her eyes as blue as the sea behind her. She was three years younger than Barbara—and she was always doing things.

"Why didn't you come wading, Sister?" she asked, sitting down and spreading out her dress to dry in the sun.

"Barbara likes to stay still once in a while and talk to an old man," said Uncle Waldo. "She was just beginning to tell me why she is so sorry for kings."

"Why are you, Sister?" Peggy looked amazed. "Wouldn't you like to be a princess?"

"Well, perhaps," she hesitated. "But I wouldn't be a king for worlds." And she repeated, " 'Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.' "

"I suppose crowns *are* heavy," observed Peggy, "but why do they have to wear them when they are lying down?"

Barbara smiled and Uncle Waldo laughed outright. "At any rate," he said, "Henry IV took his off and put it on the bed beside him. Did you hear that part, Barbara?—about how the Prince, the wild and naughty Prince Hal, came in and took it up and set it on his own head and declared that if all the world were one great giant it should not take it off again."

"Sounds as if *he* wanted to be a king," said Peggy.

"Oh, yes! they always wanted to," Uncle Waldo agreed, and Peggy went on:

"I'm not sorry for them. They can live in grand palaces and have everything they want. *I'm* sorry for beggars and poor little orphans. I'm not sorry for kings."

"Everything they want!" repeated Uncle Waldo. "And do you think that would make them happy?"

"Well, then," she argued, "how about

The world is so full of a number of things
I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings?"

"And a great deal happier!" Uncle Waldo exclaimed. "I rather think it means that."

"Perhaps it means *good* kings," suggested Barbara, adding quickly, "Oh no! because Duncan was a good king and Macbeth killed him just the same."

"Did the naughty Prince Hal ever get to be a king?" asked Peggy.

"Oh, yes," answered Barbara. "He was Henry V. That's the only one of Shakespeare's plays about real history kings that I've read. He was a good king—the best in the world wasn't he, Uncle Waldo? But I don't see why he wanted to go over and conquer France. If it hadn't been for Joan of Arc——"

Peggy interrupted. "Well, then," she remarked, with an air of relief, "the bad boys *don't* always grow up to be bad men. I wonder if Ned Locke will grow up to be a good man. He is always playing the worst tricks."

"Just like Prince Hal," threw in Uncle Waldo.

"He never likes real games for two minutes, does he, Sister?"

"He likes to swear pretty well," said Barbara. *"Didn't* he swear that day that Susan Wright stopped him? She said, 'You can swear as much as you like for all I care. But you mustn't do it before Peggy and Barbara. *They're* not used to it.' It sounded so funny because she is such a little tot. I guess there are plenty of swear words in Shakespeare—not the ones he used, though."

" 'I'd break a thousand oaths to reign one year,' " quoted Uncle Waldo. "That was a different kind of an oath, however. One of Shakespeare's boys said that to his father who claimed the throne. And his brother, the youth who was afterward Richard III, agreed with him, saying,

And, father, do but think
How sweet a thing it is to wear a crown,
Within whose circle is Elysium
And all that poets feign of bliss and joy.

But the king who was on the throne wailed,

> O God! methinks it were a happy life
> To be no better than a homely swain
> To sit upon a hill——

And that same youth who was Richard III cried out in despair, just before he was killed, when he was surrounded by his enemies,

> A horse! A horse! my kingdom for a horse!

And Henry V, you know——"

A whistle sounded through the trees. "That's Tom," said Peggy, and she was off in a twinkling.

The two lovers of Shakespeare were left.

Uncle Waldo had spent nearly all the leisure hours of a busy life fishing for trout in the northern woods and reading Shakespeare. He had won all the honors of his profession in the Middle West, where he had gone as a boy nearly eighty years ago. But he had acquired just two possessions of which he was really proud, his collection of trout flies and his Shakespeare library. He sometimes wore a shabby coat, but there were no shabby volumes in that library, though many were worn with age and use. And he had stored up wit and wisdom while he was collecting the rare editions on his shelves.

"Go on, Uncle Waldo," said Barbara, when they were alone. But he remained silent and she began,

"Aunt Margaret was telling me the other day about the king in Shakespeare who came to the throne when he was a little boy. And as he grew up he hated being king, because he wanted to read and study. She said being a king was his job, and he ought to have tried harder to do it well, even if he didn't like it. You have to stick to your job whatever you do.

"I love to talk to aunt Margaret. She always knows what you mean. Some people look so queer if you begin to talk about Miranda or Juliet or Brutus. And Isabel Estes said the other day, 'They're not real people.' They *are* real people, though. Now let's read. I'll go and get my tennis racket first and have it ready when Isabel comes."

Uncle Waldo always liked to have Barbara read Shakespeare to him. He liked to watch her face while she read, slowly, in her clear voice, the lines he had loved so long. They were fresh to her, and he had known them so many years! It was when he first discovered that she liked it, too, that they had begun to be friends. When the family had urged him to spend this summer with them in their cottage by the sea, Barbara had helped them by saying, "We can read Shakespeare, Uncle Waldo." Barbara's friends were of all kinds, from the big red setter, who had been lying beside her and now followed her into the house, to Uncle Waldo.

When she came back the old man was watching for her and the red setter was still at her heels. "I suppose you would rather be a banished duke in the Forest of Arden than a king," he said. "Shall we read this?" and he handed her a copy of "As You Like It."

That was a play she knew. It was one of her favorites; and of course it was better every time you read it. The merry-hearted Rosalind; Celia, the perfect friend; their faithful Touchstone; Orlando, hanging his verses on boughs; and the melancholy Jacques;—how she did enjoy them all!

After a while her voice grew tired. She dropped the book in her lap and fell to thinking. Uncle Waldo did not interrupt her thoughts. She looked up at a sea gull, floating on the wind, and out across the water, ruffled into curly waves, and went on thinking, thinking——

Suddenly she caught sight of a tall, white sail and two jibs, full set. "It's the 'Sunshine!' " she cried, jumping up. I'd like to go down to the wharf and meet Mother and Daddy and hear about it. I wonder if they got to the Isle au Haut this time. They've gone on three cruises to that island and never got there yet!"

"Run along," said Uncle Waldo.

"But you'll be alone."

"Never mind. Jacques and I will be here when you get back."

"I'll stop for Ethel. Good-bye."

Uncle Waldo was sorry her thoughts had been interrupted. But they were not, in reality. She kept on thinking all the way to the wharf and later, on the tennis court, and through the evening until bedtime. She was no longer thinking about Shakespeare's kings. She had forgotten about them. When her mother bade her good night—out on the porch, where the scent of fir balsam mingled with the salty smell from the sea— Barbara surprised her mother by saying,

"It was lovely for Rosalind and Celia in the Forest of Arden, wasn't it?"

"What do you mean?" asked her mother. "Being in the beautiful forest together?"

"No, I mean just being together and being such good faithful friends."

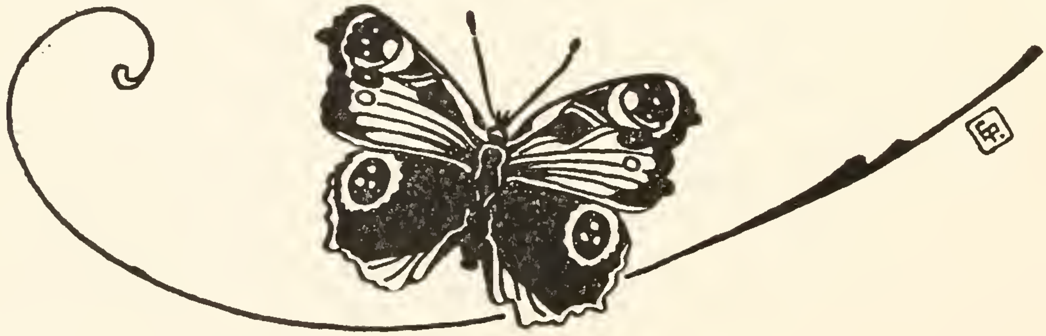
"It was like you and Peggy, here in these woods and on the beach," replied her mother. "I am sure Rosalind and Celia could not go swimming in the Forest of Arden."

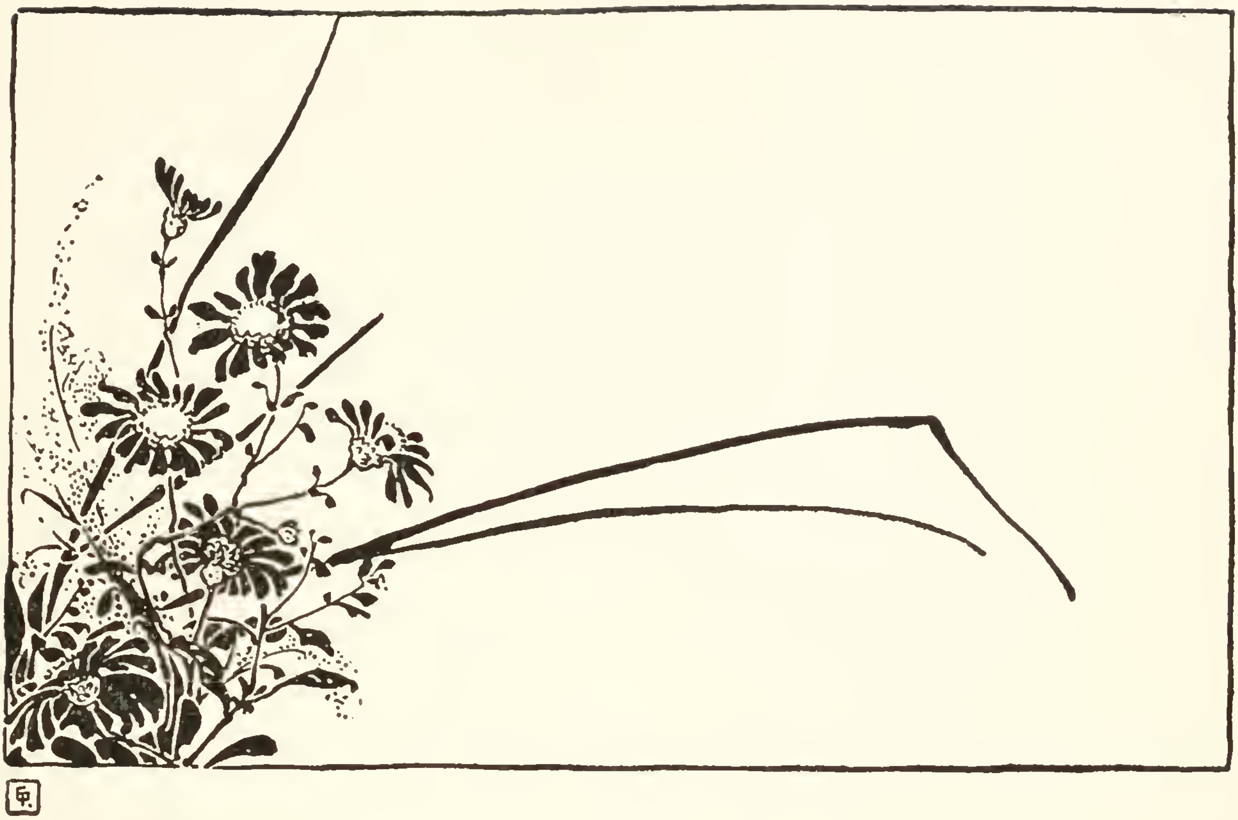
She smiled. "But, Mother, it would be wonderful to be friends like that,—to have one first, own, dearest friend. I think it would be nicer than being a princess."

"But you have ever so many friends, my dear; here, in the summer, and at Hampton, in the winter, surely enough for one little girl."

"Yes, I know. I love them all—that is, most of them. Everything is all right. Good night, dearest Mumsie."

But still she was not quite satisfied, and she fell asleep wondering if there were not something else about being friends.





CHAPTER II

SONGS AND STORIES

Jog on, jog on, the foot-path way,
  And merrily hent the stile-a:
A merry heart goes all the day,
  Your sad tires in a mile-a.
Song ("The Winter's Tale")

BARBARA could not remember when she had first begun to read Shakespeare. She knew the songs long before she knew the plays,—away back in the days of the "Child's Garden of Verses" when she had loved any poetry that sang itself like lullabies or moved along as if it marched or danced to some pleasing tune. And when it came to be

Peggy's turn to learn the songs, Barbara could often tell her the stories to which they belonged.

Even then she hardly knew that they were Shakespeare's stories. They belonged with fairy tales and "Alice in Wonderland," among things that were given to you as a matter of course, along with food and flowers and the blue sky. You took them, enjoyed them, and asked no questions.

She would rock her doll to sleep to scraps of the songs,

Merrily, merrily shall I live now
Under the blossom that hangs on the bow.

Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby—

set to tunes of her own and never twice the same. And on rainy days there was often a strange medley of verses, comic and serious, mixed with the games and stories that whiled away the time; especially in the country, where the house had no nursery and but one fireplace, and the "family circle" was a lively scene. They could be quiet for a time, cutting and pasting and doing various things with their hands. But very soon they seemed to grow hungry for noise. If other children came in, there would be a romp. If not, they would sing out nursery rhymes and jingles from the "Nonsense Book," or anything they knew, raising their voices louder and louder to see which one would come out on top at the end. And no other nonsense went better at that game than

Most friendship is feigning,
Most loving mere folly,
Then *heigh! Ho!* the *holly!*

And often at bedtime Barbara would ask her mother to sing to the "real tunes"

> O mistress mine, where art thou roaming?

or

> Who is Sylvia? what is she,
> That all our swains commend her?

She had read some stories from Shakespeare, but she did not go back to them again and again as she did to the plays themselves when once she had found her way to them. For she liked the sound of Shakespeare's words. The stories seemed dull without those words. It was not necessary to understand always everything they meant. You could understand enough to enjoy what you were reading; and, as more of the meaning came to you every time you read the lines, there were always new pleasures in store for you.

Those were the days when Barbara was fascinated by "The Lady of Shalott." There was a kind of magic in Tennyson's words, too, though so different from Shakespeare's. She would repeat them over and over, in a low, chanting voice, for her own amusement. And because she was already beginning to discover that "acting plays" was about the best game that could be invented, she would arrange the scene of the room in the castle tower, with the mirror and the web and the loom; and there, dressed in long, flowing robes, she would recite the verses to whatever family or friends were at hand for audience, while Peggy, in her short gown with her light curls hanging about her face and her big blue eyes looking very serious, would pace to and fro, representing

> Up and down the people go,
> Gazing where the lilies blow

and "bold Sir Lancelot" in his "brazen greaves" and all the rest of the gay world.

Barbara's mother would often read her some part of one of Shakespeare's plays, and she would take the book afterward and read what came before and after. If she could find any one to listen, she would read aloud. If not, she would read aloud just the same, to herself. And before she knew it she had read the whole play.

She had a good friend who lived next door to their house in Hampton, which was Barbara's winter home, a friend of her mother's whom Barbara called Aunt Caroline. Often, when she was left to herself, Barbara would run across to Aunt Caroline with her little book in her hand, and after she had given her a big hug, she would say, "Aunt Caroline, let's read Shakespeare." And Aunt Caroline would answer amiably, "Very well, Barbara, let's!" Then Barbara would pull out from the corner the little chair in which she always sat and, while Aunt Caroline went on with her sewing, Barbara would read to her heart's content.

Aunt Caroline never interrupted, as some people did, just when the lines were marching in their grandest way. Sometimes Barbara would stop to ask how to pronounce a word, while her eyes would shine with eagerness to be getting on. She seldom asked about the meaning of things. Aunt Caroline was often glad she didn't! But she would say to herself, "I believe the child understands it in her own way. She reads it as if she understood."

Sometimes she would skip the prose passages to hurry on to the blank verse. But not always. One day when they were reading "A Midsummer Night's Dream" they both laughed so much over Bottom and his company, while Barbara tried to mimic the clown's "This*n*e, This*n*e!" in a "monstrous little voice," so that Barbara stopped and rolled over on the floor, and they read no more that day.

For Peggy and Barbara, as it has been for countless children since the world began, the hour between supper and bedtime was the hour for stories. If Mother was there at that precious time—doubly precious because it must end so soon—Peggy was sure to ask for "stories about when you were a little girl" or for "the story your mother used to tell you about the little girl bleaching linen." Barbara preferred the gods and goddesses and the fairies and far-away legends and myths and miracles. Peggy liked these, too, but she wanted to come back often to stories she could understand perfectly about people such as she knew. Barbara reveled in mysteries that could not be explained and strange and beautiful events.

Sometimes Barbara told the story herself while Mother and Peggy listened. And one evening, while they sat in the bow of the window that looked out through the fir trees to the sea, she turned toward her mother, seized her hand with one of her quick little gestures, and said, "Mother, what do you think I found in Shakespeare to-day?"

"What did you find in Shakespeare to-day?"

"I found the story about the beautiful Princess who was lost in the forest—she was dressed in a boy's clothes, don't you remember?"

"Oh, yes!" replied her mother. "You mean the story of Cymbeline."

"It's called that, but *I* think it's the story of Imogen," replied Barbara. She leaned back, and went on as if talking to herself, "She was dreadfully tired and hungry, and she came to a cave and walked inside and found something to eat there. Just then the old man and his two sons who lived in the cave came back—he called them his sons, but they were really princes and the brothers of this lovely lady—and when they saw her, they said, 'But that it eats our victuals I should think here were a fairy.' And she offered them money for the food and they said money was no better than dirt."

"Oh!" exclaimed Peggy, "did they take the food away from her?"

"Of course not! They gave her everything she wanted."

"Money would not be worth much in the forest, you know," said Mother.

"They loved her right away," Barbara continued. "One of them said he would always love her like a brother—of course he said 'him,' because he thought she was a boy and she told him her name was Fidele when it was really Imogen."

"How did she get there, Sister?" asked Peggy. "Please tell it all from the beginning."

"Well!" Barbara took a long breath. "I don't know it *all.* I read some of it with Aunt Caroline and she told me some of it—it's a little bit like Snow White—and—anyway, Imogen had a wicked stepmother who was the Queen and made all the trouble. She pretended to be so sweet and kind and *so* nice to Imogen, and really she was a cruel, bad woman. She did everything for her own son—and he was even worse than she was—he was dreadful! First, the Queen had Imogen's dear husband banished, and then she gave some poison to Imogen's servant and told him it was good medicine and if Imogen was ever sick it would make her well. Anyway, she thought it was poison but it wasn't really. It only put you to sleep and made you seem like dead for a while—a few days or so.

"Now let me see what happened next. Oh, yes! Imogen's husband went off to Italy and got into a quarrel with some men about who was the best and truest woman. And Imogen's husband (I have forgotten his name) swore that Imogen was the most beautiful and the best and purest of them all."

"And was she, Sister?" Peggy interrupted.

"Of course she was! Wait, and you'll see. One of those men swore that he could prove that she was *not.* And Imogen's husband said that if he did he would give him the wonderful ring that his wife gave him when he left England. . . . So this man went to the palace and met Imogen and tried to make her believe bad things about her husband. But she would not. She wouldn't listen to him! So then he hid himself inside of a trunk that was carried into Imogen's bedroom, and in the night, when she was asleep, he crept out and looked all around, so that he could remember things, to show her husband that he had been there, and he stole the bracelet on her arm, and then slipped out and went back to Rome, and made her husband think that she had given it to him."

"Well, what if she had?" asked Peggy.

"Because it was the bracelet *he* had given *her,* and to give it away meant that she was false and loved the other man. The poor man didn't know *what* to do. He thought Imogen had forgotten about him and wasn't good and true after all. He thought she was terribly wicked. He was so angry that he sent word to the servant he had left to look after her and commanded him to kill her."

"Oh!" cried Peggy. *"He* was wicked! How could he?"

"Well, he did; and the servant took her away to kill her, but he *couldn't* do it. She was so good and so beautiful, he just couldn't do it. He told her about her husband's letter, and then her heart was broken. She couldn't believe it; and she begged the servant to kill her right away. But he said that her husband was coming to England with the Roman army, and told her that he could give her some boy's clothes to put on and she could go to the city where he would land and maybe she could find him and tell him that it was all a falsehood."

Barbara paused. "Go on, Sister," urged Peggy.

"He said she would have to be very brave, and she was.

She walked and walked, and slept on the ground, all alone in the woods. And at last she came to that cave. She stayed there—they were so kind to her—and cooked for those boys and the old man, and they thought she cooked awfully well! He had stolen those princes, because he was angry with the King. But he was sorry afterward, and so he treated them like his own sons and taught them everything. They were as polite and nice as princes,—they *were* princes, but they never knew it. Why, when one of them came in from hunting and found Imogen asleep, he took off his boots so as not to disturb her—wasn't that pretty good for a boy brought up in the wild woods? . . . But she was so fast asleep that nothing could wake her up; and bye and bye he was frightened. So he tried to wake her up. And he couldn't, and then he was sure she was dead.

"He carried her out of the cave in his arms and met the others coming home, and he said, 'The bird is dead that we have made so much of,' or something like that. You see the servant had given her the Queen's medicine, and she took it because she did not feel very well that day. The three men were sad, because they loved her very much. They covered her up with leaves of the forest and sang lovely songs over her and promised to bring her all the flowers they knew, all the ones they liked best in the woods.

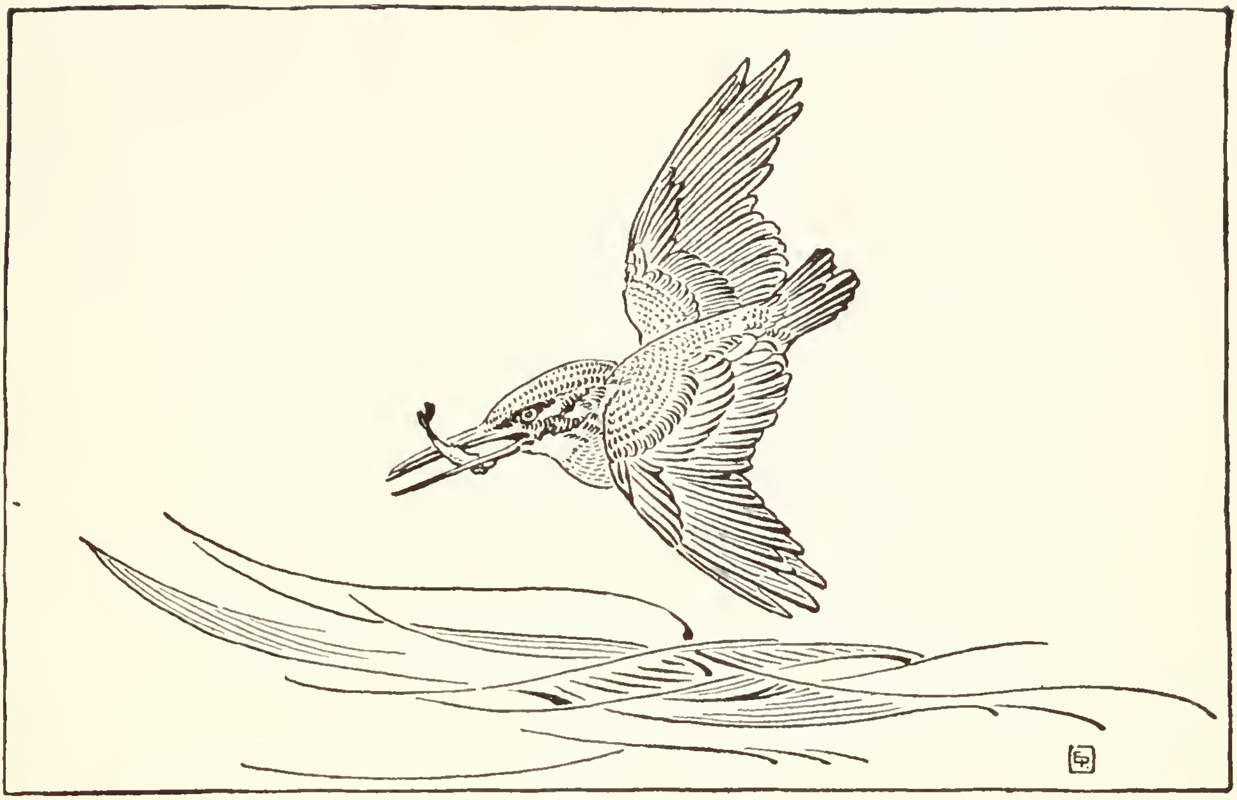
"Well, then the Roman army came, and she was not there to meet her husband. She was found in the woods, after she woke up. One of the generals found her, and when he was made a prisoner, she went with him to the King's court. And the two boys were there, too, because they and the old man had fought so well, they had saved the King's army. It all came out beautifully at the end. Imogen's husband was there, and he found out the truth about his dear wife, and she threw her arms around his neck and forgave him. And the King had his sons back, and they were so glad to find out that the 'sweet rosy lad' was not dead after all, and that he was their own sister, Imogen. Of course the wicked man who got into the trunk was there, too, and he told them what he had done, and everybody knew what a *perfect* lady she was. The Queen and her son were dead, and now Imogen could be happy."

Peggy had nestled up against her mother's shoulder while they listened. Now she rose and stretched herself and said, in a comfortable, sleepy voice, "That *is* a nice story, Sister."

Barbara looked out of the window and murmured:

"Fear no more the heat o' the sun
  Nor the furious winter's rages,——

that's what her brothers sang when they covered her with flowers. But she was only asleep after all."



CHAPTER III

TWELFTH NIGHT; OR, WHAT YOU WILL

“O WONDERFUL, wonderful, and most wonderful wonderful! and yet again wonderful, and after that, out of all hoping!”

Barbara shouted it on the terrace, and to Peggy, who heard it through the upstairs window, these were not the words of Celia to Rosalind, but only Barbara’s way, well-known to Peggy, of announcing something pleasant. She rushed to the window and called out, “What is it, Sister? What is it?”

“A lovely plan! Come downstairs, quick!”

Peggy fairly leaped down the steps, to find Barbara on the landing, already explaining:

"We are going up to the lobster pound with Uncle Fred in the 'Mumps'—the tide is just right—and we can take turns paddling in the bow. And on the way back Uncle Fred is going to leave us at Aunt Jane's, and we are going to stay there all night, and sleep out-of-doors, and have breakfast on the porch—and pick blueberries—and to-morrow some of the grown-ups are coming up through the trail and have lunch with us in the sheep-pasture—and the 'Sunshine' is coming to take us sailing—and a lot of things. And—oh, well, you know what fun it always is at Aunt Jane's."

"Hoop-la! Can we start right away?"

"As soon as we pack our bag. We've got on our middies and woolen skirts, so that's all right. And we can take our bathing suits; and Mother says to be sure and not forget our toothbrushes."

The little bag was soon packed and they were gliding up the Skillings River in the canoe,—the good, old, safety *sponson* which Mother, wishing to class it with their friends' sailboats, the "Sunshine" and the "Moonbeam," had named the "Starlight," but which, on account of the ungainly chambers that swelled from its sides, had been christened by Daddy, irreverently and irrevocably, the "Mumps."

The Skillings River was really no river at all but an arm of the sea that made into the land between rugged shores, bending around the hills and headlands, and widening out in some places into what seemed like mountain lakes embedded in great stretches of unbroken forest. As they paddled inland, a line of pale blue hills lay across the headwaters in front of them, and, behind them, the hills of Mount Desert and smaller islands called the Porcupines shut off the open sea.

To-day the air was so quiet that every rock along the shore was doubled in the water, making strange shapes, as of great horned skeletons that might have been left there since prehistoric ages. There were giant tortoises that had drawn head and feet inside their bony shells; and long, crooked dragons, stretching out their pointed tails and rounding up their backs into fantastic coils, warted and knotted, rough with green bristles, and speckled with red and yellow spots. At first the huge-ribbed creatures seemed to be stalking their prey—now it was strange that they should be so motionless. They must be enchanted by the magic of the summer day: for everywhere around them was a blue and silent peace. Not a boat nor a human creature anywhere. Only a group of cranes stood, as still as the water, on a sandy beach; and now and then a flock of gulls, looking like snowballs as you came near their resting place, would spread their wings and swoop away into the sky.

They stopped to watch a blood-red jellyfish, as large as a half-bushel basket, spreading the petals of his flower-shaped body and trailing his long streamers behind him. A seal raised his head above the water and looked at them, ducked under, came up again, and went down with a lazy swirl, showing his glossy back and setting in motion circles of tiny waves. His face was like a dog's; they hoped he would bark. And they hoped that the loon, who swam and dived and swam again not far away, would laugh at them. But all the creatures' voices were silent on that still afternoon.

They drew up on the beach of a small island, made use of the woods for bathing houses, and plunged into the cold water for a swim. Uncle Fred fairly gasped with the cold, while the children called out, "Oh, it's warm to-day! It's just as warm as toast." "It's not my idea of toast," Uncle Fred answered. "English toast, perhaps—well done, Peggy! You are a real mermaid."

Peggy was swimming with her feet out of water and pressed together like the lobes of a fish's tail.

"Up in Kilkenny Brook," said Barbara, when they had dressed and come back to the canoe and Peggy had taken her place at the bow paddle, "we go into that warm water *as we are;* and we let our hair down, and then we really are mermaids. And we bind our hair with ferns for seaweed and play in the water for hours. We sit on the rocks and repeat 'The Forsaken Merman.' But that makes us sad, and we have to jump up and chase each other to another rock. Sometimes we see Queen Mab on the edge of the stream, driving by in her hazelnut chariot, with a gnat for coachman and little insects for horses, all harnessed up in spider's webs and moonshine's watery beams."

"Queen Mab, the Maker of Dreams," mused Uncle Fred. "Doesn't she play tricks on you?"

"One day she did," said Peggy. "Something bit my legs terribly. I thought it was a bloodsucker. But there was nothing there at all. It was just Queen Mab."

"But don't forget," interposed Barbara, "that you thought she brought the strawberries there, too. We were there one day—not a strawberry in sight! And the very next day, there they were,—the whole bank covered with them!" With a knowing smile at Uncle Fred, she added, "Queen Mab can play very nice tricks sometimes."

They had turned back with the turning tide and they soon reached the lobster pound, the site of which was marked by a group of low, rough buildings above a wharf. Tying the canoe by a long rope so that it would not be hung up by the receding tide, they climbed a ladder nailed to the side of the wharf, walked through a rather smelly storeroom full of boxes and barrels, and came out into a small grass-plot from which a narrow track of rails led to another shed. A low, four-wheeled cart stood on the track. It had just been unloaded; and a large, fat man, "with a tummy like Falstaff's," Barbara whispered, had started to push it back with his hands when he stopped and motioned to the children to climb in. It was a tight fit, but they managed it, and, with Uncle Fred helping to push the car, they made a swift entry into the shed, the old man panting and laughing a loud, hearty laugh and exclaiming, "I'll be darned if they're not the prettiest—and the heaviest—lobsters I ever had in my car."

From a platform on the farther side of the shed they looked straight down into the pool of lobsters. It was a long distance down to them, but you could see them plainly, the green, shiny creatures creeping slowly about, hundreds and hundreds of them crowded together. A wooden screen shut them in from the open water. "I suppose the fishes outside enjoy looking in at them," Uncle Fred remarked. "Like a cage at the Zoo!" exclaimed Barbara.

The fat old man, still panting and breathing heavily, let down a box by a rope and pulled it up full. He thrust wooden plugs between their claws, while the children watched him. "This is to save your lives," he remarked grimly. "I wouldn't try to pull them out, if I were you." Then he carried the lobsters to the canoe, Uncle Fred paid for them, and they were off; and a few good strokes, with the help of the tide, brought them to Aunt Jane's shore.

Waving a good-bye to Uncle Fred, they climbed the hill, through sweet fern and bayberry and ground juniper and tall grasses, to the low, gray cottage that nestled comfortably on the upland and looked far out over sea and hills and river and woods. Breffny, as the little house was called, stood halfway between the shore and the top of the ridge from which the land dropped down on both sides to the sea. "The great road from the mountain" lay along the ridge. "The little ways of Breffny," which, as the Irish poem has it, "are dearer to my heart," wound through a pasture that opened to the sunlight between two stretches of dark woods. Some one had once stopped at the farmer's house on the main road and asked if there were not a path to the sea down through that pasture, at which the farmer's wife waved her massive arm with a broad gesture and answered, "Why, the whole pasture is a path to the sea."

And so it was. Graceful young birches had grown up at random in this pasture path. Their little leaves fluttered in the gentlest breeze and the strong winds bent them to the ground.

On this day it was so still, even the birch leaves scarcely moved. The white-throats were tuning up for their evening songs. There was no other sound. The world seemed motionless; and, as they stopped in their climb to look back, it was like a blue, shining picture. Only the air was so fragrant and the warm sun so delicious that they did not care to think what it was like. Dropping down now and then to pick some irresistible blueberries, they came to the house at last, to find the supper table spread on the porch, as they had hoped, and Aunt Jane waiting to welcome them.

"It is so lovely to wake up at Aunt Jane's," Barbara had remarked as they climbed the hill. "It is even nicer than the evenings, when the fire is burning and the candles are lighted and we sit about toasting marshmallows and telling stories. It is your first night up here, isn't it? Well, wait till morning. You'll see."

They slept on the low porch, close to the ground. But the morning brought a great disappointment. They woke up to a pouring rain. Instead of opening their eyes upon a sky of blue enamel over a sea of pearl and a silvery light on the birch trees, they were awakened suddenly by a howling wind that brought Peggy over to Barbara's cot, in the dim light; and she had no sooner crawled under the covers and nestled up to Barbara than Aunt Jane appeared at the door with a candle, which the wind blew out, and called them to come in and go to bed upstairs. There was no more sleeping, however, for the wind came in gusts that shook the house and the rain poured down upon the roof in torrents.

It was a real "Sou-Easter"; it would rain all day, they knew, and all their plans were spoiled. Yet breakfast was a cheerful episode. When good, black Molly had pulled out the slender-legged table and unfolded it in the center of the living room and set it with white doilies and old-blue china, while the fire blazed away on the hearth, Aunt Jane called them to their places, and they were as jolly over their scrambled eggs and blueberry muffins as if the rain had not been slashing the window-panes.

It was after breakfast that the clouds descended upon their spirits. They went over to the window-seat on the other side of the room and looked out hopelessly.

"What *shall* we do *now?*" Peggy whispered, her long face turned up to Barbara's.

"Ye gods! ye gods! must we endure all this!" Barbara began to wonder, after she had said them, where those words came from. Suddenly she remembered—"Julius Cæsar!" She had to smile. There were greater troubles in the world than this rain; and she put her arm around Peggy as if it were only on *her* account that she was sorry now.

Aunt Jane was moving around the room, wondering what she might suggest for their amusement, when she discovered that Barbara had settled the question. She had reached up to the shelves from which rows of books looked down temptingly upon the soft, cushioned window-seat and pulled down a volume entitled "Twelfth Night; or, What You Will." It sounded like a cheerful title for a gloomy day.

"Let's read this together, Peggy," she said. "Come along. We'll divide up the parts. Let me see. Here's the Duke Orsino and Sebastian, the brother of Viola. You be the Duke and I'll be Sebastian. And I'll be Sir Toby Belch and you can be Sir Andrew Aguecheek. *They'll* be funny, I know. You be Olivia and I'll be Viola. And then there's the clown, and Malvolio——"

Peggy, who had fallen in with the plan, chose the clown on general principles, and they began. They invited Aunt Jane to join them, but, saying that she had letters to write, when she had found another copy of the play for their convenience, she sat down by the desk; and, in spite of herself, she was soon listening to every word.

For nobody could resist the contagious merriment of "Twelfth Night." It bubbles over with mirth; it is the cheerfulest of plays. It begins with music and ends with a song; and the whole story seems to be set to the strains of music. There is trouble enough, to be sure, for every one in the play. There is shipwreck and unrequited love and too much drinking (on the part of Sir Toby and Sir Andrew) and desperate misunderstandings; and poor Viola gets into such a tangle with it all that only Time, she says, can untie the knot. But the knot is untangled in such a light-hearted vein! Nobody suffers very long or very deeply, not even Malvolio, unless a conceited fool who gets no more than he deserves can suffer deeply; and if he does, one cannot be very sorry for him. And if the young Duke is forced to transfer his affections from one lovely lady to another, Viola has proved herself more than a match for Olivia and every one profits by the exchange. Even the clown is happy: for has he not won praise for the wisdom of his folly from every one whose commendation is worth having and revenged himself upon Malvolio for his scorn of "such a barren rascal"?

In the opening scene, the Duke is listening to music. Peggy read the lines in a low voice, speaking the words distinctly:

If music be the food of love, play on.

. . . .

That strain again! It had a dying fall:
O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour!

Before he has spoken six lines they felt acquainted with this romantic lover and anxious to know his story. He soon makes a clean confession to the other lords:

O, when my eyes did see Olivia first,
Methought she purged the air of pestilence!

And a gentleman coming in brings from her the news that, for the sake of a dear brother who is dead, Olivia has vowed to go into retirement, like a nun, and see no one for seven years.

The scene changes to a seacoast. It is Illyria. They stopped reading while Aunt Jane told them that Illyria was what is now the Dalmatian coast, across the Adriatic Sea from Italy. "There are many Italian villas there to-day," she told them, "with gardens and orchards like Olivia's. It is a wild and beautiful coast on which Viola and her twin brother were shipwrecked."

Viola's predicament and her gentle nature are revealed in a few words. As Barbara read them, she had a picture in her mind of that rocky shore, with villas and orchards in the background.

And what should I do in Illyria?
My brother he is in Elysium.
Perchance he is not drowned: what think you, Sailors?

When the captain assures her that it is more than likely that her brother, too, is saved, she makes inquiries about the country and considers what to do with herself in this strange emergency. She must do something at once; and she decides to trust herself to the captain, whose fair demeanor she believes covers a kindly heart, while he promises to help her to disguise herself and to win the office of page in the service of the Duke.

For I can sing,
And speak to him in many sorts of music,
That will allow me very worth his service.

