

The Way to Fairy-Land.

What is the way to fairy-land? Which is the road to take? Over the hills, or over the sand? Where the river ripples break? The hills stand listening night and day As if to a wonderful tale; The river whispers along its way Secrets to every sail. They must be listening and whispering there With the fairy-folk, I know; For what but this is the sound in the air So sweet, and soft, and low?— The sound that floats o'er the misty hills, And runs with a little shiver, As of a thousand musical trills, Over the running river. O hills that stand so lofty there, Listening night and day, Listen to me and show me where The fairy-folk do stray! And river, river, whisper low, Whisper me low and sweet, Tell me the secret that you know Of the fairy-folk's retreat.

A MOTHER'S STORY.

I was bitterly discontented that morning, and there is no denying it, discontented with my home, my husband, with everything, even with my baby. I remember the morning well, it was gray and cloudy, with a heavy mist that chilled me to the bone, and hung the trees with a reeking moisture. The black mud about the door of our western home was thick and deep, and the bare floor of our cabin room was badly stained and soiled by the careless feet of the rough shod workmen. I had been cleaning up all the morning, but the more I cleaned the worse matters seemed to grow, and when a sudden puff of wind whirled the smoke and ashes down the pipe of my cooking stove, covering the books and table I had just cleaned off, I threw myself in the rocking chair and burst into a flood of tears.

The remembrance of the nice little cottage, with its low breezy windows, and its clean, well ordered rooms, adorned with all those charming useful little things, that go so far toward making a home pleasant and attractive—that was our home before the western fever seized us. It was my first home and a woman always loves that home better than any other. We were very happy, Ned and I, as cosy as two robins in a summer apple tree. Ned was a clerk, but with as good a salary as any clerk in the place, and when our baby came, "Little Sunbeam" as we called her, our happiness was indeed complete.

But after a while this new rapture began to cool, and as "Little Sunbeam's" blue eyes deepened and expanded, Ned began to cast about him in a sage and fatherly manner. "We must do the best we can for our darling's sake, Lucy."

He had caught the western fever. "Westward the star of empire makes its way," Ned quoted, with telling emphasis, adding, "We must follow, Lucy, and build up a name and a home for Little Sunbeam."

I assented, as I always did, to Ned's plans though in my secret heart I felt that the movement was a bad one.

We sold our pretty home and furniture, at a considerable sacrifice, Ned left his clerkship, and the winter after Little Sunbeam's birth found us in our western home.

Ned had urged me to bring a maid-of-all-work with me, but in a fit of high-strung heroism I determined to do the housework myself. Ned would have to sacrifice his ease and comfort, I would not be behind him.

It was comparatively light in the beginning, when there were only Ned and myself to provide for. But after a while the hired man came and the baby required more attention every day. The fall rains set in, converting the spongy soil into black adhearing mud. I worked late and early, and found it impossible to keep our rude home in anything like good order. I bore up as long as I could; but at last my strength utterly failed, and sitting down in the nearest chair I sobbed like a silly child. I thought of my old home, of the hours of pleasant leisure and social enjoyment to which I had been accustomed, and then, with a fresh burst of tears, I looked around the small untidy room in which I was imprisoned. It was wrong in Ned to bring me to such a place, and against my will, too, I thought bitterly, and a feeling of homesickness took possession of me, such weariness and loneliness as to make me wish I were dead.

At that moment I heard the voice of the sick hired man calling for water. Catching up the pitcher, I brushed away the tears and ran to the rude loft where he lay. As I reached the bed I saw by the sun it was almost noon, and dinner was to cook for Ned and the hired men. Giving the invalid his water, I paused a moment to mix a portion of the medicine for him. My thoughts full of smoking stove, and distasteful duties that awaited me below, and just then, shrill and clear, came Little Sunbeam's cry. I threw down the dose I was mixing, exclaiming angrily: "It's no use; I can't get along no matter how hard I try. What shall I do? Oh, dear! I wish I had no baby!"

