

# FOR EVERY BOY AND GIRL

## A Timely Restoration.

AN EPISODE IN VENICE.

By Mary G. Foster.

It was half-past ten in the morning of a glorious Fourth of July in Venice—glorious with radiant sunshine, blue sky, and shimmering waters. There was no display of flags and bunting, no sound of fire-crackers, nothing that makes the day noticeable in America, and Dorothy Stoneman, of Chicago, aged eleven, walking beside her father that bright morning, never once thought what day it was.

They had arrived in Venice early, after traveling all night, and Mrs. Stoneman, suffering with a headache, having sought the quiet of her room, it chanced that Dorothy and her father started for a few hours' sight-seeing by themselves.

At home Dorothy had prided herself upon being one of the most patriotic girls in the country. Just before the Fourth she had always made out a list of fireworks for her father to bring her—what she considered necessary for the proper celebration of the day. Having no brothers, Elmer Dewey, who lived next door, used to come over and assist both in selecting the fireworks and in celebrating with them. He had given her a small flag when they said good-by, and she had promised to carry it all day and to think of him on the Fourth of July, wherever she might be.

This had been only three months ago. But when going from place to place in a foreign country it is not always an easy matter even to keep trace of what day of the week it is; and there being no preparations going on, as there are in America, to remind them of the approach of the Fourth, it slipped into place like any ordinary day, and no one recognized it.

A short walk brought Dorothy and her father to the front of a great church, before a recess, high up over the entrance of which stood four bronze horses, and Mr. Stoneman, taking a book from his pocket, came to a standstill.

It was doubtless all well worth looking at, but soon an object caught Dorothy's eye that was of much greater interest to her than churches or bronze horses. A little girl of about her own age was crossing the square toward where they were standing. She was bareheaded, and her small face was full of winning gentleness. She was all brown,—hair, eyes and complexion varying in shade from chocolate to cream,—and her frock looked as if it had faded for the purpose of blending with the tints of the wearer. Across one shoulder she carried a sort of wooden yoke, something like an Indian bow, from each end of which was suspended a small copper bucket filled with water.

Mr. Stoneman was gazing upward, absorbed in contemplation of the bronze horses, and the girl observing his attitude and apparent interest stopped, slipped the yoke from her shoulder, and placing the buckets upon the ground, came close beside him and looked up in the same direction with frowning curiosity.

It may have been that she thought something was about to take place with those horses, or perhaps she could not understand why the tall stranger was gazing at them. Whatever it was, after a short scrutiny she turned away, and in doing so came face to face with Dorothy.

The little girls looked at each other, and then both smiled at once, one in English and the other in Italian, but it needed no interpreter to make either understand.

Dorothy put out her hand and caressingly touched the somewhat soiled one of her companion, and the smiling continued. All at once, as if some recollection had come to her, the small brown water-carrier turned to where her buckets were standing, and raising the yoke to her shoulder,—with a backward glance showing her face still illuminated,—trotted away and disappeared round an adjacent corner.

Mr. Stoneman being still absorbed in the study of the front of the church, Dorothy walked to the corner, a moment later, to see if her new acquaintance was still in sight.

Yes, there she was stopping at an open door; and Dorothy ran down the narrow street to exchange smiles with her once more. The little brown maiden put down her buckets, and the children drew near and looked into each other's face again. There was a gulf as wide as the world between them, but the living instinct of childish sympathy spun its invisible thread from heart to heart.

An untidy woman, and a little tot who evidently had fancied a morning walk before being washed, stopped in passing to gaze at the unusual sight of the little American in their neighborhood. Half a dozen boys and girls of assorted sizes joined them, and before Dorothy was aware she was the center of a curious group.

It suddenly occurred to her that she was out of her father's sight and had better return. Edging her way out between the spectators, she tripped back to the corner. It looked like the same corner she had turned a few minutes before, but before going many steps beyond it she discovered that she had made a mistake. There was nothing in sight that she remembered. Retracing her steps, she tried again; but instead of coming to the church where she had left her father, she found herself at the end of a street where a short flight of stone steps led down to a canal.

