

CARMIO

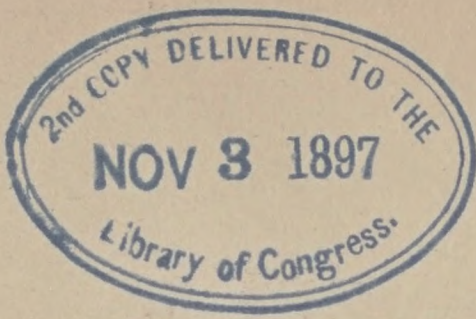
THE LITTLE
MEXICAN INDIAN
CAPTIVE



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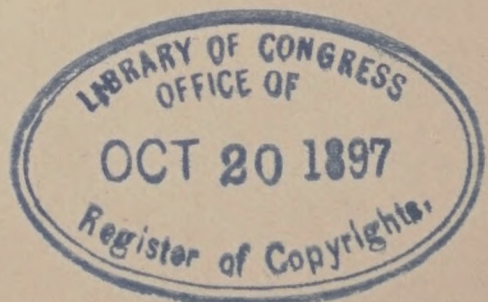
THE LITTLE MEXICAN-INDIAN CAPTIVE

mailed
BY
MISS A. M. BARNES
" "



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I

CAPTURED

CARMIO

CAPTURED



YEARS ago the Indians of the Western plains, those that we now know as the Apaches, Comanches, and Kiowas, used to make raids into Texas and Mexico. They would burn houses, kill people, drive off cattle, and very often carry women and children into captivity.

At this time there was living near one of the towns in northeast Mexico a little boy nine years old, named Carmio. His father was dead, but he had a good, kind mother, and a pleasant home. He was quite a handsome little fellow, with brown

skin, dark eyes, and crisp curls of black hair all about his forehead.

Now there was one thing Carmio did not like to do. He did not mind telling of it himself. It was that he did not like to go to school. Over in the town, a mile and a half away, there was a young priest who kept a school, for Mexico was then, as it is now, a Roman Catholic country. Every morning Carmio's mother, after fixing his books and a little lunch in his basket, went with him through the gate and for some way down the road. This she did to encourage him and to make him go more cheerfully to school. She would then kiss him, and say:

“Adios, Carmio mio (Good-bye, my Carmio). Be a good boy; study the books; and mind the priest.”

Carmio would return the kiss, but he would make no effort to go forward. Indeed he would stand and gaze after his mother until she was out of sight. Then

he would creep along the road to school as though he had iron weights to his "guaraches" (sandals).

How Carmio loved to see vacation come. Then he could go fishing, and to help the men gather the fibres of the maguey (century plant) to make baskets. Sometimes too, when they burnt the charcoal, his mother would let him camp out with them.

Early in one of Carmio's vacations they were made glad by a visit from his eldest brother, Jacinto. He lived about thirty miles off, away up among the mountains, and he had a great sheep ranch.

"How has Carmio been doing the last term at school?" asked Jacinto.

Carmio watched his mother's face anxiously. He was sure something was coming. It always did when his brother looked like that. How would his mother answer? Oh, he did hope she would be easy on him. He did wish now that he

had studied better and had not shown so plainly that he did not like the school. His mother hesitated.

“Well, he did a little better toward the last of the term.”

“I think Carmio would rather be a ranchman than a scholar,” said Jacinto smiling.

“That I would,” said Carmio with candor. “The books make me go to sleep, they are so dull and stupid.”

“Oh, yes, so it seems,” replied his brother. “Very well, go to sleep now. I have something to say to the *madrecita* (little mother).”

But Carmio did not obey. Indeed, he kept his eyes wider open than ever, and his ears with them, for he knew it was something about himself his brother was going to say, and he knew Jacinto was only teasing.

“Well,” said Jacinto, “now that Carmio has gone to sleep, I want to say to thee, *madrecita*, that I think it would

be a fine plan to let him come this vacation and help me with the lambs. In this way he can earn enough to buy the clothes he will need for the next term."

"But he is so small," objected the mother. "I don't think he could do much minding the lambs."

"Oh, boys as small as he are even minding sheep. There is not much to do, only to keep the lambs where they can get the tenderest pickings, and to see that no dogs are about."

"Oh, mother, do let me go!" cried Carmio.

"What! Carmio awake?" said his brother, pretending to be surprised. "Why, I thought he was asleep."

"But I am afraid of the Indians," said their mother again. "I hear they have been making raids up that way lately, and doing many terrible things."

"They will not come within range of my ranch," replied Jacinto with confidence. "They know better. It is too

well guarded, and I have guns. Besides Carmio will not go out of sight of the ranch. I will impress it upon him that he must not."