When she next appears, she is the page, Cesario, who, in three days, has so won the favor of the Duke that he has "unclasped to her the book even of his secret soul" and bidden her carry his suit to Olivia, to whom the youthful charm and gentle breeding of the "dear lad" cannot fail to gain access. And even as she consents, the reader learns that her own heart has surrendered to the Duke and she would fain be in Olivia's place.

Another scene introduced the children into Olivia's house, where Sir Toby, her uncle, and his boon companion, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, have been disturbing her with their late hours and their carousals. She is mistress of a large estate, where she is wont "to sway her house, command her followers," and manage her affairs with "a smooth, discreet, and stable bearing." Yet she is modest and kindly, as her banterings with the clown soon prove,—and she won Peggy, once for all, by the way she rebukes her conceited steward, Malvolio, who has been abusing the good clown:

"O, you are sick of self-love, Malvolio, and taste with a distempered appetite."

Like all victims of self-love, Malvolio has no sense of humor; and he is made to pay dearly for that lack by the joke the two knights and Olivia's maid, Maria, enjoy at his expense.

Viola, or Cesario, stands long outside Olivia's gate, but when Olivia hears how young the messenger is, that he is well-favored and has a shrewish tongue, she admits him, forgetting her vow. He presents the Duke's cause very skilfully, humorously, at first, to gain a hearing—pretending that he has learned his speech by rote and must not be put out—and later with all the eloquence of one who knows by experience the feelings in the Duke's heart and can plead for him with the earnestness of one who knows his charms only too well. But alas! the result of this pleading is that Olivia falls in love with Cesario, as she believes him to be, and would fain hear him plead his own suit to her. Viola is amazed at this unexpected turn of events and blames her disguise as wickedness. "Poor lady!" she exclaims to herself—

If it be so, as 'tis,
Poor lady, she were better love a dream.

Now all the tangle is exposed; and in the second act appears the person who is to make things more confused than ever for a time and then at last straighten them out. This is Sebastian, who has been rescued by one Antonio; and from the devotion of Antonio to this young gentleman and Sebastian's unwillingness to be any further burden to him, Sebastian is shown to be worthy of his sister, whom he believes to have been drowned. (They stopped once or twice while Barbara, with Aunt Jane's help, straightened out the tangle for Peggy.)

While Viola still acts her part as page, there is one delightful scene, over which all three laughed heartily The Duke calls again for music, and says to Cesario,

Come hither, boy: if ever thou shalt love,
In the sweet pangs of it, remember me.

Viola speaks so "masterly" of love, that he suspects that this youth, although so young, has had some experience of it, and the page confesses to having once, a little, loved some one of the Duke's complexion. Then the Duke begs

Cesario to press his suit to Olivia, declaring that he loves as no *woman* could ever love. Viola objects to that, saying,

> My father had a daughter loved a man
> As it might be, perhaps, were I a woman,
> I should your lordship.

The Duke:

> And what's her history?

Viola:

> A blank, my lord. She never told her love,
> But let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,
> Feed on her damask cheek: she pined in thought;
> And with a green and yellow melancholy
> She sat like patience on a monument,
> Smiling at grief. Was not this love indeed?

And, now, in several scenes, Sebastian is mistaken for Cesario and Cesario for Sebastian. When Olivia bestows her affection upon Sebastian, thinking him Cesario, Sebastian is completely mystified and thinks he must be dreaming. And he cries:

> If it be thus to dream, still let me sleep!

But no, he is not asleep.

> This is the air; that is the glorious sun;
> This pearl she gave me, I do feel't and see't;
> And though 'tis wonder that enwraps me thus,
> Yet 'tis not madness.

Thus, little by little, the way is prepared for the happy conclusion. When the brother and sister appear together, the truth is out, and the Duke at once exclaims:

If this be so,
I shall have share in this most happy wreck.

Olivia will wed Sebastian, to whom she has already plighted troth, mistaking him for Cesario; and when the Duke knows that his Cesario is a woman, he remembers their conversations and understands her meanings. Calling Olivia his "sweet sister," he goes off the final scene, leading Viola by the hand.

Malvolio appears in this last scene to learn the truth for his part also. He has been imprisoned and is now released. Already, in the second act, his tormentors had begun on him, when, in the famous garden scene, they had left a letter, written by Maria in her mistress's hand, where he would find it; and while they watched him from behind a boxwood hedge, he read it with swelling pride, for it convinced him that Olivia was in love with him. The letter begged him to go in yellow stockings and cross-gartered (a fashion she abhorred, in reality), to speak haughtily to his inferiors, to smile always, and to remember that some men are born great, others achieve greatness, and others have greatness thrust upon them. From that moment Malvolio has been strutting about like a peacock, smiling and bragging, convinced that greatness has been thrust upon him. He irritates the two knights more and more, till they accuse him of madness and imprison him.

And so it happens that the real fool of the play is Malvolio, while the clown, whose task in life is to play the fool, appears as a man of wit and wisdom. And thus, says the clown, the whirligig of time brings in his revenges.

The play ends with the clown's song,

When that I was and a tiny little boy,
  With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
A foolish thing was but a toy,
  For the rain it raineth every day.

. . . .

A great while ago the world begun,
  With hey, ho, the wind and the rain.
But that's all one, our play is done,
  And we'll strive to please you every day.

"And if it *did* rain every day," Barbara began, as they closed the books.

"Why, it is pouring as hard as ever," Peggy interrupted, turning to the window. "I had forgotten all about it."

CHAPTER IV

A BOY AND A FESTIVAL

We have had pastimes here and pleasant game.
The Princess ("Love's Labour's Lost")

BARBARA cherished among her treasures a little copy of "The Winter's Tale" which one of her older friends, an Englishman who knows all about Shakespeare, had sent her from New York as a birthday gift. On the flyleaf he had written some verses

To Barbara

In Shakespeare's England many a maid
Was serious and learned Greek.

And yet I think they sometimes played
  At ball and hide and seek.
I hope that they had tops to whip
  And also tops to hum,
And skipping ropes wherewith to skip,
  Though ping-pong had not come,
Diavolo was all unknown
  Nor Teddy bears invented.
They never heard the gramophone,
  And yet they were contented.
They played at marbles, prisoner's base,
  And other simple games.
They made cat's cradles with a lace,
  And called each other names,—
At least I am afraid they did,
  For children even then
Did not do all that they were bid
  And act like grown-up men.
'Tis true that girls wore farthingales
  And stomachers and ruffs,
Which made them look like ships with sails,
  And yet they were no muffs.
They climbed up trees and rolled down hills
  And paddled in the sea;—
Were children underneath their frills,
  In fact, like you and me.

These verses set Barbara to thinking about the children of Shakespeare's time. What kind of boys and girls did he see about him, she wondered. What kind of school did they have? And what did they do to amuse themselves? Above all, what kind of a boy was Will Shakespeare?

Barbara was much less interested, it must be confessed, in knowing about Shakespeare than about the people in his plays and the places where their stories were enacted. Yet she sometimes wondered. He seemed to her to belong to the whole world. His characters lived in all the countries of Europe and traveled from one to another so often that it was hard for her to believe that there were no steam engines in their day or in Shakespeare's. It was strange, therefore, to think that he had passed his boyhood in the village of Stratford-on-Avon, that he came back from London in later years to live there as a country gentleman, and that, as far as anybody knows, he was never out of England. That he knew the life of the country, was evident; that Warwickshire was very beautiful one scarcely needed to be told, for the country whose fields and flowers and woods he describes must have been beautiful. But he knew court life and city life, high life and low life; and he seemed at home in ancient and medieval times as well as modern, though he mingled ancient customs with those of his own day and made Cleopatra play billiards. What kind of a country was that England of Queen Elizabeth, where Shakespeare learned so many things? And what was he seeing and doing there when he was a boy among other boys?

Barbara had hardly opened her new volume when she found, in the first scene of "The Winter's Tale," such an attractive boy that she wished she might know "for certain" that Shakespeare was like him. And before she had finished the play she had been present, with Shakespeare, at a country festival like those he often saw in the valley of the Avon.

The boy was Mamillius, a prince—and Shakespeare was no prince! No, he was the son of a villager—a dealer in wool, meat, gloves and leather, who perhaps had his own sheep in the neighboring fields and who was at one time high bailiff, or mayor, of the town. His mother was a farmer's daughter. She came of an educated family long established in Warwickshire and she was heiress of the estate. Whether she was one of those maids who were "serious and learned Greek," we have no way of knowing; but it is difficult not to believe that, like her granddaughter, Susanne Shakespeare, she was "witty above her sex." She it was, we may guess, who first drew the mind of her inspired child to observe the beautiful sights and sounds of the country around Stratford, which was called "the heart of England." But she had ten children, and in those days, when everything from candles to fine linen was made at home, she must have been a busy woman. Mamillius lived a sheltered life, as we see him in the play. He had lords and ladies always about him to play with him and amuse him. The child Shakespeare had to shift for himself, no doubt, and was free to wander through the fields and along the country paths and to mix with all kinds of people. He learned from life at first hand, as the saying is. Yet not one of his plays would have been written if he had not learned also from books, as Mamillius did, with as great an interest and understanding as he ever learned from observing what he saw about him. Indeed, his lifelong passion for reading, which must have been formed in childhood, is a simple fact which answers many of Barbara's questions.

After all, these two boys may not have been unlike. Mamillius was a "gallant child,"—one who "made old hearts fresh." "It is a gentleman of the greatest promise that ever came into my note," said a visitor at his father's palace. He had "honourable thoughts,"

Thoughts high for one so tender.

Not many things escaped him. He saw everything and understood more than his parents realized. He had his opinion about the kind of eyebrows that were becoming to a lady. He was active and full of his ideas. When his devoted mother, at one point in the story, turned him over to a lady of the court, he was not willing to play with her because she would "kiss him hard" and "speak to him as if he were a baby still." After a few minutes Hermione, his mother, came back to him; and the conversation that followed might be a picture of Shakespeare's own childhood:

Hermione:

Come, sir, now
I am for you again: pray you, sit by us
And tell's a tale.

Mamillius:

Merry or sad, shall't be?

Hermione:

As merry as you will.

Mamillius:

A sad tale's best for winter: I have one
Of sprites and goblins.

Hermione:

Let's have that, good sir.
Come on, sit down; come on, and do your best
To fright me with your sprites; you're powerful
at it.

Mamillius:

There was a man——

Hermione:

Nay, come, sit down, then on.

Mamillius:

Dwelt by a churchyard: I will tell it softly;
Yond cricket shall not hear it.

Hermione:

Come on, then,
And give't me in my ear.

Such a child, no doubt, was Shakespeare. For we may well believe that he had a mind well stocked with stories and that tales of sprites and goblins pleased him; perhaps, too, he was more eager to tell his stories than to sit down where he was bidden and tell them exactly as some one else would have him. It may be that Shakespeare was thinking of his own little boy, when he pictured Mamillius —his only son who died at the age of twelve. Certainly, if he remembered his own free childhood, he must have pitied the boy who was cooped up and watched so carefully, as he pitied poor Prince Arthur in the Tower of London, when he imagined him as saying, in "King John":

By my christendom!
So I were out of prison and kept sheep,
I should be merry as the day is long.

There are some pleasant things about boys in the first part of "The Winter's Tale." Barbara liked them so much that she read them to Uncle Waldo; and that led him to tell her interesting things about Shakespeare's boyhood. He told her about a book, called "The Palace of Pleasure," full of stories from all climates and all ages, which must have been one of the few books in the Shakespeare family; and one member of the family, at least, used it to good purpose. He had the Bible, too, always at hand; and the legends of Greece and Rome came to him, through Ovid and Vergil, in his early school days. Uncle Waldo was sure that Shakespeare read everything he could find to read, and that he was always full of fun like the two boys in the play, of whom the Queen asked her husband's friend, who had been his playmate: "You were pretty lordings then?" and he replied:

We were, fair queen,
Two lads that thought there was no more behind,
But such a day to-morrow as to-day,
And to be boy eternal.

"Was not my lord the verier wag o' the two?" she asked, and he assured her that they were like twin lambs frisking in the sun and bleating at each other, equally happy and carefree and jolly.

While they were talking thus of bygone days, the King was bantering with Mamillius. He chided him playfully for the smutch on his nose, saying,

Come, captain,
We must be neat; not neat, but cleanly, captain.

Then he turned to his royal friend and asked him: "Are you as fond of your young Prince as I seem to be of mine?" To which the other father answered that his boy gave him all his exercise and all his mirth and that he made a July day seem as short as a day in December.

So the two fathers who had been boys together talked of their own boys, and Hermione was proud and happy as she listened. But sorrow followed, coming suddenly upon Mamillius and his mother even while he was telling her that story of the man who dwelt by a churchyard. His father interrupted them; and enraged by a cruel and false suspicion against his mother, took him away from her and kept them apart. The boy fell ill of grief and loneliness; and his knowledge that his father was wronging his mother so "cleft his heart," that he died.

But, although Mamillius has a brief and a sad part in "The Winter's Tale," he is never forgotten throughout the play. The news of his death brings his father to reason and causes him to regret bitterly what he has done. It is through Mamillius that the happy ending is made possible for all the others, including his baby sister, Perdita.

"The Winter's Tale" is in two parts, with sixteen years between. In all that time this sister has been lost from the court and nobody knows whether she is alive or dead. But we who read the play know that she was left—a baby in swaddling clothes—on the rough ground of a rugged country where she was found by a shepherd and reared as his own child. At the age of sixteen she appears to us for the first time at that country festival which resembles so exactly those that Shakespeare knew when he was a boy.

It is the sheepshearing feast, and Perdita, the most beautiful shepherdess of the countryside, "the most peerless piece of earth that e'er the sun shone bright on," has been chosen mistress of the revels. She is being wooed by a prince, Florizel, who, when he was out hawking (a favorite pastime in Shakespeare's day) had chased his falcon over this shepherd's domain, and, meeting Perdita, had come back often to see her, as he has come on this gala day. He is clothed as a shepherd, and he has added fine ornaments to Perdita's gown so that she may shine her best at the festival. He is none other, as it happens, than the son of that friend of Perdita's father. Sixteen years before, he was that little boy of whom his father declared that he made a July day seem as short as a day in December.

The sheep are all sheared and the shearers, with their families and friends, are to be entertained at dinner, with dances and merrymakings afterward. Perdita has commissioned her supposed brother, the rustic who is called a clown, to buy spices and sugar and currants and rice, saffron to color the pies, and prunes, and raisins. For she must cook the dinner for all these people, as well as be their hostess. And although the clown, while he was counting the money from his share of the wool on the way to the market, was robbed by the rogue, Autolycus, we must believe that Perdita obtained the things she needed. For the festival takes place; and nowhere else could it properly take place than at the house of this shepherd, her foster father, who has so increased in prosperity since he found Perdita that his neighbors are puzzled about how it can have happened.

The reason for his great prosperity is that he found much gold wrapped up in the bundle that contained the baby. It was called "fairy gold," because in Shakespeare's day people believed that the fairies left little changelings to be cared for, just as they also sometimes carried children away to live with them, and that good fortune would follow the one who found the waif and befriended it.

Perdita has prepared ribbons and nosegays to deck the twenty-four sheepshearers; she has engaged men singers who can sing in three parts (and one of them is a Puritan who sings psalms to hornpipes) ; she has no doubt procured good ale, though nothing is said of that. She has thought of everything. Indeed, the rustic "brother" thinks she rather "lays it on" and has very grand ideas about her feast. She has flowers of every kind the season will afford and she distributes them among her guests as graciously as Flora, goddess of the spring, when she ushers in the month of April with the first wild flowers. Yet she holds back modestly till the shepherd urges her on, telling her that she ought to be like his good wife who was wont to be pantler and cook, butler, dame, and servant. Then she comes forward, receives the guests, sings and "dances featly"; and while the other shepherdesses join her in a dance on the green, there comes in a pedlar.

This pedlar is the rogue, Autolycus; and just such pedlars were always turning up at these festivities in Shakespeare's England, where it was the custom for the swains to buy presents of them for their partners. Autolycus was one who haunted fairs and wakes and bear-baitings; he had at one time gone about selling chances to play at a game called troll-my-dames: he had carried apes on his shoulder, and he had acted with traveling companies in "The Prodigal Son." The servant who meets him at the gate is entranced with him: he comes back to tell the dancers that if they could hear him they would never again dance after tabor and hornpipe; that no bagpipes would move them again. For he can sing faster than one can count money; he utters ballads as if he had eaten them, and "all men's ears grow to his tunes."

How often the boy Shakespeare had delighted in such an "admirable conceited fellow" as this Autolycus! Perhaps his wife, Ann Hathaway, had been mistress of the feast when he first met her, and perhaps he had bought trinkets for her from such a pedlar as this one who had songs "for man or woman, of all sizes"; who had ribbons, tapes, worsteds, cambrics, lawns of all colors, and who sang them over as if they had been gods and goddesses, till "you would think a smock were a she-angel."

Perdita is a little afraid that he will use bad words, but when the clown tells her that there is more in these pedlars than you would think, she allows him to come in. He enters singing:

Lawn as white as driven snow;
Cypress black as e'er was crow;
Gloves as sweet as damask roses;

Masks for faces and for noses;
Bugle, bracelet, necklace, amber,
Perfume for my lady's chamber;
Golden quoifs and stomachers
For my lads to give their dears.

. . . .

Come buy of me, come; come buy, come buy,
Buy, lads, or else your lassies cry; come buy.

The shepherdess, Mopsa, wants her shepherd to buy her a ballad. She loves a ballad in print because then "we know that it is true." Autolycus makes a good day's trade and goes off singing:

Will you buy any tape
Or lace for your cape,
My dainty duck, my dear-a?

After that some dancers enter—three carters, three shepherds, three neatherds, and three swineherds. Dressed in skins, like satyrs, they leap about in a wild sort of woodland dance, to the delight of the company.

Here the serious part of the play interrupts the revelers. And Barbara, reading it, became so absorbed in the remainder of the story—of how Florizel took Perdita back to her father's court, of how she went with her father to see a statue of Hermione, her mother, whom every one thought dead, and how the statue came to life before their eyes—she was so charmed by these events that she forgot all about the children of Shakespeare's day. Only afterward, when she turned back to the flyleaf, did she continue to think about them.

CHAPTER V

AN ENCHANTED ISLAND

To cry to the sea that roared to us; to sigh
To the winds, whose pity, sighing back again,
Did us but loving wrong.
Prospero ("The Tempest")

SOME one had told Barbara of having heard an opera sung out-of-doors on a real ship on real water, while the audience sat on the shore. And one day, when she was on board the "Sunshine," it occurred to her that it would be a wonderful thing if "The Tempest," which she and her friend Alice Van Norden had been reading that very morning, could be acted on one of the wooded islands among which they were sailing. First, there would be the shipwreck, she thought, right there on those gray rocks that were slipping past their starboard bow. The boatswain would be there, shouting out his commands to the King of Naples, crying, "What care these roarers for the name of king?", sending his royal passengers back into the cabin where they were better off at their prayers since they could not handle a rope; and the good Gonzalo, who had saved Prospero and Miranda so many years before, making his jokes in the midst of the danger,—declaring that the boatswain was born to be hanged, that they were safe as long as he was on board, for his complexion was perfect gallows; and Prospero's wicked brother, the Duke of Milan, blaming the sailors for all their trouble,—when his own guilt was at the bottom of this whole story of "sea sorrow." Old Gonzalo would cry out, as the ship split: "Now would I give a thousand furlongs of sea for an acre of barren ground, long heath, brown furze, anything. The wills above be done! but I would fain die a dry death."

Just beyond the rocks, on the island they were passing, was a level, mossy platform bordered by soft, pointed cedar trees. That was just the place, thought Barbara, for Prospero and Miranda, while Prospero should tell Miranda the story of how they came to be living on this island and explaining the meaning of this storm, which he had raised up by his magic powers, and give his commission to the delicate spirit, Ariel. It was just the place where Ariel's music might draw Prince Ferdinand, after his brave swim for shore, and where, seeing Miranda, he would exclaim:

Most sure the goddess
On whom these airs attend!

Alice Van Norden, who lived in Hampton, was sitting beside Barbara while she was imagining all this. She had been making Barbara a visit while her family had gone on motoring down the coast; and Barbara's Uncle Roger had kindly made up this sailing party for Alice's benefit. There was a perfect wind. They had put a reef in the sail before starting, whereupon the breeze lightened at once (as, of course, it would); and they were gliding along slowly, talking of shaking out that reef, when, just as Barbara was on the point of telling Alice what she thought might be done with that island, the "Sunshine" touched bottom.

"We're on a rock!" they exclaimed, as the boat listed.

"Yes," said Roger from the wheel, "I've been looking for that rock all summer. Now I've found it."

He rose and dropped the mainsail quickly, saying, while he furled it, "The tide is falling. I'm afraid we can't pull her off, but we'll try."

In half a minute he had the anchor in the tender; he rowed out, away from the rocks, and dropped it a short distance to the windward side. He came back, hurried to the bow, and, with the help of two other men, pulled hard on the anchor rode; but the "Sunshine" refused to budge.

"We'll have to wait till the tide rises," said Roger, "and lifts us off. It will be about three hours, I think. I'm sorry, friends." He sat down by the wheel and lit his pipe.

"This is the way we learn patience from the sea," remarked Aunt Margaret.

"There are worse teachers," said Roger. "I was down in Indian Harbor once, with my friend Joe Crowly, the lobster fisherman, when we saw a boat go aground just after the tide had begun to fall. There was only one man on board. I looked to see what he would do; and the old salt sat down calmly, with his pipe, to wait at least seven hours. I said to Joe, 'I declare, that man has learned patience.' 'Should think he ought to have,' answered Joe, 'he has just come back from serving eight years in state's prison.' "

Barbara was saying in a low tone to Alice, "I was just thinking about the shipwreck in 'The Tempest' when we struck that rock."

Roger overheard her. "This is not exactly a shipwreck, Barbara," he remarked. "Still, if you could persuade Ariel to fetch us some of that 'dew from the still-vexed Bermoothes,' it might help to get us off. All we need is more water."

"By the way," he continued, "I always wonder when I read that play how Shakespeare knew so much about sailing. That great old sea dog, the Boatswain, who roars louder than the gale, knows exactly what to do. He never wastes a word, and you can see what is happening to the ship every minute. He does everything in his power to keep the ship off shore, to run her close to the wind, with as little leeway as possible. He knows he is safe if he has room enough. If he could have put out an anchor, as we have done, to hold her off shore, he would never have struck that reef. He did everything there was to do."

"He had Prospero's magic against him," remarked Aunt Margaret.

"Well, I never heard that Shakespeare was a sailor, but I believe he was. He could never have done that from books, any more than he could have written his descriptions of hounds and hunting without having been a hunter. Of course he could have learned a good deal from his friend Sir Walter Raleigh while they chatted together at the Mermaid Tavern. Raleigh was called 'the Shepherd of the Ocean,' wasn't he?"

They talked on about Raleigh and his explorations until Roger said,

"Why don't some of you go ashore and take a walk on the island while we wait? You might find Ariel, Barbara. But avoid Caliban—'Ban, ban, Ca-Caliban.' "

"We'll explore!" exclaimed Barbara, jumping up, while Roger rose to untie the tender. "The trouble is," she whispered, "Ariel would be invisible." "And Caliban wouldn't," Alice added.

They went ashore, as many of them as the small boat would carry, and landed on slippery, seaweedy rocks. While the tender was rowed back to the "Sunshine," they climbed the hill, and soon were scattered over the island.

There was not a human habitation anywhere, not so much as a fisherman's hut. If the island was not enchanted and possessed by spirits, like Prospero's island, it was certainly a place of "airy charms," fit for "such stuff as dreams are made of." The woods led down to wild rocks on the ocean side. The trees were festooned with a gray-green feathery moss that hung down, like nereids' hair, from the branches to the ground. In the open spaces, great clumps of fireweed stood up against the sky. The ferns were as tall as palm trees. Carpets of bright red bunchberries were spread between the moss-covered rocks, and farther down blue harebell hung by slender thread-like stems to the cliffs. There was an "odd angle of the isle" where the water would rush in seething and boiling, if the winds were high. The waves were as gentle now as if their fury had been allayed by Ariel's music.

Alice and Barbara did not rest until they had explored the entire island. Then they sat down in a clump of fir trees and looked out toward the blue horizon.

In the meantime, Roger and those with him on board caught sight of a small motor boat in the distance.

"That is Allan Crabtree's boat," said Roger, watching it through the long-distance glasses. "He's coming toward us."

Allan drew up alongside, heard what had happened, and drawled out amiably, "I'll head 'round to the far side o' the island and take your party home. I ain't got nothin' special to do this afternoon. There's a better landin' on the far side."

As the afternoon sun was getting low, this seemed an excellent suggestion.

"But can you take them all?" asked Roger. "There are seven of them on shore."

"Oh, yes, I can take seven. They may have to wade for it." With that Allan was off and disappearing around the point.

Alice and Barbara heard the chug-chug, saw the boat pull up on the narrow beach, and ran down to join the others who were going to meet it. It was rather hard to be taken home so soon, and with that chug-chug! Alice looked disappointed and Barbara begged her mother to let them wait for the sailboat. "It won't be long now," she pleaded.

Mother looked at her watch. It seemed a pity to spoil their sail for the mere matter of an hour. She herself would have preferred to wait and go back on the "Sunshine." She disliked the gasoline engine; the sailboat, even on the rocks, seemed far safer for the children. So she gave her consent, telling them to go at once to the shore near the "Sunshine" and let Uncle Roger know they were there. "Call to them right away and they will row in for you," she said. It was only a few steps up the slope before they would be within hearing distance of the "Sunshine."

They promised and started at once. But instead of climbing straight across the island they decided to go by the shore. The rocks were slippery and walking was difficult. They were having a fine talk, too, about the girls and boys in Hampton, and perhaps they delayed more than they realized.

"It's a pretty long way, after all," said Barbara at length. "I wish we'd gone straight. *That's* what Mother meant. We ought to be seeing the sailboat by this time!"

"Why, wasn't it right *there?*" Alice looked puzzled.

"No, it's a little farther round," said Barbara.

Presently they turned and looked in both directions. "Surely, Barbara, we're past the place. It *was* right *there,* don't you remember?"

"It's gone!" cried Barbara. "Oh, there it is, way out in the bay! Oh! oh!"

Her eyes filled with tears. She sat down on the ground, —a picture of despair.

"Surely they'll come back for us, won't they?" Alice waved her arms to beckon them, although she knew it was quite useless.

"How will they know? They will think we are on the motor boat. What *shall* we do?" There was no answer to that question.

"Well, Barbara, no supper for us to-night," said Alice after a moment of silence. "But we're not afraid. And *sometime* they will come back for us."

"We must put up a signal," said Barbara. "That's what people always do when they are wrecked on a desert island. Somebody may see it before dark. If we only had some matches to light a fire!"

But Alice was older and wiser. "No, I think we'd better not put up any signal," she said. "We don't know who would see it. And if we don't let any one know we are here, the 'Sunshine' or the motor boat or some of your friends will come back for us. Let's go up there where we can see them coming."

They sat down on a mossy ledge, on the very spot which Barbara had chosen for the central scene of "The Tempest." Her face cleared as she recalled how she had pictured them there—Prospero and Miranda and Ferdinand and all the wonders that surrounded them. She tried not to think of Caliban and his drunken companions. She was rather glad there was no cave or cell, just there.

"I'm glad Peggy isn't here," she said. "*We're* not afraid, are we, Alice?" She peered around again as she said it. The shadows were growing very dark under the trees. "I'm glad there are no Calibans on this island," she whispered. "But what if——?"

"Don't think of it." Alice forced herself to speak in a loud, brave voice. "If I were not so hungry I'd think this was great fun, because I know they will come for us, and we have explored the whole island and there's nothing to hurt us."

"Nothing that we *saw,*" murmured Barbara. "We'll have to learn patience, I suppose," she added, straightening up. "If you were only Prospero with a magic cloak you could have Ariel bring out a table and spread a feast for us. And you could send him to fetch the boat back."

"If I were Prospero!" repeated Alice, grandly, rising to her full height and stretching out both arms.

"Oh, Alice, you really would look like that picture of him, if you had his long cloak on. At my party, you know, you made a fine Aladdin."

"Aladdin!" exclaimed Alice scornfully. "He was only a magician. Prospero was great and wise. He had learned everything studying all those books so many years. But, Barbara, you really *do* look like Miranda, leaning against that tree."

Alice had, in fact, a wise-looking face, for all her blue eyes and flaxen hair. And Barbara, smiling up at her, was not unworthy of Alice's praise.

"But, Alice," she resumed, "Uncle Waldo says Prospero didn't learn it all out of books. He had so much time to think; and he had nature all around him. He found out all kinds of secrets. Ariel and Caliban were nature's secrets, Uncle Waldo said."

"I suppose they were." Alice meditated. "But you know he said that Caliban was one of the savages the explorers talked about when they came back from America. And the story of the shipwreck and the strange island came from one of their adventures."

"Yes, but it's *more* than that," answered Barbara. "And so I suppose Shakespeare made Caliban more than a savage. He's not very much like an Indian!"

"Look! We can hardly see the sailboat, now," said Alice. And Barbara, tossing her head as if to throw aside all anxiety, began to quote:

> 'If by your arts, my dearest father, you have
> Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them.'

"I wish I could remember what Prospero answered to that," sighed Alice. "But then, you have read so much more Shakespeare than I have. Just think, I am nearly two years older than you, and *you* have made *me* read him. . . . Did you ever know before, what Uncle Waldo told us this morning, that some of Shakespeare's best friends were the men who worked for the Virginia Colony, away back before the landing of the Pilgrims?"

"No, I didn't know Shakespeare had ever heard of America!"

"Southampton was one of them," Alice continued. "I wonder if Hampton really *was* named for him! He was the handsomest man at Queen Elizabeth's court. He helped Shakespeare—and he helped America. He wanted the people in the colony to have their own way and not have to obey the King all the time—it was King James, then, wasn't it?"

"Yes, but what did Uncle Waldo say about Gonzalo, when he talked about the country he wanted to start, where nobody would have to work?"

"Oh, yes, he said Shakespeare got that idea from some Frenchman, but he was really making fun of some of the people who wanted to go off—to America, I guess—and live without government or laws. Because of course, you can't have a decent country without a government and laws. Gonzalo knew it, too, but he thought it was a nice thing to talk about."

"I wonder," Alice mused, after a pause, "I wonder if one of those explorers ever saw a queer fish that looked like Caliban. You can find lots of things when you go exploring."

"Caliban isn't so *terrible,* though," Barbara declared, "because, don't you remember how much he liked the music on the island? He heard it in his dreams and when he woke up he cried because he wanted to hear it again. I learned that speech of his *ever* so long ago:

> Be not afeard, the isle is full of noises,
> Sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not,—

and I was so surprised when I found out that Caliban said it! Maybe he was like a bad child that doesn't want to be bad but just can't help it."

"I wonder what Ariel did after he was free," said Alice. "He was a spirit of the air. I read a story once about some sailors that saw a queer flame on the top of the mast in a storm,—just like Ariel when he made himself a flame."

"Just the way the fairies do in 'Peter Pan,' in the treetops," replied Barbara. "Oh dear! I wonder if the 'Sunshine' has landed. I wonder what they think at home!"

The sun had dropped below the horizon while they talked. It was almost dark. But the evening air was mild and there was little wind.

A slight noise in the bushes startled them and they drew closer together. "Let's keep on talking," whispered Barbara; and as there seemed to be nothing to talk about she began to repeat:

> Full fathom five thy father lies;
> Of his bones are coral made;
> Those are pearls that were his eyes:

Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
Ding-dong.
Hark! now I hear them,—ding, dong, bell.

"What's that? I heard a bell." Alice's breath was coming jerkily as she listened.

"It must be the bell buoy we passed out there between the islands. *That's* nothing."

But it had a dreary sound and, remembering that Alice was her visitor and she must do something to make things a little more cheerful, Barbara pulled herself together and began:

Where the bee sucks there suck I:
In a cow-slip's bell I lie;
There I couch when owls do cry.
On the bat's back I do fly
After summer merrily.
Merrily, merrily shall I live now
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.

They felt better after that. The sunset colors had faded away and the full moon had risen. They were beginning to grow sleepy, while they continued to look out across the water, resolved to keep up the watch every minute till some one came.

"I think Miranda *was* like a sunrise," said Alice, forcing herself to talk of something pleasant. "That's what Uncle Waldo called her."

"She had never seen a man except her old father before.

I like it when she says, 'O brave new world, that has such creatures in it.' Yes," Barbara concluded, "you can see what Uncle Waldo meant."

"It seems to me that Prospero forgave his wicked brother too soon," remarked Alice. "Why, he stole his dukedom, and sent him and his little girl out to be drowned! Of course, he repented, and I suppose that was enough for Prospero. He did give those men a good fright. And when Ariel was sorry for them, *he* had to be. I wonder why he gave up his magic and buried his staff."

"Perhaps," suggested Barbara, "he was afraid he would do something foolish with it,—the way the people in the fairy stories always wish something crazy when they can have three wishes."

"Or maybe," said Alice, "he was just tired of it. He must have worked like everything all those years. I suppose he loved his books; but maybe he just wanted never to see them again."

"I suppose Ferdinand and Miranda were happy ever after. Prospero's magic was certainly a great success. It was nice he taught Miranda how to play chess. She was——" Barbara was too sleepy to finish the sentence. They had stretched themselves on the slope, their eyes fixed in the direction of home, and now, without meaning to in the least, they both fell fast asleep.

The "Sunshine," meanwhile, was becalmed in the middle of the bay. It was midnight when she arrived. Nobody on shore had begun to be anxious, for it was a warm, quiet night; there was plenty of food on board; and they had imagined the children having the time of their lives with supper on the boat and a moonlight sail, and thought them undoubtedly asleep by this time in the cuddy or on deck. Barbara's father was down on the wharf, however, where he had been for a long time, when the "Sunshine" crept in to her moorings at last; and when the dark figures came on shore and there were no children with them, *then* there was consternation far exceeding anything Alice and Barbara had experienced. They rushed to the nearest telephone, got Allan Crabtree out of his bed, and started off in the motor boat as quickly as was humanly possible. But it took some time.

Barbara was awakened by the sound of the chug-chug. She was bewildered. Where was she? What had happened? The sound came nearer and then stopped. Some one was landing. She sat up and listened.

She was truly frightened now. She tried to speak to Alice, but her tongue refused to move. She was numb with fear. She clutched the grass with both hands and waited. After a minute, which seemed an eternity, she heard her father's voice. What a blessed relief! She was trembling when she cried out, "Hello, Daddy!" Alice jumped to her feet, calling out excitedly, "What is it? What is it?" "Are you all right, children?" Daddy shouted. "Yes," they answered in one breath. "*We* are all right."

"Stay where you are," called Roger, "till we get up there." In five minutes more Daddy and Uncle Roger had taken them by the hand and were leading them down to the shore.

"It came near being a shipwreck, after all," said Uncle Roger, when the engine was started and they were speeding away.

"Oh, we've had a fine time," Alice declared, politely, "and we do not mind going home in the motor boat, now."

"I was dreaming about Ariel," said Barbara. "I guess he must have put us to sleep. We had made up our minds *not* to go to sleep. And, oh! I heard the loveliest music in my dreams. I saw the fairies dancing on the sand, and they were singing, and some of them were flying through the air. I guess it was an enchanted island. Are you still hungry, Alice? Daddy, is Mother awfully worried?"

CHAPTER VI

UNDER THE GREAT TREE

His life was gentle, and the elements
So mixed in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, "This was a man!"
Mark Antony ("Julius Cæsar")

"MOTHER," said Peggy, "what do you think? Isabel Estes has *never read* a play of Shakespeare!"

"Well, my dear," her mother answered, "what of that? How many have you read?"

"Oh, hardly any. But Sister has. And Isabel is Sister's age; she's even six months older."

Peggy would not have said this before Barbara. She was very proud of her big sister; but some things you said to your sister and some things you kept to yourself or whispered in confidence to your mother. And Barbara never suspected that any one was proud of her, because she was so far from being in the least proud of herself. She was sorry that Isabel did not enjoy Shakespeare, but it was because "we could have had such a good time together if she did." There were ever so many interesting things you could not talk to Isabel about. That was the only trouble. And it was a trouble. For she was living much of the time in an absorbing world where none of the girls that she knew well went with her. There was one regret always at the back of her otherwise cheerful and contented mind.

One of her best friends in Hampton was a boy who read everything he could lay hands on. But she never talked about books with Arthur. They talked about skating and skiing and the dancing class. She knew that he liked to read Shakespeare because his aunt had told her mother and her mother had told her. But neither she nor Arthur would have mentioned the subject. And besides, as Barbara, who liked to talk, knew only too well, you can play together and be very good friends without talking very much about anything. She found nothing to regret in that. She had a good time with Arthur and that was enough.

During Alice's visit, the regret at the back of her mind vanished away. She had gone on reading to Uncle Waldo as usual the first day, while Alice sat with them on the headland. But she was troubled by the thought that Alice might rather be off canoeing or picnicking; for she wanted above all things to give her a good time. Alice was a great out-of-doors girl, like Barbara; only she was more like Peggy in wanting to keep things going all the time—not merely to lie on the shore and think or read or talk. Barbara, too, liked active things. Her idea of a good time however was, not to keep tearing about all day long, but to take a horseback ride in the morning and read a book in the afternoon; or to go for a canoe or a bicycle picnic, build a fire and cook lunch, and settle down afterward for a good read or a good talk beside the burning logs. She enjoyed her horse and her books with equal intensity, as long as she could share them both with some one she was fond of. She did not care much for solitary pleasures.

She was a little afraid that Alice would prefer Peggy's way of keeping on "having fun" till you dropped into your bed at night, or at least until the story-telling hour that preceded bedtime. To her great delight, however, she discovered that Alice was as much interested in what they read as she was herself. She was not long in finding out that she and Alice liked the same people in the plays; they laughed at the same places; and they liked to declaim to each other the grand speeches of Hamlet and Mark Antony and the tragic utterances of Lear and Lady Macbeth; and they found endless things to talk about in what they read.