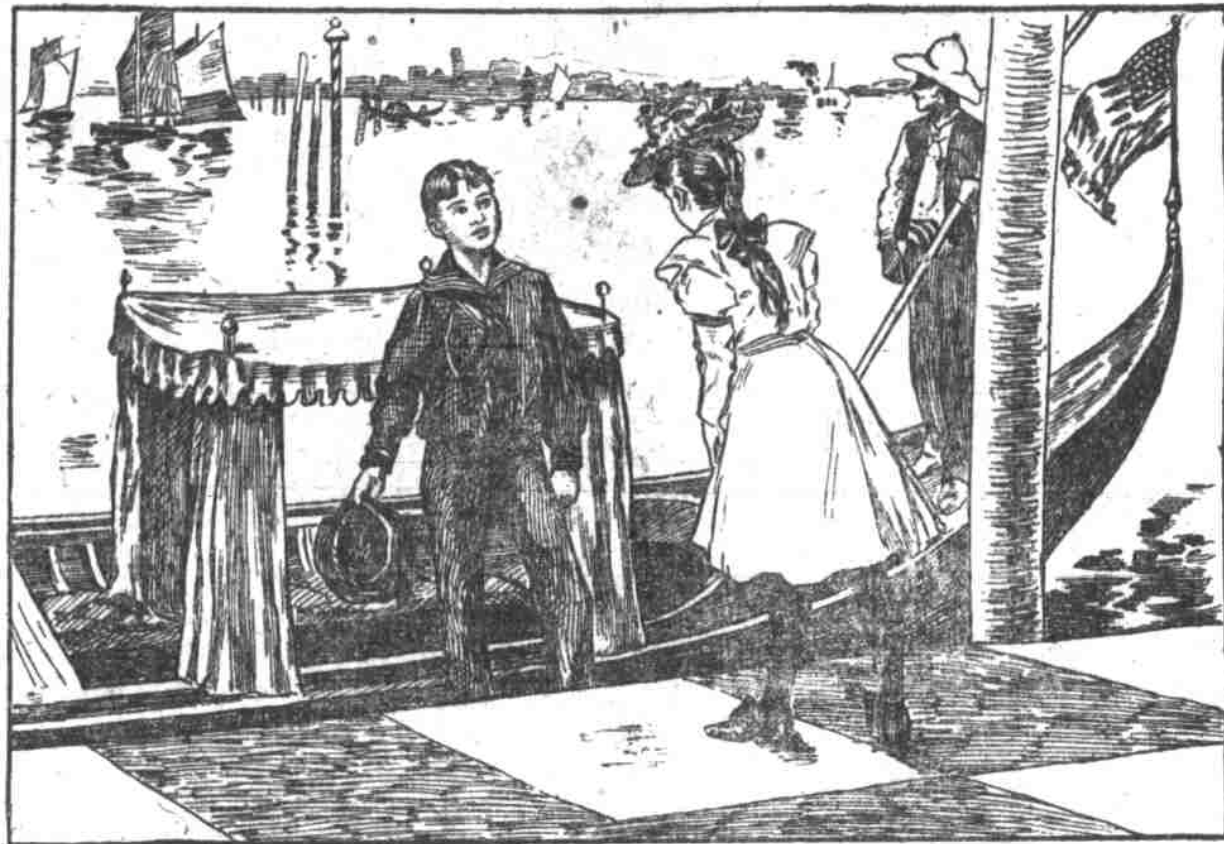
It came to Dorothy with a sudden thrill—a thrill that went from her heart out to the ends of her fingers and toes and back again—that she was lost! Her father had repeatedly warned her not to wander from his sight. She vividly remembered the warning now.

She was too frightened to cry. Round the corner and up another narrow street she ran, over a bridge that seemed to her excited senses to be stretched across the canal by magic at her approach.