So it was settled that Carmio should go. The next morning, after kissing his mother and promising to be a good boy, and to keep a sharp lookout for the Indians, he rode away beside his brother on his little pony, his clothes in a roll strapped behind him, one of the happiest, if not the happiest, boy in all Mexico.

For a day or so Carmio roamed about the ranch with his brother, "getting his eyes on things," as the latter called it. Then he went regularly to work minding the lambs.

At first Carmio kept in mind the promise to his mother and the cautions of his brother, and was very careful. He kept within sight of the ranch, and always he was on the lookout for Indians. But after a while he grew careless. The little lambs were quite frisky. Some-

times they would go romping on and on, stopping every now and then to nibble at the tender blades. For a while Carmio drove them back, but soon he stopped doing this and would follow them, feeling a childish delight in their gambols. He liked the free and joyous life, the open air, the blue sky, and the beautiful hills and mountains on which the lights seemed to fall and flash as though they were covered with myriads of jewels. Oh, how beautiful are the Mexican mountains!

Carmio had made friends with a boy from the next ranch. The name of this boy was Hermando. He was two years older than Carmio, and rather more willful and daring. It was he who proposed to Carmio that they go some little distance beyond his brother's ranch to a nice grazing place he knew, the very best in all the country, he said. At first Carmio would not.

“I promised my mother I would be

careful," he said. "She begged me to watch out for the Comanches."

"Oh, the Comanches!" said Hermando loftily. "Why they haven't been just here at all. Don't you know they are afraid to come? Your brother keeps guns. Besides, aren't we men enough to take care of ourselves?"

Thus Carmio was led to go with the lambs to the new grazing ground, though he felt he ought not to go. It was such a beautiful place, a valley shut in by the hills, like a jewel in a box, and all about the grass was tender and green. There were piles of rocks heaped here and there, and under the shadow of these Carmio used to lie, when not talking to Hermando, and dream of the time when he too would be a man, and have a great ranch with horses and cows and sheep, and ever so many more fine things. He too would keep guns, and he would fight the Comanches. Oh, yes, he would certainly fight the Comanches.

He was lying thus one day when he was startled by a piercing cry from Hermando:

“Los Comanchys! los Comanchys! á Dios! á Dios! (The Comanches! the Comanches! O God! O God!)”

Carmio sprang to his feet and stood up among the rocks. It was only too true; there were the terrible Comanches, twelve of them, mounted on their ponies, and in all their horrible war paint, and with feathers stuck in their hair. Carmio forgot all the bravery of which he had been dreaming the moment before. Poor little fellow! Such a sight was enough to cause the stoutest heart to quail. He tried to crouch down again so as to crawl farther in among the rocks and thus conceal himself. But it was too late. He had been seen, and with a shout they spurred their ponies toward him. Two of them jumped off, came toward the rocks, and reaching down dragged him out. Then they placed him on his feet close beside Her-

mando, at the same time giving both to understand what would be done if they cried out or made other noise.

The Indians were all on ponies, and besides had several they were leading, some they had stolen no doubt. They lifted Hermando to put him upon one of these ponies. The thought of being thus dragged away from home was so terrible that, in spite of the warning of the Indians, he began to kick and scream.

“Kish! kish! (Steady! steady!)” said the Indian sternly, his eyes flashing, and pointing as he spoke toward the knife in his belt.

Hermando was lifted without more trouble to the pony and bound, while another Indian did the same for Carmio.

The latter dared not cry out or resist. The glance and gesture that had been given Hermando told him only too plainly what would be done if they gave their captors any trouble, and so he tried to be very quiet.

After binding the two boys the two Indians again mounted, and all rode away at a swift gallop, the heads of their ponies turned, as Carmio knew only too well, toward the Rio Grande, and away from his dear home.

Poor little Carmio! he turned his head backward to get the last glimpse of the spot where he knew his brother's ranch lay. A hill shut it from view, but he could see the smoke curling upward from the brow of the hill. He knew that old Martina had just begun her fires to boil food for the youngest lambs outdoors, and to prepare supper for the boys and men indoors. Oh, what would he not give if he had never gone out of sight of that ranch! Above all, if he had only obeyed his mother, his precious mother, who loved him so, and who would be completely heartbroken over this dreadful thing that had happened to her baby boy.

He bowed his head upon his hands,

and while the tears trickled through his fingers, the cry of his heart was:

“O madrecita mia! O madrecita mia! (O my little mother!) If I had only minded thee!”

II

THE ESCAPE

THE ESCAPE



THE Indians traveled rapidly all the rest of that afternoon and into the night. Then, coming to a wooded place, where a small stream ran, they stopped and prepared to camp.

Carmio and Hermando were so tired from the long, rough ride on the bare backs of the ponies, and so cut and hurt by the tight cords that bound them, that they could hardly stand when lifted from the ponies. Indeed, after making a great effort to stand, Carmio fell.