Alice, it became clear, was entering with Barbara into that absorbing Shakespearian world.

And Peggy was not entirely shut out. She went as far as she could, bless her little heart! She would never go an inch beyond what she could fully understand, at least to her own satisfaction. But she loved the stories as Barbara told them to her, on rainy days, or whenever she could be still long enough to listen.

Peggy said to her mother one day, in another confidential mood, "*My* sister is such a good sister. When I want something I can't reach, she always comes and gets it for me. She is *such* a good sister."

In the same way, Barbara was reaching up and plucking the fruits from the great tree, Shakespeare, and bringing them down to her little sister, who could not reach them for herself.

Alice was quite able to reach them without Barbara's help. Only she had not known before how delicious they were. And she never forgot the quiet hours when she and Barbara and Uncle Waldo sat on the headland feasting upon the fruits of the great tree, which has sheltered and nourished young and old alike for three hundred years, which bears blossoms and ripe fruit together in all seasons of the year, like the orange trees of the south.

Sometimes they would talk together about the people of the plays and sometimes they would talk about Shakespeare himself, who began to seem like a man they knew and had seen, as Uncle Waldo talked about him. And a very gentle person he seemed to them, one they would surely have loved. Every one who knew him seemed to like him, even the people who said that his plays would never do because they broke so many rules for the composing of dramas. Even *they* liked the man for his uprightness of dealing and his cheerful, modest, open-hearted nature.

One of the most interesting things Uncle Waldo told them about Shakespeare's boyhood was that he grew up in the near neighborhood of two of the noblest castles of Old England. Barbara loved castles in stories and pictures; and the splendor of Shakespeare's scenes in courts and palaces made the country scenes, like the sheepshearing in "The Winter's Tale," more beautiful by contrast.

Little by little, in answer to their questions, Uncle Waldo told them all he knew about Shakespeare's school days.

"At the age of ten he was in the grammar school at Stratford, which he probably entered at seven and left at about thirteen. Before going to the grammar school he had learned to read from a 'hornbook' which was the ABC book of those days. It was a single page fastened to a board and covered with thin, transparent horn, through which the letters could be read. It could be hung by a handle to the boy's belt.

"The students of the grammar school sat at long tables on wooden benches without arms or backs. There they were drilled, chiefly in Latin and mathematics, from six in the morning until five in the afternoon, with a few short recesses and an hour at noon. Discipline was strict and punishment severe. When Shakespeare wrote of the school boy

With his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school

he probably knew, as he usually did, just what he was talking about.

"His friend Ben Jonson said of him that he knew 'small Latin and less Greek.' But when he said that, much Latin and much Greek .were required in the schools. Shakespeare's little Latin would seem much to the boys of to-day. After Æsop's fables, he probably read Vergil, Horace, Ovid, and other Latin writers. He always loved the Greek and Roman stories; perhaps they made up for the endless drill in grammar.

"The schoolmaster, Holofernes, in 'Love's Labour's Lost,' is supposed to be a portrait of Thomas Hunt, Shakespeare's principal teacher. And although Holofernes is rather tiresome, and always trying to show off his knowledge, he nevertheless loves Vergil and Horace and reverences poetry and learning. He is moreover on friendly terms with his pupils' parents. He is invited to dine at one of their houses, and he feels sufficiently intimate to invite other guests to go with him!

"Shakespeare never went to the higher schools, nor did he go to the Continent to finish his education, as was the custom for young gentlemen of the time. England was turning to France and Italy for everything that made for refinement in education. And while her many poets at home were busily engaged in making over into English verse poems that came chiefly from Italy by way of France, her young men were sent to those countries to learn of the artists and scholars and scientists and explorers who had created the modern world out of what we call the Middle Ages. These travelers came back with new ideas and customs. It was during Shakespeare's lifetime that the gentle art of eating with a fork was discovered in Venice and introduced into England. Yet it was the great Elizabethan age—the age that produced Shakespeare!"

The two children looked at each other, and Alice exclaimed, "But they *couldn't* eat without *forks!*" "At those grand celebrations, too," added Barbara.

This led Uncle Waldo to tell them about the celebrations and festivals of those days—about Christmas and Easter and May Day, St. George's Day, and Whitsuntide. "They looked forward to the festivals," he told them, "as the great events of the year. Much was made of them; lords and ladies mingled with peasants on the village green. On May Day morning the villagers went out into the woods at an early hour and returned with a maypole drawn by oxen. Plays were given as a part of the Whitsun pastorals, and masques and pageants. The favorite amusement was the Morris Dance, in which appeared Robin Hood and Maid Marian, Friar Tuck and all the jolly huntsmen. The fool was among them, with his cap and bells, and Tom Piper, and a huge dragon with a man inside his scaly body, and a hobbyhorse that went about performing antics.

There were many dancers with bells on their feet with which they kept time to the tabor and hornpipe."

"Will Shakespeare must have had fun!" remarked Barbara.

"I am sure he did," answered Uncle Waldo. "He liked to go swimming, too, and fishing and hunting. He liked football and archery and everything that took him out-of-doors.

"But he went out-of-doors not only to play games and join in festivals. He went to see the morning, when 'jocund day stands tip-toe on the misty mountain tops.' Those are *his* words, not mine!" Uncle Waldo smiled. "He spoke the truth when he said:

> Full many a glorious morning have I seen
> Flatter the mountain top with sovereign eye.

He went out to see the night, when the moon was 'decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass.' He went out to watch the lapwing fly close to the ground; to see the daffodils that 'take the winds of March with beauty,' and even to 'bide the pelting of the pitiless storm.' The flowers of his native fields live in his verse. He knew the ways of farmers and gardeners with their crops and plants as well as he knew the birds and wild flowers and the changes of night and day."

Alice had heard the story of how Shakespeare poached on his neighbor's land—that he killed deer on the beautiful estate of Sir Thomas Lucy. When she asked Uncle Waldo about that, he answered, thoughtfully: "Yes, it is doubtless true. However, poaching was not regarded as a serious offense in those days by any one except the owner of the game. Any one who 'pulled it off' was regarded as rather a clever fellow; and no doubt the youthful Shakespeare was of that opinion!"

"He wasn't perfect, of course," Alice commented.

"No," said Uncle Waldo with a smile, "I suspect he even liked to watch the cruel sports of bear-baiting and cock-fighting. But still, he always showed great sympathy for animals,—for the deer that was trapped and slain, for dogs and horses, and even "the poor beetle that we tread upon.' He had a fellow feeling for all living creatures.

"When you read 'Love's Labour's Lost,' " he went on, "you will hear Shakespeare himself talking about the sports and dances and pageants that he knew. You will find there the crossbow and the dancing horse, the tumbler with his hoop, bowlers and fighters with poles, and the Pageant of the Nine Worthies, a comedy which young Shakespeare may have seen on Christmas Eve before a blazing yuletide log. You will find the schoolmaster and the parson and the constable and many people that he knew when he was young—for it is one of his earliest plays. Perhaps you know already the lovely song with which it ends:

> When daisies pied and violets blue
>   And lady-smocks all silver-white
> And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue
>   Do paint the meadows with delight,——

so goes the 'Song of Summer'; and the 'Song of Winter' follows:

When all aloud the wind doth blow
 And coughing drowns the parson's saw,
And birds sit brooding in the snow,
 And Marian's nose looks red and raw;
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl
 Then nightly sings the staring owl;
  To-whit;
To-whoo a merry note
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

"Getting a meal in those days," continued Uncle Waldo, "must have been something like your picnics, when Joan turned the pot about over the fire and the crab apples hissed in the bowl."

"She could do it without being greasy, I should think," was Alice's comment.

"Let's read that play next," said Barbara.

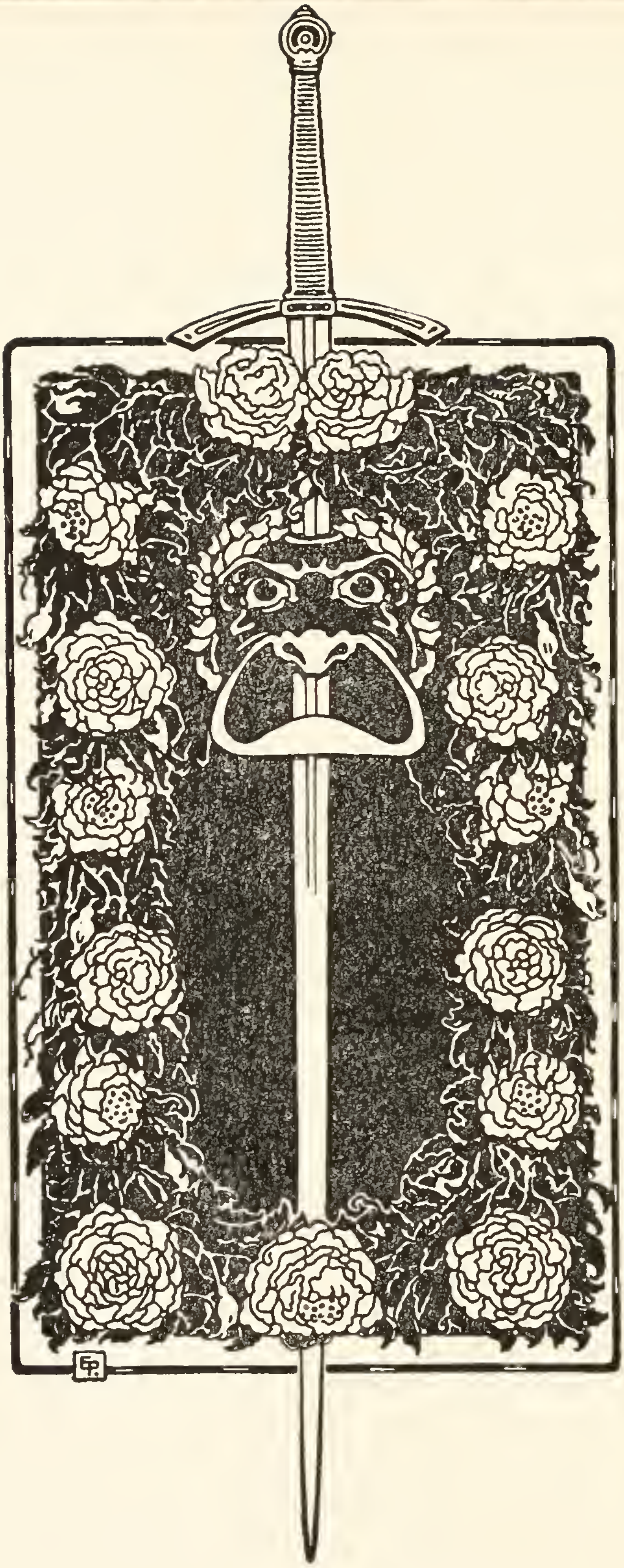
"You'll need some help, I think," Uncle Waldo replied. "There are rather too many Latin jokes in it for you. Still, you'd enjoy the story. It's about the King of Navarre and his three lords who make a solemn vow to live apart from the world and devote themselves to study for three years; to eat little, sleep little, and see nothing of the ladies; to become scholars and make Navarre the wonder of the world. But the Princess of France comes to Navarre on an embassy from the French King, her father. Yes, these are French people and the scene is in France; but still, the play is full of English people and customs; and when it was acted before Queen Elizabeth, she and every one else knew that England was aimed at all the way through."

"What happened next?" asked Barbara.

"The story goes on to tell, with many jokes aimed at the verse makers and the pretenders to learning, how the King and his lords are unable to resist the charms of the Princess and her ladies, until, one by one, they fall in love, each one thinking himself the only offender. Finally, Biron, one of the lords who has thought all along that their vow was rather foolish, discovers the secrets, and the men come into the presence of the ladies to press their suits openly. The Princess, who is taking her leave, thinks the time too short to 'make a world-without-end bargain in'; besides, she cannot yet trust one who has broken his vow; so she tells the King that he must go into a hermitage for one year, and if, at the end of that time, fasting and frost have not 'nipped the gaudy blossoms of his love,' she will grant his suit. Her ladies follow her example. Biron's lady, Rosaline, tells him that he must spend a year caring for the sick in hospitals, to win her, and to cure him of his merciless wit.

"You will like Biron. Some people think he resembles Shakespeare in the early days when he wrote verses, before he began to write plays."

"Oh! then I am sure we shall like him," said Barbara.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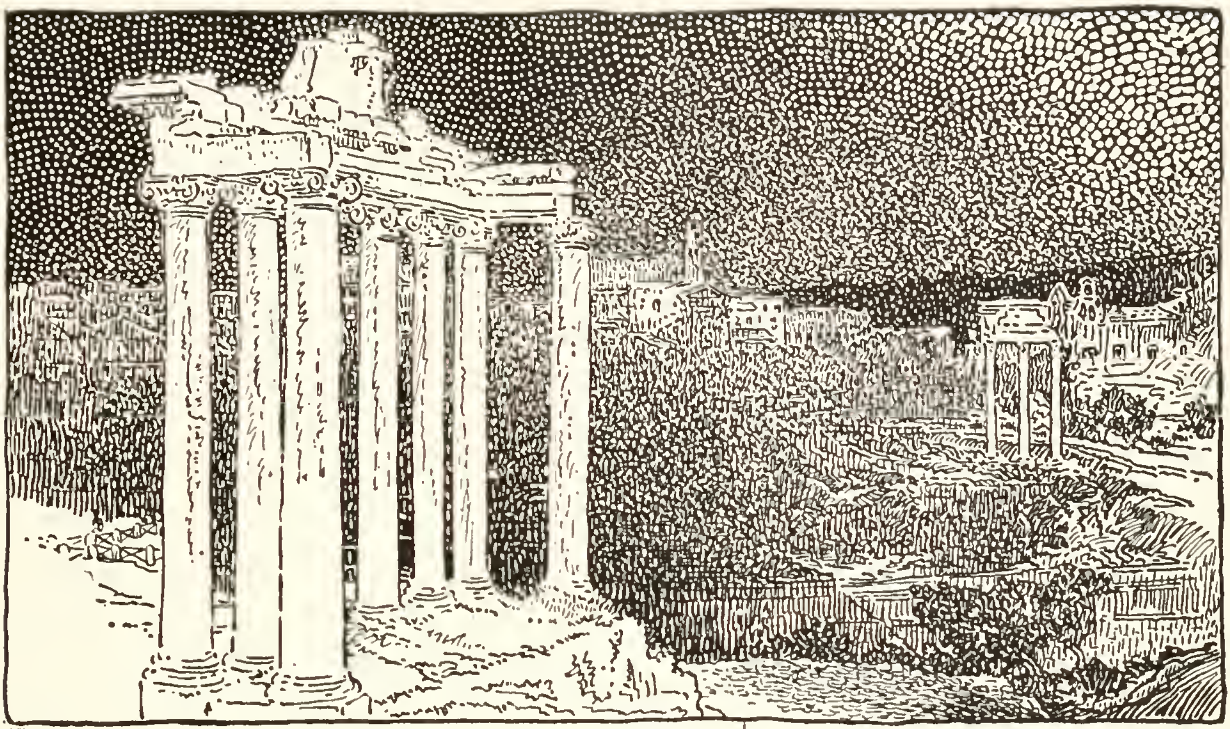
Shakespeare in Italy



CHAPTER VII

THE HOME OF THE CÆSARS

All places that the eye of heaven visits
Are to a wise man ports and happy havens.
John of Gaunt ("Richard II")

WHEN the birch trees had turned to gold in the September sun and the sumac on the slopes of Aunt Jane's pasture was as red as rubies, Barbara and Peggy, instead of returning to Hampton, were taken across the ocean to spend many months in France and Italy. Fortunately for them, those countries were still at peace. Soon after their return to America, the World War began.

It was rather hard to go away so far and leave home and all your friends for so long a time. But Barbara could take her Shakespeare friends with her. And although, when you are going to a French school and learning to recite French and Italian poetry, there is not much time for anything else, yet those friends were not entirely forgotten. And some things happened over there which enlarged her interest in Shakespeare's plays.

If you had read "Julius Cæsar," it was thrilling to be taken about the streets of Rome; to see the places in the Forum where Brutus and Mark Antony made their speeches; and to see Pompey's statue beside which Great Cæsar fell. How real it all seemed! Of course you had to imagine, as Daddy said, that the city was on one level and the Forum not sunk down in the ground as it seemed to be now. The dust of centuries had half-buried its temples and been dug out in modern times. You had to imagine the columns and porticoes standing all fresh and new, instead of old and moss-grown and toppling over. But that was easy when you remembered that these were the very same pavements on which the people stood when the Soothsayer cried out to Cæsar

> Beware the Ides of March

and when Antony

> Thrice presented him a kingly crown
> Which he did thrice refuse,

and those were the same arches through which the crowd had rushed and the senators marched with trumpeters at their head.

Barbara walked through the rooms of a Roman house. The walls were mostly gone, but there were bits of bright-colored fresco clinging to the parts that still stood and they gave you an idea of how lovely it must have been. It might have been Portia's house. Barbara liked the great, central courtyard with its marble-rimmed pool of clear water. She imagined that this court was the place where the conspirators came to Brutus with "their hats plucked about their ears and half their faces buried in their cloaks"; where Brutus talked to them as if it would break his heart to join them in their plot against Cæsar's life; where Portia came out to plead so well to know her husband's secret, and all in vain.

Barbara wished she could see the house where Cæsar and Calpurnia lived. It must have been very grand and like a palace, she thought, if the great Cæsar lived there. Daddy thought not; he thought it must have been very much like this house—small compared to Mr. Rockefeller's cottage at Seal Harbor, but not without a charm of its own. Everything in it must have been made by hand. All the brasses and bronzes—kitchen utensils even—were graceful in shape and often exquisitely carved. In the hall there were marble benches standing on griffins' feet, with arms formed by the griffins' wings. Lovely statues from Greece, perhaps, were standing about, and tall, slender jars for oil and wine like those they had seen at the museum.

She and Peggy were glad there were no terrible storms "with portents in them," while they were in Rome, nor any lions walking about the streets like the one Casca met.

The wolves that live on the Capitoline Hill were safely caged and the day of portents had gone by, they hoped, along with that old Rome which you would not wish back again, if you could, however much you might wish to see just how it looked in the days of its greatest grandeur.

Barbara never found the house where Julius Cæsar lived. But on a beautiful day in early spring she climbed the Palatine Hill where that other Cæsar, the first emperor, and those that came after him had built their magnificent palaces. Above their foundations there was a garden now, where you could walk through soft, silent paths between borders of pink and purple gillyflowers, among trees of many shapes and colors. The bright red berries still glistened on the holly trees. The blooming Judas tree looked like a bouquet of cyclamen. The umbrella pines spread their branches above their gigantic trunks—so dark and still, they seemed, from a distance and, when you were close to them, so soft and feathery that you longed to feel them against your cheek. Standing by itself in a plot of grass a very tall and stately palm tree held its huge tassel high up against the sky. From the stone wall around the garden you looked down upon the whole length and breadth of the Eternal City, with its yellow Tiber winding its way between low banks, just as in the days when Romulus and Remus were little boys.

Beyond the garden the ruins stretched away as far as you could see. You might explore for days among numberless foundations of heavy masonry, massive walls and arches, vast chambers and passageways that had been unearthed from the accumulation of ages and seemed more like subterranean caverns now than like human habitations; among shrines and temples, fountains and marble baths, spacious pavements of mosaic, stairways, pillars, and porticoes. It was hard to imagine these ruins in their ancient state of wealth and splendor, but what you could see as you wandered through them in the spring sunshine made you feel sure that this was a fitting home for the emperors who ruled the world.

The Signorina was with Barbara that day—the lively, sparkling Signorina who had been with the children for a part of every day that winter; who chatted Italian with them; took them for long walks in the picturesque gardens of age-old villas kept young forever by their singing fountains; played with them as if she were a child herself, and had them laughing most of the time. She and Barbara had become fast friends. Peggy she called her *"piccola sorella"*—her little sister—and she was a person after Peggy's own heart because she was always full of fun.

As Barbara and the Signorina sat together in the garden on a bench at the edge of the hill, you would certainly have taken them for sisters, though one was American and the other Italian. They had the same clear-cut features and oval face, the same dark, shining eyes and brown, waving hair curling about their foreheads, and the same rich color in their cheeks. They had the same quick responsiveness and fresh interest in everything they saw.

"This would be called a 'park' at home," Barbara was saying. "Only I never saw anything like it at home or anywhere.—Well, of course," she laughed, "there could be only one Rome."

"And only one home of the Cæsars," added the Signorina. "These trees, to be sure, have been brought from all over the world. They are not all native to Rome. But that only makes the place more like the ancient city; for the ancients, too, brought plants and statues and treasures of all kinds from everywhere to make Rome beautiful so that the Romans could stay at home and still have glimpses of the whole world."

As they looked down at the Forum and out beyond the Arch of Titus to the strange, circular building, incredibly large and massive, called the Coliseum, the Signorina told Barbara stories of old Rome; of how, when the divine Castor and Pollux had come down from heaven to announce the salvation of the city, their horses had drunk at the pool down there by the graceful columns of their temple; of how the Vestal Virgins had kept guard over the sacred flame through hundreds of years, down there in the House of the Vestals—the flame that was to burn forever, while Rome stood, but was extinguished at last by the barbarians from the north; of how the Roman generals had gone forth to conquer the world and, returning, had led their prisoners in triumph under those very arches and up to their palaces on this hill. Here Barbara interrupted,

"Cæsar never led Cleopatra captive in the streets of Rome, anyway."

"No. But why, Barbara, how did you know that?"

"Because, in Shakespeare—in 'Antony and Cleopatra'—she put the asp to her breast when he was trying to capture her. Shakespeare calls him Octavius, but Daddy calls him Augustus Cæsar. She knew what he would do to her and she couldn't bear it. She had been such a great queen, and *so* beautiful—how could she bear it? It is a sad ending to the story—after she sailed up the Nile in that *grand* boat. But I am glad she wasn't captured and taken to Rome as a prisoner. It wasn't as sad as Antony's death—when he said 'I am dying, Egypt, dying.' After Daddy read me the play those were the only words I could remember, and they almost made me cry. I suppose other poor queens were led in those processions with their hands fastened by chains."

"Oh dear! oh dear! Barbara, you look so solemn!" exclaimed the Signorina. "All that was a long time ago. We shall be talking about Nero next if we are not careful. Let's run down the other side of the hill and see if we can find some more violets. It is pretty late for them. Come along! You must cheer up the poor, sad, unhappy, Signorina. Look at me." She made a long face—as long as her rosebud face could be made. "Look at me! So sad, so pale, and so neglected! Poor, *povera* Signorina!"

In a gale of laughter Barbara followed her down the hill.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FAIRIES IN ROME

> A most majestic vision and
> Harmonious charmingly.
>
> *Ferdinand* ("The Tempest")

THE event of the season in Rome that winter was the production of a play of which every child knows something, yet which, as it was produced in the great theatre called the Argentina and repeated for twenty-two successive nights to crowded houses, seemed like a new birth of poetry in the world. It was Shakespeare's comedy, "A Midsummer Night's Dream," recently translated into Italian.

It was a marvelous performance, such as had never been seen in Italy. The talents of the whole of Europe and the newest inventions for stage effects were drawn upon to make the scenery, the acting, and the music worthy of the play that Shakespeare wrote.

All this was possible only because, years before, a little boy, living a somewhat lonely life in a Tuscan villa, had turned the pages of an illustrated copy of Shakespeare's plays until he had come to know and love the people of Shakespeare's world. He knew the meaning of a few of the words on the pages, for he was already beginning to learn English—but only a few. He pored over the books, however, until he found out what was happening; until he knew so well what was happening to the persons of the pictures that he laughed and cried over them. He longed to understand their words and to make them live in his own language, so that other boys of his country might understand them more easily than he had done. He was fascinated by Titania, first of all, and he used to go about the great park of the villa searching among the mosses and flowers for a glimpse of the fairy queen and her train of elves; and when he grew up and began to translate Shakespeare into Italian, desiring to create a more truthful version than other translations had given, his first choice was "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

Just before the play was acted, his work was published, with Arthur Rackham's illustrations. It was a beautiful book, printed in large type and bound in white and gold. Barbara looked and looked at the illustrations before she saw the play; and what was her delight to find that their delicate colors had been reproduced upon the stage.

Fairies delight to clothe themselves, as every one knows, in "elfin-gray," the gray of lichens on old tree trunks. But the gray of lichens on old tree trunks often shades into exquisite tints of primrose and violet and saffron and pale green. And all these colors of the pictures, softened by the light of the moon, reappeared in the scenes. Only, on the stage, they were in perpetual movement, changing and interchanging upon the gauzy fabric of the vision.

Harmonies of sound as well as color were woven into the marvelous dream. For the action, now brisk and lively and humorous, now slow and soft and languorous like the airs of a summer night, was accompanied by selections from the music which Mendelssohn had composed for the opera made out of the play a hundred years before.

An English artist, an Italian poet, and a German musician had added their talents to Shakespeare's genius; painters and engineers, electricians, mechanics, makers of fine fabrics, designers and workers of many kinds had made their contribution to the setting; the musicians, the singers, and the dancers were of that high excellence which can only be attained by lifelong devotion to an art; and, most important of all, the actors and actresses proved themselves worthy of their rôles.

Italy is a nation of actors. Even the conversation of Italians is like fragments of a play, and every schoolboy will tell a tale or repeat a poem like a born actor. Moreover, the greatest of Italian actors have been famous in

Shakespearian parts. It was therefore no surprise that in "The Midsummer Night's Dream," successful acting should crown the achievement. The "hard-handed men of Athens" who presented the "lamentable comedy" of Pyramus and Thisbe—the play within the play—were not quite the same "rude mechanicals" that they appear on the English stage. They were comical, but not very dirty; they fitted well into a story of dreamland.

Under such conditions Barbara and Peggy were to hear

> Sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
> Warble his native wood-notes wild.

They were taken in the afternoon; but when they came into the box and looked down through the great lighted theatre, day seemed changed into night; it was enchanted night on the stage, when the house was darkened and the curtain rose and the moonlight shades of silvery rose and lavender appeared and enveloped scene after scene; and real night was falling when they came out into the streets again and were driven home.

They had been silent through the play, too spellbound to say much even between the acts. But now their tongues were loosened and they chattered freely, while the horse's hoofs clattered on the paving stones.

"Isn't it cold!" Barbara exclaimed, pushing her hands down deep in her coat pockets. "It was all a dream; and you always have to wake up from dreams. I wish that one could last forever."

"And it wasn't all love affairs, like that opera we went to. I *was* glad of that," said Peggy. "Wasn't Puck a darling little rogue? And Moth was the loveliest fairy I ever saw." Her voice fell a little as she added, "Only they were too big. Fairies are tiny."

"Yes," assented Barbara, "Titania could sleep under a snake skin. And don't you remember, when she and Oberon quarreled, how all the fairies were so frightened they crept into acorn cups?"

"Well, of course," said Peggy, "these were not real fairies. The real Puck could ride on the back of a tiny bat and drink out of the moss cups in our fairy house. Real fairies stay in the woods, in the country."

"Oh," answered Barbara, with a quick look at Peggy. "The fairies came to Rome, for once."

She was thoughtful for a moment and then added, "There are so many gods and goddesses in Rome, and all their lovely stories! Cupid and Psyche are just like fairies. And Diana, goddess of the woods—and Pan—I should think the fairies would want to come to Rome."

"It just happens," her mother interrupted, "that Titania was a name given to Diana by a Roman poet. That is where Shakespeare got the name—from Ovid. And Queen Elizabeth, who was Spenser's 'Faerie Queene,' was Belphoebe, too, in the same poem—and Belphoebe is another name for Diana. The fairies and the gods and goddesses were all mixed together in Shakespeare's day in England. When people read Chaucer they found that Pluto was called the king of the fairies, instead of Oberon, and Proserpina was their queen."

Barbara clapped her hands with delight. "Oh, how lovely!" she exclaimed. "Why, of course, Proserpina, with all her flowers, was a fairy.—Only, *they* were the size of mortals, Peggy. In the statues and pictures they are, anyway. So perhaps we don't mind so much if Titania was too large for an acorn cup. And she *was* adorable! Oh! oh!" she exclaimed, "I never thought it could be like that."

They had alighted and climbed the long flight of stairs to their house, and Fulvia was bringing them their supper, when Daddy came in just in time to hear Barbara's words: "I never thought it could be like that!"

"Well, what *was* it like?" he asked. "Tell me all about it."

They told him, with many exclamations, both of them talking at once, until Barbara had a chance to say, "It was too bad, though not to have the real words and the real songs. And, Daddy, Bottom was not quite as funny as when I used to read it to Aunt Caroline. Was it because he spoke Italian? The Signorina had read the translation with me and I could understand *most* of it."

"It was partly that, but not entirely, I suppose," he answered. "From what you tell me I think Shakespeare would have been as much surprised as you were by that production of his play. I believe he would have said, too, 'I never thought it could be like that!' When he saw it on the stage, it must have been very different;—no electric lights, very little machinery, only a platform, and the audience grouped around it and not much more. I suppose they must have had the ass's head and such devices, and beautiful costumes and gorgeous trappings, like those in the pageants,—horses on the stage, richly caparisoned, shining armor, jeweled crowns, and all that. But the stage was not set off like a picture in a frame. Think of having the actors close at hand—right down among the audience, in fact! Probably a space at the back of the stage was curtained off, so that, for instance, Portia and her suitors, could do their part there, while the Venetian street scenes could go on in front. But the whole stage was very simple, like the Greek and Roman stage, and for that reason the words had to count for more. The audience could not see Puck or Ariel fly through the air; they had to imagine what the words suggested. Even if you had had Shakespeare's own words to-day (you say the Italian words were beautiful, but they were not his) there would have been so much to look at that you might still have felt that the words meant less than when you read them."

"How could they act it without electric lights?" asked Barbara.

"With candles, of course," said Peggy. "What do you think, Sister?"

"Perhaps they used candles when they acted in a small way, in houses or in the Queen's palace. But the Globe Theatre, where Shakespeare acted, was open to the sky—all except the tiers of boxes that were built around it and roofed over. There was no curtain in front of the stage. The light came from the sky and they acted always in the daytime."

"Something like the open-air theatre at home, where

Alice saw them play 'As You Like it,'" Barbara exclaimed.

"It would have been nice," Peggy mused, "to have heard

> Over hill, over dale,
> Thorough bush, thorough brier."

"Oh, yes," Barbara exclaimed, "and to have heard Bottom say 'I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove,' and to hear Peter Quince say, 'Bless thee, Bottom, thou art translated.'"

"Well, I'd rather see it on the stage than read it, anyway," declared Peggy.

Barbara was not sure. She thought long about the difference between reading Shakespeare and seeing his plays acted. Both were pleasures—one of them she had long known, the other she had just discovered—and they were such different pleasures. She wished she could see them all on the stage—every one she had ever read; and yet with that wish was a kind of dread lest they should seem strange to her and different from the books she loved. And she soon began to think of a way of combining these two pleasures without destroying either of them.

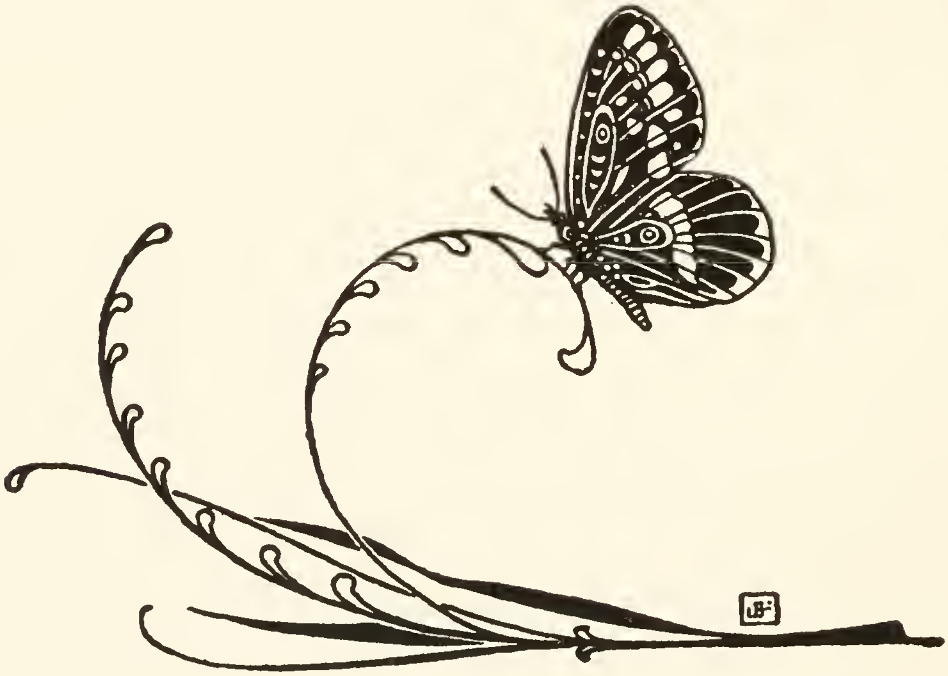
The next morning she wrote to Alice Van Norden. She and Alice had become better acquainted through their letters than they had ever been at home, even during that week's visit by the sea. For Alice wrote the most amusing letters! And she was so much interested in everything that Barbara was doing—much more than any of the other girls—that Barbara liked to write her long epistles, telling her everything. This time, after a few sentences about the scenery, she went on:

"It seems to me there are three stories in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and Puck gets into all three of them. Of course he belongs to the fairy story, and he gets into the story about the lovers because when Oberon wants to punish Titania for not giving him her little Indian boy he sends Puck to drop on her eyelids, when she is asleep, the juice of a flower that will make her love the first thing she sees.—And Oberon tells Puck that he saw in the forest a lady pursuing a man who will not love her, and he might as well drop some of that juice on the eyelids of the man, when the first thing he sees will be the lady. However, Puck makes a mistake—Oberon tells him it is an Athenian youth, but there are two of them in the woods; so Puck puts the charm on the wrong man, and the lovers get awfully mixed up. First both men love Hermia, then they both love Helena, and she thinks they are making fun of her. They quarrel, and the two men are going to fight, but Puck finds out his mistake. So he leads them a chase; they follow his voice and never find each other; they drop down tired and go to sleep. Then Puck takes some more juice and straightens out everything—so *that* story ends happily. Puck gets mixed up with the other story, about Bottom and the company of funny men who are rehearsing a play for the wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta—that is the reason the fairies are in those woods that night, too; they have come to help with the celebration. Bottom is so proud of himself he wants to take all the parts in the play, so Puck turns him into an ass; and the ass is the first thing Titania sees when she wakes up. *Isn't* that part funny, where the fairies are all waiting upon the big ass Titania is in love with? Anyway, she sends the little Indian boy to Oberon, while she is under the spell, so when Puck takes the spell away, the fairies' quarrel is over, and *that* story ends happily. Bottom is changed back, too. He doesn't seem to have learned much. He is awfully proud of the dream he has had! But he takes his part without so much boasting—I guess he'll be afraid to boast like that again!—and they give the play of "Pyramus and Thisbe,' and Theseus and Hippolyta like it, and the lovers are married, too, and the fairies bless the house. I suppose Oberon wouldn't let Puck play any tricks at the wedding. Of course you know this story, but I keep thinking about it and I can't help writing about it.

"It was beautiful, but I missed the words, Alice, the real words and songs. Don't you think it would be fun, when I come home, for you and me to act some Shakespeare together? Daddy says the stage was so plain in Shakespeare's day—I think we could make one something like it ourselves. And so, don't you see, we could get the real thing, words and acting, if we did it ourselves. What do you think of that for a plan?

"Sometimes I am almost homesick, though I am having a beautiful time. It seems a good deal like home here, because we have our own house, even if it is all on one floor. The flowers on the roof garden help a little bit, and there are bees up there, too. We have to keep away from them. We have lots of fun in the big kitchen with our jolly, fat cook, Pasqua. I went to market with her one day, and the vegetable man called out to her, 'Buona Pasqua.' That means 'Happy Easter' in Italian, and it also means, 'good Pasqua.' Do you see the joke?

"I remembered what you told me about seeing 'As You Like It' in Hampton, when I came back from seeing 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' in Rome. Shakespeare seems to belong to the whole world."



CHAPTER IX

FLORENTINE LEGENDS

Spring come to you, at the farthest,
In the very end of harvest!
Ceres ("The Tempest")

IT seemed as if the winter in Rome had scarcely arrived when the spring began. There was no time in the year when one could not buy garden roses at the foot of the Spanish Steps, and the fountains were never silent. The air was often cold and piercing, so that one pitied those that must go thinly clad, but on windless days the sun was warm and delicious. Before the end of January, bright pink almond blossoms appeared, brought in from the country by the peasants, and about the same time Barbara and Peggy gathered violets and cyclamen in the half-wild gardens of Roman villas.

Often, on days of blue sky and sunshine, they went out across the Roman Campagna to the quaint hill towns, perched high above the plain, like eagles' nests. They climbed up, in the steam tram, to Tivoli, where the roar of the wonderful cascades drowns the songs of the birds in the olive orchards, where you look far down and far away through the purple distance to the sea, and where the Villa d'Este is a little world of beauty by itself—a world of solemn trees and laughing fountains and friendly, talkative birds and dreaming fishes and lazy lizards. And if the only nymphs and naiads one sees there are carved in stone, that is one's own fault; for the real ones are there, too, hiding in the shadows, if one has eyes to see them. They tramped through the woods on the steep slopes around Lake Nemi, where the ground is sprinkled with white narcissus like a dark sky with stars. With their lunch in a basket, they took the train for the Castle of Bracciano and spent a day under its massive, medieval walls that rise above soft meadows of wild flowers and look across shimmering, blue water to snow-capped Mount Soracte.

These places often took Barbara's thoughts far from Shakespeare. But later, when she read the plays at home, she realized how full they were of the scenery of Italy; and often she would recall some trellised garden or some arcade beside a fountain or some

pleachèd bower
Where honeysuckles ripened by the sun
Forbid the sun to enter,

which seemed the very place in which his people moved.