My very finger-tips thrilled with terror the instant the terrible wish had passed my lips, and, cleaning the steps at one bound, I rushed to the corner of the room where the crib stood, eager to clasp her to my bosom and pour out my remorse in tearful kisses. The crib was empty—Little Sunbeam was gone. For a moment I stood dumb and almost senseless, then a swift thought came to my relief.

"Ned has stolen her to frighten me, I cried, and rushed out, I searched everywhere to find him, but in vain. The mist was thickening into rain, I knew well enough that he was too, careful of our darling to expose her in such a manner; but I clung to the belief that he had taken her, as I clung to my life.

There were fresh footprints in the black mud about the door leading out toward the wood-lot, where Ned and the men were at work. I followed them unmindful of the chill and driving rain, plunging ankle-deep into the yielding soil at every step. About half way I saw something in the path before me. It was a little red stocking! My heart leaped for joy. Ned had stolen her, and she had kicked it from her foot on the

way. It was cruel in him to frighten me so; he must have heard that silly wish of mine.

Half a mile from the house I met him and the men coming home to dinner. He started forward the moment he caught sight of me.

"Oh, Lucy, what's the matter? Is the baby sick?"

One glance at his white face convinced me that my hope was vain. Yet I cried out: "You've got the child, Ned, you know you have; don't torture me any longer!"

"Lucy, in the name of heaven, what do you mean?"

"She's gone! You stole her to frighten me, Ned."

"No; on my soul, Lucy!"

"Then she's gone. God has granted me my wish. Oh, my baby, my baby!"

I was rushing past him, but he caught and held me fast, commanding me to tell him all, and I did. And then his after words thrilled my soul with horror.

"The Indians! the Indians, boys!" he cried. "They passed us, you know. They must have stolen her. Come!"

They followed him without a word, and so did I. Over the spongy prairie mud, the chill wind and driving rain beating in our faces; down to the shore of the river we followed their tracks. But we were too late. The last canoe was moored on the opposite shore. My wish had been granted. I had no baby.

Little Sunbeam could not be found, although our efforts were ceaseless. Her crib remained in its corner, with the impress of her head still on its pillow, but the little laughing face was gone from us forever.

I had ample time to perform all my household duties then. No little quivering cry to detain me when I was busy, no clinking hands holding mine and keeping them idle. My wish was granted me—I had no baby.

Oh! the desolate, inconsolable sorrow of the lonely days that followed, no tongue can tell, the tender longing, the sharp, stringing remorse. But we lived and worked, for life and labor must go on, no matter how sore and weary our hearts may be. At the end of five years Ned was considered a well-to-do farmer. He could look out over broad fields of waving grain; he had been prosperous in raising stock; he had realized his most sanguine hopes. He had built up not only a home but a name, in this new country. We had a beautiful house and luxurious furniture, birds and flowers, fine pictures and books, nice horses and carriages, in fact all the possessions that go to make up a happy home, for Ned had fine taste. But we were childless. Little Sunbeam had never come back, and God had given us no other child to fill her place.

Poor Ned! That unforgotten sorrow, together with hard work, had made him an old man before his time. The silver threads were thick on his temple, and the furrows on his forehead deeply cut. When we went back to our old home the friends of his youth did not recognize him. His step once buoyant and elastic had the slow gait of an old man. His life had lost its impelling aim and motion. I was in hopes a visit to our old home in Ohio would help him, but in this I was disappointed, so with sad hearts we started on our journey to our western home, going a little out of our way to visit some friends who lived in Chicago and vicinity.

One night in the great city we were returning from the opera, when a child's voice startled us. "Please, sir," it said, "give me a penny to buy some bread." It was mid-winter, the pavements were glazed with ice, and the stars overhead glittered in the cold, blue sky like so many points of steel. I was dreaming of my home in the far west, and the friends of his youth did not recognize him. His step once buoyant and elastic had the slow gait of an old man. His life had lost its impelling aim and motion. I was in hopes a visit to our old home in Ohio would help him, but in this I was disappointed, so with sad hearts we started on our journey to our western home, going a little out of our way to visit some friends who lived in Chicago and vicinity.