“Get up!” said one of the Indians, giving him a savage kick.

He tried to obey, found himself more unsteady upon his feet than ever, clutched at Hermando to save himself, and this time both went over together. They

were jerked to their feet, and again kicked.

The Indians now unloosed the cords that bound their hands and partly so those that bound their feet. Then they made them crawl about and gather twigs with which to build the fire.

The supper was cooked and eaten. Only a small amount was given to the two young captives. But small as it was, it was more than they could eat, for their hearts were so full of the pain and the terror of what had happened to them that it made the sobs almost choke them.

The Indians heaped up the brush and leaves for beds, and, placing two on guard, prepared to go to sleep for the night. They formed a circle about the fire, Carmio and Hermando being placed within the circle. Soon all were asleep except the two on guard and the little captives. Carmio lay upon his back, watching the stars as they twinkled through the boughs of the trees. Now

and then he could not see them at all for the blinding tears that filled his eyes.

Somewhere up there Carmio knew there was a great Being whose name was God. Carmio had been taught to pray to him through the Virgin, who was the mother of his son, Jesus, and had been taught that this great God could do many things if only the Virgin or one of the saints would beseech him in the name of the one who prayed. There was the good Saint Anthony; he was the saint of little children. He had played with the child Jesus and helped to carry his playthings, therefore he loved all children and would help them when in trouble.

“ Oh, dear, good Virgin, sweet Mother of Jesus, and dear good Saint Anthony,” prayed poor little Carmio out of the fullness of his sorrow, “ do hear, do pity, and do save poor Carmio and Hermando! O Virgin, forgive that I disobeyed my own precious mother. If I had only thought of thee and of her and

of how it would have wounded both, I would not have done it! I would not, I would not!"

After a while he heard Hermando call to him softly:

"Art thou asleep, Carmio?"

"No," replied Carmio in the same low tones.

"Pay close heed, then, to what I will tell thee. We must try to escape, for I would rather die than go away with these Indians. All are asleep. I have looked about closely, and I am sure. Even the two who were put to watch are nodding. They will soon be gone into sound slumber. When they are, then we must creep away."

"But how can we with our feet and hands bound as they are?"

"Hist! Bend thine ear closer. The Indian who tied my hands the last time did not do it well. I have slipped the cords, and my hands are now free. Hast thou a knife, Carmio?"

“Yes, a little knife my brother gave me. It is in my pocket.”

“Which pocket?”

Carmio told him.

“Well, turn as I tell thee and I will get it out. Hist! be careful; the two Indians on guard are not yet well asleep.”

Carmio turned nearer Hermando, so that he could run his hand into his pocket and draw out the knife. Though small it was sharp, and Hermando soon had not only his own bonds cut but Carmio's also. They were free now as to hand and foot, but how were they to get away with so many of the Indians all around them? Even if they got without the circle safely, might not some noise, however careful they might be, betray them? The ground was full of dried twigs, any one of which was likely to snap if stepped upon. It was dark too, under the trees, and they could not pick their way as carefully as in the light.

But Hermando was bound to escape,

never mind how great the risk, for, as he said, he would rather die than be carried away a captive by these Indians. As his was the stronger nature, it led Carmio's.

"The two have at last fallen into sound sleep," whispered Hermando. "Now, Carmio! Let us get on our hands and knees and creep away. There is room between those Indians yonder. For thy life do not make a sound!"

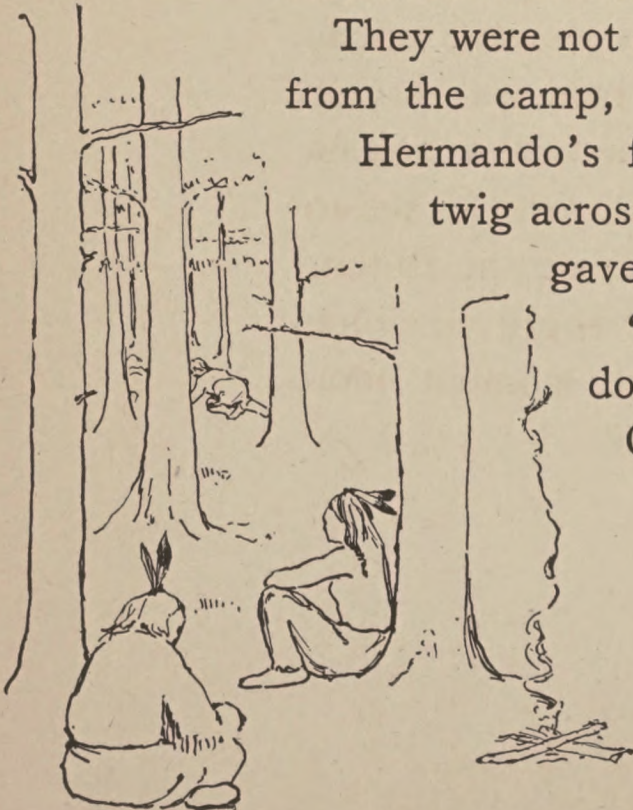
They crept away softly, and passed the line of sleeping Indians. They were now outside the circle.