In April, when the days were long and warm and the air was spicy, Barbara went off for "a spree" with her mother to pay a visit to Cousin Emily in Florence. There, for two happy weeks, much of the time was divided between pictures and the skating rink, with lazy hours in the Boboli Gardens or along the banks of the Arno or under the pergolas of a villa on the hillside from which you looked down upon the domes and towers of the proud old city and the river winding under its bridges. In those loiterings Mother and Cousin Emily talked together incessantly and, as long as she kept them in sight, she could wander about as she liked, to look at things and to think of things, or just to bask, without thinking at all, in the warm sunshine.

But Barbara rather liked to think about things, even in sunny Italy; and in Florence her mind fed upon wonder as she thought of Dante and Beatrice (she knew them in a bedtime story she had always loved) and of the Bible stories and the legends of gods and goddesses and saints and martyrs that she had seen pictured in the churches and galleries. Her thoughts went far, indeed, from Shakespeare; for when, at the end of the visit, Cousin Emily asked her which of the paintings she would chose to take home with her, she decided that her "favorite" was Botticelli's "Venus Rising from the Sea." And the little copy

Cousin Emily gave her hung always in her room, wherever she was, from that time on.

One afternoon they visited the Villa of the Portinari, the family of Beatrice, who had recorded on a tablet the proud memory that there they had entertained Dante and that there he had met Beatrice, their daughter, who had remained the inspiration of his life and led him on over all obstacles and through all sorrows into the very heart of Paradise. When Barbara had first heard that story she had asked her mother, "Did it happen in Heaven above or in ages long ago?" Now it seemed to belong to this world, wonderful as it was, while she sat there on the steps of the house, under the covered porch, and listened to the blackbird singing in the fig tree on the lawn.

"We know more about Dante's life than we know about Shakespeare's" Cousin Emily was saying as the two talkers sauntered down the garden path. Barbara listened. *That* sounded interesting. "Although Dante lived three hundred years before Shakespeare."

"Yes, because Boccaccio wrote the history of Dante's life and nobody did the same thing for Shakespeare. I suppose that is the reason why."

Barbara jumped up and slipping in between them sauntered along with them, her arms in theirs.

"We are talking," Mother explained, "about the great story-teller, Boccaccio, the father of Italian prose, and Dante, the father of Italian poetry." Then turning to Emily, "Boccaccio never *saw* Dante, did he, although he wrote the story of his life? I have forgotten my dates!"

"No," Emily answered. "You remember he was a little boy running about over these hills above Florence when Dante died in exile. Later he knew Dante's daughter, named Beatrice! And he so honored her father that he thought it his duty to write down all that he knew about him—partly, I think, to atone for the sin of Florence in having forced him to eat the bitter bread of exile. But the best thing he did for him was to copy some of his poems which, otherwise, would have been lost."

"Who was Boccaccio?" asked Barbara. "Was he a *good* story-teller?"

"He told good stories, certainly," replied Cousin Emily, —"so good that they were taken up by the writers of France and Italy and retold again and again, and some of them found their way into Shakespeare's plays."

"Then some of Shakespeare's stories came from Florence!" Barbara looked down upon the City of Flowers with a new interest.

"Very many of them came from Italy," said her mother, "for the Italians were the greatest story-tellers of modern Europe; and Boccaccio was the first and the greatest of them all. Some of them came by way of one greater than he—our own Chaucer, the father of English poetry. He retold some of Boccaccio's stories, in the 'Canterbury Tales,' and Shakespeare read them there and put one of them into 'A Midsummer Night's Dream.'"

"Did Boccaccio make up the story? I thought Shakespeare made it up out of nothing." Barbara looked disappointed for a minute.

"Nothing was ever made up out of nothing, Barbara. No, Boccaccio and others picked up scraps of tales from Greece and France and different parts of Italy and made them into such good stories that they lived. And Shakespeare made them into something absolutely new—as new as anything can be. He always put in new characters that do not belong to the old tale at all. Many of those he made out of the people he saw about him in Stratford and London; that is why, no matter where the tales came from, the plays are thoroughly English after all."

They sat down on the brow of the hill and Barbara lay stretched on her back looking up into the branches of a spreading pine tree, while Cousin Emily told her Boccaccio's story of the seven ladies and three gentlemen who came out from Florence one summer morning into these hills which he had loved from boyhood and, to beguile the time they were spending in one of the loveliest of the villas ("It is just over there," she said, indicating the direction with her hand), they told the hundred tales of the "Decameron."

"There was a terrible plague, called the Black Death, raging in Florence. People were dying in the streets and the city was like a desert of mourning. And it so chanced that seven young ladies met together in an almost empty church and one of them proposed that, since they were left alone by the death of so many of their family and friends, they should escape from the infected city into the country. The plan met with favor, and the next day, accompanied by their maids and by three young men of their acquaintance who had agreed to join the party, they betook themselves by the road that Boccaccio knew so well—for he had lived 'not too far from the city nor too near the gate'—to a villa of their own estates—a palace of many rooms and halls and loggias, adorned with paintings.—And when they had examined the house and found everything in order, the beds fresh and clean and the rooms filled with wild flowers, they sat down in a circle on the grass, where there was no sound but the voice of the cricket through the olive trees, and decided to spend the time, not in games of dice and chess, in which only the winners would be satisfied, but in story-telling, which would give delight to every one. A leader was chosen for every day and crowned with bay leaves; and in ten days the hundred stories were told.

"But they did not stay always in the same spot. One Sunday morning, at dawn, they walked, led by twenty nightingales, to still another villa; and there, while the men were playing chess, the ladies wandered into a heavenly valley surrounded by five hills, where there was a pool of clear water, so clear that they could see the pebbles on the bottom and the fish darting about in all directions. Telling their maids to keep watch for them, the ladies bathed in this clear, deep pool, and went back refreshed to the arbor by the villa where the men were still at their game."

"What a contrast it is," Barbara's mother remarked, "to the gloom of the plague-stricken city! And what a contrast is that clear, pure setting to some of the tales those innocent young people told! You will never want to read them all, as they stand, Barbara. They were suited to the time in which they were written, and they *are* wonderful; but I prefer to read them in forms like Shakespeare's plays which are better suited to our time or to all times.

"Yes," said Cousin Emily. "Boccaccio told the story of Imogen; but you would not love her there as you do in Cymbeline. Why, she is not the same person in the least! Shakespeare took only the outline of the story and created the people."

"But not out of *nothing,* Barbara," said Mother, "out of his own mind."

"Of course, that's what I meant," pleaded Barbara. "Oh, no!" she tossed her head and laughed, "I didn't mean his *mind* was *nothing.* Mother! You *know* what I mean."

Her mother gave her a reassuring smile, and she went on: "I think they were *sensible* to tell stories. But why didn't they stay and help the sick people in the city?"

"Ah! there," replied Cousin Emily, "you have the difference between their day and ours. Our young people would have chosen games, I feel sure, but then they would not have said, as those young ladies did, that as long as they had none of their family to care for, they were free. They would have stayed—let us hope—to nurse the waifs in the streets, or any one who was suffering."

They were all three silent for a time, listening to the birds. Then, as they rose to go home, Cousin Emily said to Barbara: "Perhaps you would like to see, in the Florence library, some of those works of Dante in Boccaccio's handwriting. For they are there, and oh! there are many beautiful manuscripts there, written on vellum in the most exquisite script and illustrated in brilliant colors. Boccaccio's 'Decameron' is there. You must see them."

A few days later, Barbara saw with her own eyes these books that were made before printing was invented. And while she looked at the strange, black letters and the bright-colored pictures of the manuscripts, and at Boccaccio's own handwriting, her thoughts flew back to the country, and she thought of the gay brigade of youths and maidens sitting in a circle under the olive trees, telling the tales that were to travel so far and yet would never be separated from their picturesque setting in the hills above Florence.

Shakespeare had never been in Italy. No, that was not necessary. Boccaccio and his followers had taken Italy to Shakespeare's England.

CHAPTER X

JULIET'S GARDEN

In fair Verona, where we lay our scene.
Prologue ("Romeo and Juliet")

IN the worn, leather-bound volumes of Shakespeare on the shelf at home, among the books inscribed with the name of Barbara's grandmother, were some old engravings of the scenes, real and imaginary, where the action of the dramas takes place. Barbara liked them because they showed you exactly where you were when you read the play. The lines of the pictures were clear and definite, too—not blurred and lost as in many illustrations of to-day. They fascinated her, so that she sometimes tried to copy them with her pencil. Once, when she was little, she brought her paint box and was about to color them, thinking thus to make them quite perfect, when some grown-up stopped her. She knew many of them so well that when she went to Verona in the month of May she had her own idea of what she hoped to find there as the setting of "Romeo and Juliet" and "The Two Gentlemen of Verona." She rather hoped to see Launce and his dog, Crab, in the flesh. But in that, alas! she was disappointed.

For the most part, however, she found what she expected. There was the castle on the hill and the fountain in the square; there were the palaces with their towers and terraces and balconies, just as she had seen them in the pictures, and the mysterious structure of pinnacles and statues called a Tomb of the Scaligers, and the great amphitheatre of the Romans called the Arena, and the swift river Adige sweeping under bridges of stone, and, in the background, the mountain tops against the sky. Only the so-called "House of the Capulets" was a disappointment. Surely this could be no more than a fragment, if it were that, of the home of Juliet—the great house of a powerful family where feasts were held and hospitality extended to the entire city—to all but the Montagues, the lifelong enemies of the Capulets. Where, thought Barbara, was the marble terrace under Juliet's balcony? And where was the orchard below it, and the high wall over which Romeo had leaped? She wished most of all for the orchard and the garden, where "the moonlight tipped with silver the fruit-tree tops" and the nightingale sang every night on the same pomegranate bough.

For two days Verona was, to Barbara, a mixture of delights and disappointments. But on the third day she came in from her walk saying that everything was all right now; she had "found Juliet's garden."

"Why, what do you mean?" asked her father, in some surprise.

"It *must* be Juliet's garden," she answered. "It is just like it anyway. You see, it is right here in Verona, and the trees are hundreds of years old, the gardener said—and you can see they are! and there are pomegranate trees and sycamore trees and roses and *everything*—and it is, oh, so beautiful!"

"You *have* made a discovery," said Daddy. "It pays to explore, doesn't it?"

The embowered spot known as "Juliet's tomb" was another surprise. Barbara had rather dreaded that. But there was nothing really sad about it, after all. The marble sarcophagus rested under an arched roof supported by pillars forming a sort of open-air temple covered by swaying vines of shining leaves. Flowers bloomed on every side. The mellow voice of a church bell was chanting in slow measured tones through the quiet air.

On a warm, sultry day the children came back to the hotel from an early walk and, after luncheon and a long nap, Peggy went to work with her dolls inside the house while Barbara sat down alone on a shaded balcony that hung out from their room above the square. Below her, carts and horses, men, women and children mingled together in a lively scene. Across the broad, paved square, the marble Arena lay yellow and silent in the sun.

Little by little, as Barbara looked and dreamed, the scene changed. She saw two young men in doublet and hose and feathered hats, their short swords hanging from their belts, talking and laughing together, down there on the pavement. Presently one of them said to the other:

> I pray thee, good Mercutio, let's retire:
> The day is hot, the Capulets abroad,
> And if we meet we shall not 'scape a brawl.
> For now these hot days is the mad blood stirring.

But the gay Mercutio preferred to stay there jesting with his friend, and while they talked, up came the fiery Tybalt of the House of Capulet. High words were exchanged, their hands felt for their swords, but the moment passed, for another Montague approached and Tybalt cried,

> Well, peace be with you, sir; here comes my man.

It is Romeo, whom he has been seeking,—Romeo, the "virtuous and well-governed youth" who had enraged Tybalt the night before by coming uninvited to the Capulets' ball. There he had seen Juliet, the daughter of the house, who seemed to him a "snowy dove trooping with crows." He had contrived to speak with her, and after a few brief words, they knew and loved each other, only to learn with sad foreboding that their love was planted where it would not be allowed to grow, in the camp of the enemy. Tybalt would have drawn his weapon on the offending Montague then and there but for Juliet's father, who would not allow even an unwelcome guest to be maltreated in his house. The hard-hearted old Capulet was too much of a gentleman for that! Now Tybalt has been out seeking him in the streets, determined to make him pay for his rash act.

"Romeo," he cries, "thou art a villain."

But Romeo will not be driven into a quarrel. He can find no hatred in his heart just now—and this Barbara understands, for she remembers what has happened since the Capulets' ball. She remembers the conversation in the moonlit garden when Juliet, thinking herself alone, had revealed her inmost thoughts to Romeo. She remembers how the plotting of the parents to arrange Juliet's marriage with Count Paris has hastened on the full confession of her love for Romeo and driven her to consent to meet him the next day at Friar Lawrence's cell, where the Friar, thinking thus to end the family feud, married them. Even now, while Tybalt is challenging Romeo, she is at home waiting impatiently for his return.

Romeo, full of his great happiness, will not be driven into a quarrel. He replies with gentle words, telling Tybalt that the reason he has for loving him makes him pardon that word "villain." To Mercutio, who knows nothing of Romeo's reason, this seems a vile submission, and he now rushes forward to answer the charge with his sword.

Romeo tries in vain to part them. They fight and Mercutio is wounded. He dies with a jest on his lips.

And now everything seems changed. A different look has come into Romeo's face. There is grief for his friend who has died in his defense and anger at the murderer. Foreseeing the woe that will follow "this day's black fate," he draws his sword and Tybalt falls. Tybalt, Juliet's cousin, is slain by Romeo, her husband. The citizens rush in, with the Capulets and the Montagues; and the Prince of Verona, learning what has happened, condemns Romeo to banishment.

It is a short, swift scene which Barbara sees in her day-dream. But it is the centre of the tragic story which Shakespeare made so beautiful, into which he crowded so much intense happiness, that it is less a tragedy than a song of triumph.

The place is silent now. Romeo has taken refuge with the Friar. The Nurse has carried the fatal news to Juliet. And Barbara sits there recalling the events that followed. She remembers that Romeo and Juliet were granted one farewell visit, when the radiance of their happiness shone against the background of their woes. She thinks of how those strange parents insisted with cruel words upon her marriage with Paris; of how she appealed for help to the Friar, who, seeing her determined to die rather than desert her husband, gave her a drug which would make her seem to die, and promised to summon Romeo before she should awaken in the family tomb; of how the Friar's letter miscarried and Romeo, hearing that Juliet had died, came back to drink poison beside her; of how Juliet awakened a moment later to find him there and, in haste lest the others should come and snatch her from him, thrust his dagger into her side.

By their deaths the lovers have buried their parents' strife. The fathers are reconciled over their bodies. Romeo and Juliet have been sacrificed. There will be peace henceforth in the streets of Verona.

"Was Juliet really only fourteen years old?" asked Barbara as her mother stepped out upon the balcony.

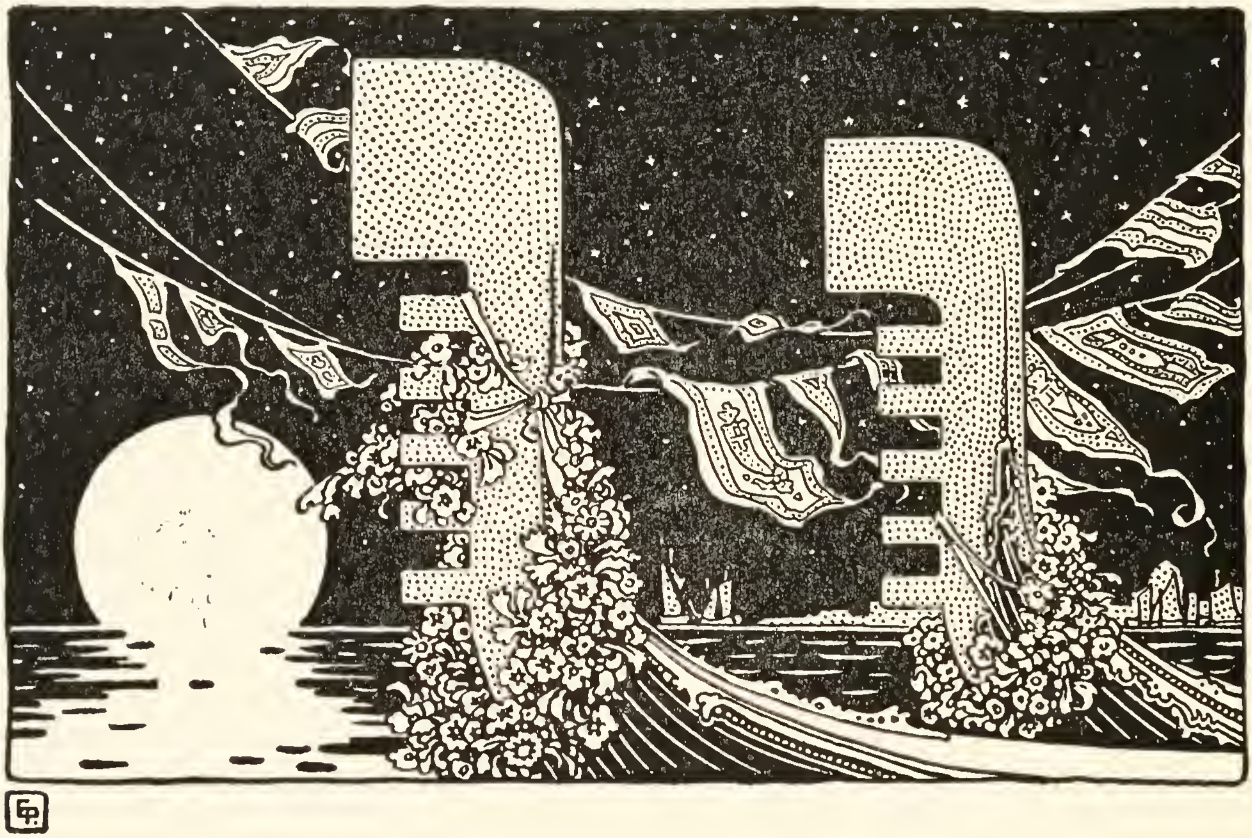
"Girls were very different in those days," her mother answered promptly.

"Her father said wicked things to her. That was why she couldn't tell him the truth. And her mother was not like a real mother at all. I should think she *would* have run away. Even the old Nurse turned against her. . . . But, oh! why did Romeo kill himself? Why didn't he know she was alive, when she was so sweet and beautiful lying there all ready to wake up? Then it might have ended happily. But I suppose Shakespeare had to tell what really happened."

Barbara's mother did not try to tell her why she thought the story better and greater as it was. Instead of that she led Barbara back to the gardens where, it was easy to believe, Juliet had played when she was a little girl. Long shadows lay across the paths between the boxwood hedges. The broad-terraced palace of the old engraving might have stood just there, Barbara thought, beyond those cypress trees which were turning to gold in the afternoon light. It was pleasant to think of it all as happening right here, where the roses were blooming so gaily among the dark trees and the air was heavy with the perfumes of spring.

It was no ordinary garden now, but the moonlit orchard which Shakespeare created, where the lovers' song mingled with the nightingale and the lark. Juliet was happy there. And Barbara looked happy, too, as she leaned over a railing, beside a fountain, and listened while her mother repeated Romeo's words:

> The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,
> As daylight doth a lamp; her eye in heaven
> Would through the airy region stream so bright
> That birds would sing and think it were not night.



CHAPTER XI

THE POET'S VENICE

How far that little candle throws his beams!
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.
Portia ("The Merchant of Venice")

MORE than all the other places, Barbara loved Venice. That was the magical city, where you moved about in a dream that lasted longer than one midsummer night, through streets of water that rose and fell with the tides of the sea. It seemed impossible that you had come there in a real railroad train, and that those were real trunks piled on the gondola that took you from the station to the hotel. Surely it was not a real hotel. It was a Venetian palace of a pale rose color, with pointed windows tipped with leaves of marble, with sculptured balconies, and steps that dropped down below the water. On still days, while you floated through the canals under the bridges, the marble palaces rose straight up from the water to the sky and dropped down far below in shimmering reflections to the other sky under you. You lost sight of the palaces under the sea again and again and the clouds of that reflected sky broke into pieces, as the boats glided through them. But you had nothing to regret because then you watched the boats. And nothing could be more fascinating than the boats.

Sometimes a gondola carried a party of gay people; sometimes there were two sturdy gondoliers for one solitary gentleman who leaned back luxuriously among the cushions. There were broader, less graceful boats that carried more fascinating cargoes—shining red tomatoes piled into pyramids, oranges and apricots in large, round baskets, artichokes that looked like buds of some rare, gigantic flowers, grapes in glistening festoons, and mountains of curly cabbages. There were huge black hulks of boats, each one with a blue virgin painted on the prow and a yellow, winged lion on the rudder. Often they seemed to block the canal and you looked for a collision. But they always slipped past each other, a hair's breadth apart, yet never touching.

When they went in a gondola, the children liked to sit on the low steps facing the proper seat, so that they could watch the gondolier bending his supple body to the great oar, steering, one knew not how, by the slightest motions of his wrist, and clearing the way by his mysterious calls that reëchoed through the canals. For there were no sounds of motor cars and trams in Venice, and you heard the voices, and the plash of the oars, and laughter, and singing, as if you were on some quiet, country stream. Once, when they had taken two gondoliers for a long trip across the lagoon, Peggy's smiles persuaded the man in the bow to let her hold the oar and she plied it bravely till she was out of breath and glad to give it up. "I learned how when I was smaller than you," he told her, "and I have done it ever since. And now my little boy is doing it. He is strong like you, Signorina. But I have only one gondola and it is not often that he has a chance to practice."—"Mumsie," whispered Peggy, "couldn't we give him a gondola?"—How nice it would have been if Mother could only have said yes!

Barbara and Peggy were not taken to see many pictures in Venice. Wherever one turned one saw a picture. The carved palaces under the blue sky were such works of art in nature's setting that it was a pity to leave them for churches and museums. Venetian painting could wait for a later visit. So they fed the pigeons in St. Mark's Square and stored up at the same time a precious memory of that most beautiful of all city squares, which is like a great festal chamber, surrounded by marble walls and colonnades adorned with gold pinnacles and domes and the sculptured arches of the cathedral, and open to the sky.

Amid all the life and motion, the color and the sounds, nothing in Venice was of such great interest to Barbara as the house on the Grand Canal called Desdemona's Palace and the old Bridge of the Rialto; for about them hung stories that she knew.

This palace and this bridge were fascinating in themselves. But their charm for Barbara was lent them by their stories. They were wonderful stories, full of the poetry and mystery of Venice—wherein the sea and ships that traffic in the Orient are made a part of the life of the streets and the marketplace, and the wealth and power of the Republic of Venice are woven into the loves and hatreds of men, and strange adventures throb in human passions. In one of them, at least, the light-hearted, merry temper of the Venetian is given full play; in the other a sheltered and innocent Venetian girl becomes the prey of the hot emotions of men in a world where violence has not been tamed to reason.

Barbara did not know the play of "Othello" as she knew the "Merchant of Venice." It was too terrible to read, she thought. But she liked the story of the gentle Desdemona won by the brave Moor's tales of his adventures in wild and unknown lands; and as she floated in a gondola past the house which tradition called Desdemona's, while her mother repeated the story and recalled certain lines of the play, she could picture them sitting behind that balustrade carved into patterns as delicate as the lace she had seen young girls making on the island of Burano, while the waves washed the steps below them and the boats came in from those far eastern countries of which they talked. She thought of Othello as an olive-skinned Moor, dark and swarthy, and so different from Desdemona's family and friends that her father might have said—exaggerating in his anger—that she "loved that which she feared to look upon," but for all that a fine type of man, strongly built and noble in his bearing. He must have looked even handsome—and the Venetian councillors must have looked pale and weak beside him—when he stood up in the Signory, in a room like those Barbara had seen in the Doges' Palace, and, addressing them with perfect courtesy,

> Most potent, grave and reverend signors,
> My very noble and approved good masters,

delivered his "round, unvarnished tale" in such a way that one of them was moved to say, "I think this tale would win my daughter, too." Barbara liked him best when he said, so very simply,

> She loved me for the dangers I had passed,
> And I loved her that she did pity them.
> This only is the witchcraft I have used.

Later, when his passions and suspicions were aroused against Desdemona by the wicked Iago, Barbara did not understand him, and her mind refused to dwell upon that part of the story. It was "too terrible." When she knew the play much better, and had learned something of the history of Venice, she understood Shakespeare's truth to life in making him die with a word of devotion to the Venetian state upon his lips. It justified his title, "Moor of Venice."

The great square of Saint Mark's was full of people, sitting at tables or pacing to and fro under the arcades or over the open pavement in the lengthening shadows of the later afternoon, when Barbara and her father crossed from the cathedral to the opposite end of the square and turned into a narrow, crooked street called the Frezzeria—the street of the arrow makers, which Shakespeare called the Sagittary. They made their way between small shops and over bridges built high on arches that let the boats pass under, and came out into a busy square where there were larger, quite modern-looking stores. In the centre of the open space was a bronze statue of a man, raised on a low pedestal so that he stood but a few feet above the crowd, and smiling in such a jolly way that you could hardly look at him without smiling back.

"Who is it, Daddy?" asked Barbara.

"That is the Venetian who wrote plays," he answered, "Goldoni."

"Was there only one?—He is a dear!—Do you like his plays, Daddy, as well as Shakespeare's?"

When her father had explained that there were many, but he was the most famous, and that he liked Shakespeare's plays much better, though Goldoni's were quite amusing and "not half bad," he told her that the Venetians had always loved to act, and that in the days before Goldoni, who lived a long time after Shakespeare, they had found it so amusing to invent their plays as they went along that they would dress themselves up like certain familiar characters and then make up the words these characters might speak, right there on the stage, while the audience applauded, or hissed, as the case might be.

"That must have been hard!" exclaimed Barbara. "When Peggy and I do plays, we think up the words first and learn them by heart. They must have had their wits about them!"

"They did," Daddy went on, "and for that reason it was a long time before they had any real, written plays, worked out with care so that they were good enough to keep. Goldoni did what seemed impossible when he made comedies in which the people were full of wit and gaiety like true Venetians and so well done that the people who listened were glad to hear them over and over and did not ask for new fresh words every time they went to the theatre. You know," he said, "that when you hear words like so many of Shakespeare's, which make you feel, 'There! That is just right. That couldn't be better,' then you want to hear them again, and you want to keep them in a book so that you can read them when you are alone. That is what the Venetians felt about Goldoni."

"And that *is* what we feel about Shakespeare," Barbara assented. She understood that very well; and often, as time went on, and she read the plays of Shakespeare more frequently, Shakespeare's words would come into her mind most unexpectedly, to help her express her own thoughts.

Her father told her that Goldoni had been one of the first Italians to know and appreciate Shakespeare and to declare his "reverence" for him.

They wandered through many streets—if you can call them streets when there are no vehicles and so little room for the people to walk that you must keep to the right or block the way—and several times they thought they were lost. The turns were so sharp that, as Daddy said, you couldn't lose the direction; there was no direction to lose through such streets as these.

"They make me think of Launcelot Gobbo's instructions to his father in 'The Merchant of Venice,' said Daddy. "Let me see, what was it? 'Turn up on your right at the next turning, but at the next turning of all to your left, and at the very next turning, turn down directly into the Jew's house.' Was that it?"

"He must have been making fun of Venetian streets when he said that, don't you think so?"

Barbara stopped and looked into a little shop where an old man and woman were frying shellfish and all kinds of fish and selling them hot over a sort of counter that faced the street.

"It looks better than it smells," Barbara remarked. "And it looks clean, Daddy!"

"It's a miracle if it is," he answered.

They came soon to a broad opening and faced the Grand Canal. From the edge of the foundation wall they looked "up and down the river," as Barbara put it, adding, "only, of course, it isn't a river." And there, close by them on the right, was the Rialto Bridge.

"Can we go right up to it?" asked Barbara, who had seen it only from the water, when it looked very high and rather stern and unapproachable, as if it expected you to stay far off and look at it with respect for its grave dignity.

"Certainly. We are going to cross it," and Daddy led the way up a short flight of steps that rose by the side of the canal to the end of the bridge, and, when they had stopped to look in a shop window at some beautiful silk damasks and brocades, they turned up other broad steps onto the bridge—or rather *into* the bridge, as it seemed, for they found themselves in a street like the other streets of Venice, closed in between rows of shops. Only at the top they came to a broad, arched opening through which they could look far down upon the canal and watch the boats come in and out of the dark shadow under them.

As they turned from the arch and walked on, they met an old, stoop-shouldered man with a huge, gray beard and white, unkempt hair, dragging his feet as if to keep from losing his dilapidated shoes. He raised his head and looked at them with a sharp, black eye, and passed on.

Barbara held on to herself until he was well past them and then whispered, "Shylock!"

"There is a family resemblance, certainly," said Daddy. "Don't, dear, don't look round at him. I wanted to say, 'What news to-day on the Rialto?' "

"Why *didn't* you, Daddy?"

Descending the steps on the other side, they looked into an open marketplace where all kinds of things,—food and clothing, muslins and cloth, household utensils and knick-nacks—were displayed for sale in small shops on the outer edge and queer little booths in the open square. It was odd to see chickens and ducks and pigeons, all ready to be cooked, piled up under an awning, and fruit in heaps with no covering but the sky.

"The things don't look very nice," was Barbara's comment.

"Ah! But they once did," her father answered. "All the rare gems and stuffs of the Orient were on sale here once, and with them the beautiful things made by Venetian goldsmiths and silversmiths and workers in bronze and leather and ivory. Even the paintings of great artists like Titian and Tintoretto were hung up here in the open air for all to see. The whole marketplace, and not the bridge alone, was called the Rialto. The ships came up here with their cargoes of gold and ivory and precious stones, and the men who made them into works of art came here to make their purchases, and then each kind of workman would go off to his own little street where his kind of things was made—as arrows, you know, were made in the street of the arrows—and all kinds of people flocked here to buy and sell and to look and talk and listen. It was here, you remember, that Antonio's friends rallied him and teased him about his silence. They wanted to know why he was sad, and not gay and talkative like the rest of them——"

"Oh, yes!" Barbara broke in, "and when they could not find a reason they said he was 'sad because he was not merry.'"

"There were even public halls here on the edge of the market," Daddy went on, "where students came to hear lectures and learn everything from seamanship to Greek philosophy. And gay processions went through the place, to remind people of sports and athletic contests that were to take place in other parts of the city; and processions of church dignitaries, with boys in white surplices like those we see nowadays, to remind the people of sacred festivals in the cathedral."

"I suppose Shylock didn't like that," Barbara remarked, "because he was a Jew and hated Christians."

"I am afraid the Christians hated the Jews, too," replied her father. "The whole story centres in their hatred of each other. When Antonio borrowed money from Shylock to lend to his friend, Bassanio, who needed it so that he could offer himself in marriage to the lady Portia, Shylock demanded a pound of the merchant's flesh as a forfeit if he failed to pay, just because of that hatred. He wanted to be revenged on all Christians for hating the Jews. Antonio understood Shylock's wicked thought, but he promised it gaily enough, trusting that his ships would be in with their cargo before the day of payment. The ships were delayed by storms, you remember, and if Portia had not come to the courtroom, disguised as a lawyer, and pleaded so well for Antonio, Shylock would have triumphed."

"I remember," said Barbara, "Portia told him that if he shed a drop of Christian blood when he cut off the pound of flesh he would have to die by the laws of Venice."

"Yes, and all his goods must go to the state. That cut old Shylock worst of all."

"The other part of the story is so different, isn't it?" Barbara mused. "I like the part about the casket, when

Portia's lovers come to choose, and Bassanio chooses the right box. That seems too good to be really true!"

"Nothing is too good to be true," her father answered. "You must like Shylock's daughter, Jessica, too, don't you—and the lovely things that Lorenzo says to her about music, out in the moonlight. Shakespeare certainly loved music.

"It was wonderful of Shakespeare," he went on, "to begin his play with that picture of the ships at sea—Antonio's 'argosies with portly sail' and 'pageants of the sea,'—because so much of their life centred in their ships. And to put Portia into an inland villa—that was wonderful, too, because the Venetians had a passion for fields and hills and quiet, wooded valleys. If they possibly could, they had villas on the shore of a river that comes down into the lagoon, or in the mountains; and the combination in the play is a perfect picture of Venice."

"And afterward," said Barbara, "I suppose Portia came to live in Venice with Bassanio, and they went to their villa for part of the time."

She was thoughtful for a minute, and then remarked, "Portia had her wits about her, didn't she, Daddy?"

They walked down to the water's edge and hailed a gondola and were soon slipping silently under the broad, massive arch of the bridge and out again into the sunlight, and around a corner into the shadow of narrow canals, twisting their course under many bridges, while the rays of the setting sun flushed the palaces above them and the rising tide brought in fresh water and scents of the sea.


EP

Shakespeare
in France

CHAPTER XII

A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY

What wind doth blow you hither, Pistol?
Falstaff
Not the ill wind that blows no man to good.
Pistol ("Henry IV," Part II)

EN route for Paris!

How many people in the history of the world have set their faces toward Paris! And with what different aims!

Barbara and Peggy, in their brown linen dresses, their hair tied back from their faces with soft, black ribbon, looked out from the windows of the train that carried them from Italy to France, little realizing over what a famous route they were traveling. As they watched the swift-passing scenes of snow-capped mountains and river torrents, they could not appreciate how easy it was for them to glide under the Alps by way of the St. Gothard tunnel compared with the hardships and dangers endured by travelers of earlier days.

Yet those children's eyes were open, and to both of them going to Paris was a great adventure. To Peggy, it meant a happy journey to the Paradise of Dolls! to Barbara it was a voyage of discovery. Barbara was like those seafarers of ancient Greece who always wanted to see what was beyond the next headland, and the next, and the next. Wherever she went, her first words were always, "Now let's explore." There were always things to investigate and new things to discover, at home or abroad. And now she was impatient to explore Paris. She wanted to know what the city looked like, what kind of a place they would live in, what kind of children there would be in the school they were to enter, and just what wonderful and beautiful objects they would see.

"There'll be dolls and dolls," mused Peggy. "There'll be dolls that walk and talk and dance and sing and laugh and cry. And I wonder what they'll think of *you,* my dear little Agrippina." She hugged the small Roman peasant in a red velvet kirtle and black-and-white bodice and gay, worsted apron.

"I wonder if it will be like the school in Rome," Barbara pondered. "I wonder if we have to go in the afternoon. I wonder if they act plays there, too. I hope there'll be a teacher as nice as the Signorina."

"Of course there won't!" declared Peggy. "I'm going to write to the Signorina *every*—well, *nearly* every day."

"I wonder, I wonder—— Isn't it grand that Daddy and I are going to ride horseback?—I wonder——"

When they reached Paris at last, it was dark, and the only thing they wanted in the world was to drop into their comfortable beds and go to sleep.

In the months that followed, Barbara made many discoveries. And among all the pleasant things that Paris revealed, the most important of her discoveries was history.

She found history all about her—in churches and palaces, in the streets and houses, as well as in stories that she read in prose and verse. History as it was taught in Barbara's school in Paris was a series of fascinating stories about the heroes and heroines of France and of ancient Greece and Rome. Some of those heroes and heroines stood out from the others and became Barbara's favorites. One of them was Bayard, the famous knight who was without fear and without reproach. Another, for quite different reasons, was Francis I (François Premier, she called him), the King who did so much to make Paris beautiful. About him she centred all that she learned about the new world that rose out of the Middle Ages, when travelers from Italy were spreading the new learning and our modern ideals of life. Another was a French hero dear to the

England of Shakespeare's day, King Henry of Navarre. But greater than all the heroes of France to Barbara's mind was her heroine, Joan of Arc.

Barbara made another discovery.

The stories that she liked best were those of the age of chivalry, when the air was full of jousts and tournaments; when knights were brave and courteous and ladies were beautiful and good; when kings conducted crusades to the Holy Land and came back enriched with treasure of gold and gems and ivory and silken stuffs from the Orient; when the great cathedrals were built—like Notre Dame in Paris and others that Barbara saw, in Chartres and Rheims; when warfare, as it seemed, consisted chiefly of riding in radiant armor on prancing steeds richly caparisoned.

Barbara found that, in that interesting period, the history of France and England was one and inseparable. A large part of what now is France belonged to England then; French princesses became English queens and English kings and dukes were even sovereigns of France; there were constant wars to settle the rights to the lands and cities of France and whether the provinces of Normandy, Maine, Anjou, Touraine and the rest owed allegiance to the King in London or to the King in Paris; and there were constant alliances and new vows of friendship between the rulers, to be broken as easily as they were made. King Philip of France (Philippe Auguste) and Richard Cœur de Lion, Crown Prince of England, went together like brothers to the Holy Land and quarreled on their return.

And so, for more than two hundred years, there was a series of friendships and marriages and estrangements and warfare.

It was in this period, when the history of France and England was one and inseparable—and this was Barbara's discovery—it was in this period that Shakespeare found the stories which he told in his dramas of English history as they have never been told since.

Philip Augustus, who went to the Holy Land with Richard of the Lion's Heart, is the King who espouses the cause of Prince Arthur in Shakespeare's "King John." The greatest victory of the English over the French was in the battle of Agincourt, after which Henry V of England was acknowledged to be the sovereign of France and heir to the French throne. This is the story of Shakespeare's "Henry V." It was not good for the French that an English King should rule their land, nor for the English, either, as it proved. They were driven out at last by the brave leadership of Joan of Arc; and in the three plays about "Henry VI"—but that is another story, to be told in another chapter.

Twice after France and England were well established as separate nations, the two countries were closely united: once, in the reign of Henry V, Shakespeare's ideal King, and again in Shakespeare's lifetime, in the age of Queen Elizabeth. In the first period the union was that of the conqueror and the conquered; in the second they were united by common interests in a close friendship. In that time of friendship, France inspired England to noble efforts; and all through Shakespeare's plays the inspiration of France is clearly reflected, from his earliest comedy, which was laid in the France of his own day, to his latest work, in which it may be seen that he had been reading the books of a contemporary Frenchman.