One night in the great city we were returning from the opera, when a child's voice startled us. "Please, sir," it said, "give me a penny to buy some bread." It was mid-winter, the pavements were glazed with ice, and the stars overhead glittered in the cold, blue sky like so many points of steel. I was dreaming of my home in the far west, and the friends of his youth did not recognize him. His step once buoyant and elastic had the slow gait of an old man. His life had lost its impelling aim and motion. I was in hopes a visit to our old home in Ohio would help him, but in this I was disappointed, so with sad hearts we started on our journey to our western home, going a little out of our way to visit some friends who lived in Chicago and vicinity.

One night in the great city we were returning from the opera, when a child's voice startled us. "Please, sir," it said, "give me a penny to buy some bread." It was mid-winter, the pavements were glazed with ice, and the stars overhead glittered in the cold, blue sky like so many points of steel. I was dreaming of my home in the far west, and the friends of his youth did not recognize him. His step once buoyant and elastic had the slow gait of an old man. His life had lost its impelling aim and motion. I was in hopes a visit to our old home in Ohio would help him, but in this I was disappointed, so with sad hearts we started on our journey to our western home, going a little out of our way to visit some friends who lived in Chicago and vicinity.

One night in the great city we were returning from the opera, when a child's voice startled us. "Please, sir," it said, "give me a penny to buy some bread." It was mid-winter, the pavements were glazed with ice, and the stars overhead glittered in the cold, blue sky like so many points of steel. I was dreaming of my home in the far west, and the friends of his youth did not recognize him. His step once buoyant and elastic had the slow gait of an old man. His life had lost its impelling aim and motion. I was in hopes a visit to our old home in Ohio would help him, but in this I was disappointed, so with sad hearts we started on our journey to our western home, going a little out of our way to visit some friends who lived in Chicago and vicinity.

One night in the great city we were returning from the opera, when a child's voice startled us. "Please, sir," it said, "give me a penny to buy some bread." It was mid-winter, the pavements were glazed with ice, and the stars overhead glittered in the cold, blue sky like so many points of steel. I was dreaming of my home in the far west, and the friends of his youth did not recognize him. His step once buoyant and elastic had the slow gait of an old man. His life had lost its impelling aim and motion. I was in hopes a visit to our old home in Ohio would help him, but in this I was disappointed, so with sad hearts we started on our journey to our western home, going a little out of our way to visit some friends who lived in Chicago and vicinity.

One night in the great city we were returning from the opera, when a child's voice startled us. "Please, sir," it said, "give me a penny to buy some bread." It was mid-winter, the pavements were glazed with ice, and the stars overhead glittered in the cold, blue sky like so many points of steel. I was dreaming of my home in the far west, and the friends of his youth did not recognize him. His step once buoyant and elastic had the slow gait of an old man. His life had lost its impelling aim and motion. I was in hopes a visit to our old home in Ohio would help him, but in this I was disappointed, so with sad hearts we started on our journey to our western home, going a little out of our way to visit some friends who lived in Chicago and vicinity.

One night in the great city we were returning from the opera, when a child's voice startled us. "Please, sir," it said, "give me a penny to buy some bread." It was mid-winter, the pavements were glazed with ice, and the stars overhead glittered in the cold, blue sky like so many points of steel. I was dreaming of my home in the far west, and the friends of his youth did not recognize him. His step once buoyant and elastic had the slow gait of an old man. His life had lost its impelling aim and motion. I was in hopes a visit to our old home in Ohio would help him, but in this I was disappointed, so with sad hearts we started on our journey to our western home, going a little out of our way to visit some friends who lived in Chicago and vicinity.