"We can get on our feet," said Hermando. "It is now the twigs I fear. Look for them closely, Carmio."

They were not more than twenty paces from the camp, when all of a sudden Hermando's foot came upon a dry twig across a little hollow, and it gave way with a loud snap.

"Run," said Hermando, "or we are lost!"

Carmio started, but it



was too late! Three of the Indians were aroused, the two that were on guard and one of the sleeping circle. They saw at once what had happened, and sprang up to follow.

“Stop!” called one of the Indians.

Carmio obeyed, and in this way his life was saved. But not so Hermando. He kept on, rushing away as fast as his strong young legs would carry him. He had said, “Better death than captivity,” and he had meant it.

On went Hermando, but alas! those legs, once strong and swift, had been weakened by the binding, and they could not carry him now with their usual vigor. It was dark too, in the woods, and he could not see just the best way to go. Suddenly he fell, stumbled in a hollow, and went rolling over and over. Before he could get up again one of the Indians was beside him. Very angry, the man drew his lance and in a moment more poor Hermando was dead.

The body was brought back to camp on the point of the Indian's lance, and laid down with a meaning gesture directly in front of Carmio. He almost fainted when he saw it. Oh, what a terrible end for poor Hermando! They then took Hermando's body and threw it out on the prairies for the wolves and buzzards to eat.

This was more than poor Carmio could endure. He begged them to bury Hermando, to give him even a shallow grave in the sand. They refused him and with threats. But at last one of the Indians, who seemed to have a kinder heart than the others, said that Hermando might be buried, but that Carmio must bury him. This Carmio was very ready to do; so they unbound him that he might dig the grave. He scooped it out of the sand with a piece of wood and with his hands, and all the time the Indians were standing over him and taunting him in various ways. It was at last dug, and Carmio's



hands laid Hermando in his lonely grave on the far-away prairies. Then the sand was thrown in and rocks piled about the place.

“Oh, if I ever get home,” said Carmio to himself sadly as he turned away from the grave, “I will beg Father Rodrigo to say a mass for poor Hermando.”

Yes, if he ever got home again! Would he? The chances seemed so against it now that even the thought sickened poor Carmio’s heart.

At sunrise the next morning the Indians had broken camp, and were again on their way, keeping the heads of their ponies turned almost northward.

Carmio now rode between two of the Indians. He was more closely bound than ever; only at camping times were his bonds loosened, and then only that he might bring the wood and water and make the fires.

As they went onward Carmio noticed something that caused a ray of sudden

hope to go to his heart. For he was thinking all the time about making his escape from the Indians. Hermando's death had left him sadder and lonelier than ever, and he felt, as poor Hermando had, that he would rather die than go on with these Indians. He had thought for some time that one of the captured ponies looked as though he had seen it before, and now he was sure that he did know the pony. It was Pedro, a pony his brother had owned. Indeed, he had sold it only a few days before to a near ranchman. It had perhaps been left out to graze, and thus the Indians had found it.

Carmio knew Pedro to be a fast pony, one of the fastest in all that part of the country. Once on Pedro's back and flying southward like the wind, it would give the Indians a task to catch him if they ever did. Another hope was that he felt sure Pedro would know the way, for he was a bright pony as well as a fast one.

When they halted for dinner that day

Carmio managed to give Pedro a gentle pat and a soft word. The pony at once knew him, for he whisked his head and answered with a glad neigh. Carmio would have made the effort to escape then, but it was not the time he wanted. He would wait for the dusk.

At evening they stopped again to camp for the night. The place was not so thickly wooded as before. It was a mere strip of trees, and beyond it were the prairies, the tall grasses swaying gently in the wind.

They unbound Carmio's hands and feet and sent him to gather fuel. In the meantime they staked the ponies, placing them some little way off on the prairie.

Carmio had brought one turn of fuel and was going for another. Feeling sure that Hermando's fate had cowed him enough so that he would not try to escape, the Indians were not so careful in watching him.

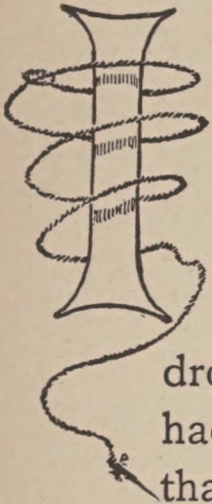
Carmio started for the fuel, keeping

one eye upon the camp and the other upon the ponies. He went out of his way to one side and suddenly, instead of going deeper into the woods, turned toward the prairie where the ponies were grazing. He gained the group of ponies and passed in between them and was thus screened. With a running bound he reached the stake to which Pedro was fastened, threw into the effort all the strength of his young arms and jerked it from the earth. Then, keeping the stake in his hands and gathering in the rope, he sprang upon Pedro's back with a word of endearment and the command to go. The pony needed no second bidding. The next moment they had begun their race for life headed for the south. But not before the dread Comanche war-whoop, coming from the camp, broke upon the air.