When Francis I of France met Henry VIII of England on the Field of the Cloth of Gold, the bond of the friendship between these two "mighty monarchies" was sealed with great splendor and magnificence. That seal would have proved as brittle as its glory but for the vital interests that were to draw the nations together; and a part of that story is in Shakespeare's play, "The History of the Life of King Henry VIII."

A few months after Barbara and Peggy left Paris, France and England were again close together, when their armies fought side by side on the soil of France in the World War. Not many miles from the field of Agincourt, the British were drawn up against the Germans. Henry V was marching toward Calais when he encountered the French forces at Agincourt. The Germans were aiming at Calais when the English stood with their "backs to the wall" and helped the French to defeat them. And now all that, too, is a part of history.

In France, Barbara remembered Italy. She was fascinated by the walls of the Roman city underneath the French. What she liked about François Premier was that he brought painters and sculptors and architects and scholars from Italy. And at every turn she was reminded of England. And since America is the child of those older countries, she was making discoveries about the people who made America.

America's inheritance—England, France and Italy combined—is it not all in Shakespeare? It was there, at any rate, that it became real to Barbara. It was there that the people seemed like those that walk the streets to-day, and yet as truly belonging to those other times and places that fascinated her. Shakespeare's words made them living people.

Yet Shakespeare does not always keep to the facts of history even in his history plays. And in the others!—we know well with what a free hand he rearranges time and space. But when he knows the facts and changes them, it is always for the purpose of telling the real truth more plainly. When, for example, he makes Harry Hotspur many years younger than he was at the time, it is to contrast him with Prince Hal in such a way that the true and actual characters of both are made unforgettable.

For he is always true to life. He was often more true to life than the history of Barbara's schoolbooks which, though always interesting, was limited to great leaders and great events. Barbara learned from Shakespeare that war in the Middle Ages was something more than heroic exploits of kings and princes riding fully armed on prancing horses or on ships whose sails were of purple silk, heavily embroidered in gold. She learned about the hardships of the English soldiers—poor threadbare fellows like those that Justice Shallow offers to Falstaff—Wart and Feeble and Bull-calf and Shadow and Mouldy. She met with brave yeomen "whose limbs were made in England," and with a coward now and then, like Nym or Pistol. The conversation between Henry V and his soldiers before the battle of Agincourt showed her the King and the peasant in such a way that—little girl though she was—she felt acquainted with both.

It was a great world she was exploring—reaching out far beyond her in tempting vistas. Paris was on the highway to knowledge. Shakespeare was often the gateway of the world.

The highway sometimes led far beyond the city, into Normandy and Brittany and the valley of the Loire. Six weeks of the summer before the opening of school were passed on the Breton coast, bathing in the sea, walking and driving in wild, open places or in the quaint towns where so much of the Middle Ages survives in the habits and costumes of the people. At Angers, on the way to Brittany, they found themselves again in that many-colored world of which the gateway is Shakespeare.

CHAPTER XIII

IN OLD ANJOU

"Gone to be married! gone to swear a peace!
False blood to false blood joined! gone to be friends!"
Constance ("King John")

THE proud, injured Queen, mother of Arthur, was sad and passionate in the army tent before Angers, down in the plain below the castle walls on which Barbara and Peggy had been walking until their feet were tired. A modern city had sprung up there, in the green valleys of the rivers Loire and Maine, but the mighty towers of the grim, old castle still rose above it and the same cathedral spires pierced the sky. And still, after seven hundred years, the armies of King John of England and Philip, King of France, were encamped below the walls; for Barbara saw them there, as she stood beside Peggy, while Mother and Daddy talked together at the other side of the round tower roof. There was Constance, with young Prince Arthur beside her. The boy's lovely face was troubled, while his mother poured forth her indignation at the perjury of kings. Barbara remembered what had happened. Philip of France had espoused the cause of Arthur, who, as the son of John's elder brother, had a real claim to the throne of England, and, with England, to the French provinces, Touraine, Anjou, Poitou, and Maine. The armies of the two nations had met and fought, with no clear victory on either side; and now, at the suggestion of a herald appearing on the walls of the city, they had patched up a peace by arranging a marriage between the French King's son and a niece of the King of England. The citizens of Angers, who had refused to side with either king, admitted them as friends into the city, and the marriage was solemnized in the cathedral. King John gave the disputed provinces to France, and the claims of Arthur were cast into the dust heap. He was made Duke of Brittany—but what was that to the ambitious Queen who had seen him, ever since his birth, as King of England?

While his mother flamed with indignation, Prince Arthur was anxious that this conflict should be ended and they should be at peace. Over there between the camps, when the two sides were wrangling over him before the battle, he had pleaded, with tears and sighs:

> Good my mother, peace!
> I would that I were low laid in my grave.
> I am not worth this coil that's made for me.

And now again he begged her; "I do beseech you, madam, be content." She replied that if he were grim and ugly and misshapen, she could be content:

> But at thy birth, dear boy,
> Nature and fortune joined to make thee great.
> Of nature's gifts thou mayst with lilies boast
> Or with the half-blown rose.

His beauty remained only to increase her wrath because fortune had turned against him.

Barbara explained all this to Peggy as well as she could. "You see, Arthur didn't care," she said, "whether he was beautiful or great if his mother would only be content."

"And oh!" cried Peggy, "I know just how he felt. 'If they'd only stop making a fuss about me,' he thought, 'I don't care what happens. I'd rather die than have so much talk about me.' I know just how he felt."

"So do I," said Barbara, "but there was something else. Because, when he was taken prisoner—— Come over here a little way so we can see where the English camp was, and I will tell you what happened to poor little Arthur next. There he is now, with King John and his mother, Queen Eleanor, the one who is so afraid that Constance will win and take her place. They have had another battle because a legate came from the Church at Rome and the two kings couldn't agree about what he said, so they broke their friendship and had another battle; and Arthur was taken prisoner, and he said, 'Oh, this will make my mother die of grief!' You see he thought of her first. And then that wicked King John gave him over to Hubert to put in prison —and—oh, Peggy! it makes you shudder to read what he said to him."

"Mother has the book. Please, go get it and read it to me."

"Well!" exclaimed Barbara, drawing herself up, "if you want me to read it to you, *you* had better go and get the book,—hadn't you?" she ended with a smile.

Peggy ran and Barbara followed her and, in spite of tired feet, they raced each other across the tower and threw themselves against Mother and Daddy at the same instant.

But it was time for lunch and the children were persuaded to do their reading in the garden of the hotel. They took one more look at the fertile plain—the richest garden spot of France—and at the river winding under the massive castle walls and the gray, slate-roofed town and the Gothic churches, and then climbed down the crooked stairways and came out into the street.

"This ought to be the most interesting town in France to English-speaking people," Daddy remarked, "because Anjou furnished England with eight of her kings, not to mention Margaret of Anjou, the powerful queen in the Wars of the Roses."

"More interesting than Paris?" asked Barbara.

"Oh, no! Always excepting Paris. Paris is a world by itself. Did you know that Henry Plantagenet was really Henry of Anjou—that Plantagenet was a nickname, from the *planta genista,* the yellow flower that he wore in his crest?"

"That lovely ginesta that we had in Rome? Did he wear that in his cap? He must have been dashing!"

An hour later, the children sat on a bench among the palms and flowers of the Hotel du Cheval Blanc—the ancient Hotel of the White Horse, refashioned into a large, white, comfortable, modern building. Peggy held in her hand a little picture of the earlier structure, as it looked in Shakespeare's day, while Barbara read aloud the words that passed between King John and the rough, dark-browed fellow, Hubert, when Eleanor had taken Prince Arthur to one side out of hearing.

King John: Come hither, Hubert. O my gentle Hubert,
We owe thee much! within this wall of flesh
There is a soul counts thee her creditor,
And with advantage means to pay thy love.

. . . .

Give me thy hand. I had a thing to say,
But I will fit it with some better time.
By heaven, Hubert, I am almost ashamed
To say what good respect I have of thee.
Hubert: I am much bounden to your majesty.
King John: Good friend, thou hast no cause to say so yet,
But thou shalt have, and creep time ne'er so slow,
Yet it shall come for me to do thee good.
I had a thing to say,—but let it go:
The sun is in the heaven, and the proud day,

Attended with the pleasures of the world,
Is all too wanton and too full of gawds
To give me audience:—if the midnight bell
Did with his iron tongue and brazen mouth
Sound on into the drowsy ear of night;
If this same were a churchyard where we stand,
And thou possessèd with a thousand wrongs;

. . . .

Or if that thou couldst see me without eyes,
Hear me without thine ears and make reply
Without a tongue, using conceit alone,
Without eyes, ears, and harmful sound of words,
Then, in despite of brooded watchful day,
I would into thy bosom pour my thoughts.
But, ah, I will not!—yet I love thee well,
And, by my troth, I think thou lov'st me well.
Hubert: So well that what you bid me undertake,
Though that my death were adjunct to my act,
By heaven, I would do it.
King John: Do not I know thou would'st?
Good Hubert, Hubert, Hubert, throw thine eye
On yon young boy. I'll tell thee what, my friend,
He is a very serpent in my way;
And wherso'er this foot of mine doth tread
He lies before me: dost thou understand me?
Thou art his keeper.
Hubert: And I'll keep him so
That he shall not offend your majesty.
King John: Death.
Hubert: My lord?
King John: A grave.
Hubert: He shall not live.
King John: Enough.
I could be merry now. Hubert, I love thee.
Well, I'll not say what I intend for thee.
Remember——

"And what then, Barbara?" demanded Peggy.

"Oh, then Arthur's mother mourned and mourned. She seemed to know that she would never see him again till she saw him in heaven. And she was afraid he would grow so thin and pale in prison that when she met him in heaven she would not know him. And Arthur was taken to England and shut up in a castle, and Hubert was his keeper. They were such good friends!—until—now let's read this" —and she read the heart-breaking scene in the castle chamber which was Arthur's prison. At the mere mention of the hot irons which Hubert brings to fulfil his dastardly promise, Peggy was frightened and caught Barbara's arm.

"Cheer up, Peggy, it doesn't happen, you know. I *must* read it. I just *must*. Arthur is so adorable."

She read on bravely, as if performing a solemn duty to little Arthur. Peggy simply must know how dear he was, and how he won Hubert from his purpose.

The child's pleading would have melted a heart of stone, and when Hubert yielded, saying:

> Well, see to live. I will not touch thine eye
> For all the treasure that thine uncle owes:
> Yet am I sworn, and I did purpose, boy,
> With this same very iron to burn them out,

and Arthur answered:

> O, now you look like Hubert! all this while,
> You were disguised,

and Hubert assured him that for all the wealth of the world he would not harm him, and Arthur cried:

> O heaven! I thank thee, Hubert,

both Barbara and Peggy were smiling through their tears.

Their mother found them then, and proposed a run in the park. But they could not be torn from the sad story until they had taken Arthur to the end of his troubles. And so Mother took up the book and read them his last words, as he stood at the top of the castle wall:

The wall is high; and yet I will leap down:
Good ground, be pitiful and hurt me not!
There's few or none do know me; if they did,
This ship-boy's semblance hath disguised me quite.
I am afraid; and yet, I'll venture it.
If I get down, and do not break my limbs,
I'll find a thousand shifts to get away.
As good to die and go, as die and stay.

He leaps down.

O me! my uncle's spirit is in these stones:
Heaven take my soul, and England keep my bones.

"And when they found him there at the foot of the castle wall," said Mother, turning over the pages, "one of them exclaimed:

O death, made proud with pure and princely beauty!

and another:

It is a damnèd and a bloody work!

When one of them lifted the boy's body, Faulconbridge declared:

I am amazed, methinks, and lose my way
Among the thorns and dangers of this world.
How easy dost thou take all England up!

The deed was so vile that this man foresaw that with Arthur's soul the light had fled from England. He knew (as King John for all his wickedness acknowledged):

> There is no sure foundation set on blood,
> No certain life achieved by others' death.

Although Hubert had not killed Arthur, the King's sin was none the less and he suffered the consequences of his sin. His friends fell from him; the French invaded the land; and he died an inglorious, remorseful death, "a scribbled form drawn with a pen upon a parchment" and shrunk up to nothing by the fire of the fever in his blood.

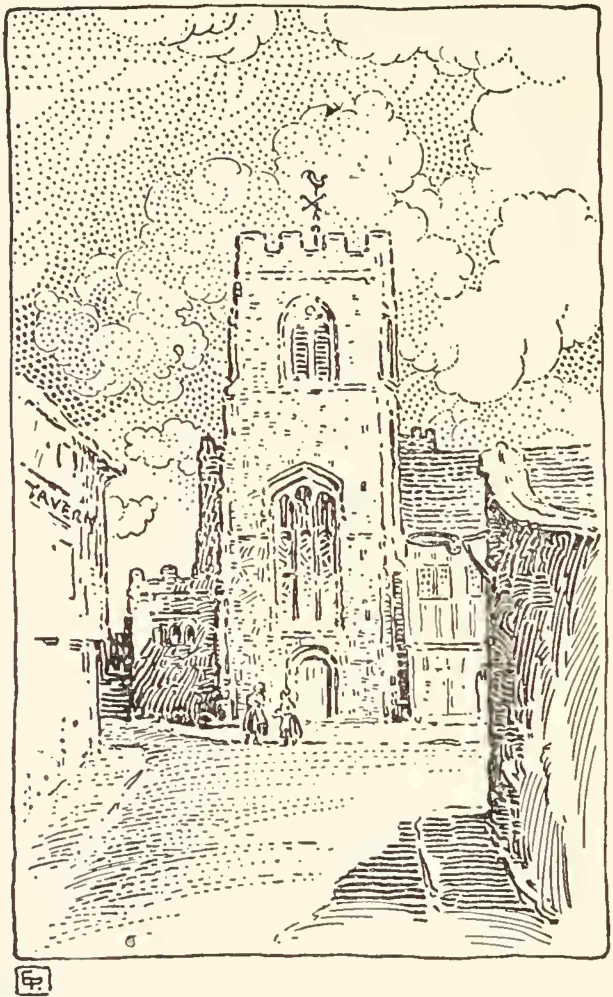
"But now," said Mother, "before we go, you must hear the last words of the play. They are spoken by Faulconbridge, and when you know him you know the only person in the play worth knowing besides Arthur and Constance. Faulconbridge was a rough, witty, selfish fellow at the start. But as he served the King, he realized that he was serving England; and he forgot his selfish ambitions and thought, at the last, only of his country. And at the end he spoke the often-quoted words:

> This England never did, nor never shall
> Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,
> But when it first did help to wound itself.
>
> . . . .
>
> Nought shall make us rue
> If England to itself do rest but true.

"Oh, but I want Arthur back," sobbed Peggy. "I do rue! I do rue! I don't *care* about England."

"Wasn't there anybody good in those days?" queried

Barbara, "any grown-up people, I mean. There was some good in Hubert, though. I'm glad I'm in Angers now and not then. Let's read some more 'Henry V' and forget about 'King John,'—only I'll never, never forget Prince Arthur. He was right; if he could only have been out of prison and keeping sheep he would have been as happy as the day is long. . . . *We* ought to be happy, then. Let's go now and play in the park."



THE site of “New Place,” at the corner of Chapel Street and Scholars Lane, opposite the Guild chapel and the tavern.

CHAPTER XIV

BLUFF KING HAL

> The mirror of all Christian kings.
> *Chorus* ("King Henry V")

MONTHS had passed since their return from Brittany, when they were walking home from school one day through the most fascinating street in Paris. It was the longest way home, but they chose it always in bright weather because it lay along the quays of the River Seine. They liked the long vistas up and down the river and they never tired of looking down from the stone parapet at the moving water and the steamers and the barges and tugboats and the river people plying their trades.

The temptation to linger was strong that afternoon, for the air was warm with the first breath of spring, the trees were tinged with green as if a thin gauze hung over them, and a new life and gaiety seemed to be stirring under the blue sky.

They had been in Paris long enough to know that much of the history of the world had passed that way. Across the river was the Louvre; they looked back at the cathedral towers of Notre Dame; they walked out on the bridge a little way so that they could see better the island which had once been the entire city. To Barbara, everything she saw meant something now. The spires and turrets of the old churches and palaces had stories to tell her.

She had read very little Shakespeare in those winter months. There were so many French stories to read, so many lessons to learn, and so much to see and do in Paris! But this afternoon, because of what had happened the day before, her head was full of it and, as usual, she wanted to share everything with Peggy.

The day before was a holiday and it had rained all day. Barbara was not in a holiday mood at all; but it was not on account of the rain. It was because she was gloomy over the misfortunes of France. They had been reviewing their history in school (they were always "reviewing" in that school!) and Mademoiselle had painted a sorry picture of the state of the country just before Joan of Arc appeared, when the poor afflicted King Charles VI was on the throne, when the people were distracted by civil wars between the King's party and the Dukes of Burgundy; when, after many struggles, the "oriflamme," the sacred banner of the Kings of France, raised for the last time at Agincourt, was taken down in token of submission to King Henry V of England; and a little later when the infant Henry VI of England was crowned in Paris, and there was no King of France.

Barbara's mother, coming into the room in the middle of the morning, found her on the rug by the open fire, murmuring, half to herself and half to Peggy, who had arranged a "circus" over by the window and was seating the dolls around it for audience,

"That wicked Queen, Isabeau of Bavaria, and the Duke of Burgundy helped the English! How could they? They were traitors!"

Her mother took a book from the shelf and said quietly, "Suppose we read the English side of the story."

Barbara looked at the book and her face brightened. It was a volume of Shakespeare. But when she saw that it was "Henry V," she shook her head and her face fell again. "No, Mother," she said, "I don't think I can ever like him again. He made the French so unhappy." However, she decided to read a little of it, and before very long she was under the spell of Shakespeare's words, which cast a glamor over the soldier-king of England even while they do not let you forget the sorrows of France.

And now, as they lingered in the sunshine, she was telling Peggy what a great king was Henry V; how he gave up the bad habits of his youth and turned over a new leaf, and all for the sake of his country; and how every one was astonished that Prince Hal, the boon companion of Falstaff, should suddenly, when he became king, show such wisdom and courage. She explained that you couldn't really blame him for invading France when his father and every one had told him it was the only way to make England strong and united.

They were standing at the corner of the bridge watching the river, when their mother, who was rummaging among the queer old books in the bookstalls, heard Peggy exclaim:

"Tennis balls! Why that was a *nice* present for the French Prince to send. I don't see why King Henry was angry about that."

"Well, you wouldn't want tennis balls if you had asked for dukedoms, would you?" Barbara replied. "Besides, he was making fun of the King—and you don't like to have anybody make fun of you."

"No, but I wouldn't make a war just because some one made fun of me."

"Oh, but that wasn't the real reason. He had other reasons—we were just talking about them! He sort of pretended that was the real reason. I suppose he did that to make the Dauphin a little bit ashamed of being 'so pleasant with him.' What the messenger said when he came back to Paris has been running through my head all day:

> He'll make your Paris Louvre shake for it."

She looked across the river at the Louvre, her eyes wandering the long length of its magnificent façade.

"He didn't shake it down, anyway. I'm glad of that," she said.

"I suppose," she went on, still looking at the Louvre, "I suppose the French Princess, Katherine, lived there before she married King Henry. It was the royal palace then. In that old picture, you know, it has round towers, like a castle."

"Look," interrupted Peggy, "look at that funny little tug dragging that big barge. There's a dog! Isn't he having a fine ride?" Then, after a pause, she looked up and said: "Sister, I can't help liking the Dauphin."

"Of course, so do I," said Barbara. "He's great about his horse. I wish I could see him ride. King Hal was a fine rider, too. Mother read me something about his 'noble horsemanship.' You don't like the Dauphin as well as you like the King, Peggy? You *can't* when you read the whole play."

"I don't like King Henry very much," declared Peggy. "I don't see why he made his soldiers fight when they were all tired out and sick and hungry."

"But Peggy, they won! And it was the King's courage that did it. He inspired them. And don't you think they were glad, afterward? He was a real Englishman. Mother says they never know when they are beaten; and so, they are *not* beaten, you see. The King said, the greater the danger the greater will our honor be. He went about cheering them the night before the battle and calling them his brothers. And he meant it, too. . . . Of course," after a pause, "he didn't treat Falstaff just like a brother. He played with him and played with him, and then, after he was king, he pretended he didn't know that vain old man. He thought he had to, because he was no longer Prince Hal, but the King. And it broke the old man's heart."

"Can't a king be a good man, then?" asked Peggy.

"I don't know. I know the King of Italy wouldn't do such a thing!—I guess, maybe, Falstaff and the Prince were not really truly friends. They just played together, maybe. And perhaps the person who said, 'The king hath killed his heart' was wrong. I hope so, anyway. And Falstaff *was* terribly cocky!"

Mother called them and, as they walked on, Barbara said: "I'm going to read *all* of Henry IV next—not just parts of it. Perhaps I'd get to like Falstaff as much as Uncle Waldo does. That tells about him and the madcap Prince, doesn't it, Mother?"

"Yes," she answered, "and about many quarrels and civil wars between the friends and the enemies of the King. One of the leaders in those stormy times was that other Harry, called Hotspur. Prince Hal was very funny about him. He described him as 'he that kills some six or seven dozen Scots at breakfast, washes his hands, and says to his wife, "Fie upon this quiet life. I want work." ' "

"Oh!" they both exclaimed, laughing and frowning at the same time.

"One good thing!" said Barbara, "King Henry didn't like war. He thought he had to do it, and so he was going to do it as well as he could. I don't believe Prince Hal wanted to be king. But he had to be, and so he thought he'd try to be the best king in the world."

CHAPTER XV

AT RHEIMS

No longer on St. Denis will we cry,
But Joan la Pucelle shall be France's saint.
The Dauphin ("Henry VI")

THE glories, not the sorrows, of France filled Barbara's thoughts as she stood before the Cathedral of Rheims, near the statue of Joan of Arc, and looked up at the sculptured figures on its façade. The whole vast structure had been overpowering at first—rising above the city to such amazing heights and yet carved as delicately as a jewel of the finest gold. Now, after coming to see it every day for several days, she was beginning to "see what she was looking at", as she expressed it. She was getting acquainted with some at least of that great concourse of people who stand in rows and groups, in solitary niches or on columns, on pedestals and under carved canopies, around the great rose window. High up, just under the towers, were the Kings of France, with Clovis waist-deep in his baptismal font in the center of the row, his wife, the holy Clotilda, on one side of him holding the crown, and on the other Saint Remi, founder of the cathedral, receiving from a dove the heaven-sent oil for the sacred font from which through many centuries of coronations in Rheims the Kings of France were anointed. Between the Kings and the rose window, who should appear but David and Goliath, and David's sheep and the shepherds under the trees? While around them and below them were the inhabitants of heaven and earth, with the Virgin at her Coronation in their midst.

They were so lifelike, all these people—smiling or frowning, looking serene or worried, roguish or pious, hopeful or discouraged, just like real human beings, that the whole thing seemed like a big stage with people whom the cathedral builders had known, ready for their parts, in the costumes of kings and priests and bishops, pilgrims and warriors, saints, martyrs, prophets, and angels. The charming ladies wore their wings most gracefully. One of them down near the ground smiled with such a bewitching smile that Barbara went over to her again and again until she felt that she knew her well.

There were musicians, too, and they added to the feeling that this might be some French stage on which a pageant was represented. When Barbara turned the corner and walked down the long side of the Cathedral, past the flying buttresses, she noticed that at the spring of every buttress there was an angel spreading his wings beyond the openings of the turret in which he stood. This row of lively angels might have been a chorus for the pageant.

But when Barbara went back to the front again her eyes were fixed intently upon the brave figure of Joan of Arc. She was on her war horse, marching away from the Cathedral and stretching out her arm with a sweeping gesture as if urging on her followers; so that it no longer seemed like a stage full of actors, but like a great company of living people with the Kings of France at their head, and Joan of Arc leading them on.

For good or for ill, Mademoiselle Lavoise was neglecting her duties that morning. She ought to have been conversing in French with Barbara. Instead of that, she was seated on a bench, at the edge of the square, writing letters. Barbara was glad. She liked to talk, but some things demanded silence. She had forgotten the existence of Mademoiselle and was wandering off again, down toward the side portal, looking at the long, lank beasts that stretch out with open mouths as if to leap at you. The serene angels just above them were comforting. They reminded Barbara of the man high up on the mast of an ocean steamer who shouts "All's well" from his lookout.

But Mademoiselle had not forgotten Barbara, and now she overtook her, suggesting that they go inside where Mother and Peggy were to join them.

A hush fell on them as they entered. Mademoiselle Lavoise dropped on her knees before an altar, and Barbara knelt beside her for a moment. This was not "her church," but she felt it was the time and place for prayer.

A little later she was wandering about, looking up at the lofty columns that so mysteriously divide themselves, their lines bending this way and that to meet one another in graceful curves, forming avenues and openings to the rich glass windows, or rising without interruption to the vaulting of the nave.

Her mother, catching sight of her, was reminded of a kodak picture she had once taken of her when she was walking in the woods, looking up at the treetops. The sunlight streaming through the many-colored glass made long stretches of light and shadow, as if this were indeed the actual woods. The aisles, too, were like avenues of trees arching overhead. And every kind of forest leaf and vine had been brought here by the sculptors—and all kinds of woodland animals, resting under the leaves or darting in and out among them—birds and lizards, squirrels and foxes, even lions and tigers, and strange creatures, half bird and half woman, or half man and half goat, with the faces of gnomes and sprites peering at you, laughing and teasing you, like the little wild spirits that haunt the woods.

There is much in the woods, to be sure, that one missed here. Was it not a shame to shut out the sky even by means of the most beautiful architecture copying the lines of the forest trees and combining them into a perfect harmony? And the air! the fragrance! the movement! the mystery! Yet on the other hand there was something here that one could not find in the woods. Barbara felt it without knowing what it meant. It was because she felt it that she had dropped on her knees when she came inside.

"Sister," whispered Peggy, "did you see those queer animals on their haunches all around the back—the choir, or apse, or whatever you call it? Come on out and see them. They're the funniest things! And one of them frightens you. One has a spike in his head. Do you think he's a unicorn? Don't you wish we could find the 'reluctant dragon'?"

They all four followed Peggy and laughed at the strange creatures that sat above the balustrade and formed a sort of rear guard for this host of beings, human and divine. It was hard to get a look at them because of the houses built close about the church. Then Barbara wanted to show Peggy the gargoyles and the angels perched in lookouts, and some prim, stiff birds over the front entrance; and so they came again to the statue of Joan of Arc.

"At first," said Barbara, "I thought she ought to be marching up *to* the cathedral, leading the King to be crowned. But now I see; the cathedral is France and she is leading them to victory."

Peggy looked perplexed. "Why, there's the Virgin

Mary," she said, "*she* isn't French. And David and Goliath—*they're* not French. And——"

"Oh, Peggy, just think for a few minutes, all to yourself, and you'll see what I mean. Just *think!*"

Peggy planted her feet firmly, folded her arms, and set herself to thinking. But when Barbara, who had walked over to where her mother stood, looked back a few minutes later, Peggy was trotting gaily down the street with Mademoiselle.

"Yes," explained Mother, "I told Mademoiselle to take Peggy home because I wanted to talk with you for a few minutes. Let us sit here on the bench. The warm sun is delicious.

"I know you were troubled, dear, because I said 'Don't' when you wanted to read one of Shakespeare's plays, and I have had no chance to explain."

"It *was* funny of you, Mother," answered Barbara. "And you said it was because Joan of Arc was in that play! That was just why I wanted so much to read it."

"Well, you see, Barbara, I knew you would be terribly disappointed. Because the Joan of Arc in 'Henry VI' is not the Joan of Arc you know. At the beginning you think she is going to be, but at the end, you are shocked and distressed. You can only be glad that nobody believes that Shakespeare had very much to do with writing that play."

"Didn't write his own play? What do you mean, Mother? Who wrote it then? What is she like? Didn't Shakespeare know?"

"She is what the English thought she was—or pretended they did—when they condemned her to the stake. She is what the chroniclers of English history made of her—a witch in communion with evil spirits, a cowardly impostor. At the beginning, as I said, she is not like this. Whoever wrote the first scenes of the play must have known that the chroniclers were wrong—that even if she was the means of humiliating England she was nevertheless *not* a devil! In those scenes she appears as a holy maid with a high mission. She is an Amazon, too, able to overcome trained soldiers in single combat as well as to inspire the troops by her presence and sway the destinies of nations by her strange power. You can see that the brave English soldier, Talbot, the real hero of the play, is wrong in his scorn and suspicion of her. But the last scenes! Oh, I cannot bear to have you read them!"

"Then Shakespeare must have written the first part," declared Barbara. "But why did he let anybody else finish it for him?"

"Of course, we *want* to think," was the answer, "that he wrote all of the good part and none of the bad. But all that we really *know* is that these three plays about Henry VI were written when he was first trying his hand at play-writing and were not printed, so far as we know, till after his death, and that his way of trying his hand was to join with several other actors who would select some old play or chronicle, when a new performance was desired for the stage, and work it over into something that would suit the actors and entertain the audience. That was the customary thing to do. Such a play would be put together in great haste, nobody would know who wrote what, and it might be changed by all kinds of people before it was finally printed. Later, when Shakespeare had shown what he could do, they gladly let him work alone. But at first he did not know it himself! And even his very latest plays suffered from tamperings with the text. Shakespeare seemed to care very little about having his things printed, once they were written.

"You can read a great many guesses about who the men were that joined together to compose the three parts of 'Henry VI' if you ever care to, and about who wrote what. And read the plays now, if you like—now that I have prepared you. They are really the history of the War of the Roses. Talbot is one of the heroes; Warwick, 'The King-maker,' is another. The troubles of England, not the triumphs of France, is their chief interest. When you have time to read all of the histories together you will have a wonderful time. It is a great way to get your history of England!"

"It is a wicked shame," sighed Barbara. "I am sure if they had left him to himself he would have made a fine play about her. He has a lot of women who put on men's clothes and do brave, hard things just the way Joan of Arc did."

"Yes," said Mother, "he seemed to like women who come to the rescue. He certainly makes us admire the way

Portia did it. As you say, he must have cared for those women who turned themselves into men to save the day or to escape from some hopeless predicament. There are Rosalind and Celia and Viola, Julia, Imogen—but as for coming to the rescue, there is nobody who can compare with King Lear's daughter, Cordelia! Think how she gave herself to save her father, at any cost. He had turned her from him, in the beginning of the story, because, being truthful, she would not, as her false sisters did, profess greater affection for him than she really felt. And when those two vile daughters had heaped agonies upon the old man's head, had turned him out into the pitiless storm and driven him about until he was crazed with misery, Cordelia came back to offer herself to save him from their cruelties.—Yes, Shakespeare could have given us a great Joan of Arc. She would have been condemned to death in the end—as Cordelia lay dead on the breast of Lear. Ah, well, Barbara, he didn't do it. But one thing is true. We understand her better—not as a saint, but as a woman of supreme courage who strove greatly and was sacrificed—we understand her better for knowing Shakespeare's women."

Barbara's eyes wandered far away, following her thoughts.

"What made her a saint, Mother?" she asked at length.

"The Church, dear, the Church of the twentieth century."

Barbara looked dubious. Surely that could not be the whole truth. But her mother talked on:

"I was thinking last night about Macbeth—how he listened to the voices of evil until they gained a power over him, so that evil possessed him and dragged him to his ruin. And then I thought of how Joan listened to the voices of good spirits in the fields until the power that spoke through the voices held her and led her to her task. Think what Shakespeare could have done with that!" After a pause she added, "Shakespeare was an Englishman, of course. And if he himself could see things as a citizen of the world he had to think of his audience."

"But, Mother, he has so many nice Italians and Romans and so few nice French people. Why is that?"

"Let us think about that for a minute," said Mother. "He had Romans and Italians because the stories about them were at hand. The French, too, were rewriting those stories about the older countries. Shakespeare got the stories for his Roman plays from an English translation of a French translation of the Greek of Plutarch! That is rather difficult. But, at any rate, that translation of Plutarch was one of the favorites of the French in Shakespeare's day. Henry of Navarre had loved it from childhood. But about Shakespeare's French people—let me think—the Countess of Rousillon in "All's Well that Ends Well" is one of the most charming of women. And Lafeu in the same play is a golden-hearted old gentleman. And Helena is a very wonderful person, and as lovely a creature as could be made out of that strange plot that came from Boccaccio. Then there is the King of Navarre in "Love's Labour's Lost," and Biron!—above all, Biron, for he was a living Frenchman who visited Elizabeth's court; yet

Shakespeare has represented him with such sympathy that he is supposed to have been drawing his own youthful character in Biron! Surely *that* shows that he was rather close to the French in his feelings. And do you remember the French King who married Cordelia in 'King Lear'?"

"Oh, was he a French King? I didn't remember that."

"Yes, it was a nameless French King who took her dowerless when her father had cast her off.

" 'Fairest Cordelia, thou art most rich being poor, most choice forsaken, and most loved despised.' So said the French King; and he loved her always, as you can see when he comes back with his army to rescue her father.

"For once in the world an army invaded a country for no selfish purpose. No bloated ambition, Cordelia said, brought him there, 'but love, dear love and my aged father's right.' "

Barbara's eyes shone with pleasure. "Oh, I am glad that was a French army," she said, "and I am glad Shakespeare told us about it. And, Mumsie, if Joan of Arc couldn't have a really truly play of Shakespeare, this cathedral is hers, isn't it?"

They rose and walked over to the entrance as her mother answered:

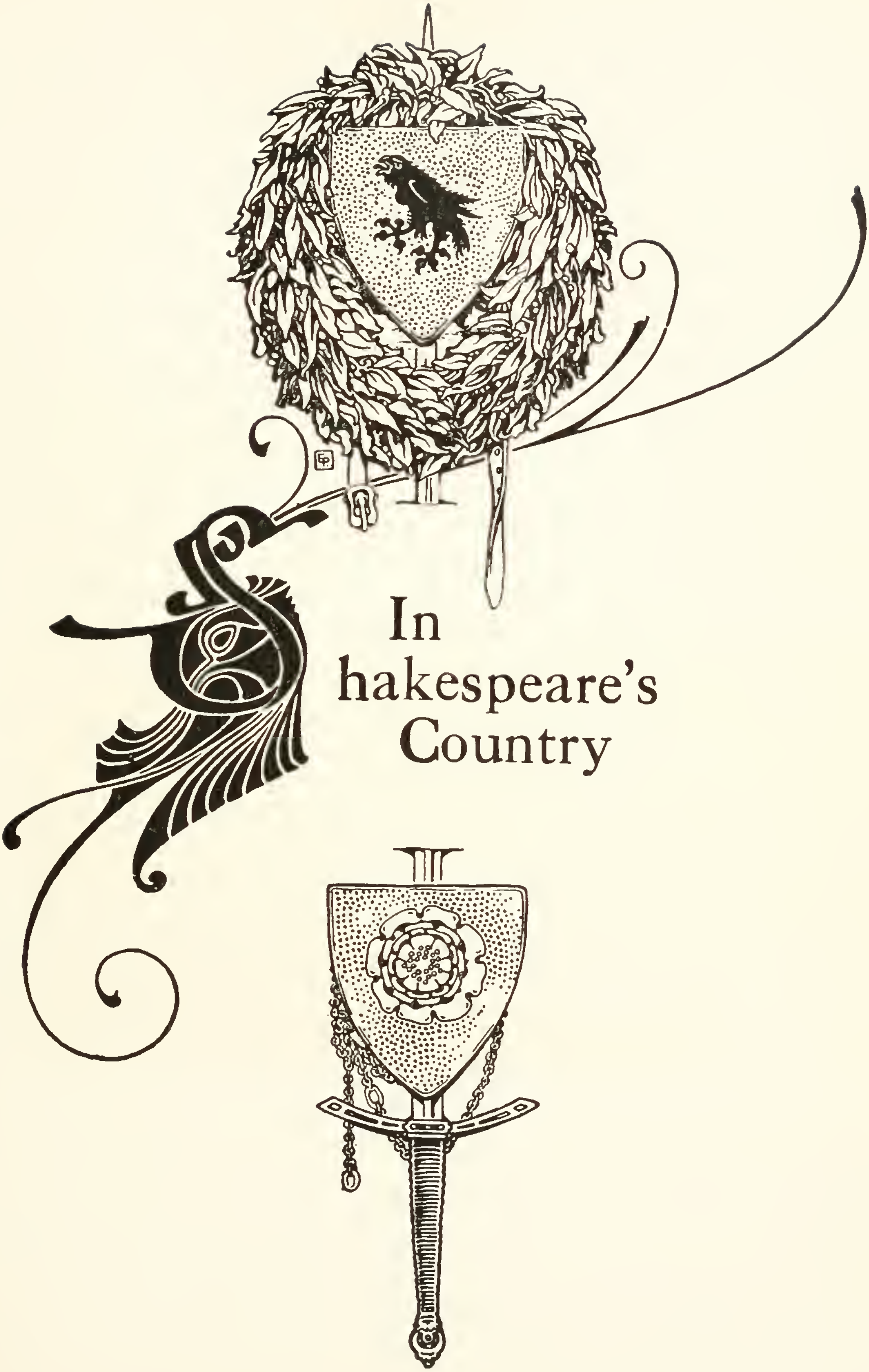
"Yes, she seems to have made it hers on that famous day when she stood holding the white banner while Charles VII was anointed. Beautiful as it is, nobody can ever look at this cathedral without thinking of the little peasant girl of Domremy.

"But we must say good-bye to it now. Do you realize, Barbara, that it looks to-day almost exactly as it did five hundred years ago when Joan of Arc saw it? It was but just finished then—the spires were burned later and never rebuilt—except for that difference we really see it as she saw it."