One night in the great city we were returning from the opera, when a child's voice startled us. "Please, sir," it said, "give me a penny to buy some bread." It was mid-winter, the pavements were glazed with ice, and the stars overhead glittered in the cold, blue sky like so many points of steel. I was dreaming of my home in the far west, and the friends of his youth did not recognize him. His step once buoyant and elastic had the slow gait of an old man. His life had lost its impelling aim and motion. I was in hopes a visit to our old home in Ohio would help him, but in this I was disappointed, so with sad hearts we started on our journey to our western home, going a little out of our way to visit some friends who lived in Chicago and vicinity.

One night in the great city we were returning from the opera, when a child's voice startled us. "Please, sir," it said, "give me a penny to buy some bread." It was mid-winter, the pavements were glazed with ice, and the stars overhead glittered in the cold, blue sky like so many points of steel. I was dreaming of my home in the far west, and the friends of his youth did not recognize him. His step once buoyant and elastic had the slow gait of an old man. His life had lost its impelling aim and motion. I was in hopes a visit to our old home in Ohio would help him, but in this I was disappointed, so with sad hearts we started on our journey to our western home, going a little out of our way to visit some friends who lived in Chicago and vicinity.

One night in the great city we were returning from the opera, when a child's voice startled us. "Please, sir," it said, "give me a penny to buy some bread." It was mid-winter, the pavements were glazed with ice, and the stars overhead glittered in the cold, blue sky like so many points of steel. I was dreaming of my home in the far west, and the friends of his youth did not recognize him. His step once buoyant and elastic had the slow gait of an old man. His life had lost its impelling aim and motion. I was in hopes a visit to our old home in Ohio would help him, but in this I was disappointed, so with sad hearts we started on our journey to our western home, going a little out of our way to visit some friends who lived in Chicago and vicinity.

One night in the great city we were returning from the opera, when a child's voice startled us. "Please, sir," it said, "give me a penny to buy some bread." It was mid-winter, the pavements were glazed with ice, and the stars overhead glittered in the cold, blue sky like so many points of steel. I was dreaming of my home in the far west, and the friends of his youth did not recognize him. His step once buoyant and elastic had the slow gait of an old man. His life had lost its impelling aim and motion. I was in hopes a visit to our old home in Ohio would help him, but in this I was disappointed, so with sad hearts we started on our journey to our western home, going a little out of our way to visit some friends who lived in Chicago and vicinity.

One night in the great city we were returning from the opera, when a child's voice startled us. "Please, sir," it said, "give me a penny to buy some bread." It was mid-winter, the pavements were glazed with ice, and the stars overhead glittered in the cold, blue sky like so many points of steel. I was dreaming of my home in the far west, and the friends of his youth did not recognize him. His step once buoyant and elastic had the slow gait of an old man. His life had lost its impelling aim and motion. I was in hopes a visit to our old home in Ohio would help him, but in this I was disappointed, so with sad hearts we started on our journey to our western home, going a little out of our way to visit some friends who lived in Chicago and vicinity.

One night in the great city we were returning from the opera, when a child's voice startled us. "Please, sir," it said, "give me a penny to buy some bread." It was mid-winter, the pavements were glazed with ice, and the stars overhead glittered in the cold, blue sky like so many points of steel. I was dreaming of my home in the far west, and the friends of his youth did not recognize him. His step once buoyant and elastic had the slow gait of an old man. His life had lost its impelling aim and motion. I was in hopes a visit to our old home in Ohio would help him, but in this I was disappointed, so with sad hearts we started on our journey to our western home, going a little out of our way to visit some friends who lived in Chicago and vicinity.

One night in the great city we were returning from the opera, when a child's voice startled us. "Please, sir," it said, "give me a penny to buy some bread." It was mid-winter, the pavements were glazed with ice, and the stars overhead glittered in the cold, blue sky like so many points of steel. I was dreaming of my home in the far west, and the friends of his youth did not recognize him. His step once buoyant and elastic had the slow gait of an old man. His life had lost its impelling aim and motion. I was in hopes a visit to our old home in Ohio would help him, but in this I was disappointed, so with sad hearts we started on our journey to our western home, going a little out of our way to visit some friends who lived in Chicago and vicinity.