III

DANGER

DANGER



T took the Comanches some time to gain their ponies, unfasten them, and mount. By this time Carmio was nearly the third of a mile ahead, and rushing onward like the wind. The long journey of the day had tired Pedro; but as for that all the ponies had had a share in it. It was in Pedro's favor that he had not carried any heavy burden during the march. The way he was speeding along now, he did not seem to be tired at all. Doubtless Pedro felt, as did his little rider, that the joy of freedom, perhaps of life, depended upon his efforts.

Carmio feared the long piece of rope and the stake to which Pedro had been tied, and which he had gathered in his hands as he sprang to the pony's back.

If he should drop it, then it might become tangled in Pedro's feet, tripping him, and thus cause great mischief. He determined to get rid of it if he could. Bending down, and clinging more closely to the pony, he managed to unfasten it from about Pedro's neck. Straightening up again, he gathered stake and rope more carefully in his hand, and threw it from him, as far from the course the pony was taking as he could. He now had neither saddle nor bridle, but Carmio, for a little fellow, was a fearless rider. Besides he trusted Pedro. The pony would need no guidance, for he knew the way. Carmio felt he need only cling to his mane, keep a firm seat, and trust to Pedro.

He could hear the yells and shouts of the Indians as they came on behind him. Once he looked back. They were sending their arrows after him, but so far none had reached him. The course taken by the pony was almost parallel with the strip of woods. Soon they came to a

jutting point, or rather a bend of the forest. Around this the pony rushed, heading due southwest. By this movement the Indians were for a time shut off from view. But alas! in that time something happened to Carmio which might bring upon him not only capture, but also death, for poor Hermando's fate had told him that one meant the other.

It must have been a hollow in the prairie; at any rate Pedro rushing onward, suddenly stumbled, and with such force that Carmio went spinning over his head and into a sand hillock. Now, had Pedro been less excited over the race for liberty, he might have stopped for Carmio to get on his back again. But alas! Pedro was only a pony, and so couldn't think as a human helper would have done. He knew he was being chased, and the wish to escape was the first thing with Pedro. Thus, getting on his feet, he went speeding on and on, leaving poor Carmio lying in the sand hillock.

For a second or so Carmio was too stunned to rise. His hands and face too were scratched and bleeding, for he had fallen near the outer edge of a bed of cactuses. As he realized his danger he made haste to get upon his feet. Already he could hear the shouts and cries of the Indians as they neared the point. Once around it there would be no hope for him. He must escape while he could. There was no chance to reach Pedro, for the pony was now almost out of hearing. Even if he could hear a call, and obeying it return, it would be too late. The Indians would be there. Carmio must fly to the woods and hide himself until the Indians passed. They would see the pony and think that Carmio was still upon Pedro's back, for they would know nothing of the fall if he could get out of sight.

The woods were near, not more than fifteen or twenty paces. It was now dusk, and the shadows had gathered.

There was a moon, but it was only faintly shining from among the trees. Objects at a distance could not be seen clearly. With all his strength Carmio turned and ran toward the woods. He had barely time to crouch down behind a tree, when the Indians came speeding around the bend. Seeing the pony still flying along in the distance, they urged their own ponies to greater speed, and set off with renewed shouts.

As soon as they had passed out of sight, Carmio started to make his escape more sure by going farther into the woods. He had just moved away when he thought he heard a shout. Could it be that the Indians had seen he was not on Pedro's back, and were coming back? The thought aroused Carmio so that he began to run like a frightened deer into the woods, taking little care as to where he placed his feet. He was running in this headlong way, when all at once he felt his feet slip from under him, and down

he went, rolling over and over, till there was a sudden, sharp shock, and then Carmio knew no more for some minutes. When he came to himself he was lying on a bed of leaves, seemingly midway between the top and bottom of a ravine, and not far away he could hear the sound of falling water. He raised himself, and soon found that, except for a few sore places, he was all right. He did not know what better to do than to stay where he was until morning.

There was a hollow in the side of the bank near where he lay. He drew the leaves into this until he had a great bed of them. In this he cuddled down snugly, pulling the leaves up about him, and slept soundly until morning.