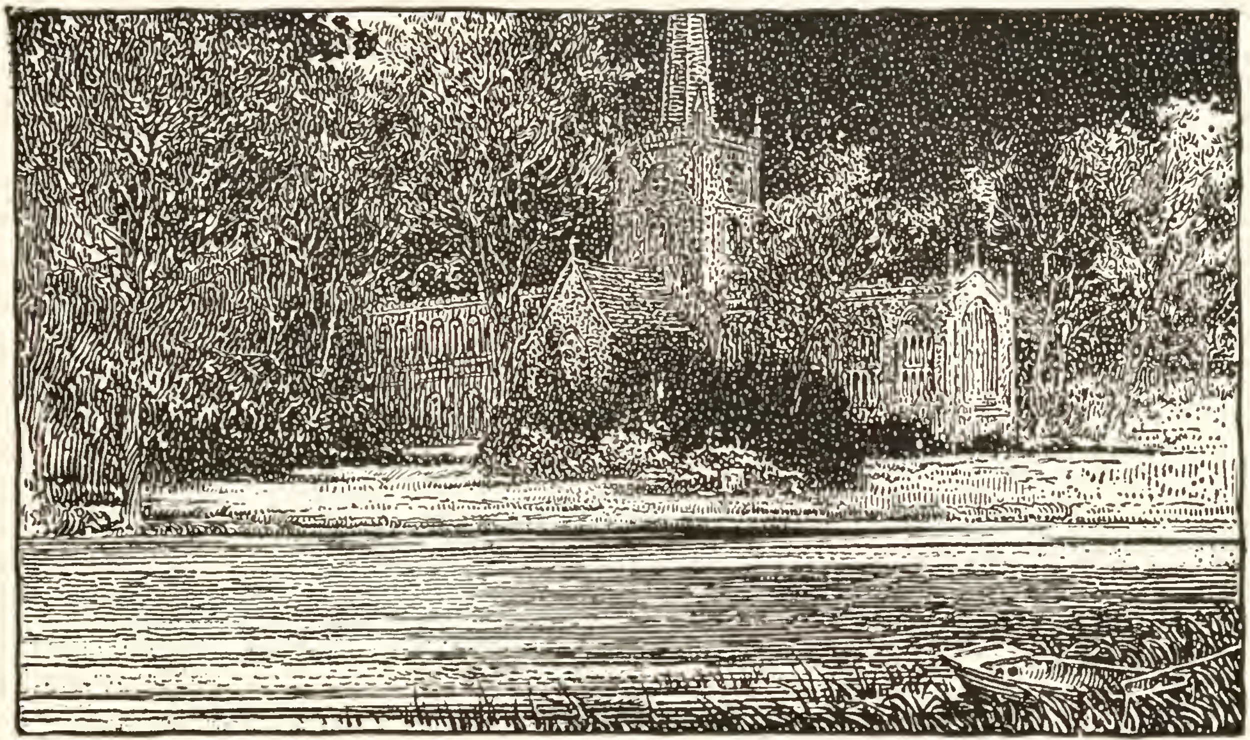
"Will the spires ever be finished?" Barbara asked.

"Oh, no!" was the confident answer. "Nobody would ever think of touching the Cathedral of Rheims. Its beauty is sacred."

The quiet of the noon hour held the square and the sunlight poured down from a cloudless sky as they bade the cathedral a silent farewell and turned reluctantly away.



In Shakespeare's Country



CHAPTER XVI

STRATFORD-ON-AVON

O England, model to thy inward greatness,
Like little body with a mighty heart.
Chorus ("Henry V")

ALL this while, England lay just across the Channel.

"It looks so little on the map, and it seems so big and wonderful when you read about it," said Barbara. "I wish I could see it."

But Barbara was in the hands of her parents; and seeing England at this time was not in the plans either of her mother, who was looking up steamers for America, or of her father, who was already at home waiting impatiently for his family.

Fortune, however, was kind to Barbara. For the steamer they chose was to sail from Liverpool; and when Barbara pleaded, "You wouldn't—Mother, you *couldn't* go so near without seeing the place where Shakespeare lived," it was decided to make the pilgrimage which thousands of Americans make every year to Stratford-on-Avon. They were to give themselves time, also, to wander for a little through the surrounding country of Warwickshire, the "heart of England," which perhaps meant more to the youthful Shakespeare than the town itself. This they would do, even though they would have time for only a glimpse of London.

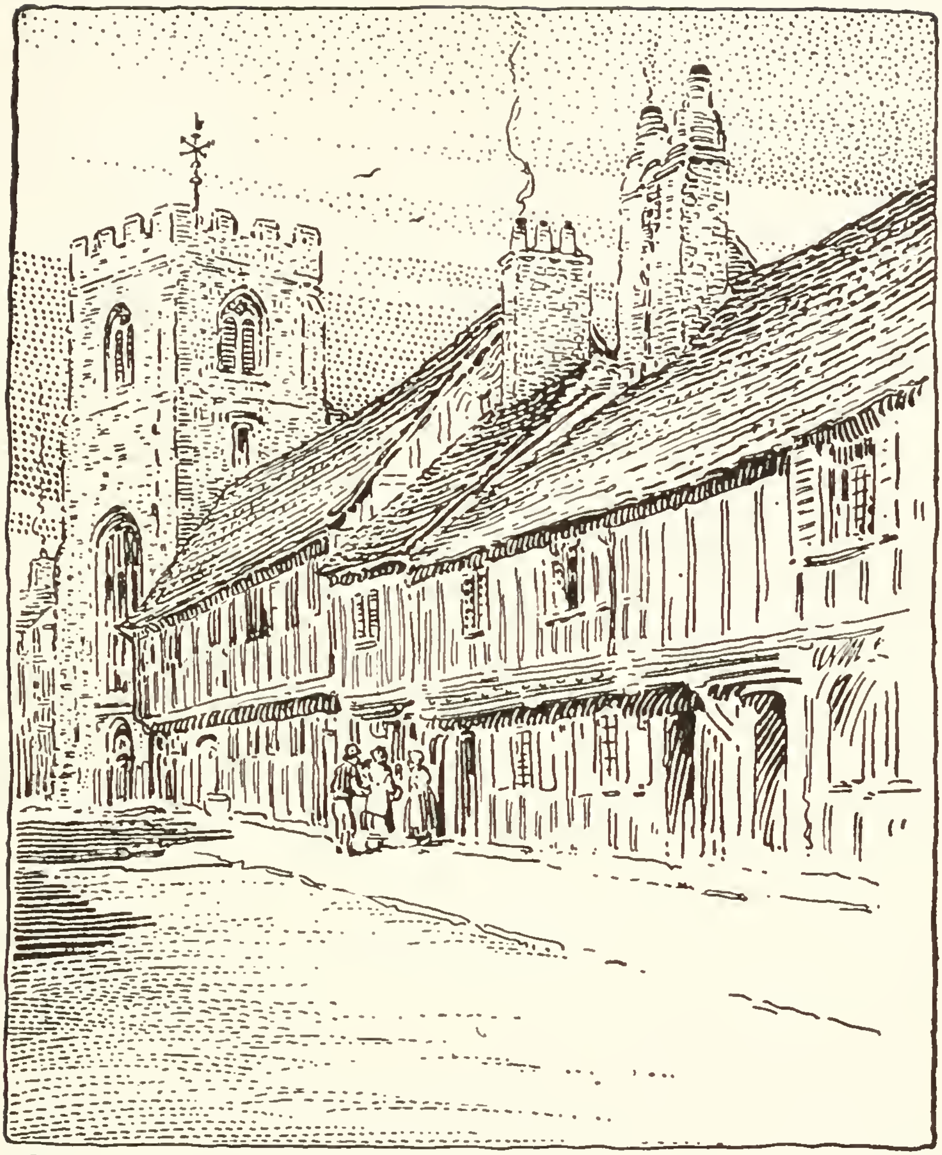
"Anyway, a glimpse is something," Barbara cheerfully remarked. And she was right. They had only two days in London; but it was something to stand on the Thames Embankment and look out across the river, trying to take in all of the lively scene before them and at the same time imagine how it looked when it was the great thoroughfare of Shakespeare's London; when there was but one bridge across it and boats of every kind—except the modern kind—plied to and fro, and the banks were noisy with the cries of the boatmen calling out "Eastward, ho!" and "Westward, ho!" and quarreling, no doubt, over their fares and their rights of way; when the steps of the many landings and the life of the boats made it look like the Grand Canal of Venice; when the Queen sailed by in her great, gilt barge, followed by boatloads of gaily-clad lords and ladies. with banners streaming and music playing, while lowlier boats—perhaps the one in which Shakespeare was crossing to his theatre—stood by to watch the regal procession. It was something, too, to climb the steps and enter the great door of St. Paul's Cathedral; and, although you were told that the church had been rebuilt since the great fire that destroyed so much of the city Shakespeare knew, you could think of the old St. Paul's which stood right there and was the centre of London when the young poet came up from the country to try his fortune in the city. Barbara was to learn many interesting things about St. Paul's a little later; and about Westminster Abbey, too, and the Tower of London. Just now, there was too much to take in all at once. She remembered only the great beauty of the one and the dark, forbidding strength of the other. She carried away a faint recollection, too, of the "Poets' Corner" in Westminster Abbey, where the greatest poet of them all was *not* buried. They would know the reason for that when they visited Stratford.

They had left the roar of London behind them; in a little more than two hours by train they had made the journey which, for Shakespeare, required two days of hard traveling by coach or on horseback; and now they were unpacking their bags in the Shakespeare Hotel of Stratford, in a room named "As You Like It." They had seen the names of the plays over the doors as they came in, and Barbara had caught hold of Peggy's arm, whispering, "Oh, I wonder which ours will be. Good luck! Good luck!" she cried, when the maid had shown them their room and disappeared. "It might have been 'Macbeth' or 'King Lear.' Now we shall sleep in the Forest of Arden."

"'As You Like It' does sound good," answered Peggy. "*I'd* like my dinner."

When dinner was over, they went out for a stroll in the long twilight. The streets were very clean and trim and orderly and quiet. A few steps brought them to the corner of Chapel Street and Chapel Lane; and there—it seemed like a dream!—there was the square stone tower of the fine old Guild Chapel which was a familiar sight to Shakespeare all his life long. Behind it was his schoolroom—they could see only the outside of it this evening—and the Guild Hall where he went, as a little boy, to see plays acted by traveling companies from London. On the opposite corner they could see the trees and smell the flowers of the garden of New Place, the home which Shakespeare made by his success in London for himself and his wife and their two daughters. The house had been torn down, but the trees and flowers!——If they were not the same that the poet planted, yet the air was filled with the same fragrance that greeted him when he came out-of-doors on midsummer evenings, in those quiet years at the end of his life which he spent "in retirement and the conversation of friends."

"Did his little boy play in that garden?" Barbara asked as they stood beneath the chapel tower looking across the darkening shadows of the garden.



CHAPEL of the Guild of the Holy Cross and the Grammar School at Stratford-on-Avon.

"No. He died the year before his father bought the house. He was twelve years old. But Judith must have enjoyed it. She and Hamnet were twins, and she lived at home until the year of her father's death. For a long time she and her older sister, Susanna, saw their father only when he came home for visits, for he was very busy in London; he was writing his greatest plays in those years."

"Was he jolly when he came home, do you think?" asked Peggy.

"I think he certainly was, except—except——"

Barbara finished her mother's sentence, "Except when he thought about his little boy." After a moment she added, "He must have been awfully tired sometimes."

"I suppose so," sighed Peggy. "But I want to see where he lived when he was a little boy."

"He lived all over the place, I suspect," her mother replied. "But to-morrow we shall see the house where he was born. And we shall go inside of the beautiful church where he was baptized and where he was buried."

"I don't see," Barbara began slowly, as they walked on, "I don't see why people who had such a lovely chapel and such nice gardens had dirty streets."

"What makes you think they were dirty?"

"Uncle Waldo told me so."

"I suppose they were," her mother assented regretfully. "When old Widow Baker swept the principal square with a broom of twigs, the ordinary streets must have been pretty bad. But still, we know that the boy Shakespeare had this chapel to look at and the beautiful Church of the Holy Trinity, and many forest trees and orchards and gardens and the clean, flowing river. So let's forget the dirty streets, as he did when his mind was full of dreams and visions, of bright scenes in the Forest of Arden and enchanting creatures like Rosalind."

Barbara warmed to this idea. "Of course," she exclaimed. "What did he care if there were pigs and chickens in the streets?"

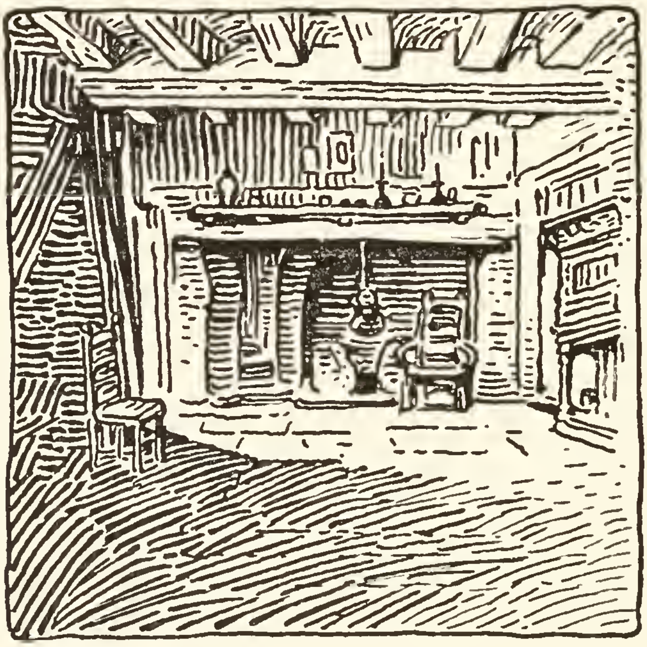
"I think he *did* care," put in Peggy. "*I* think he liked 'em."

Barbara laughed. But Peggy's face was quite serious, as they turned toward the river and walked past the statue of Shakespeare and the great new memorial building, where there is a theatre for acting his plays and a Shakespeare museum (the whole town, they soon discovered, is kept by England as a monument to Shakespeare), and out on to the long, stone bridge across the Avon. This bridge, with its fourteen arches, was built almost as it stands to-day by another prosperous citizen of Stratford who went up to London many years before Shakespeare and, instead of an actor and writer of plays, became Lord Mayor of London.

They stood on the bridge, first on one side and then on the other, looking up and down the stream that shone like silver shot with gold between the drooping branches on either bank. For some time they were silent, listening to the lap of the water and the evening twitter of birds.

"I'd like to live here," said Peggy at length. "You could fish on the river, and wade and swim and row and paddle——"

"And you could ride horseback," Barbara added, "all



THE KITCHEN IN THE HOUSE WHERE SHAKESPEARE WAS BORN, APRIL 23, 1564.

over the country. I'd like to live just outside of the town, on the river——"

"Oh yes! and then you could have all the pigs and chickens you wanted, and cows and sheep and haystacks——"

"Then you know," said Mother, "why Will Shakespeare liked to go to visit his grandmother. Mary Arden, his mother, came from a place like that—a very superior one of its kind, I believe, where they had painted hangings on the walls of the house and fine pewter spoons and carved oak furniture, in addition to the well-stocked barns and cellars."

"He must have had a good time there!" exclaimed Peggy. "I suppose they gave him cookies and gingerbread."

"I hope he was there for the sheepshearing," remarked Barbara. "Because, don't you remember they had pies and all kinds of good things to eat then?"

"It is getting dark, children. The river is too beautiful to leave, but we must go back. I like to imagine," she went on, as they started reluctantly, "what he was thinking about when he crossed this bridge at different times in his life. When he was little, he may have crossed it with his father or some neighbor to go up to the magnificent town of Coventry for the Corpus Christi festival, when the stories of Bible heroes and saints and devils and angels were acted on a stage out-of-doors, and there were brilliant processions, and all the town made merry. He crossed it many times, no doubt, with his schoolmates, and sometimes alone, when he strolled off among the fields to see what he could see, or when he went to work in his father's fields. I wonder what he was thinking when he walked across it to go up to London for the first time, leaving his wife and three children and his father and mother and brothers behind. I suppose he was penniless—his father's business seems to have failed—but I am sure he had verses in his pocket; one of his old school friends, who was in London before him, printed them when they were finished. And eleven years later he came back, not walking this time, but riding a horse, to buy the big house and garden. I suppose if we had lived in Stratford we should have said: 'He has been very successful; but, of course, he would be, because he is so genial and friendly and everybody likes him.' We should never have guessed that in his absence he was making himself the greatest poet of England and the greatest dramatist of the whole world."

"I don't suppose he knew it himself."

With that wise remark from Barbara, they entered the hotel and went to their rooms.

"Sister," said Peggy, as she unbuttoned her shoes, "what happened to Rosalind in the Forest of Arden? I know she was a dear, and her friend was almost as nice. I know they had that clown Touchstone with them, and I know about the verses hanging on the trees. But I don't know what *happened.*"

"Oh, yes you do, Peggy. It's such a nice story. But the lovely part is what everybody *says.*—Let's read it!" She went to the door and spoke to her mother who was in the next room, "Mother, do you suppose you could find a copy of 'As You Like It' in this hotel?"

"I should hope so. But no reading to-night, my dear child. You must get up bright and early in the morning. I will look for the book to-morrow. Go to bed now and get a good sleep."

"It's no use, Peggy." She came back and went on with her undressing. "Well, I'll tell you about it—— You see Rosalind's father was the real Duke, but his brother took the dukedom away from him and banished him. He didn't banish Rosalind; he kept her at the court, because his own daughter, Celia, was her dearest friend. And Rosalind wasn't very happy, with her father banished, but she was cheerful and gay just the same and she and Celia had good times together. Then one day the Duke,—that is, he *called* himself the Duke—came in and told her she must go away, too. Everybody liked her so much he was afraid they would begin to take her father's part. But Celia said if Rosalind went she would go too. She would *not* be separated from Rosalind. So they made a secret plan to dress up as boys and run away together; and they decided to take the fool, Touchstone, with them."

"Why did they want to take a fool with them?" interrupted Peggy.

"Oh, you know, he wasn't really a fool. He was very kind and jolly. He was a jester—that kind of a fool, you know. But before they left, Rosalind met Orlando. Oh, Mother, how *did* she meet Orlando?" But Mother did not hear. "I've forgotten; but never mind. She saw him at a wrestling match. He had a wicked brother, who kept all their father's money, and he hoped the great wrestler would kill Orlando. But he didn't have his wish. Orlando won; and Rosalind was so pleased, and she was so much in love with him all at once, that she put her gold chain around his neck, and he was so overcome he could hardly speak——I suppose because Rosalind was so very, *very* beautiful. She wasn't dressed up as a boy then."

"But what about the Forest of Arden?"

"Wait, Peggy, wait! Rosalind's father and his friends were living in the forest, killing deer for food and all that—*you* know—and they found it was nicer than at the court. They loved it in the woods—all except the melancholy Jacques. He didn't like to see the lovely deer killed. But then he didn't like much of anything, except Touchstone——"

"Touchstone!" exclaimed Peggy. "He was with——"

"Yes, but you see, Rosalind and Celia and Touchstone came to that same part of the forest, after they wandered about a long, long time. And Orlando came there too and a nice old man who went with him when he had to run away from his cruel brother. Orlando found the real Duke and his friends when he was hunting for food for that old man. They all came to the same place after a while and there were shepherds and shepherdesses there; and the shepherdess thought Rosalind was a boy; they called Rosalind Ganymede, and the shepherdess fell in love with Ganymede. And Rosalind found Orlando's verses on the trees before she knew he was anywhere near. At first she thought it was some other Rosalind the verses were meant for. And, of course, when they met, he thought she was a boy; and oh! what fun she had making him talk to her about his Rosalind! She made him pretend that she—or he—was Rosalind and tell what he would like to say to her! And all the time she was hoping he loved her as much as she loved him—you can see that! When he was hurt, killing a lion to save a poor man's life, she saw blood on his handkerchief; and she fainted. And then she pretended that she was only *pretending* to faint because she was *pretending* to be Rosalind. The poor man turned out to be Orlando's cruel brother; and he was very sorry for what he had done, and Orlando forgave him; and that brother fell in love with Celia.

"Well, Rosalind made everything come out right in the end. She told Orlando that she understood magic; and if he would come to the wedding of Celia and his brother, she would promise him that he should be married to Rosalind. The Duke was asked to the wedding, too, and the shepherds, and everybody. Rosalind changed to her girl's clothes just at the right minute, and her father knew her, and Orlando knew her, and everybody was married to everybody else!—Anyway, Rosalind and Orlando were happy, and the shepherd got his shepherdess, and the banished Duke got his dukedom back, and—and—won't that do for to-night, Peggy?"

Mother had come in while she talked and was brushing Peggy's hair. "Now," she said firmly, as she finished, "climb into your beds, children, and go to sleep."

As she tucked them in, Peggy asked, opening her eyes wide, "Did the Forest of Arden really have lions in it?"

"Yes," said her mother, "and English shepherds and Italian olive trees, and French dukes. There was a real Forest of Arden near Stratford; but the one in the play is a dream forest. However, the story came from an old Robin Hood legend in the first place. Rosalind's father, you see, was an outlaw, like Robin Hood. So that her story is really a part of Merrie England, when there was mirth and a witty answer for every sigh. To-morrow, we can read the play; and it will bring us closer to the real man who lived in Stratford than seeing his birthplace a hundred times——Oh, yes, Barbara, we'll see that too. We'll go there right after breakfast."

She blew out the candles and sang them the song that was sung for Touchstone and Audrey in the forest:

It was a lover and his lass,
With a hey, with a ho, with a hey non-i-no and a
hey no-ni-no-ni-no
That o'er the green corn fields did pass
In spring time, in spring time, in spring time,
The only pretty ring time
When birds do sing
Hey ding-a-ding, hey ding-a-ding, hey ding-a-ding,
Sweet lovers love the spring.

They were not quite asleep when she finished, so she sang softly:

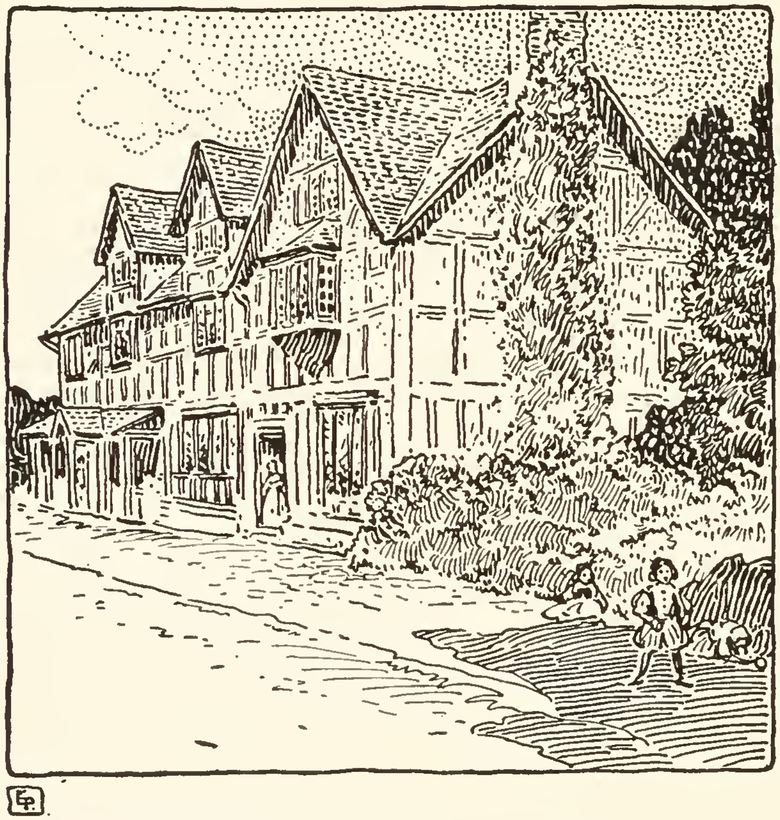
Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me
And tune his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat?

Come hither, come hither, come hither,
  Here shall he see
  No enemy
  But winter and rough weather.

She was quiet after that; and when she left them, they were both sound asleep in the "Forest of Arden."

The sun was high and the lark had long since finished his song "at Heaven's gate" when they came out into the warm, fragrant air and made their way to Henley Street. It was the time of roses and honeysuckle; and it was *not* the time for the Shakespeare festival, when the town is crowded with visitors; when plays are given every day; when Elizabethan dances on the grass are watched from motor cars, while the river is noisy with launches and, at night, gay with electric lights. They would not see the town in gala dress; but they liked it as it was on this radiant morning, when it seemed to be lying on the lap of earth in smiling contentment.

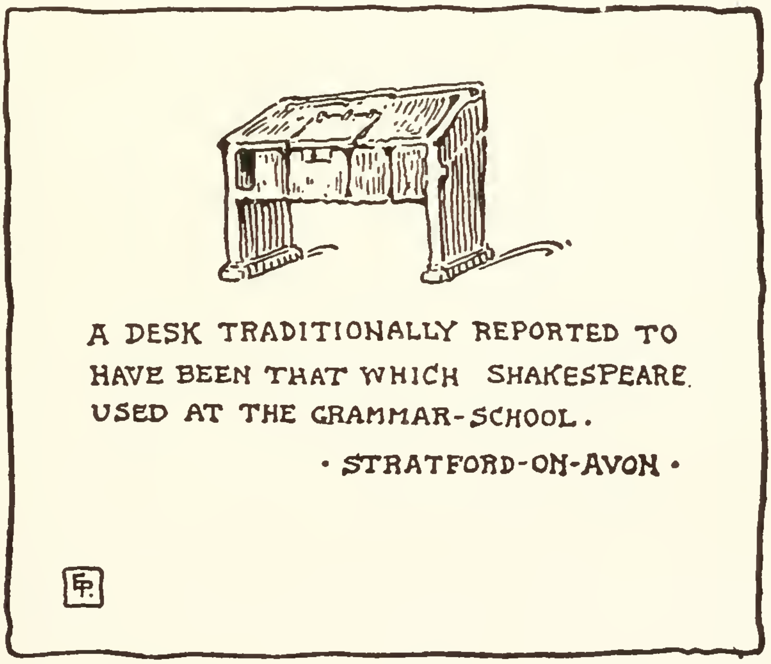
The day was far too lovely to be spent in the house, even if the house were Shakespeare's birthplace, and they stayed a shorter time inside the rooms sacred to the memory of the poet's boyhood than in the garden behind the house, where devoted hands have planted the flowers that bloom in his verse. Besides, since the house has become the property of the British nation, it has been kept in such a flawless state of repair—it is so orderly and picturesque and so dressed up for visitors (of whom there are some forty thousand every year), that it is hard to see in its eight spotless rooms the busy house where John Shakespeare traded in wool and hides and corn and pork and mutton, while his wife cared for the children under the same roof. Barbara looked with interest at some of the objects preserved there, especially at the only existing letter written



BIRTHPLACE of William, third child and eldest son of John and Mary Arden Shakespeare.

to the poet, in which his neighbor addressed him as "my loveinge good frend and countreymann, Mr. Wm. Shackespere." Upstairs, the low, heavy-timbered room called the birth-chamber was dark and cheerless, and the children's faces brightened as they came out into the garden among the fruits and flowers.

They followed the footsteps of the boy who has led us to believe, whether rightly or not, that he went "like snail unwillingly to school" and climbed the stairs to a long, bare room that was his schoolhouse. The ancient rafters seemed sagging above their heads; the small, latticed windows were high from the floor.



A DESK TRADITIONALLY REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN THAT WHICH SHAKESPEARE USED AT THE GRAMMAR-SCHOOL.

· STRATFORD-ON-AVON ·

"Oh!" exclaimed Barbara, "when Uncle Waldo told me about his school—and the hard benches and everything—I never *thought* I was going to see it. He came every morning at six o'clock and stayed all day."

"Look at this, children."

They went quickly to see what Mother was looking at. It was a rough W. S. cut with a penknife on the wooden bench. The letters were very old; they must have been there a long, long time. What if it really *was* William Shakespeare who had cut them? It was almost like seeing him there, with his knife in his hand.

"I suppose the teacher wasn't looking," remarked Peggy.

"Maybe he did it at recess," said Barbara. "Anyway, he must have been glad when school was over; and *I* want to go out-of-doors, too."

So they crossed the street to the garden of New Place and wandered about among its trim paths and velvety lawns. They could trace the foundations of Shakespeare's house. From its windows he could see some of the same gabled houses of which they caught glimpses through the trees and the same gray tower of the chapel. They saw the gnarled tree trunk, believed by the villagers to be an offshoot of the mulberry tree planted by the poet.

"Here is something; what is it?" Barbara had caught sight of a legend inscribed on a stone tablet. She read it aloud. It was an abstract—so it claimed—from the "Acts and Monuments of the Fairies". It explained that the cutting of the famous mulberry tree had disturbed their nightly revels; wherefore they decreed that their festivities should be removed to another part of the estate where the grounds were better cared for and the lawns clipped; that the part of the grounds nearest the Avon should be called

"The Fairy Lawn"; and that on that lawn should be erected a tablet of stone recording the affection of the fairies for William Shakespeare.

"I don't believe *that,*" said Peggy firmly. "Fairies don't write on stone—how could they? They don't write at all. They dance and sing and talk and laugh and fly through the air."

"We don't have to believe everything," answered Barbara. She looked in the direction of the house for some time before she told them what she was thinking about. Then she explained:

"*I* don't believe that he died because he drank too much with his visitors the night before. Oh, yes, I believe his friends from London were here (Ben Jonson and that other poet); but I think he was just not well enough to sit up late, and so he got worse and died."

"He was only fifty-two," added her mother, without expressing her opinion. "Now let's go to the church. Then we shall have followed him through his native town, from the beginning to the end."

They walked in silence through the churchyard, under the spreading branches of oaks and elms, through the avenue of limetrees, shading the path even from the noonday sun, to the fine, arched doorway of the church, then up through its quiet aisles to the altar railing. There they stood until some other visitors had come out, when they walked inside and bent their heads to the floor to read with their own eyes the curious epitaph inscribed on the slab of stone that marks the burial place:

Good frend, for Jesus sake forbeare
To digg the dust encloasèd heare
Blest be ye man yt spares thes stones
And curst be he yt moves my bones.

Had the great Shakespeare written those lines, suiting his words to the language of sextons and warders for whose feelings they were written? It was hard to tell; but now, at any rate, they understood why his body had never been removed to a place of honor in the Poets' Corner. It would lie here always, in the row of family tombs, between his wife and his daughter and his daughter's husband and the husband of the last of his line, his granddaughter, Elizabeth.

When they had looked up at the bust on the wall, which has been so much restored since it was made that it seemed hardly worth while to wonder whether it was a true likeness of the man Shakespeare, and when they had read the praise of the poet in the old inscriptions under the bust, they went out again into the sunshine and strolled under the great church windows and down to the edge of the stream.

"We are grateful to Barbara, aren't we, Peggy?" said Mother, "for wanting so much to come to Stratford."

"Yes," she answered; "specially if you'll take us rowing after lunch."

Three swans were floating by, their proud necks glistening in the sun, as the boat slipped away from the shore and moved lazily up the Avon, among punts and barges and reeds and swaying branches. A husky boy named George was rowing them; he had promised to give Barbara and Peggy a turn at the oars whenever they liked. They named him "Saint George," for his kindness—not because he looked as if he could slay a dragon. He was only too glad to keep his promise when they had passed under the bridges and to lie down restfully in the bottom of the boat while they tugged away at the heavy oars.

The river wound in and out among trees and cottages and green fields. It was not always easy to guide the boat around the curves; and after a while they were ready to call Saint George back to his post, while they dragged their hands idly in the water and watched the reflections of trees and flowers hanging over the banks and the green fields showing between.

> There is a willow grows aslant a brook
> That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream.

There they were, on both sides of them—Shakespeare's willows. And those yellow flowers were his marigolds:

> The marigold that goes to bed wi' the sun
> And with him rises weeping.

The birds that gave a call or a twitter now and then—he had often heard them "chant melody in every bush." He had been there in the morning when the sun was "kissing with golden face the meadows green," and in the evening when

> Light thickens, and the crow
> Makes wing to the rooky wood.

Barbara did not remember these lines at the time; but when she read them afterward she remembered Shakespeare's river; and she always liked the name another poet once gave him, "Sweet Swan of Avon."

AN old cornmill in Shakespeare's country.

After a while they took up the little copy of "As You Like It," bought in a Stratford shop, and read parts of it aloud, taking turns at reading and listening. They could not read all of it; they would save it, they decided, for the steamer, when they would have time on their hands. It would be fitting to read it on the sea because the story came to Shakespeare—so the preface to their little volume told them—from a romance that was written, the author declared, on a voyage to the Canary Islands,—"hatcht in the storms of the Ocean and feathered in the surges of many perillous seas."

They stopped at a charming tea house beside the river, where they had delicious bread and butter with their tea, and even jam and cakes. They brought sandwiches to Saint George, who stayed by the boat, and he devoured them with so much relish that they went back for more. To judge from his appetite they might better have named him for one of the giants that used to be so popular in that neighborhood. However, the smile on his face was saintly, while he rowed them as far as the church, so that they could see its spire reflected in the still water, and then back to their starting place.

The day lengthened out, as days will in English summers, and came to a pleasant close with a walk across the fields to Shottery, where Shakespeare wooed Ann Hathaway.

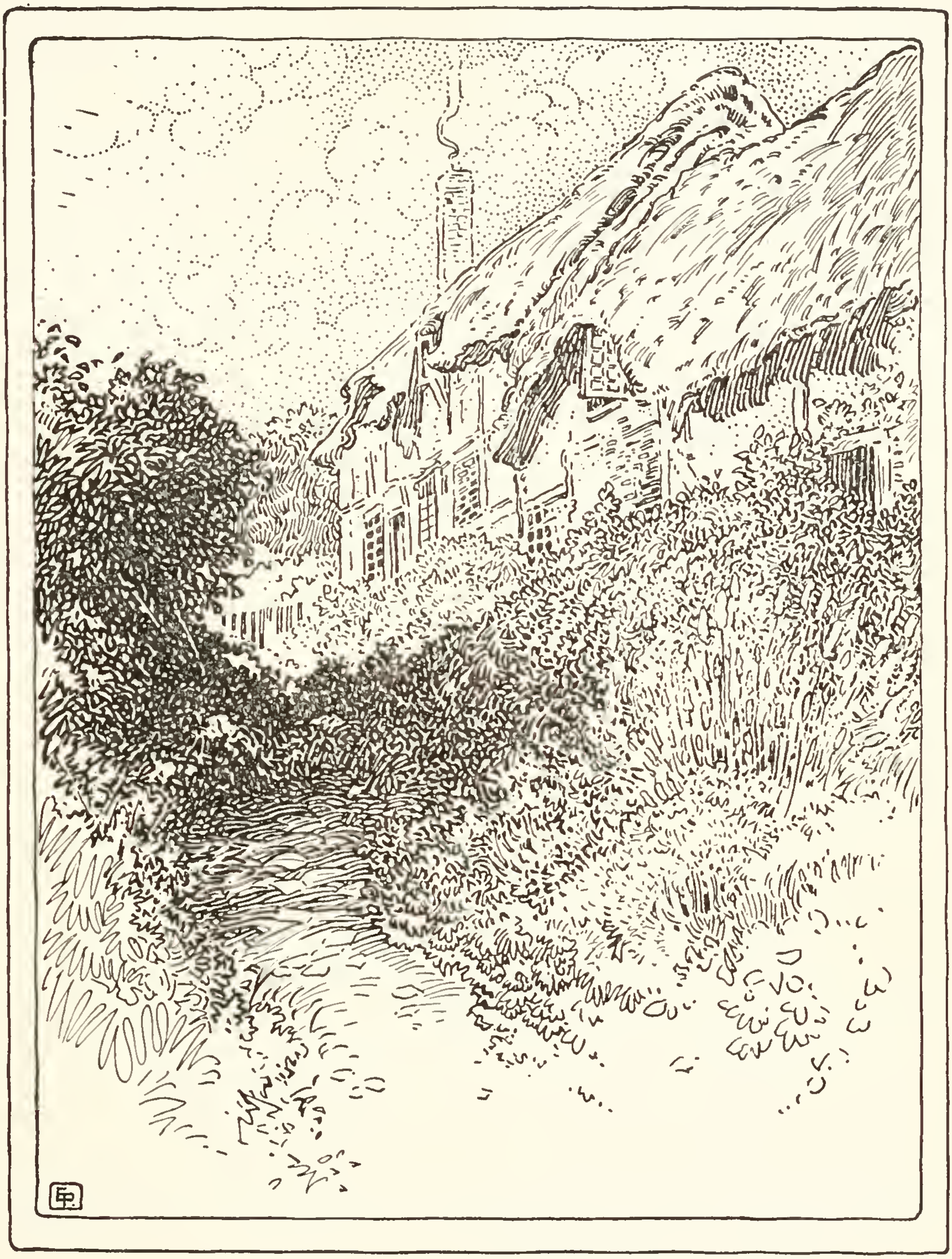
They frolicked and danced, rather than walked, all the way to the cottage. Peggy led her big sister a chase, darting away from the path and refusing to come back till she was caught. When she was tired of that sport, they danced together along the path, until their mother said, "You make me think of the Nine Days' Wonder"; after which she had to explain what she meant by telling them about William Kemp, the actor in Shakespeare's company, who danced for nine days without stopping, all the way from London to Norwich.

The old farmhouse, which has become famous as "Ann Hathaway's Cottage," seemed to Barbara "more like a picture than the Shakespeare house." Picturesque it certainly was, half-hidden behind shrubs and flowers that grew almost to its thatched roof; but once inside she changed her mind. The long, low room, with its fireplace, its wooden settles and its latticed windows, had such a home-like appearance that she declared, "It's more real, Mother, and *not* so much like a picture."

They both "loved" the little house. But not even Barbara showed much interest in Ann Hathaway. She quite forgot her on the way home and chatted all the time about Rosalind and Orlando and Jacques. And that was only natural, for she knew them as one knows real people, while she had never heard so much as one word that Ann Hathaway had ever said.