One night in the great city we were returning from the opera, when a child's voice startled us. "Please, sir," it said, "give me a penny to buy some bread." It was mid-winter, the pavements were glazed with ice, and the stars overhead glittered in the cold, blue sky like so many points of steel. I was dreaming of my home in the far west, and the friends of his youth did not recognize him. His step once buoyant and elastic had the slow gait of an old man. His life had lost its impelling aim and motion. I was in hopes a visit to our old home in Ohio would help him, but in this I was disappointed, so with sad hearts we started on our journey to our western home, going a little out of our way to visit some friends who lived in Chicago and vicinity.

One night in the great city we were returning from the opera, when a child's voice startled us. "Please, sir," it said, "give me a penny to buy some bread." It was mid-winter, the pavements were glazed with ice, and the stars overhead glittered in the cold, blue sky like so many points of steel. I was dreaming of my home in the far west, and the friends of his youth did not recognize him. His step once buoyant and elastic had the slow gait of an old man. His life had lost its impelling aim and motion. I was in hopes a visit to our old home in Ohio would help him, but in this I was disappointed, so with sad hearts we started on our journey to our western home, going a little out of our way to visit some friends who lived in Chicago and vicinity.

One night in the great city we were returning from the opera, when a child's voice startled us. "Please, sir," it said, "give me a penny to buy some bread." It was mid-winter, the pavements were glazed with ice, and the stars overhead glittered in the cold, blue sky like so many points of steel. I was dreaming of my home in the far west, and the friends of his youth did not recognize him. His step once buoyant and elastic had the slow gait of an old man. His life had lost its impelling aim and motion. I was in hopes a visit to our old home in Ohio would help him, but in this I was disappointed, so with sad hearts we started on our journey to our western home, going a little out of our way to visit some friends who lived in Chicago and vicinity.

One night in the great city we were returning from the opera, when a child's voice startled us. "Please, sir," it said, "give me a penny to buy some bread." It was mid-winter, the pavements were glazed with ice, and the stars overhead glittered in the cold, blue sky like so many points of steel. I was dreaming of my home in the far west, and the friends of his youth did not recognize him. His step once buoyant and elastic had the slow gait of an old man. His life had lost its impelling aim and motion. I was in hopes a visit to our old home in Ohio would help him, but in this I was disappointed, so with sad hearts we started on our journey to our western home, going a little out of our way to visit some friends who lived in Chicago and vicinity.

One night in the great city we were returning from the opera, when a child's voice startled us. "Please, sir," it said, "give me a penny to buy some bread." It was mid-winter, the pavements were glazed with ice, and the stars overhead glittered in the cold, blue sky like so many points of steel. I was dreaming of my home in the far west, and the friends of his youth did not recognize him. His step once buoyant and elastic had the slow gait of an old man. His life had lost its impelling aim and motion. I was in hopes a visit to our old home in Ohio would help him, but in this I was disappointed, so with sad hearts we started on our journey to our western home, going a little out of our way to visit some friends who lived in Chicago and vicinity.

One night in the great city we were returning from the opera, when a child's voice startled us. "Please, sir," it said, "give me a penny to buy some bread." It was mid-winter, the pavements were glazed with ice, and the stars overhead glittered in the cold, blue sky like so many points of steel. I was dreaming of my home in the far west, and the friends of his youth did not recognize him. His step once buoyant and elastic had the slow gait of an old man. His life had lost its impelling aim and motion. I was in hopes a visit to our old home in Ohio would help him, but in this I was disappointed, so with sad hearts we started on our journey to our western home, going a little out of our way to visit some friends who lived in Chicago and vicinity.