The sun was shining into the ravine when he woke. The gorge seemed to be about thirty feet deep and ten or twelve wide. Carmio, as has been said, had fallen only about half-way, a projecting ledge having caught him. He scrambled

down and found his way to the water he had heard during the night, for he was very thirsty. It was a tiny stream that trickled through the rocks and fell into a mossy pool below. All about it grew ferns and wild flowers, and it was such a beautiful place that for the moment Carmio forgot all his troubles in delight.

He knelt down beside the tiny basin and drank, then bathed his face and hands. He was very hungry; what could he find to eat? He looked about. There were no berries or nuts. At last he found a tree, but the squirrels had been there before him.

While he was looking about a saucy gray squirrel, with his plume curled over his back, came and sat on a rock almost beside him. Carmio's hand went to a stone that lay near by. He knew that he could easily kill the little animal, for though Carmio was small, he had a sure hand in throwing. His fingers closed about the rock, then he let it slip away again.



“No,” he said; “no, I will not kill thee. Life is sweet to thee as to me. God made thee as well as me. Keep then the life he gave; I know how dreadful death can be.”

Tears were in his eyes as he turned away from the squirrel. He would find something to eat, but it would be nothing that had life in it and that he must kill.

All at once a daring resolve came to him. He was pressed by hunger or he never would have thought of it even for a moment. He would return to the camp where the Indians had been and get food. He knew they had plenty which they had left when they started to chase him. It never once came to him that all the Indians might not have left the camp, that some would stay to care for the things. But before Carmio had walked many steps he took a second thought. To this he owed his life. It was that before he started toward the camp he would creep near the edge of the forest and take a

look out upon the plains. He climbed up into the thick branches of a tree and glanced out over the prairie. The tree grew almost at the edge of the forest. Carmio had not more than settled himself and raised his eyes for the look out, when he saw a sight that made his heart beat so that it almost choked him. In plain view was a band of Indians. They were mounted and were riding straight toward him, though they seemed to be riding slowly.

Carmio's first impulse was to jump down and run back into the forest; but he was afraid he would be seen. By the time he could scramble from the tree and spring to the ground he was sure he would be seen. So he crouched still farther within the limbs and waited.

On came the Indians. As they drew nearer Carmio saw with increased fear that they were the Indians who had chased him. They had plainly given up the chase, either because they had failed

to overtake Pedro, or because they had found out that Carmio was no longer upon the pony's back. Carmio was afraid it was the latter by the suspicious way they glanced at the forest as they came near. Would they spy him in the tree? It looked very much like it, for as they came near two of the Indians left the others and rode toward the forest. Carmio could hear his heart beat. Surely the Indians would hear it too. It seemed to him, in the great fright that held him, that they must even hear him breathe.

But surely God was helping poor Carmio, for, having given a sweeping glance through the forest, the two Indians rode on to rejoin the others. It may have been they were not looking for Carmio after all, but for some chance game that might be in the woods. However, just as Carmio thought himself the safer, it seemed that greater danger than ever was at hand.

The two Indians had not more than

reached their company, and all were unpleasantly near, when Carmio, in trying to ease his cramped position, lost his hold upon a limb, and with a noise that he felt sure was louder than the crash of the whole tree in falling, plunged to the branches below, clinging there for dear life. At the same moment there came ringing out the loud shout of the Comanches.

“I am lost!” moaned Carmio. “O sweet Virgin, dear Mother of God, let me die ere they seize me.”

Ah, if Carmio had only known then how to pray direct to God.

IV

RECAPTURED

RECAPTURED



ARMIO waited in terrible suspense, his head bent down, his eyes upon the ground. He dared not raise them; he could not. The sight would be too dreadful to endure. Every moment he thought he would feel those savage hands close about him and drag him from the tree. Their awful shouts of triumph would soon be in his ears. But he would not have to listen to them long. In a moment or so all would be over. They would make quick work of him as they had of poor Hermando.

But hark! what did those sounds mean? For instead of coming nearer, the cries, the shouts, were going farther and farther away. With his heart almost standing still, Carmio raised his eyes. Could he

believe them? Two deer had bounded from the woods, and the Indians were now in hot chase straight across the prairie. It had then been game, after all, for which the two Indians were looking when they rode so near the strip of forest, and the deer had bounded out just in time to draw their attention from Carmio as he fell.

He waited until the Indians were too far away to notice him, even if they had turned to look back, then he scrambled down from the tree and again went deeper into the forest.

But soon he knew this would not do. If he were ever to find his way home, as he longed with all his heart to do, then he must leave the forest and go over the prairies. There was no other course. He could go for only about a half-mile or so by way of the forest.

When he had come to the farthest edge of the woods, he hid behind a tree and gazed long and carefully out over the plains. No living thing was in sight.