At the next corner she paused for breath. Dark, strange faces were passing to and fro, but their glances, though not unfriendly, only added to her alarm. She was about to start again, in another di-

rection, when her heart gave a bound of joy. Suddenly, as though she had come up out of the stones of the street, the little brown water-carrier stood before her!

Dorothy had known in her life what it was to be glad, but never before had she felt the gladness of that moment. Before the smile of the brown maiden had widened sufficiently to show half her white teeth, Dorothy's arms were clasped about her, and in the great universal language of tears she made known her trouble. Several passers-by stopped, and there was much talking and gesticulating, as if all were offering advice,—which doubtless was the case,—and then the Venetian



AN INSTANT LATER THE BOY, CAP IN HAND, WAS STANDING BESIDE HER.

girl took Dorothy by the hand, and with an understanding between them as perfect as if it had been expressed in words, they left the chattering group and tripped back on the quaint old street.

Over a bridge or two, and then a few yards beside a canal,—it was but a very short distance, although Dorothy seemed to have gone miles,—when a sudden turn brought them into the square where the great church stood. The bronze horses looked quite like familiar friends to Dorothy, who, dropping her companion's hand, ran to the place where she had left her father.

There were a number of people moving about the square, but Mr. Stoneman was nowhere to be seen. Dorothy looked in every direction, and then the tears returned and again flooded her blue eyes.

The little Venetian undoubtedly understood the situation, for she took Dorothy's hand once more, and pointing in an opposite direction, murmured some unintelligible words, and Dorothy, drying her tears, went willingly with her in the direction indicated.

A few minutes' walk brought them to the side of the square, where a broad flight of steps led down to the water, and a row of long, slender black boats, or gondolas, were moored.

They paused at the top, and the little brown girl looked up and down among the boatmen lying idly about. Very likely she was looking for some gondolier who was known to understand English. Dorothy's glances also were wandering about, and all at once they fell on something that set her heart beating again in the most violent manner.

There, on the shining blue-green waters before her, was a gondola silently gliding toward the place where they were standing. The only occupant beside the Italian who stood up propping it was a boy somewhat older than herself, wearing a sailor-cap and blouse.

But it was neither the fine gondola nor its occupants that caused the commotion under Dorothy's bodice. It was the fond, familiar sight of an American flag which she saw flying at the stern of the boat! Never before, though she loved them well, had the Stars and Stripes appeared half so dear and beautiful to her.

With a cry of welcome that startled the idlers about the landing, she ran down the stone steps, and reached the water's edge just at the moment that the graceful gondola came alongside.

An instant later the boy, cap in hand, was standing beside her. He was a head taller than she, with the friendliest gray eyes imaginable, and hair that looked bronze in the sunshine.

Dorothy saw that he was almost as distinctly American as the flag. Eagerly, as if she feared he might escape before she could make known her need, she burst out, in a tone the genuine distress of which there was no mistaking:

"Oh, excuse me, but you are an American, are n't you? and won't you please help me to find my father? I've lost him, and don't know my way or—anything." The tears were coming again.

"Don't—don't cry," said the boy, replacing his cap with one hand. "You'll soon find your father." And then, by way of further consolation, he added: "One can't get lost for very long in Venice."

Dorothy held an entirely different opinion, but she did not contradict him. She brokenly told him of the morning's experience, not forgetting the part the little brown girl (who had drawn near and was watching them with deep interest) had played.

"Do you remember the name of the hotel where you are staying?" he asked, as she paused to tuck away her handkerchief somewhere beneath the folds of her frock.

"The Grand Hotel," answered Dorothy, her face lighting up. "Papa said it had quite a homelike sound."

The boy's eyes looked friendlier than ever as he said:

"I don't know your name yet." "Oh," exclaimed Dorothy, "I forgot we were strangers!" Then they both laughed and the little Venetian, being within the influence, smiled.

"I'm Dorothy Stoneman," she continued, "and we live in Chicago. And, oh, I'd like so much to find out her name!"—indicating the little brown girl. "She has been so good to me!"