One night in the great city we were returning from the opera, when a child's voice startled us. "Please, sir," it said, "give me a penny to buy some bread." It was mid-winter, the pavements were glazed with ice, and the stars overhead glittered in the cold, blue sky like so many points of steel. I was dreaming of my home in the far west, and the friends of his youth did not recognize him. His step once buoyant and elastic had the slow gait of an old man. His life had lost its impelling aim and motion. I was in hopes a visit to our old home in Ohio would help him, but in this I was disappointed, so with sad hearts we started on our journey to our western home, going a little out of our way to visit some friends who lived in Chicago and vicinity.

One night in the great city we were returning from the opera, when a child's voice startled us. "Please, sir," it said, "give me a penny to buy some bread." It was mid-winter, the pavements were glazed with ice, and the stars overhead glittered in the cold, blue sky like so many points of steel. I was dreaming of my home in the far west, and the friends of his youth did not recognize him. His step once buoyant and elastic had the slow gait of an old man. His life had lost its impelling aim and motion. I was in hopes a visit to our old home in Ohio would help him, but in this I was disappointed, so with sad hearts we started on our journey to our western home, going a little out of our way to visit some friends who lived in Chicago and vicinity.

One night in the great city we were returning from the opera, when a child's voice startled us. "Please, sir," it said, "give me a penny to buy some bread." It was mid-winter, the pavements were glazed with ice, and the stars overhead glittered in the cold, blue sky like so many points of steel. I was dreaming of my home in the far west, and the friends of his youth did not recognize him. His step once buoyant and elastic had the slow gait of an old man. His life had lost its impelling aim and motion. I was in hopes a visit to our old home in Ohio would help him, but in this I was disappointed, so with sad hearts we started on our journey to our western home, going a little out of our way to visit some friends who lived in Chicago and vicinity.

One night in the great city we were returning from the opera, when a child's voice startled us. "Please, sir," it said, "give me a penny to buy some bread." It was mid-winter, the pavements were glazed with ice, and the stars overhead glittered in the cold, blue sky like so many points of steel. I was dreaming of my home in the far west, and the friends of his youth did not recognize him. His step once buoyant and elastic had the slow gait of an old man. His life had lost its impelling aim and motion. I was in hopes a visit to our old home in Ohio would help him, but in this I was disappointed, so with sad hearts we started on our journey to our western home, going a little out of our way to visit some friends who lived in Chicago and vicinity.

One night in the great city we were returning from the opera, when a child's voice startled us. "Please, sir," it said, "give me a penny to buy some bread." It was mid-winter, the pavements were glazed with ice, and the stars overhead glittered in the cold, blue sky like so many points of steel. I was dreaming of my home in the far west, and the friends of his youth did not recognize him. His step once buoyant and elastic had the slow gait of an old man. His life had lost its impelling aim and motion. I was in hopes a visit to our old home in Ohio would help him, but in this I was disappointed, so with sad hearts we started on our journey to our western home, going a little out of our way to visit some friends who lived in Chicago and vicinity.

One night in the great city we were returning from the opera, when a child's voice startled us. "Please, sir," it said, "give me a penny to buy some bread." It was mid-winter, the pavements were glazed with ice, and the stars overhead glittered in the cold, blue sky like so many points of steel. I was dreaming of my home in the far west, and the friends of his youth did not recognize him. His step once buoyant and elastic had the slow gait of an old man. His life had lost its impelling aim and motion. I was in hopes a visit to our old home in Ohio would help him, but in this I was disappointed, so with sad hearts we started on our journey to our western home, going a little out of our way to visit some friends who lived in Chicago and vicinity.

year or more. Couldn't you take her, madam?"

"Where are the clothes she had on?" asked Ned and I; in the same breath.

She gave each of us a keen, searching glance, and then pointed to the trunk. Ned lost no time in opening it.

There they were folded carefully, the dainty, embroidered slip, the tiny bib, and one crimson stocking. His mate lay in the bottom of my bureau drawer in my far western home.

"Oh, Ned," I cried, "it is Little Sunbeam!" but already he had her in his arms.