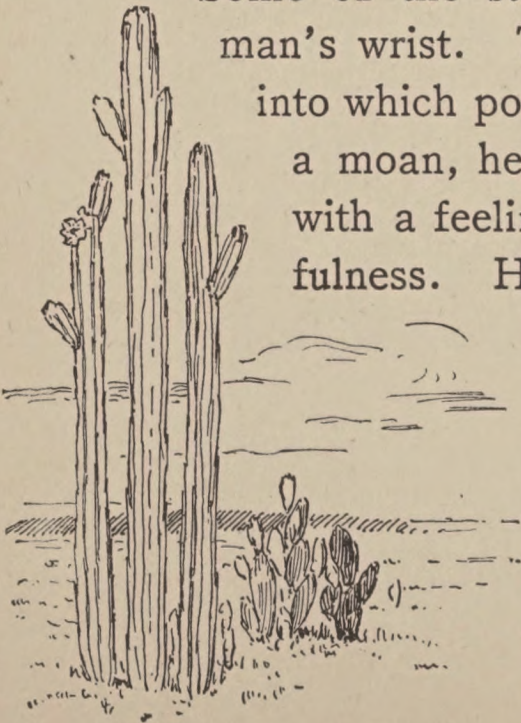
He did not see even an animal moving about. Still he lingered; still his heart failed him. In the forest there was some protection, some chance of hiding, but out on the prairies there was neither. But if he stayed in the forest he would never reach his home. If that sweet time was to come to him he must go forward.

His hunger, which fright had made him forget for the time, had now increased so much that he could hardly endure it. Before leaving the woods he would search for some berries at least. After much looking he found a tree with some nuts. He cracked a handful between the stones and ate them; then he filled his pockets.

He now turned his face toward the prairies. At this place the grass was very tall. It came nearly to his waist. He found some trouble in making his way through it; but he knew this was not nearly so bad as the stretches of cactus to which he would come after a while.

Soon the sun began to grow unpleasantly warm. It made Carmio feel faint and sick. The thirst too, came back, but alas! there was now no sweet trickling stream at hand to give a drink. He toiled on almost ready to drop. Not a tree or a bush could he see anywhere, only bare plains with here and there a clump of sharp cactus. He was indeed thankful these were not nearer together, for then he would have had a bad time getting through them.

After a while, when he had almost given up in despair and felt that he must fall by the way, he came to a great patch of wild sunflowers, such as now and then may be seen on the prairies of the West. Some of the stalks were as large as a man's wrist. They gave a deep shade, into which poor little Carmio sank with a moan, he was so tired, as well as with a feeling of the deepest thankfulness. He was so weak, so weary, he lay there for the rest



of the day scarcely moving. He now decided he would do most of his traveling by night. There would be less chance of his being seen by Indians.

When the moon came up he started again. He had not gone more than two or three miles when a new, an awful danger faced him. Over the prairies, and charging down toward him, he saw a herd of wild cattle. His first impulse was to turn and flee, but that, he knew a moment afterward, would be almost like inviting death, for should the cattle see him they would be sure to chase him.

The cattle were not far away now, and still rushing toward him. He tried to get out of their way as much as possible, but it was hard to tell now just which way they would come. Any little thing might cause them to swerve from the direction in which they seemed to be coming.

A sudden thought struck Carmio. It was like a flash of inspiration. In his pocket was a box of the little wax

matches he had brought from his Mexican home. He would tear off a piece of his straw hat, set it afire, and with it fire the grass in front of the cattle. The wind was blowing that way and it would carry the fire toward them.

The first match went out, and so did the second. His hand trembled so that he could scarcely hold the third. There was not a moment to lose. The cattle were now so near the tramp of their feet shook the earth where he stood. The match flared up, flickered, flared up again, and then held a steady flame. The dry bit of straw caught well, and soon the grass was afire. It swept toward the cattle, growing brighter and bigger. There was a sudden mighty bellowing, cries of almost human terror, then with a swiftness and skill that would have done credit to a body of cavalrymen, the herd of cattle swerved sharply to the right and thus passed around the circle of fire and Carmio.

Yes, Carmio was saved; but was there not a new danger? He stood watching the fire. Every moment it seemed to grow brighter and bigger and fiercer.

“Oh, what mischief have I done?” he cried. “Have I set the whole prairie on fire? If so, then I may never see my home, for the wind may change, and it may sweep back this way and seize me. And to think too, of the poor creatures that may burn!”

This last thought was so dreadful to Carmio that he dropped his head upon his hands and gave way to tears. When at last he raised his eyes, he saw that the fire was burning itself out. It had met with something that refused to feed it. When at length the ground grew cool enough for him to go on, he saw that it was a water hole. Had Carmio been older and with more knowledge of the desert, he would have known from the signs that there was one not far away.

He hailed it now with a cry of joy,

and running to it, kneeled down to drink. The water was not of the coolest, but how sweet it tasted! Never in all his life had a drink been so refreshing.