"I wonder if Orlando guessed that Ganymede was Rosalind." She seemed to be talking to herself. "Why, no, of course, he didn't; because he told some one after it was all over that he thought perhaps it was a brother of Rosalind. He saw something about her—but he didn't guess. Oh, I'm sure he didn't. That would have spoiled it."

"Mother," she went on, after a little while, "Jacques



THE Ann Hathaway Cottage

says such sad things. But it doesn't make us sad, does it? It makes us just a little sad for a minute, and then, right away, we are laughing."

"Yes; but not laughing just as we laugh at—well—at Falstaff, for instance."

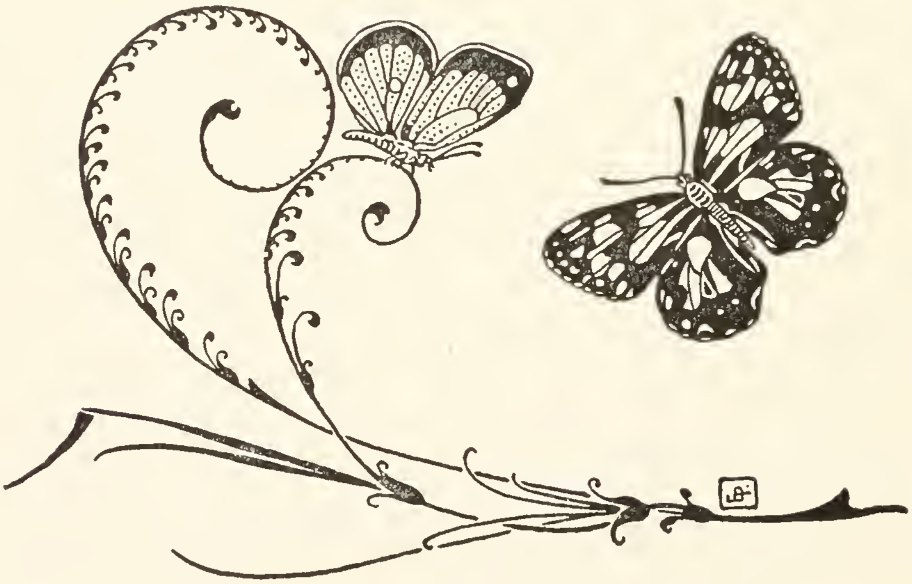
"Oh, no! It makes us merry, doesn't it? Then 'heigh ho! the holly!' "

Peggy, hearing that, started up the old song of the forest, and they sang it as they had so often sung it and shouted it around the fireside at home.

Blow, blow, thou wintry wind
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude.

. . . .

Heigh, ho! sing, heigh ho! unto the green holly;
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly;
Then, heigh ho! the holly!
This life is most jolly.



CHAPTER XVII

WARWICK AND KENILWORTH

This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle
. . . .
This other Eden, demi-Paradise,
. . . .
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England.
John of Gaunt ("Richard II")

THEY drove to Warwick from Stratford, along the ten-mile road that follows the windings of the river, between rows of hedges and fields of ripened grain, through farmland and woodland, dotted by villages like those in which Shakespeare's father and mother were born. The morning lay fresh over the quiet countryside. Every now and then, "the lark that tirra lirra chants" would rise from a wheat field and soar, singing, into the sky.

After a few miles they entered the park of Charlecote Manor, the estate of Sir Thomas Lucy, where young Shakespeare, according to the story, was more than once caught poaching. Herds of deer were grazing peacefully in the shade of the trees. As they stopped to look at them, Barbara whispered,

"Do you think he really shot one of them?"

"Of course not," Peggy answered with indignation.

"Not tame creatures like these, certainly," said Mother. "But he went hunting for wild deer, as every one did, I am sure. If he shot one of Sir Thomas Lucy's and was charged with stealing——"

"If they were wild it wasn't stealing!"

"Perhaps that is what Shakespeare thought, Barbara. Or perhaps he had heard the proverb, 'Venison is nothing so sweet as when it is stolen' and believed it. I imagine he was quite proud of getting his game safely past the keeper's nose——"

"And then he was caught!" Peggy shook her head regretfully.

Barbara, remembering how Jacques pitied the slain deer, declared, "I am *sure* he was sorry for them, anyway."

The spacious country house which, except for some additions, remains as it was when Shakespeare saw it, was built in the form of a letter E (out of deference to Elizabeth, it is said) and bore the Queen's crest and initials along with those of the family in the carved decorations above the entrance. For three hundred years the same family have occupied the house. The children thought it was very good of people living there to let strangers come into their grounds, even if they did have to pay something to enter. They would have liked to stay longer, to walk among the flower beds and in the woods and along the banks of the river.

As they drove on, they talked about how Shakespeare got even with Sir Thomas by putting him into his plays and drawing a most unflattering picture of him. Of course he did not name him—he called him Justice Shallow—and he placed his house in Gloucestershire instead of in Warwickshire. Barbara remembered Shallow in "Henry IV," because it was at his house that Falstaff reviewed the ragged regiment that were to follow him to the wars. She remembered how Justice Shallow had boasted of the wild pranks he and Falstaff had indulged in years before, when they "heard the chimes at midnight." It was not made clear in "Henry IV" that Shallow was Sir Thomas, but when he reappeared in "The Merry Wives of Windsor," the play which Shakespeare wrote because Queen Elizabeth wanted to see Falstaff in love, what is said there, about his coat of arms and other things, made it perfectly sure.

They talked, as they drove along, about Christopher Sly, the tinker, and the tricks the lords play on him, in the farce at the beginning of "The Taming of the Shrew." They wondered if Shakespeare had known some Christopher Sly there in the country, and whether many others could not be recognized if we knew enough about them.

"I don't see what good it would do," Barbara concluded. "They are real people, of course. We know that."

When they entered the town of Warwick through its ancient gateway, they were in another world. In Stratford, rows of fresh new houses had reminded them that changes have taken place in modern times. But here, not only the fortress castle on its rocky height, but the little town as well, seemed to belong to the olden times. It could have changed but little since Shakespeare saw it, and perhaps not in a hundred years before. It seemed to have separated itself from the rest of the world and to have dropped far back into the past.

After lunching at the inn and resting for a while, they started forth to see the castle. Their first view of it was a sight never to be forgotten. They stood on the bridge across the Avon and looked up at its massive walls, planted as if forever on its foundation of natural rocks at the edge of the stream. The great, battlemented tower reflected in the still water;—how many secrets it might have confided to the silent stream in the hundreds of years it had stood there!

"It seems to be thinking," whispered Barbara.

From the bridge they walked around to the porter's lodge, and through a passageway, cut in the solid rock, to the entrance of the castle. The entrance, with its four towers, seemed like a whole castle in itself. Although the drawbridge across the ancient moat had been replaced by a new bridge, the terrible portcullis was still there. It was a kind of door made of beams that crossed like a lattice, and, instead of being on hinges, it was suspended by heavy chains from above. It was finished at the bottom by a row of sharp iron spikes that meant death to any one upon whom the portcullis should fall. The children shuddered when they were told that it is still dropped every evening by way of shutting the house for the night.

Passing safely under the iron spikes, they came into a most cheerful place. Soft, green grass covered this inner court, flowers made bright spots under the grey walls, and beautiful peacocks stood about; one of them high up on the wall, against the sky, spread his tail as they watched him, as if to say, "Look at me; I am far more beautiful than this old castle."

It was a pity to go out of this delightful courtyard into the black, dismal dungeon, or donjon, underneath the oldest tower. They did not stay there long, and when they climbed up to the light rooms above, Barbara felt obliged to think of something cheerful. "Anyway," she said, "they haven't had any prisoners there for a long, long time, have they?"

"No, indeed," answered her mother, "not since long before Shakespeare's day. Warwick was a relic of history when he saw it, although people lived in it as they do now. Doubtless he saw many other castles of the same kind, which have been destroyed since or made over into modern palaces. But they were no longer needed as fortresses and prisons in the days of Queen Elizabeth. Warwick, for some reason, stayed as it was; it has been restored just enough to preserve it as it was in the times that Shakespeare wrote about in his history plays. How often he must have thought of Warwick when he was writing them!"

Inside the vast halls they were shown much splendor of royal beds and canopies, china, tapestries, and pictures. I am afraid they forgot all those things very soon. But they remembered the portcullis and the donjon and the Tower of Cæsar which they were told was once held by Britain's king, Cymbeline; and if Cymbeline held it, then Imogen might have seen it! And they remembered the huge armor of Guy of Warwick, the ancient hero who fought with giants and overcame them.

All of these things the boy Shakespeare must have seen. They did not forget that; and the next morning, when they visited the church in the village, they were quite sure that he had looked up at the tall, stained-glass windows and at the carved stone figures of the early knights of Warwick, lying, clad in armor, above their tombs.

From the castle windows they had looked out into the great park that stretched away as if it covered all of England, and there they spent the rest of the afternoon, strolling over the smooth lawns and under the spreading trees. They sat down in one lovely spot and wished they could have a picnic there, while they talked about the famous Earl of Warwick, called "The King maker," who had fed hundreds of retainers every day inside the castle walls (they could see its gray towers through the trees) and could summon thousands from the surrounding country to follow him into battle. In one of the parts of "Henry VI" this Earl of Warwick says:

> In Warwickshire have I true-hearted friends,
> Not mutinous in peace but bold in war;
> These will I summon up.

That was a hundred years before Shakespeare lived, but those true-hearted friends were Shakespeare's own Warwickshire fellow countrymen.

"It would be nice to live near Warwick," said Peggy, on the way back to the hotel. "Then you could come here often."

"It's no wonder," said Barbara slowly and thoughtfully,—"it's no wonder Shakespeare wanted to write plays about the history of England."

It was still daylight and the children were "not a bit sleepy" when bedtime came. "You *must* be tired," said Mother. "You needn't go to sleep right away, but get into bed as quickly as you can—yes, you too, Barbara—and I will tell you a story."

They were not long about it after that. When they were ready, Barbara asked for "a story with castles in it."

"I am going to tell you a true story," replied Mother, "about Kenilworth, the castle we are going to see to-morrow." As that seemed to meet with favor, she began:

"It is only a beautiful ruin now, as you will see; but in Shakespeare's day it was a magnificent palace. Queen Elizabeth had given it to one of her favorites, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, who enlarged it and made it so wonderful that it was called The Palace of Princely Pleasures.

"You will hardly be able to imagine, when you see it, how enormous the place was, with a deer park that extended for miles and a lake and orchard outside the walls, and, inside, gardens and courts and buildings that covered acres of ground. I couldn't tell you of all the wonders of the place. In the garden, beside fountains and statues of white marble, there was a great bird-house filled with rare birds from distant countries. In the halls were tapestries and carpets with all kinds of stories worked into them. And pictures—of course the pictures were not very fine compared to those in Italian palaces——"

"How do you know that?" interrupted Peggy.

"Because, for one thing, I have seen the list of them. Isn't it strange that the list should be preserved when so many things have been destroyed! It is printed in a fascinating book I was reading last night——Oh, Peggy! You thought I just guessed that! Well, I might have, but I didn't. I am telling you a true story!

"Now, where was I? I was going to tell you that Leicester built a whole new wing, which I suppose was the most elegant and luxurious of all. Some of the things he had were curious—a mother-of-pearl ship for a saltcellar, with an image of Dame Fortune on the stern; a candlestick made in the figure of Saint George on horseback, with a case for knives in the tail of the horse and one for oyster-knives in the breast of the dragon. But we must go on to our story.

"When this was all finished and ready, Queen Elizabeth, who was fond of paying visits to the lords of the realm, came to visit the Earl of Leicester; and it turned out to be the most famous visit she ever made. She was attended by any number of ladies of the court and over thirty barons and four hundred servants; and the visit lasted for nearly three weeks!

"When you think of taking care of all those visitors, and when you hear about the entertainment that was offered to the Queen by Leicester, you can imagine what a crowd of people were in the castle day and night. And probably thousands gathered in the fields and along the roads to see the Queen arriving on horseback from Warwick, with Leicester riding by her side and all the retinue following.

"Elizabeth must have looked very queenly and very uncomfortable, I think, with her high ruff and her elaborate headgear, her sleeves puffed at the shoulders, her skirts standing out like a sail before the wind. But Leicester was the handsomest of courtiers—all bevelveted and befrilled—and if he regretted that his plumed hat must be carried by an attendant, because one could not cover one's head in the Queen's presence, he knew that his hair was curled in the latest fashion and that altogether he was the most admired gentleman of the company.

"The Earl of Leicester had a very special reason for wishing to entertain the Queen after her own tastes. She had shown him such special favors that he hoped she would give up, for his sake, her determination to remain a 'maiden' and choose him for her husband. That hope was hinted at in some of the poems written for the occasion."

William Shakspeare

"Did Shakespeare write them?" asked Barbara.

"No, indeed; Shakespeare was only eleven years old when this happened. In Scott's novel, 'Kenilworth,' which describes this visit, Shakespeare is spoken of as if he were a grown man, acting his plays in London. But that is wrong. However, Scott's description of the castle is fascinating. You will never forget it after you read that book.

"Besides the feasting and dancing and reveling at all hours, the Earl had employed poets and actors and musicians to present a series of pageants, such as the age, and especially Elizabeth, delighted in, when gods and goddesses and heroes and nymphs and satyrs and dolphins and mermaids appeared before the spectators to the accompaniment of music and spoke or sang their parts in verse. As the Queen crossed the new bridge that Leicester had built for her, the Lady of the Lake appeared on a floating island and recited a poem of homage to Her Majesty. One thing followed after another. Arion sang on a dolphin's back; old Triton sported with the mermaids; gigantic heroes of old Britain stood on the walls blowing gigantic trumpets, while fireworks shot stars into the water and rained down sparks like hail from the sky, fire flamed unquenched below the surface of the lake; and it is said that the noise of these displays could be heard twenty miles away.

"Shakespeare, as I said, was eleven years old, and, as you know, he lived much less than twenty miles away. His father, who was Mayor of Stratford at that time, would certainly have been expected to be present at this spectacle; and it is not at all unlikely that he took his little boy with him. If he didn't, he was a worse father than I think he was; so we might as well believe Will Shakespeare was there. He knew all about it long beforehand, as the performers were collected all through the country, and I think it would have taken a good deal to keep him away!

"He may have seen the Queen's arrival; he may have seen the Coventry players who acted in the great court of the castle; he may have been on the outer edge of the lake when Arion appeared on the dolphin's back. The dolphin, which was about twenty feet long, was built on a kind of boat of which the oars made the creature's fins; and inside its body were concealed musicians and musical instruments, so that while Arion sat on its back and sang, mysterious music filled the air."

"How wonderful!" exclaimed Barbara. "I hope he was there."

"Well, whether he was or not, he knew all about it. Do you remember in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' what Oberon tells Puck when he sends him to pick the flower that contains the magic love-juice?"

There was no answer, but two pairs of wide-open eyes showed that not a word was being lost, as she went on:

"He tells Puck that once upon a time he sat on a promontory

And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath
That the rude sea grew civil at the song;

and stars, he says, shot madly from their spheres. Doesn't that sound as if Shakespeare was thinking of this pageant? But what makes it more likely is what he says next. Oberon goes on to describe how he saw Cupid fly through the air and take aim from his bow

At a fair vestal thronèd in the west;

in other words, at Queen Elizabeth. He shot as if he would pierce a thousand hearts, but he missed the fair vestal.

> And the imperial votaress passèd on
> In maiden meditation fancy free.

Queen Elizabeth was the imperial votaress. Cupid's arrow missed her; not all of Leicester's grand preparations could make her bręak her vow to remain single; but the arrow, says Oberon, struck a little white flower which became purple with love's wound; and it was the juice of that flower that Puck used as his charm.

"So you see we have the whole story in a few lines of Shakespeare."

"Oh, I wish I could see the dolphins and the mermaids," exclaimed Barbara. "I am *so* glad Shakespeare saw it."

"And all the fireworks," added Peggy. "And we can only see ruins!"

"Never mind," consoled Barbara. "We can imagine it. Mother, I never knew Oberon meant that. That makes four stories in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream.'"

The sun deserted them the next day and they saw Kenilworth in a shower of mist. But the carpets of grass inside the roofless walls were as green as emerald; they seemed to be all the brighter for the mist.

"Oh!" exclaimed Peggy, "it's the loveliest ruin I ever saw! It's so decorated."

It was indeed decorated high and low by festoons of ivy. Great clumps of green nestled about the foundations and hung down from above the walls and windows. Gay flowers bloomed here and there and everywhere.

The sun was drying up the mist so that it ceased to fall down in a shower; and they were able to roam around and find out the different parts of the buildings. They began with the oldest part, the Norman Keep, which is also called Cæsar's Tower. They were beginning to think that when things were so old that nobody knew just how old they were, they were said to belong either to the Norman Conquerors or to Cæsar's time. The thousand years in between them seemed to make little difference. The walls of this tower were so thick that Peggy thought the giants must have built them.

Walking across the space where the kitchens had been, they came to the most beautiful part of the castle, the Great Hall. With its deep-set windows and pointed arches, it seemed like a Gothic cathedral that had been opened to the sky so that the sunshine and the rain could enter and the birds could fly through and all kinds of growing things from out-of-doors could find their way inside.

This, the children thought, must be the Earl of Leicester's wing; but they learned that it was much older than his. Leicester's newer wing, they found, had fallen into greater decay; it had not withstood so well exposure to the winter's storms.

This beautiful hall was built by John of Gaunt;—"Old John of Gaunt, time-honored Lancaster."

As her mother quoted that familiar line, Barbara tried to recall where she had heard it or read it.

"It's the first line of 'Richard II,' " said Mother.

"Oh, yes," cried Barbara, "that is the story of the poor, foolish King that lost his throne. I read that with Alice."

"And it was Henry Bolingbroke, the son of John of Gaunt, who took the throne away from him," said Mother, "and became Henry IV."

Barbara sat down on a loose stone and tried to recall what happened in that play, while Peggy gathered some buttercups, but stayed near enough to hear what they would say next.

"I remember," Barbara began, after a few minutes, "I remember a grand tournament, with all the people and the heralds; and just when the two knights were going to begin to fight, the King gave a signal for them to stop. He had decided to banish them both."

She paused, and her mother went on. "And one of those two knights was Bolingbroke, the son of John of Gaunt. Don't you remember the old man's death?—how he warned the King that dreadful things would happen if he kept on robbing his people to give everything to his favorites and flatterers? And instead of listening to the wise old man, Richard seized his castles and lands, after his death—that is, he took this castle of Kenilworth, which belonged to Bolingbroke."

"Oh, yes," Barbara's face cleared. "That's why he came back—I couldn't remember. Was it really this very castle? And the people took his side, didn't they? and he raised an army, and the King was frightened and just gave up his crown. I remember, he came out on the walls of *some* castle to meet Bolingbroke, and he told him he could have anything he wanted."

"And begged," put in Mother, "that King Bolingbroke, as he called him, would 'give Richard leave to live till Richard die.' "

"And then poor King Richard was put to death in a dungeon."

"Was it that dungeon we were in yesterday?" asked Peggy.

"It was not that castle," Mother answered, "but they are all much alike."

"I keep remembering more of it," said Barbara, as they walked on. "The King had to give up his crown before all the lords, and he asked for a looking-glass; and when he saw his face in it, he smashed the glass. I suppose he wanted them to feel sorry for him."

"There was one man who was sorry for him at the end," said Mother. "Do you remember the groom of King Richard's stable who came to him in his castle dungeon and told him how much it grieved him to see the new King riding on Barbary, his master's horse? Richard asked how the horse went under Bolingbroke, and the man answered that he went as proudly as ever; and then Richard remembered how that same horse had eaten bread out of his hand. Even his horse was loyal to the new King."

After a little while they remembered that it was old John of Gaunt who spoke the words about England that are always quoted to show how much Shakespeare loved his country. They repeated as much of them as they could remember. And the next day, on the train for Liverpool, they remembered more:

> This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle
> . . . .
> This precious stone set in the silver sea;
> This land of such dear souls, this dear, dear land—

and with these words on their lips they left Shakespeare's country and went on their way to their own dear land.


Shakespeare

With
Shakespeare
at Home

CHAPTER XVIII

THE NEW WORLD

To unpathed waters, undreamed shores.
Camillo ("The Winter's Tale")

THEY were at home again. Nothing so exciting had happened to Barbara and Peggy in their two years of "foreign travel." And Hampton in its setting of blue lakes was without doubt the most beautiful of towns! Above all, it was home. There had been one corner of Italy and another of France that they had called "home." But this was home in a different sense. This was where you belonged; where you were born; where you had the accumulated treasures of your "earlier ages," as Barbara once called her childhood, stored away in your own house to be taken out and pored over and to make you feel that you were really yourself again.

School had begun. They wasted no time in comparing it with the schools of Paris and Rome. They were delighted to hear their "own language" all around them. And they were especially glad to be allowed to go back and forth alone, instead of having to be accompanied by some grown-up every time they stepped out into the street.

As a matter of course every one in Hampton exclaimed: "How you *have* grown!" and "Why, Barbara, you are as tall as your mother!" and "How well they look!" and all the usual things.

Barbara was very tall and strong-limbed for a girl of fourteen and more lively than ever. She rode and tramped and paddled, and, when winter came, she skated and skied and picnicked in the snow, rejoicing in a newfound freedom. The woods and a quiet lake shore were close to her home in Hampton. Beautiful old parks and gardens were very pleasant, but these woods and this lake shore offered much greater pleasures. Even those wonderful forests of France where you could drive for hours through winding avenues, under the arching branches of ancient trees—what were they to the freedom of these woods, where you could tramp through the leaves or the snow, and build a fire when you liked, or slide on sleds or skis down the slopes and out across the ice; where you could explore the out-of-doors world at all seasons and in all weathers? It seemed to Barbara that she had never before known how good it was.

Then there were dancing parties and clubs, with your old friends. You knew how to appreciate these things when you had been away from them so long. You felt no desire to find any fault with your native country, like those travelers whom Rosalind taunted, saying, "If you don't find fault with everything in your own country, I will scarce think you have swam in a gondola."

But Barbara wanted something more. She was still like the young seafaring Greeks who were never content to rest so long as there was another headland to be rounded. She and Alice had their chance now to pursue their plan of "acting Shakespeare." That was the "undreamed shore" they would sail for now; and the first excitement of the travelers' return was scarcely over when they began to lay out their course.

While the warm weather lasted they seized every opportunity out of school hours to slip off with their books in a canoe, promising to keep near the shore. Or, if the weather was forbidding, they shut themselves in Alice's room or Barbara's—for their preparations were being made in secret. They would not ask for any help or consult anybody about this important undertaking. They might do it very badly, but they would do it by themselves.

"Alice and I have a lovely plan,"—so much she confessed to her mother. "I can tell you that it is a Shakespearean plan—that is all I can tell you. It is to be a surprise." And her mother smiled to herself, remembering how Barbara had loved a "sprise" from babyhood.

A great deal of exploration in Shakespeare's plays was required before they could settle upon the scenes they were to act. Some of this Barbara did alone, but most of it they did together. There was no promise to keep near shore in *these* explorations, and they read and read, more than ever before, usually forgetting everything but the story and its people when they got into a play and under the spell of the lines. At the end, they would pull themselves together and consider whether any of the scenes they had read would suit their purpose.

Although Alice was quite as enthusiastic as Barbara over these explorations, she sometimes wished that Barbara would talk more about her "travels." But Barbara was always pressing on to some new thing. The new thing might have been written three hundred years ago; it might be a story thousands of years old. Still, it was new to her. Even if she had read it more than once before, it was as fresh as ever. Indeed, the plays she had read before were the best of all, because there were always surprises as you knew and understood them better. It was like finding rare and unexpected flowers in a garden you had known and loved. Surely that was better than sitting still and telling about what you had done and the things you had seen. And, although she talked so little about them, Alice felt that Barbara had a great many beautiful sights stored away in her mind and that those memories added something for both of them to Shakespeare's bright scenes. That experience she thought made up for the difference in their ages. She said one day, "It's a new world, Barbara, since you came back."

They had many things to consider in selecting their scenes. Their requirements were not easily satisfied.

In the first place, there must be just two people in the scene. It must be a dialogue. And it must tell enough of the story to be interesting by itself. It must be a play in miniature, really—able to stand alone, apart from the rest of the drama. Then, too, they must mix comic scenes with serious ones. And they must not attempt the impossible. They would not try any ghosts or murders; they would not brandish swords or daggers; simple conversations would be hard enough—and good enough, too. What they liked was to hear the sound of the words and to feel the lines roll out and actually to *be* the people who were speaking them, in costume and in action. Only then could they realize the whole story and all that was happening to these interesting persons.

One might suppose that the conversations which the children thought easy were really more difficult than ghosts and duel scenes. For example, the conversations between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth—these, they thought, were quite within the limits of the possible. But they seemed to realize that high comedy is more difficult than high tragedy. For they chose Launce and Speed for their comic person-ages and did not even think of attempting Falstaff. Even Bottom they rejected for reasons of their own.

There must be perfect fairness in the distribution of the parts. If Alice had a man's part in one of the scenes, they must choose another in which Barbara would be a man and Alice a woman. Or both must be of the same sex. And if one of them had to be a very wicked person in one scene, they tried to make it up by letting her be a nice person in another. Sometimes they tried to persuade Peggy to help them out—they had trusted her with their secret—but it was only when they found a silent part for her that she could be persuaded.

They pondered over scene after scene. Should they do Prospero and Miranda? They reread "The Tempest," and talked about their own adventure, when they were castaways on that lonely island. They discovered that the only scene when Prospero and Miranda were alone was the narrative in the first act; and there, Miranda had too little to say. There was not enough acting in it, either, they thought. There must be *some* acting, of course. They liked the conversations between Ferdinand and Miranda; but there was not much to them, after all! "You must have something more than two people in love," said Barbara. "I should think so," Alice agreed.

Should they do Beatrice and Benedick? They spent some time over "Much Ado About Nothing." They read it out-of-doors on some unusually warm days in the late fall, when they had drawn the canoe up to the shore under the willow trees. It tempted them. They liked it because it was funny and serious at the same time. Barbara said that Beatrice reminded her of that dear Signorina in Rome. She, too, was both gay and serious, with the best of hearts under her wit and laughter.

They had the chance, just about that time, to see "Much Ado About Nothing" on the stage, at the Hampton Theatre.

They talked it over the next day. It was "perfectly delicious," and the costumes were "fascinating," and Beatrice was "ripping." But, oddly enough, seeing the play had convinced them that they would not try to act any of it just yet. It was not because it seemed too hard to do. It was because they could find no conversation that would represent the *real* Beatrice and Benedick.

For those two merry wits, who boasted of their hard hearts that could love no one, were very much changed by the events of the play. They were most amusing at the beginning. Their first greeting showed them at their merry warfare with each other, when Beatrice broke in upon Benedick's conversation with the Prince to remark: "I wonder you will still be talking, Signior Benedick; nobody marks you"; and he turned toward her with: "What, my dear Lady Disdain! are you yet living?" to which she retorted: "Is it possible Disdain should die while she hath such meat to feed on as Signior Benedick?"

They were amusing, too, when their friends were practicing on them their scheme for bringing them "into a mountain of affection, one for the other." How delightful those scenes were! especially that one in the "pleachèd bower" of the orchard, when Beatrice, having been told that Hero and Ursula were talking about her, runs like a lapwing, close to the ground, and hides in a "woodbine overture" to hear them say what a pity it is that Beatrice is so wild and coy when Benedick, as they declare, is entirely in love with her; to hear them praise him as the foremost man of Italy and abuse her as loving herself alone; to hear them resolve to counsel Benedick to fight against his passion—though it were better for him to waste away with sighs than to die from her mocks.

The change in her began at once, at this startling news—as it began in Benedick when he heard a similar made-up conversation. And later, when Hero, the friend of Beatrice, was the victim of a very different kind of a scheme—a cruel plot—they were both so absorbed in their sorrow for her and a desire to help her, that they forgot their jesting and became serious; and in that softened mood the warfare between them was ended and they confessed that they had "fallen in love against their wills."

In the last scene, Benedick's friends hail him, in jest, as Benedick the married man. But he will not be moved by their "wit-crackers." He cares not for their jokes. He calls for music and a dance, and advises the Prince to get him a wife.

The children could not find any dialogues that would tell enough of this story to satisfy them. So they gave it up and continued their search.

They lingered longingly over "As You Like It." Rosalind and Celia were perfect. "They are *too* perfect," Alice said. "Yes," replied Barbara, "we'll save Rosalind and Celia for another time."

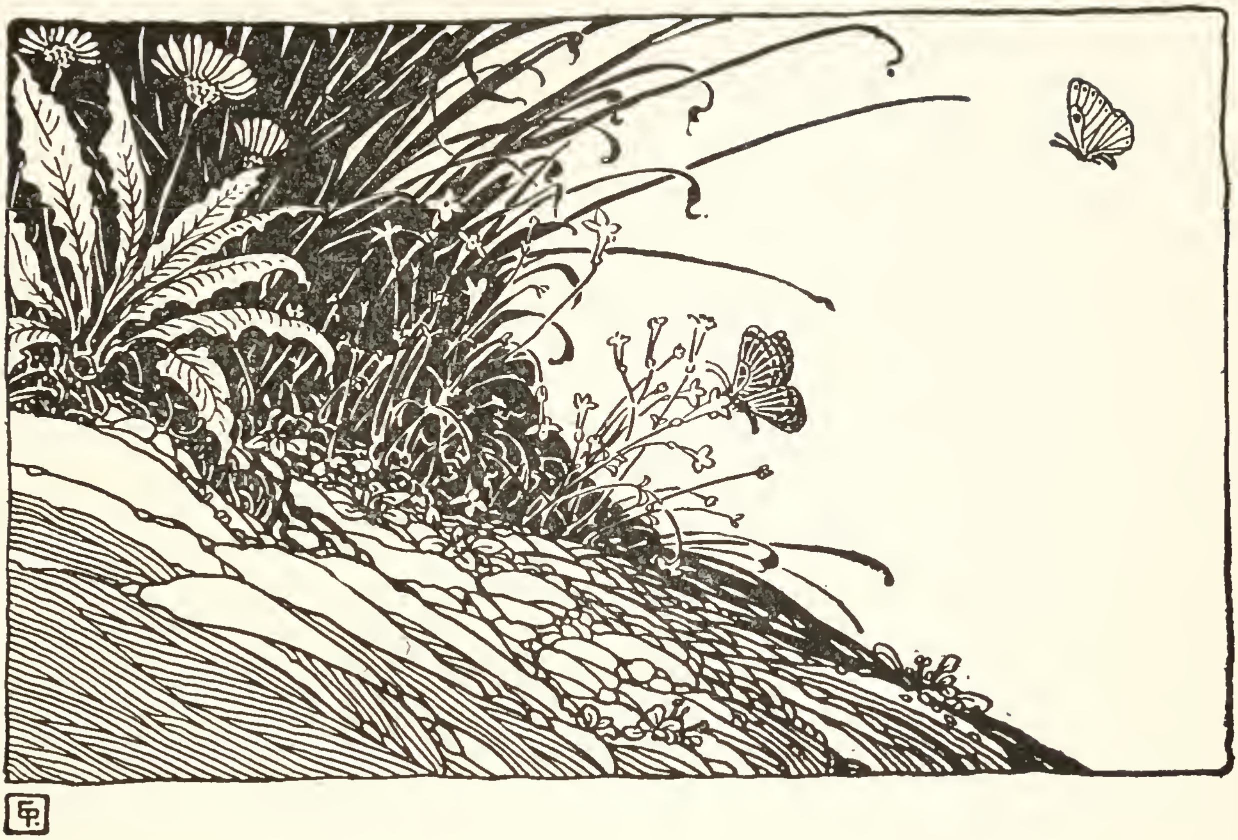
Finally the scenes were chosen and the program was made out. It was to consist of three parts: The courting of Katherine by Petruchio in "The Taming of the Shrew"; a comic dialogue in prose between Launce and Speed from "Two Gentlemen of Verona"; and the balcony scene from "Romeo and Juliet." It was a spirited program, certainly, and offered much variety. And before they had finished the rehearsals for the first entertainment they had planned a second, to consist of scenes from "Julius Cæsar" and "Macbeth."

Meanwhile, school and play went on as usual. Many things besides Shakespeare filled their busy days. Yet when you are especially interested in something, you find that other things are always leading up to that. It gets mixed up with all the other things you are doing. That is exactly what happened to Alice and Barbara.

If Shakespeare could have known, when he was writing his plays, that, three hundred years later, in the centre of the New World, hundreds of miles inland from the Virginia Colony which was all that he knew of that wild, unexplored Eldorado, there would be found two schoolgirls who had chosen for their chief entertainment the reading and learning and reciting of parts of those plays, I think he would have said, as the clown in "The Winter's Tale" said of pedlars: "There is more in these little girls than you would think."

If, through some prophetic glass, he could have seen those two girls sitting in a canoe on the edge of a lake, under willow trees like those that shadow the banks of the Avon, repeating to each other the words of Brutus and Cassius or Jacques and Touchstone or Benedick and Beatrice; and if he could have known from what a wealth of amusements they had chosen this as their chief diversion; if he, who never saw a photograph, could have foreseen the movies; if he, who never rode on a tramcar or a steamboat or a railroad train, could have imagined the fun of driving through the country in motor cars; if he, who loved a merry tune as he loved all music, could have foretold the invention of a machine that would reel off melodies by the yard; and if he could have known that in the midst of such things these two girls were finding their best enjoyment in his inventions, he would perhaps have said: "There is more in these plays of mine than you would think."

What, then, would he have said, if he had known all that was happening as a result of their choice? Shakespeare has more than once represented very beautifully the friendship between young girls. If he had known what a perfect friendship would be formed between Barbara and Alice by their pursuit of his poetry—through sharing together its truth and beauty—I think he would have found some unimaginable words with which to describe how much more was waiting to be discovered in that western world than was dreamt of by its explorers.



CHAPTER XIX

ON HORSEBACK

As full of spirit as the month of May.
("Henry IV," Part I)

BARBARA and her father had brought their horses to a walk, after a lively canter along the road by the lake. They went along slowly, listening to the sounds of the spring morning, until they turned into a lane that crossed a broad, level meadow.

"Stop here for a minute, Barbara," said Daddy, "and let me go ahead. Regina always insists upon running like lightning across this stretch. Come along slowly after me and I will wait for you at the end of the lane."

He started off, his horse running at full speed, and drew up at a sharp hill beyond the meadow. He turned back to look for Barbara,—and there she was, just behind him! She was laughing at his surprise, her hair was flying, her cheeks were glowing with excitement.

"Couldn't you hold him back?"

"I didn't try. I tried to catch up with you!"

"Why, Barbara! How did you dare?"

" 'I dare do all that may become a man!' "

She stopped panting for breath long enough to make that speech. She was so full of Shakespeare at this time that his words often came to her, unexpectedly, at exciting moments.

Daddy hardly knew what to say. He couldn't help being pleased—he was always pleased with her riding—but he looked serious; and when she begged, "Let's go back now and have a real race," he refused quite firmly, and they went slowly and carefully for the rest of the way.

Barbara really did not mind going slowly, after the excitement of the run was over, because she liked to talk. They chatted about things in general, until Barbara said,

"I suppose Mother told you about the great argument we had at school yesterday."

"No. Was she there?"

"She wasn't there, but I told her about it as soon as I came home."

"What was it? Tell me."

"It was at recess. They had all gone out and I was just going, too, when Ned Willard came along. He said 'Hello' and picked up a book on my desk. It was my 'Merchant of Venice.' 'Do you like Shakespeare?' he said; and of course I said, 'Yes, don't you?'—He told me he hadn't read much of it, but his father has; and *he* says Shakespeare won't do nowadays.

"Then I wanted to know why, and he said all kinds of things about Shakespeare caring for kings and princes and not standing for the people—he said that was 'old stuff'—we don't care about people that are nobly born and rich and so forth nowadays—we think all men are equal.

"Well, *I* thought Shakespeare didn't care a cent about birth and riches and such things, and I told him so. I said, 'Anyway, some of his wickedest men are kings.'

"Just look at 'Julius Cæsar,' he said—he had read that—'Look at the people there! They're just a mob.'

"And then I told him—what do you think I told him, Daddy? I know it was naughty. I told him that I had heard my father say that *his* father could make the crowd change their minds by talking to them, just the way Mark Antony did. I thought he would be awfully angry, but he seemed to like it! And I said, 'Anyway, that was Rome, and I don't see how that shows what he thought about the common people in England.' Oh, but then he flew up! '*Common* people!' he just shouted, 'I wish my father could hear you say that. He is working for their rights because they are *not* common. He wouldn't let anybody say that.' Of course, Daddy, I didn't mean that they were *common;*

but before I could explain, Mr. Woodward came in and asked what we were so excited about; I told him what Ned's father said about Shakespeare. Then Miss Lawrence came in, too, and Alice, and some of the others, and we had a great time."

"What did you decide?" asked Daddy.

"We didn't decide anything. But Mr. Woodward thought Shakespeare sympathized with Brutus—not with his *act,* he said, but his *cause*—and his cause was to save the people from having a tyrant over them. He thinks Shakespeare believed in democracy—but more than anything in law and order. And then Miss Lawrence said she thought we needed to read him more than ever nowadays. She told us about Jack Cade's rebellion—how they shouted 'Off with the head of any one who can read and write,' and 'It was never merry in England since we had gentlemen,' and 'Let's kill everybody, beginning with the lawyers.' Shakespeare had no use for such rebels—and I guess Miss Lawrence hasn't either! She said Shakespeare believed in law and order; and that you can't just *say* you are equal to anybody—you have to prove it."

"You didn't decide that Shakespeare was a reformer, did you?" Daddy asked.

"No. Mr. Woodward said he wasn't. But he asked if we knew what *noblesse oblige* means, and Alice told him—it means that if you have a chance to learn, you must act better and more politely than people that haven't had a chance. Then Mr. Woodward said, 'That's just what Shakespeare thought.'