"That's easy to find out," replied the boy. And, to Dorothy's surprise, he addressed the little Venetian in her own tongue.

"Her name is Bettina," he announced a moment later. "Please tell her how much I thank her," said Dorothy, "and that I want her to stay with me till I find my father, and he'll give her some money."

This was duly interpreted; and the brown face beamed.

"Now," said the young knight, "I'll take you to the hotel. Your father would very likely go back there first, I believe, for a guide."

He spoke a few words in Italian to the man who had remained standing in the gondola, an apparently interested spectator throughout the interview. Silently the boat was turned about and brought to a standstill at the steps. Dorothy was gallantly assisted to a seat. Bettina stepped lightly in without help. Then the boy seated himself, facing Dorothy, and the gondola glided out on the smooth, bright water.

It was like a scene out of a story-book, and in the pleasant novelty of the situation Dorothy forgot her troubles.

Before the hotel came in sight she and her new acquaintance were on terms of friendship that under ordinary circumstances it would have taken weeks to reach. In the exchange of confidences she learned that her companion's name was Paul Mathews, that he and his parents had been living in Venice a year, and that their home was in Boston, where they expected to return in the autumn, to which time he was longingly looking forward.

The marble front of the hotel was soon pointed out, and, as they drew near, Dorothy recognized among several figures on the porch the form of her father. Some one in the group called his attention to the approaching gondola, and then there was a waving of hands and the sound of voices exchanging happy greetings across the canal, and a few minutes later the little party alighted at the steps.

Mr. Stoneman's face still wore an anxious look. He had been just about setting out with a guide to search for Dorothy.

Introductions and explanations followed, and Bettina's eyes sparkled at sight of the silver coins that Dorothy's father placed in her little brown palm.

To Paul he gave his warmest thanks, with many a hearty handshake.

"After this I shall be prouder than ever of Young America," added Mr. Stoneman, putting his arm about Paul's shoulders. "There are no boys in the world like those of my own country."

"It was the flag I noticed first," cried Dorothy. "If it had not been for that I might not have seen Paul. How lovely it is—looking at him admiringly—to think you always carry our flag on your gondola!"

"But I don't—always," replied Paul, honestly; "only on American holidays. Of course we celebrate the glorious Fourth, and this being the Fourth of July—"

"Oh, no," gasped Dorothy, interrupting; "it can't be!"

It had fallen like a bolt from a clear sky. A vision of Chicago, and Elmer Dewey, and the flag that had been lying folded in the bottom of the trunk for three months, came before her.

"Papa, papa!" she cried reproachfully, "how could we forget it?"

Mr. Stoneman stared blankly, and Bettina's eyes grew grave with wondering what all the excitement was about.

"There's plenty of time yet to celebrate," ventured Paul, who had not fully grasped the situation.

"You don't understand," sorrowfully replied Dorothy. And then she told him about her playmate at home, and of his parting gift, which she had promised to display on Independence Day, wherever she might happen to be.

"I'll be so ashamed, to tell him that I forgot it was the Fourth until almost noon," she concluded, with a deep sigh. The thought of the offense against patriotism was overwhelming.

"It can't be helped," said Mr. Stoneman, in a sympathizing voice. "We must get the flag out now, and make the best of a bad matter."

Paul had taken out his watch and was intently looking at it; then for the second time that morning he came to Dorothy's rescue. This time he brought an inspiration instead of a gondola, but it served her need just as well.

"We've all forgotten about the difference of time," he said, his gray eyes dark in their earnestness. "It's not quite five o'clock in the morning in Chicago now. The people there are just waking up."

The sunshine broke out on Dorothy's face and her feet began to dance. She grasped Bettina by her disengaged hand, and in an ecstasy of delight cried out:

"Get the flag, quick, papa! Just think of it; Elmer's not up yet, the day is n't begun, and we have n't lost the Fourth of July, after all!"

Copyright by The Century Company

flags of foreign countries, among which the Stars and Stripes are not lacking.