"God be praised! We've found her at last," was all he said.

Ned had grown young again, though his hair is still silvered. His cheeks are red, his eyes are bright, and his step as light as before we met with our great trouble. Sunbeam is full grown now, and there is no happier family in Kansas than ours.

Kind reader, I have told you a true story, hoping that if any of you feel that the burdens of life are more than you can bear, that your children are a burden and a hindrance to you, you will remember this poor stricken mother—how the memory of that wish rankled in her soul all through the weary years of search, of the joy and peace that came to them with the finding of their child. Remember that "God's ways are not our ways."

Two Festivals, And What Came of Them.

It was a festal day in that beautiful Italian town. Bells were ringing, the streets were carpeted with flowers and everywhere reigned gayety and mirth. One man, however, kneeling in the shadow of the cathedral, did not feel the spell of the occasion, nor did he lift his eyes as the gay concourse swept by. He was only a tanner named Sandro Ginotti, and all the love of his life was wrapped up in his children—his daughters Lina and Lassa.

He was praying for 'Lassa, now in the shadow of the church. One day when she was only sixteen an artist who had noticed her beauty asked to paint her, and from that day she became tired of her quiet life.

To cap the climax, in the midst of her discontent Carlo Guidi asked her to be his wife. He was a wood-carver and quick at his trade and they had plighted their love as children, but she sent him on his way with a merry goodbye.

The next morning Guidi was not at his work and by and by it was reported that he had been met far away in the valley, going along the road that takes one to Rome.

Sandro Ginotti, heard—no, he scarcely knew whether he had heard or not—for on the night before, when the sun set, and all the folks of the Contrada d'Oca were going to bed, 'Lassa was not to be found.

She had gone. But where? In comparison to the loss of one's child, what is the disappearance of a friend? Nothing at all, nothing at all. And Sandro Ginotti, with all his simple life and single-heartedness, had a horrible fear; had 'Lassa gone towards Florence?

The signor who had painted her as the rapturous saint had gone there—he had a studio there.

Days and weeks passed. Great folks might have known many ways of search, but what did Sandro or the country people about him know? 'Lassa would not come back," said the women, when Sandro's back was turned. When Lina's back was turned, too, for Lina had grown silent and proud, and no one would have dared to whisper or to give a sign which should suggest that unspoken evil concerning Lina's sister.

No; Lina minded the house, and tended her father and the children and sewed and cooked; but she moved about like a stern, proud woman, instead of the bright, simple girl she had been.

Then one day Lina shut her door and sat down to write a letter. There was a great misery all about her; the very fact of the door being shut, and no sweet sunlight being able to pour in upon her, made her feel worse. Was not life always an out-of-door life?

Now a thing had come to her which banished the old life altogether. She had waited, but no news had come, and one way she saw by which tidings of some sort might be found.

There was an aunt, her mother's sister, who lived at Signa, a village just before one comes to Florence. Lina would write to her and would tell the tale and ask her if 'Lassa had gone to her.

Well, the letter went and an answer came on the night before the festa. 'Lassa had come—she had walked all the way—she said she had come to find work in Florence.

So much for the news. And on the lovely festa Sandro had been praying since sunrise. He heeded not the festa, and no bells ringing, he only went into the big cathedral as soon as the doors were open, and he would stay there till the late summer night fell. He would pray and pray—surely Madonna would help! he would give her no peace, he would pray until the church should be shut up for the night, until he must sleep to gain strength for his work. Lina might think of what should be done.

People may say that a man works and a woman prays. Maybe. Here is the exception that proves the rule.

The night fell, and the hill-city was ablaze with the glory of the illumination; the bands blared away in the hollow of the great piazza; the people danced and sang, and the grim old palace looked glorious again and festive, as in the olden time it might have done, over some rejoicing of conquest over the Florentines. For Florence and this hill-city had in those days been always fighting with each other.