"And he said something else. He said Shakespeare never makes you think that if you are good you will be happy. But he shows you good and bad people side by side and makes you *feel* you'd rather be like the good people. Of course you'd rather be like Cordelia than Goneril—no matter what happened to you.

"Ned wasn't very happy at the end, when the bell rang. He muttered something about, 'I'll bring my father to this school.' And Alice said afterward, 'Let him. We're not afraid.' "

She had hardly spoken Alice's name when they saw her, on the path, just on the edge of the woods near Barbara's house.

"Why, Alice!" exclaimed Barbara, as they drew in their horses. "Where did you come from?"

"I thought I might meet you," she answered. "I went to your house to see if you didn't want to rehearse our parts. They told me where you were, so I came on and brought the book. I thought I might meet you."

"Fine! I can stop, can't I, Daddy? and you can take my horse home. You don't mind."

"In your riding clothes?"

"Why, yes. I'm cooled off now. And my riding clothes will do for a costume."

"Very well," he replied, helplessly, as they dismounted and he took her horse by the bridle.

"You have chosen a beautiful spot for rehearsing, Alice," he remarked as they started off.

He stood still for a minute watching them as they walked away arm in arm. Soft spring buds were hanging from the branches above them. The blue sky glistened beyond.

"What a lovely bank," he heard Barbara say, "and what lovely moss!"

She stooped down to feel it with her hand and he heard her chant,

> "I know a bank where the wild thyme blows
> And fading violets covered up in leaves——

oh! that's all wrong," she broke off. "That's something else." She laughed at herself. "I'm crazy! That last isn't Shakespeare. What is it?"

"She is mixing Keats with Shakespeare," her father said to himself, as he put his foot in the stirrup. "Well, let her. She's happy doing it."

CHAPTER XX

A DAY IN LONDON

I'll put a girdle round about the earth
In forty minutes.
Puck ("A Midsummer Night's Dream")

BARBARA came in one Saturday afternoon with shining eyes and rosy cheeks, threw her hat and coat on the nearest chair, and exclaimed,

"Oh, Mother! I've had the grandest time! I've been to London."

Peggy murmured from the couch where she was curled up with a book,

Pussy-cat, pussy-cat, where have you been?
I've been to London to see the great queen.

"What do you mean, Barbara?" asked Mother. "What have you been doing?"

"Oh, Uncle Waldo called us in when Alice and I were going past his house to show us some books and pictures; and then he got to talking, and we stayed and stayed; and when we came away Alice said, 'Well, we've spent the afternoon in London, with Shakespeare. Wasn't it fun?' "

"Hang up your things," said Mother, "and then tell us about it. Did you drink Canary at the Mermaid?"

"Oh, the Mermaid Tavern! Yes, that was the nicest part of all." She came back after a minute and threw herself in a big armchair.

"Why didn't *we* go there, Mother," asked Peggy, "if it is the nicest part of London?"

"It isn't there *now.*" Barbara answered the question; then, turning to her mother, she went on, "I never knew that Sir Walter Raleigh started the club there at the Mermaid, where they all met and talked and had such great times. You know, Mother, that other man that wrote plays, Ben Jonson, had fierce arguments with Shakespeare, and somebody said Jonson was like a huge, Spanish galleon and Shakespeare like an English man-of-war, that was lighter and couldn't stand so firm, but tacked about and ran in and out, and got ahead of the big, heavy ship every time. Can't you just see them? I love discussions."

"And what else did you see in——"

"Why, Mother," Barbara interrupted, "London was perfectly great in those days! It was crowded full of people, because the country was changing and lots of farm people were out of work, and everybody wanted to go to the city. And the ships—such beautiful ships!—were coming and going all the time, and the town was full of sailors who had been all over the world, and the theatres were crowded and new plays were given all the time, and the taverns were exciting places.

"Uncle Waldo showed us some pictures of Westminster and St. Paul's and the Tower of London—the way they looked then and the way they look now—just the very places we saw, Peggy! Only then, the middle aisle of St. Paul's was a public walk where people met and told the news; you saw all kinds of people there, men dressed in gorgeous clothes (they dressed up more than the women did), and there were little shops where they sold things. It sounds like the Rialto, doesn't it?"

"It doesn't sound much like a church," remarked Peggy. "I think it is *much* better to have the stores outside, in the streets, the way they are now."

"But it wasn't quite given up to shops even then," said Mother. "If I remember rightly there were two very great ceremonies in that cathedral, about the time Shakespeare went up to London: one was the funeral of the poet, Sir Philip Sidney, and one was the celebration of the victory over the Spanish Armada."

"Uncle Waldo didn't tell us about that," replied Barbara. "Oh, he told us about the victory! It was after *that* that they had peace for so long and the country was so prosperous. And Drake's ship, the 'Golden Hind,' was kept in the Thames where the people could see it.

"And he told us about Queen Elizabeth and her grand court. She left one thousand dresses when she died! She just loved jewelry and silks and satins and lace. She was a sport, too; she liked parties and plays and hunting and going a-Maying and grand celebrations like that one at Kenilworth Castle. But she knew a lot! She entertained ambassadors from other countries, and she talked to them in French or Italian or Latin—she didn't care which; and she read Greek every day. Once when she was pretty old, some ambassador made her a speech that she didn't like very much, and she answered back in Latin; and then she turned around and said: 'God's Death! my lords, I had to scour up my Latin which has been rusting these many years.' She always said 'God's Death' when she was excited. Alice said her big lace ruff must have trembled. It looks like gauzy wings.

"She had suitors from all over, just like Portia, in 'The Merchant of Venice.' The Earl of Leicester wasn't the only one."

"Did Uncle Waldo tell you about Shakespeare's later years, under King James?" asked Mother, "and about how the Puritans were beginning to talk against the gaiety and splendor of court life and theatres and all kinds of amusements?"

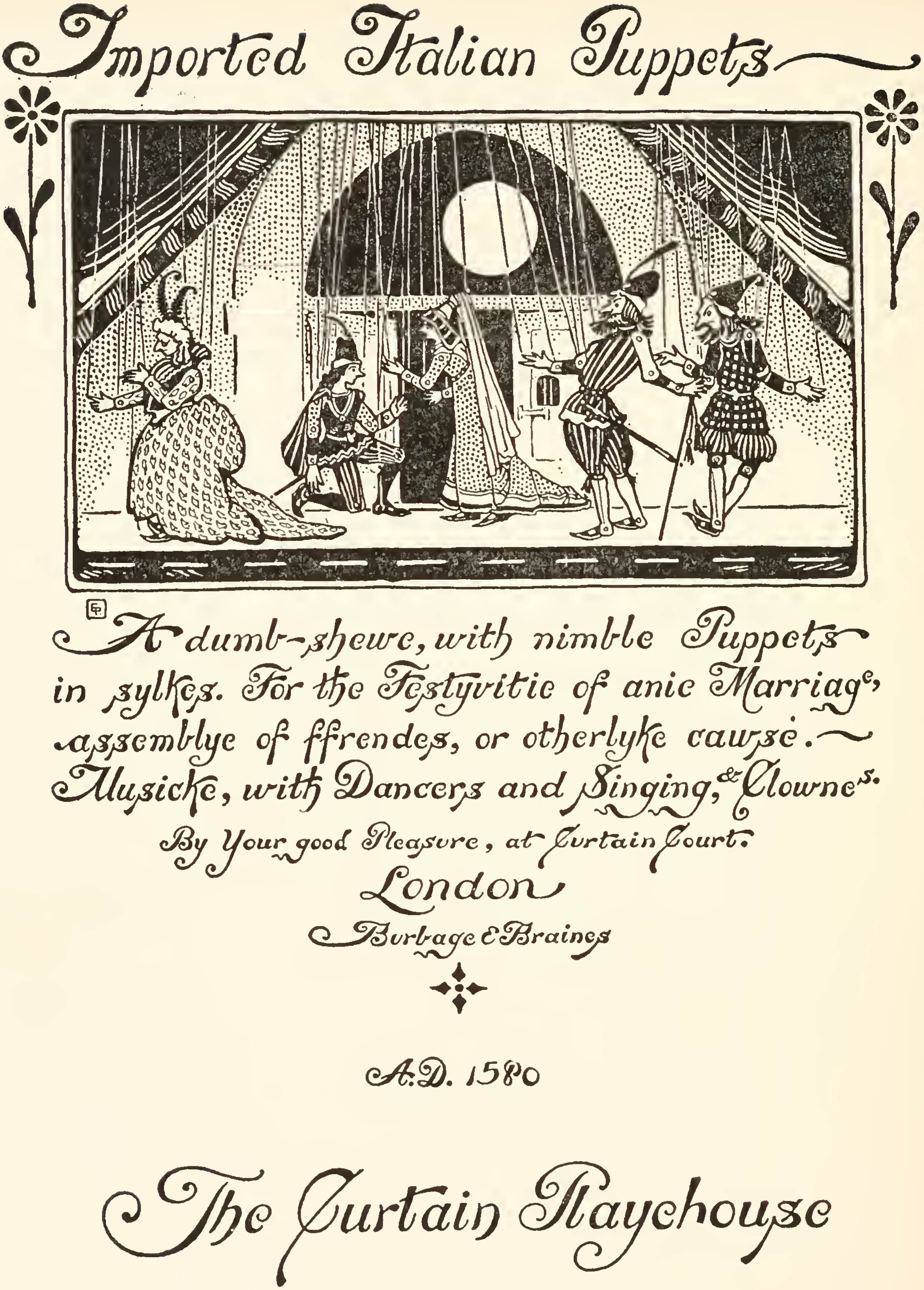
"He showed us a picture of the great hall in King James's palace—it looked like the inside of a church—where Shakespeare and his company acted some of his plays for a Christmas celebration. King James liked plays and helped Shakespeare and his actors. But the people loved

Elizabeth much more. Why, once when she ordered a man's right hand to be cut off for punishment, as soon as it was done, he pulled off his cap with his left hand and shouted: 'God save the Queen!' . . . Shakespeare didn't care a cent about going to the court. Somebody said, whenever he was invited there he was in pain. . . . I told Uncle Waldo I didn't see why; and then he explained that if you were a courtier you had to just about worship the Queen; and everybody was trying to get ahead of everybody else, and it wasn't any too pleasant. He said that maybe Shakespeare was thinking about that when he wrote 'As You Like It,' and that Shakespeare could see very well why the lords liked it better in the Forest of Arden. . . . I think Uncle Waldo likes Jacques almost as much as Falstaff. He says he really likes Hamlet best of all."

"He has wonderful editions of Shakespeare," Mother remarked.

"Oh, yes! Some of them are so big you can hardly lift them. He told us about how they made the paper and ink and type and everything especially for those books. An awfully rich man spent his whole fortune getting them published. Shakespeare never thought that would happen to his plays. Uncle Waldo told us about the treasure that Drake brought back in the 'Golden Hind,' but he said it wasn't used making beautiful books of Shakespeare's plays; it was used for a grand celebration the Queen had when her French suitor came to London."

Peggy had dropped her book and was listening to every word. Now she spoke:



Imported Italian Puppets

A dumb-shewe, with nimble Puppets
in sylkes. For the Festyvitie of anie Marriage,
assemblye of ffrendes, or otherlyke cawse.—
Musicke, with Dancers and Singing, & Clownes.
By Your good Pleasure, at Curtain Court.
London
Burbage & Braines

◆

A.D. 1580

The Curtain Playhouse

◆

Puppet Play Bill with Quaint Advertisement

"You said London was such a wonderful, exciting place, and then you said Shakespeare thought it was nicer in the woods. Didn't he like London?"

"He liked the streets and theatres and inns," said Mother. "Barbara means that he seems to have disliked the life of fashion that centered in the Queen's royal court. You know the Queen, with all her many palaces, and the hosts of lords and ladies who held positions under her, was a leader of amusements—and of everything else. Even education—even universities like Oxford and Cambridge—depended on her favor. She was a very clever ruler, too, and did great things for England. She used to refuse her suitors, saying she was married to England. Shakespeare loved freedom too much to be a courtier. He didn't like what one of his characters calls 'hanging on princes' favors.' He may never have had the chance, although some of the most powerful lords of the kingdom were his most intimate friends. They became his friends, however, because they encouraged literature and so helped make Elizabeth's reign the Golden Age of English poetry. The Earl of Southampton gave Shakespeare money for his theatrical ventures, without which he could hardly have risen to success and prosperity in ten years. And then, when he was successful, we know that he went back to the little town of Stratford where he had his house and garden for the rest of his days. That is the proof of what he liked best."

"And, Peggy," said Barbara, "when he lived in Stratford, they had stocks and a whipping post set up in the marketplace; and if boys stayed out-of-doors after nine o'clock they were put in the stocks. I didn't know that when we were there."

"Ugh!" said Peggy. "I'd rather have lived in London."

"Or in the Forest of Arden," Barbara concluded.

"We saw a funny picture of London," she continued, "with the narrowest streets, and a big round theatre on one side—I think it was the Globe Theatre—and a house where they kept bears for—what was it called?"

"Bear-baiting," answered Mother. "That must have been the amphitheatre they called the Bear Garden, where, I believe, about a thousand people could watch the cruel sport. That, too, was under the Queen's patronage. They tied the bear to a stake in the middle of the circle and set five or six mastiffs loose on him; and then the people watched him claw the dogs——"

"Don't talk about it," cried Peggy.

"The river parties on the Thames must have been too lovely." Barbara half closed her eyes as if she saw them. "And they had fine gardens in London, too."

"Yes," her mother added, "when Shakespeare was in London he didn't have to go far to see gardens and open country. He was quite a traveler, too,—going about the country with his company of actors,—even if he never left England."

"He traveled on horseback," remarked Barbara. "When he went from Stratford to London, he could see the Castle of Warwick on the hill. I wonder how London looked when he came near. London Bridge, in the picture, has houses built all the way across it. He stayed at a place just between his theatre and the Mermaid Tavern; that was very convenient for him.

"Uncle Waldo has never been in England, but he knows everything about it. I asked him if he didn't want to go to Stratford and explore the place where Shakespeare lived. He says he would rather explore the pages that Shakespeare wrote. He says he never could cross the ocean because in the winter he is too busy and in the summer he can't leave his fishing. But he doesn't care. He says he'd rather go to the places Shakespeare takes him—when he sits down in the evening with his books—than to the places where Shakespeare happened to go when—when——"

"You mean," Mother helped her, "he would rather follow Shakespeare's mind than his body."

"I should think so!" threw in Peggy. "If he followed his body he'd be dead."

A little later, when they sat at their evening meal, Barbara was unusually silent and a little absent-minded. Daddy looked from her to her mother questioningly. "She will come back presently," her mother said quietly. "She is off in dreamland now—exploring London."

" 'In the spacious times of great Elizabeth,' " quoted Daddy.

CHAPTER XXI

REHEARSALS

> Sure, this robe of mine
> Does change my disposition.
> *Perdita* ("The Winter's Tale")

THEY rehearsed indoors and out-of-doors, as opportunity offered. Sometimes Peggy, who was let more and more into the secret, was present as prompter and first assistant. Sometimes she helped and sometimes she hindered. She got them to laughing so hard one day that the rehearsal went all to pieces. Then suddenly she grew serious.

"Hurry up now!" she cried. "Please stop laughing, Sister, and *go on*."

"You made us laugh yourself, Peggy," Alice managed to say. "You're a great prompter!"

"Did I? Then I'll have to make you stop now. Go on, I say. I have to go to a meeting of the Busy Bees. Betty'll be waiting for me."

"Buz-z-z!" hissed Barbara. (That was in the part she was learning. She was quoting from Petruchio.) "You'd better run along, Peggy. We'll *try* to rehearse without your help."

They had resolved not to do anything about their costumes until they had learned all of their parts. But they could not keep their eyes off the old engravings in Barbara's volumes, under the heading "Costumes"; and they were drawn irresistibly to the attic now and then, not to *do* anything but just to see how this and that would fit together when the time came. "We must not wait too long," Alice suggested. "We might forget our parts while we are doing our costumes."

The matter of the stage setting gave them little trouble. Barbara had given up her idea of reproducing the Globe Theatre. It would have meant the betrayal of their secret. And, besides, they were too busy. The days were too full even to plan such a thing. They must content themselves with one end of Alice's drawing-room, which was conveniently marked off by pillars, and in which were two French windows, opening on the veranda, that made perfect doors for the back of the stage. For two of their scenes not much scenery would be needed—they had thought of that, too, in making their selections—and for the third, a table hidden by a vine-covered screen would serve for a balcony.

Their only desire in studying their parts was to "be the persons" they represented. As there was nobody to train them, they had to think hard and carefully about the characters, in order to be sure just how they would have said the things Shakespeare makes them say. As for the metre—they never thought of that! But when you head is full of Shakespeare's verse day after day and week after week, your instinct may be trusted to guide you in that.

There were times when the rehearsals called for a great deal of patience. It was fun to say over the parts when you only half knew them; when it was a sort of game to see how much you could remember. But when you had to learn them so thoroughly that you could not possibly forget—that was not quite so easy.

However, when they were far enough along to begin arranging their costumes, then every rehearsal was more exciting than the last. And *then* Peggy was glad to be prompter. She was never bored. For they experimented with many combinations and tried many "effects," putting together the things they found in the big chest in Barbara's attic or in a closet from which Alice's mother had told them they could "take what they liked." They were surprised to find how different the same things could be made to look by combining them differently. Sometimes their experiments were so funny that they roared with laughter and ripped them up in a hurry. They soon learned not to waste time sewing until they had tried the effect with many pins. They were not very fond of sewing. They could sew if it was necessary; but they would hunt for a long time and knit their brows over ways and means before resorting to that trying expedient.

Barbara was especially concerned, in arranging the costumes, that she should "look the part." Whether she looked well or not troubled her very little. Alice sometimes wondered that she could care so little about that. She thought it noble of her. "I don't think that is very pretty, Barbara," she would say. And Barbara would answer, "Oh, never mind. I want to look like Petruchio, and I don't think he was very pretty." Barbara was inclined to think that Alice, as Katherine, looked rather *too* pretty in the blue silk evening gown of her mother's that she finally chose. But again she said, "Never mind." Perhaps Alice was right, she thought. Certainly the Italian ladies in the old paintings were always lovely, and Katherine, the shrew, lived in Italy. She was quite sure she liked to see Alice in that long gown, so tall and straight, like a grown-up lady with her soft neck and her white arms showing.

Committing to memory was a very small part of rehearsals, they soon learned. There were so many things to decide that they often longed to ask for advice. But they never yielded to that temptation; not because it would be wrong, but because they had made up their minds not to, and it would spoil the fun.

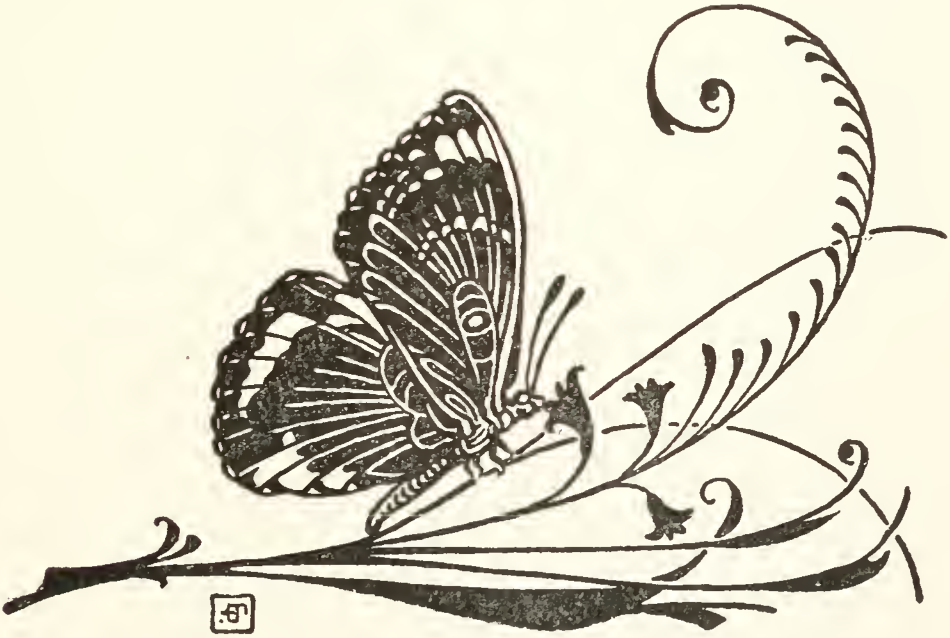
For one thing, it seemed to them that some of the lines in "The Taming of the Shrew" ought to be omitted. A few of the expressions, they felt, were out of date. For their part they did not understand them, and they doubted if the audience would. So they took the matter in their own hands and cut them out. Perhaps they were falling into the ancient folly of meddling with Shakespeare's text. But there was nothing else to do. They could not repeat lines they did not understand and suspected of being a bit immodest. No doubt these were quite all right in the Globe Theatre.

They were helped through all their difficulties by the thought of the event that was coming and the surprise they were preparing for their audience. It was to be a very select audience, consisting only of invited guests. They had no ambition to perform before a large number of people. Their families, they knew, could be counted upon to be not over critical; and how delicious it would be to see their surprise! And certain of their friends—nearly all of them older friends—must of course be asked to come. They must have a sympathetic audience above all. Modesty prevented them from asking many of their schoolmates, and they would have no boys, not even Arthur Lee. They really wanted to ask Arthur. He was fond of Shakespeare and they were fond of Arthur. But what if they should forget their parts? Oh, no, they would not dare to invite Arthur.

It was not easy to find free hours for their preparations. Fortunately there was no rush. It was all so simple that they could choose their own time. But their interest in the event was too keen to allow of long postponement. They were impatient to fix the date and at the same time they were almost afraid to fix it. So they got everything ready first. The programs were printed and painted by their own hands, and spaces were left for inserting the day and the hour whenever they could bring themselves to decide upon it.

"We *must* settle it," said Barbara, one day. "If we don't have our first performance soon, we shall never get started on our second."

And with that spur to drive them to it, the date was set.



CHAPTER XXII

THE PLAYERS

> Let your own discretion be your tutor.
> *Hamlet* ("Hamlet")

THE evening of the great surprise came at length and one by one the favored spectators arrived. Peggy, dressed as a page, with her hair hanging straight and rolled under to make her a real boy, received them at the door and gave to each one a painted program on which, in a design of pale green columns, were inscribed the simple words so full of meaning, "Scenes from Shakespeare." On that pale green portal, the secret was announced; what lay behind it the guests, who took their seats facing the alcoved end of the drawing room, were soon to discover.

What they noticed at first was the extreme simplicity of the stage setting. There were no footlights, no raised platform, no artificial walls and pasteboard towers, no silver paper, no gilt and tinsel. Everything was real as far as it went; and when the actors appeared on the same level as the audience, it was more like an actual scene in which the spectators had an intimate share, than if they had been placed in the midst of an elaborate setting, high upon a stage, framed in like a picture. It was more like the stage of Shakespeare's day than like the modern theatre.

Whatever the young actors felt, to the audience the performance seemed to proceed without a hitch. Now more than ever the actors forgot themselves—never their parts!—and became for the moment Shakespeare's characters.

Alice, as Katherine, dressed in that long, trailing gown of light blue silk, with puffs at the shoulders and a stiff lace frill at her neck, was as shrewish as possible. Yet she looked like a shrew that could be tamed—one who might indeed deserve all the flattering things that Petruchio called her when he came to woo. And Barbara, as Petruchio, in silken doublet and velvet hose and a scarlet coat, had a subtle smile on her face, as if much were hidden under the extraordinary behavior of this impetuous lover. He was a most spirited Petruchio. His changes of manner kept you guessing as they did Katherine. His voice was soft and alluring as he called her the prettiest Kate in Christendom, but his angry "Buz-z-z" came out with a telling hiss. And Katherine was his equal. After his eloquence about "Dian in her grove," she drew her head back with a most superior gesture, and put her question:

> Where did you study all this goodly speech?

The acting showed real enjoyment of the situation. It was clear that Alice and Barbara were not troubled by this idea of taming a woman. Indeed, it seemed to them that nothing was too bad for such an ill-tempered person. Besides, she was a match for any man. If any one could get ahead of this shrew as Petruchio did, so much the better.

Between this scene and the next, Peggy came upon the stage and hung up a pasteboard sign which read, "A Street in Milan." The audience felt flattered. It was plain that they were expected to imagine how the street looked.

What a transformation when the children appeared as Launce and Speed! They were really disguised now; one would hardly have known them. They were rather ragged and unkempt for the servants of gentlemen, but their costumes suited the style of their language. They changed their voices; they slunk about in a loose-jointed sort of way, as if they enjoyed being as rough as they were shrewd and witty. When Launce got off his pun, "My staff understands me," a twinkle in Barbara's eye betrayed her enjoyment of the joke.

The lights were turned off and the audience were left for a few minutes in total darkness. They could hear sounds of moving scenery. And then, what another transformation! when the lights shone upon Juliet on her balcony and Romeo half hidden behind a palm tree. The balcony was a screen with a table behind it and the palm trees, alas! were not real. They were some artificial ones Barbara had found in the attic and they had to serve.

But what did it matter to the audience when there were Romeo and Juliet, with joy in their faces, reciting to the imaginary heavens that matchless poem of young love!

Through the first scene the audience wondered and admired. Through the second they laughed. Through the last they were carried away by the dark-eyed beauty and soft voice of Juliet (Was she not indeed a young Italian in color and feature as well as in sentiment?) and by the tenderness and gracious bearing of Romeo. The audience had forgotten Alice and Barbara. Romeo and Juliet stood before them, in the garden of the Capulets; the well-known words were as new and fresh as love and spring-time. These two children, by their sincere love of the poetry, brought home to the audience its beauty and truth, till the air was tense with it. There was a breathless moment of silence; then the applause burst forth.

Again, on another evening, the living room was darkened and the lights beyond the pillars, dimmed with colored shades, revealed a corner of the hall of Macbeth's castle. Two oriental rugs, hung against the wall, served for the ancient "arras." A carved oak table stood on one side of the space with a low settee beside it. On the table were lighted candles in tall brass candlesticks. One of the three windows at the back had been transformed by draperies into a low doorway, the others into pointed Gothic windows, long and narrow. Beyond them one caught glimpses of the moonlight on the lawn.

From an "inner chamber" formed by curtains across the stage, Lady Macbeth entered. She wore a straight, flowing gown of deep red, with a gold cord and tassel hanging heavily about her waist. A soft headdress of pale yellow silk covered Alice's blond hair and fell about her shoulders. She was reading a letter. The weird sisters, her husband wrote, had met him on the heath on the day of success—they who, as he had learned, had in them more than mortal knowledge. They saluted him as "Thane of Cawdor" and "King that shalt be," and when he would have questioned them further, they made themselves air and vanished. And while he stood rapt in wonder came messengers from Duncan, the King, to bestow upon him a new title, "Thane of Cawdor." The first part of the witches' prophecy had come true! This news he sent his dearest partner in greatness, that she might know of the sure promise that he would be King.

Lady Macbeth clasped the letter in her hand and meditated. She spoke as if she were talking to her husband:

> Glamis thou art and Cawdor, and shalt be
> What thou art promised. Yet do I fear thy nature.

It is too full o' the milk of human kindness
To catch the nearest way.

. . . .

Hie thee hither
That I may pour my spirit in thine ear.

She had seated herself on the bench. Her thoughts ran on in silence, while she moved restlessly, and her eyes wandered from side to side. Suddenly she clutched the table and sat quite still gazing into space with fixed, wide-open eyes. . . . She started up, steadied herself for an instant on the table, and turned to meet her husband as he entered from the outer door. Smilingly she greeted him:

Great Glamis, worthy Cawdor!
Greater than both by the all-hail hereafter.
Thy letters have transported me beyond
This ignorant present, and I feel now
The future in the instant.

Barbara, in a short cloak and belt, with a sword hanging from her side, made a tall and manlike Macbeth. Her voice was clear and untroubled as she spoke the simple statement which announces to the audience that fearful deeds are close at hand:

My dearest love,
Duncan comes here to-night.
Lady Macbeth: And when goes hence?
Macbeth: To-morrow—as he purposes.

Macbeth started and caught his breath over those three words, for he had seen a strange look in his wife's face.

Lady Macbeth: O never
Shall sun that morrow see!
Your face, my thane, is as a book where men
May read strange matters.

Already she was persuading him that her own grim thoughts were his; that the "strange matters" were in his face, not hers. She assumed a lighter tone, bade him welcome the King with eye and hand and tongue—to look like the innocent flower and be the serpent under it—and he could perform a deed that night which would change and govern all their future days and nights. She little knew the dark truth that she was speaking.

Macbeth bowed his head. He was not strong enough to crush her plan. He put off decision, saying, "We will speak further."

During the pause that followed, the audience reflected that this scene had been well chosen for revealing the plot of the play and the characters of this man and this woman. She was stronger than he; she and the weird sisters together would conquer. But how?

The lights on the stage had been extinguished. Now they came out brighter than before and disclosed Macbeth sitting alone, speaking his thoughts aloud:

If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly.

The temptation was working. Fear of the life after death, and his conscience reminding him that Duncan was his guest whom, by every law of charity, he should protect from harm, were working against the temptation. Duncan, his conscience argued, was so good a king that his virtues would plead "like angels trumpet-tongued against the deep damnation of his taking-off." There was no right reason for such a deed.

Lady Macbeth came in upon his revery. The King, she told him, had asked for him—the kindly King who had shown him special favor. Macbeth declared with a show of firmness:

We will proceed no further in this business.

Then Lady Macbeth taunted him. She stung his pride by charging him with weakness and cowardice. Why had he ever planned this deed, she asked him—always making it appear that the suggestion had come from him—if he had not the courage to carry it out? Was he, a man, so much weaker than she, a woman? She pricked and goaded him, until he cried out upon her:

Prithee peace!
I dare do all that may become a man.
Who dares do more is none.

Then, very craftily, she turned this fine thought of his to her own ends:

When you durst do it, *then* you were a man.

Thus, flattering him for what he was and ridiculing his conscientious scruples, she worked upon his ambitious pride until he muttered, "If we should fail?"

She rose to her full height and answered boldly:

We fail.
But screw your courage to the sticking place
And we'll *not* fail.

She had won. His fear was no longer fixed upon the consequences of the crime but upon the chance of failure. And now she could unfold the details of her plot. His mind was in the clutch of that new fear, failure, and he was ready to listen. He was moved by her undaunted mettle. He lent himself to her clearer purpose and stronger will. Closing his eyes to the evil, he raised his head and declared, with something of her calm assurance:

I am settled.

It was no longer a crime to his poisoned mind but a feat to be accomplished. His wavering was at an end.

He had already proved himself twice a coward by fearing to be thought one. Henceforth, the evil spirits that had spoken to him on the heath and would speak again would have their way with him. He had surrendered.

The young actors did not attempt to carry the tragedy beyond this point. Here, indeed, is the great climax of the drama. What follows represents the fulfillment and the results of an act which is already accomplished when it is accomplished in Macbeth's mind. The horrors of the murder, the picture of Macbeth led on from crime to crime, of Lady Macbeth pursued by the furies of a guilty conscience, of Macduff entering the action to wreak the vengeance of outraged justice upon the murderer——this is but the result of the two scenes the children acted, and they wisely let the rest alone. In the silence that followed it was all present in the hearers' minds to enforce the words, which, in the voices of Alice and Barbara, had sounded the depths of the tragedy.

Screens were drawn out to hide the stage; and when, a few minutes later, they were folded back, the scene had shifted to ancient Rome. The rugs had been removed; the draperies hung straight and concealed the windows; the entire medieval setting had disappeared. Barbara's artificial palm trees, with a few flowering plants, a few statuettes, and a marble bench, created the atmosphere of a garden in the time of Julius Cæsar.

The boy Lucius was asleep. Peggy had allowed herself to be costumed for this silent part. In a short, blue tunic, her hair fastened up under a cap, her feet shod with sandals, a long spear in her hand, she sat cross-legged on the ground under a palm tree. Her spear had fallen across her knees, her hand rested against the tree trunk, her face was partially turned toward the audience, her eyes were closed.

The boy Lucius did not stir when Brutus, in his long white toga, entered and called: "Boy, Lucius!" nor while he said to himself, looking down at the boy:

> Fast asleep! It is no matter.
> Enjoy the heavy honey-dew of slumber.
> Thou hast no figures nor no fantasies
> Which busy care draws in the hearts of men;
> Therefore thou sleepst so sound.

The serene face of the sleeping child gave point to these words. They revealed, too, the gentle nature of Brutus and the burden on his mind. Then Portia entered, drawing her long purple robe about her shoulders; and the conversation that followed showed forth the character of this man and wife—so different from the two Macbeths!—and the overhanging tragedy.

Alice was Portia; Barbara was Brutus. Was it quite fair, according to their principle of distributing the parts, that Alice should be the woman in both plays? They had their reasons. For one thing, Alice had taken the chief part in "Macbeth"; she insisted that Barbara should have that honor in "Julius Cæsar." "Besides," she had said, "Brutus is one of your favorite characters. You detest Macbeth. You must be one person you like. If I am Cassius, I shall have one man's part. It is perfectly fair. And, anyway, I think you do men better and I do women better, and that is more important than anything else." And so it was settled.

It was true that Barbara was very partial to Brutus. She pitied him because he had been led by generous impulses—not like Macbeth by weak ambition—to perform an act which he despised. His "ancient Roman valour" made him a hero in her eyes—a victim of the wrongs of other men. When Cæsar cried, as the swords pierced him, "Et tu, Brute?" she understood him to mean, "And you, too, my noble friend—are *you* a part of this wicked plot against me?" That cry showed that Brutus was lovable as well as high-minded. He was a lonely figure, too. The real conspirators, who had misled him, could not understand his motive. He was lonely; and the blow he struck at Cæsar for the sake of justice failed utterly. And through it all, he spoke the most wonderful words! Barbara liked even his angry speeches, as when he said, "I'd rather be a dog and bay the moon than such a Roman." His gentle words to his wife and to his friends and to the boy, Lucius, —how they melted your heart! Barbara thought Hamlet spoke marvelous words, too, and she loved to read them. But she understood Brutus better. Perhaps he seemed most noble and most pitiable in this scene they were acting when he said to Portia:

> You are my dear and honourable wife,
> As dear to me as are the ruddy drops
> That visit my sad heart.

The boy Lucius slept undisturbed through the whole scene and in a moment of darkness at the end silently disappeared.

And now came Brutus and Cassius in the famous scene of their quarrel and reconciliation. It should have taken place in an army tent. But the children, thinking it might well have been outside the tent, merely removed the statuettes and let the trees and flowers represent the out-of-doors.

This scene, the children thought, was one of the greatest they had ever read. No love scene could compare with it in their opinion. And they made of it a most spirited quarrel and a most tender reconciliation. They deepened their girlish voices and put into the words all the vim and energy that seemed to them the natural manner of Roman generals. Barbara had the face of a madonna rather than of a Brutus! Yet there was a fine scorn in the curl of her lip and much haughtiness in her gesture when Brutus exclaimed:

I'll use you for my mirth, nay, for my laughter—

and great dignity in her manner, when he grew gentle, saying with a smile:

O Cassius, you are yokèd with a lamb.

As Barbara acted the part, there was great dignity, too, in his sadness, when his shoulders drooped and a far-away look came into his eyes and, with a world of meaning in his voice, he murmured something about his sorrows. And when Cassius, all sympathy now, wanted to know more, he seated himself on the bench, and, lifting his head and looking into space, his hands pressed against his knees, he said, in a voice that wrung the heart:

Portia is dead.

A great solemnity fell upon the audience. They had been amused at the way the sparks flew and the flame cooled up to this point. Now they felt only what the children felt. They were conscious only of Brutus and his lonely sorrow.

There was a pause. Alice and Barbara had wished that this pause might be filled by some low strains of music in the distance. It was not needed. A kind of inaudible music filled the air. While Brutus recounted the story of Portia's death, solemn harmonies seemed to linger in the background. Then, raising his head, with a quick gesture of determination, he turned to the affairs that were pressing for attention, saying:

> Speak no more of her. Give me a bowl of wine—

and the boy Lucius entered and poured out the wine in which they buried all unkindness.

In response to a request, the last number on their program was a repetition of the scene from "Romeo and Juliet."

How many times they had repeated it! They had rehearsed it more than anything else. And yet the words seemed more beautiful every time they spoke them. To-night, coming from the grim tragedy of Macbeth and the sorrows of Brutus, there seemed to be some strange enchantment in every syllable.

Romeo: Lady, by yonder blessed moon I swear
That tips with silver all these fruit tree tops,—

Juliet: O, swear not by the moon, th' inconstant moon
That monthly changes in her circled orb
Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.

Romeo: What shall I swear by?

Juliet: Do not swear at all;
Or, if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self
Which is the god of my idolatry,
And I'll believe thee.

. . . .

My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
My love as deep; the more I give to thee
The more I have, for both are infinite.

A rich color had come into Juliet's cheeks—the natural color of excitement. Now she turned away to answer the nurse's call, while Romeo stretched out his arms and folded them as if embracing the soft air, and exclaimed:

O blessèd, blessèd night! I am afeard,
Being in night, all this is but a dream
Too flattering sweet to be substantial.

With this dream of beauty and young love, the acting ended.

And now it was the actors' turn to receive a surprise. They were led into the dining room where a supper was spread out on the table. They sat down, Peggy between Alice and Barbara, and, while the others grouped themselves about, they feasted like true heroes on simple and delicious viands. Looking at the color in their cheeks, the spectators understood that there had been no "make-up" in the green room of this theatre.

Uncle Waldo proposed a toast to the young actors. "They have made the great poet live for us to-night," he said, as they all raised their glasses filled with an amber liquid that was also acting a part. But before they could drink Barbara had risen from her chair. She lifted her glass high above her head. Her hand trembled a little with excitement, but her voice was clear and her eyes sparkled as she said:

"Let's drink a health to Shakespeare."