But it is on a moonlight night that Venice is most beautiful. Then the lights along the quay adjoining the Doge's Palace show throngs of laughing people; the ancient mansions that line the Grand Canal seem to be gazing calmly down at their broken reflections in the dark waters, and the moon rides high in the heavens above the white dome of the church of "Our Lady of Salvation." Suddenly the soft strains of sweet music fill the air. They come from a large boat, all aglow with gay colors and lanterns. It floats along the center of the Grand Canal. The crowd on the quay ceases chattering and laughing for an instant, the balconies of the hotels fill with eager listeners, and the fleet gondolas which have been darting about in the moonlight cluster quickly around the boat, where a boy is singing to the accompaniment of two or three stringed instruments.

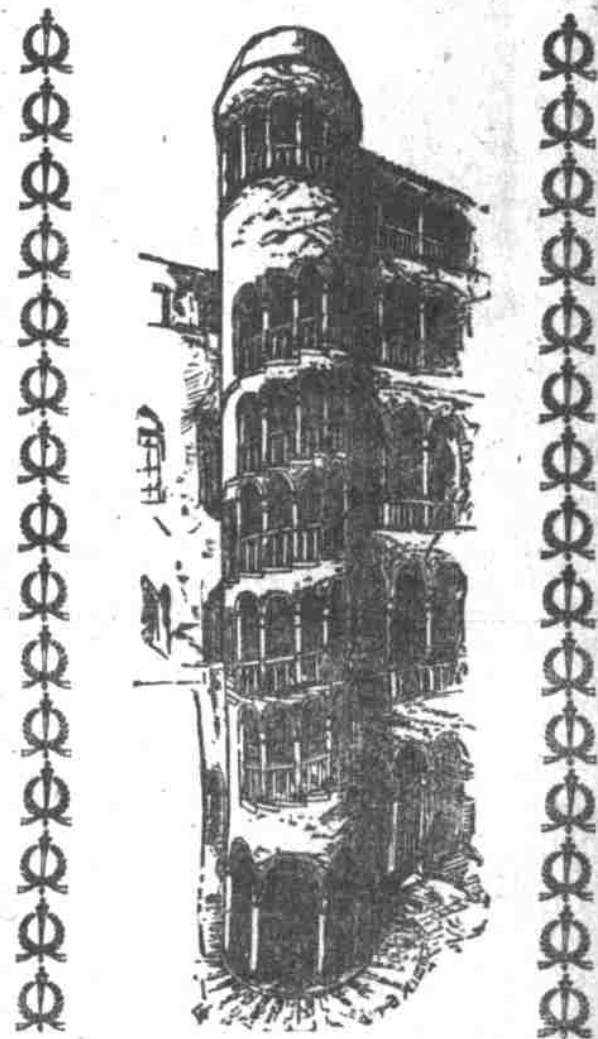
The young Venetian's beautiful voice rises clear and strong on the still night air as he sings an Italian love-song. To many of his hearers his words are without meaning, but the language of music is universal; a singer needs no interpreter; so the stranger, as he