The sun of the next day rose. How cool and fresh was the air, how pure and radiant was the morning's flush! Sandro stood lingering at his threshold; his home was going to be desolate, and yet his heart was elate. Why? and Madonna heard his prayers!

He thought so, but before he could frame any words of thankfulness, Lina, grave and silent, was by his side. She had her best clothes on, her brown checked dress, and she was tying round

her throat her new orange silk kerchief. By and by as the sun rose she would take it from her neck and would tie it over her head; now the pale young man was light, and not scorching as he would be long before mid-day.

Where would she be at mid-day? She did not know, she did not think. She gathered up a small bundle from the dim room, and with a quick change of manner—a change that for the moment made her like her gay young sister—she cried:

"Avanti! avanti mio!" Then she linked her brown hand in his, and with a quick, firm step she was out in the cool, dim street.

People were moving; the air was full of the pungent smell of the tanneries; there was the chirp of waking birds and the splash of the near-by fountain of Fontebranda. Lina hurried her father along. She, too, was going away—going to walk to Florence to seek 'Lassa.

Landro walked silently by her side for half an hour, then he turned abruptly from her and went back to his work. He pulled his old hat over his eyes, he would not watch Lina out of sight.

People talked for a while, but soon their own affairs steadied their tongues, and they gave up Ginotti and his. One and another neighbor helped him with the children, and he got on.

The next thing was that Carlo Guidi came back; he had gone away in a passion, but the passion had cooled, and he turned his face toward his beloved hill-city. He would not trouble about 'Lassa Ginotti, he would devote himself to his art; he would make himself a second Barili, whose wood-carving is so famous; he would—

He came back and found no 'Lassa, no Lina, all the glad house desolate. All his anger changed to grief. The truth of the matter was that gay, wild 'Lassa was the light of his eyes, nay, the very soul of his soul. And he did no work at all.

A letter came at last from Lina. She was with her aunt; 'Lassa was there too, but 'Lassa had been impetuous and angry, and had declared she would not be taken home. She knew she had been wrong, but she fought for her unwise independence; she said she would earn her living as a servant in Florence. Much she knew of things! She fell ill, and Lina had to give up every other thought except that of doing all in her power to keep her wilful young sister from slipping out of her hands altogether. There was nothing to do but to wait.

"To wait!" An easy word to say, a very hard word to act out.

One more letter. 'Lassa was rid of the fever, but she was weak. But, the holy Madonna be praised! she was, as one might say, in her right mind, and when she could she would come home.

Again the old hill city is in festa. Not this time a festa of the nation or of the church, but just a local affair altogether. For how many years and ages have the grand games of the Palio been held in the great piazza! This year they are grander than ever, for royal princes and princesses are there, and the rooms that for so long have only been tenanted by grave lawyers or doughty soldiers are beautiful now for the first lady of Italy.

The flower of the youth of the hill-city play in these sports. Honest and true lives and many and stalwart frames, these are the possessions needed for one's credentials. Among the first of these "mighty men" is Carlo Guidi. Who so tall and straight and strong as he? who has so quick an eye? who so ready a hand?

The sun is hotter and hotter, but who cares? Every house is decorated; banners, red, white and green, float from campanile and house-top, from every available point; every window has its crimson or blue or yellow cloth hung out, the place is a very kaleidoscope of color; the women's dresses and the masses of flowers pale under the flying pennons overhead.

Shouting and running, music of bands and the shrill call of the trumpets fill the air.

How thronged the piazza! Not a space for one more head! Is that the queen in the balcony by the old loggia?—is that?—is that?

Don't talk; the race is over—the trumpets are letting every one know that, and Carlo Guidi is the winner.

They are just in time; they have just come into the city, and Sandro, her father, has met them. How he drags and pushes; how the people make a space for them! Such a good-humored crowd an Italian crowd is.

Lina and 'Lassa Ginotti look out and see it all. There is Carlo Guidi doffing his hat; his dark curly head is bowing down, down to the very saddle as he rides past the royal princes