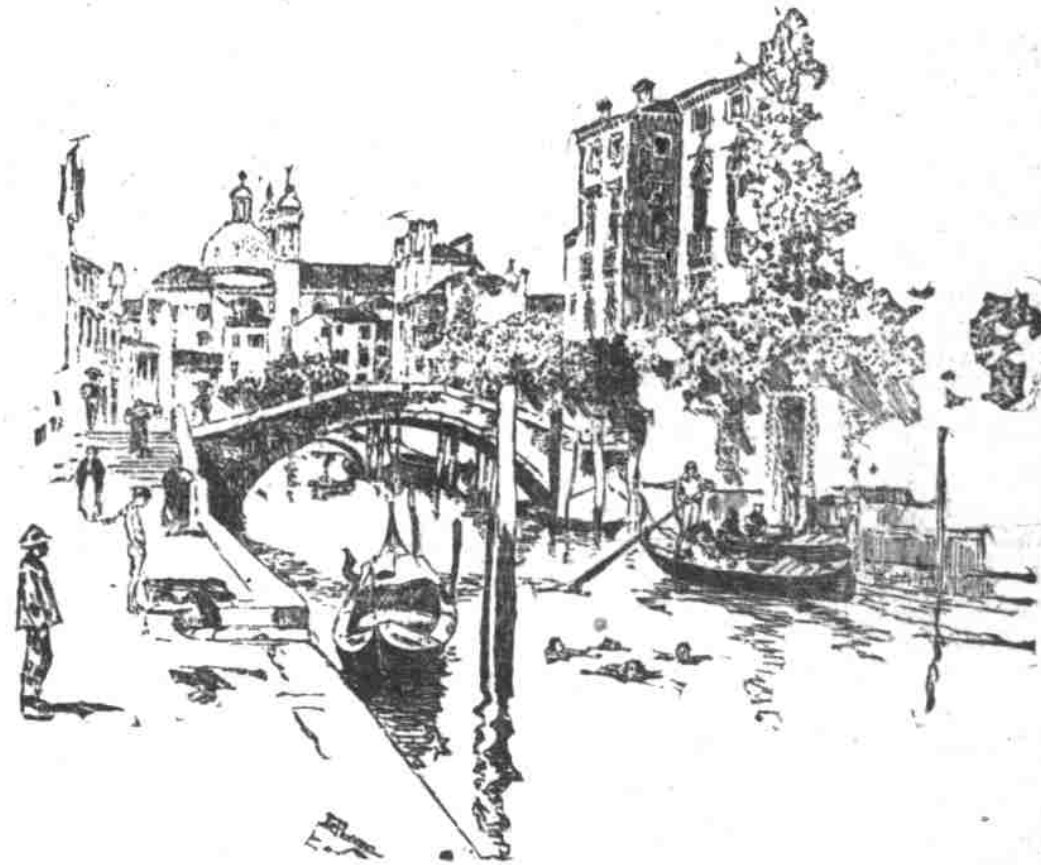
By JOHN MOTT.

You all have heard of Venice, that curious city on the Adriatic Sea where the streets are canals and the men go from place to place in gondolas instead of in carriages. Long ago Venice was one of the wealthiest cities in the world; its great fleets brought home the merchandise of the East, jewels and silks and spices; its merchant princes built those beautiful palaces which stand to-day beside the Grand Canal, most of them sadly in need of repair, it is true, but majestic still, though the plaster is falling from their weather-beaten walls. Perhaps Venice is even more beautiful now in its decay than it was in the days of its greatest glory, for age has a beauty of its own, softer and more delicate than that of youth. The bright colors which once shone with dazzling brilliancy under the Italian sky are now subdued and mellowed like those of an old tapestry. So, though wealth and commerce are deserting the city in the sea, its loveliness increases from year to year and attracts to it thousands of visitors

V  
E  
N  
I  
C  
E



AN ANTIQUE STAIRWAY IN A PRIVATE PALACE



A CANAL IN VENICE

from all parts of the earth: from Germany and England and America, and even from far-away China and Japan. These visitors come in the greatest numbers in the early springtime, for then the weather is best; the days are clear and fine, and the bright southern sun makes Italy warm and delightful when people in more northern countries are still shivering with the cold. So during the pleasant spring days the old square of San Marco, the Public Gardens, and the bathing beach at the Lido are crowded with strangers, while the graceful black gondolas which dart through the narrow canals are nearly all decorated with the

leans back on the cushioned seat of his gondola, understands as well as the natives. All discordant sounds are hushed; only a faint murmur from the people on the quay, the soft rubbing of one gunwale against another as the gondolas struggle closely together, and the lapping of the ripples mingle with the singing to make it different from any that the listener has heard elsewhere. But ever afterward, when the music of that song flashes through his memory, as music has a way of doing, he will see again the moonlight and the dark canal, the somber old palaces and the gleaming lights along the quay.