He went on all that night. He heard the wolves and the coyotes and the wild-cats, and their cries made him shiver, but he got safely by all danger of this kind. God was surely watching over Carmio. Just at daybreak he sank down worn out under a small clump of cottonwood trees. After a while he became aware that there was a wreath of smoke curling upward over the prairie. He raised himself and looked carefully. Now he could see plainly that it came from a camp-fire. About it were many moving forms, and he knew they were Indians.

He must stay where he was. Outside the one small clump of trees all else in sight was bare prairie. Even this clump was but poor shelter, for should the Indians, on breaking camp, pass near it, they would be sure to see him.

Even while he looked he saw a sudden stir in the camp. Two Indians had ridden hastily up, and were making many signs and gestures to the others. Soon it was evident that the camp was to be broken up and all the Indians to set forth again on the march. Which way would they take? The thought that they might go by the clump of cottonwoods made Carmio's heart almost cease to beat. But soon it went on again and with happy throbs, for the Indians, after catching their ponies and packing up their things, started off in a direction exactly opposite to the one where Carmio lay under the trees.

Carmio waited an hour, two or three it seemed to him. Would the Indians return? It seemed not. They had been gone too long now. He stole out and toward the camp. What was his joy to find some scraps of the meat they had cooked and two or three corn cakes still wrapped in the ashes! He ate them

greedily, putting what was left in the folds of his blanket, for his pockets were yet well stocked with the nuts.

As the sun began to slant toward the west he decided he would go on. There seemed to be, some distance away, a strip of woods to cross. He would rather pass through that in the daytime, he decided; at night he might stray from his way.

Carmio was just coming out of the strip of woods when he heard shouts and cries and shrieks, the latter as though in a woman's voice; then following these all kinds of horrible noises. Looking across the space beyond the trees he saw a sight that caused the blood in his veins to turn cold as ice, it seemed to him, for he was only a little fellow after all, and even the heart of a strong man would have grown chill at such a scene as that. He had come upon a settlement, and the Indians were attacking it. The house was already on fire and the people were

flying in every direction. But Carmio could look no more. Turning, he ran back into the woods, scurrying here and there like a frightened deer, and taking no care as to the noise he made. All at once he heard a shout, then rapid feet behind him. The next moment a great red hand swept downward, and he was grasped by the shoulder.

“Good,” said the Indian in his own language. “Here is one Tab-i-to-sa will not slay. He is of use.”

Poor little Carmio! His brave struggle for freedom, the hard things he had borne, the dangers, had been for nothing; he was recaptured.

V

WITH THE APACHES

WITH THE APACHES



THE Indians who had now captured Carmio were not the same as the ones who had first taken him. Those were Comanches, while these were Kiowas. They did not look so fierce, but that they could be as cruel, poor Carmio soon found out.

There seemed to be two bands, and they had much plunder. This was loaded on the backs of the mules and horses they had taken.

Sometimes they would let Carmio ride, and again they would make him walk for hours at a time. This was done to tire him, so that he would not have the strength left to go far should he try to escape. At first Carmio's thoughts were all the time upon the chances of getting

away, and he formed plan after plan. But none of them was he able to carry out; the Indians were too watchful.

As one day followed another day, and he knew that with each he was being carried farther and farther away from his home, poor Carmio began to lose hope and his heart was indeed filled with distress. Even if he should escape, how could he now find the way back to his home? They had already crossed the Rio Grande, and were traveling due north-east toward the Territory. There were other captives in the party, and Carmio heard one of them say that by evening of the next day the Indians hoped to cross the Pecos also. They would then be still fifteen days' journey from their camping grounds, the place they called home.

When they were no longer in his beloved Mexico, when he saw the pony on which he rode climbing the sandy bank on the other side of the Rio Grande, poor Carmio had been completely overcome.

He had let his chin drop upon his breast, while the tears rolled down his cheeks. Still the cry of his heart was the one with which he had looked back toward his brother's ranch, with the smoke curling up over the hills, on the afternoon he had first been captured:

“O madrecita mia (O my little mother), if I had only minded thee!”

Tab-i-to-sa seemed to have taken special charge of Carmio. This was doubtless because he had captured him. He began to treat the little fellow as though he were a slave, giving him all manner of hard tasks, speaking harshly to him if he did not move at once to do his bidding, and even using the lash on him.

On the fifth day after crossing the Pecos River the Indians fell in with some half-breed traders. This was a bad thing indeed for the poor captives, for these traders had whisky to sell; the Indians got some of it and terrible scenes took place. Two of the captives were killed

and two others were badly cut. Carmio was tied to the tail of one of the ponies and made to keep up even when the pony was in a trot. It was then and there that Carmio took the firm resolve never, never in all his life to touch a drop of that terrible thing that could make such awful creatures of men, and nobly did he keep it.

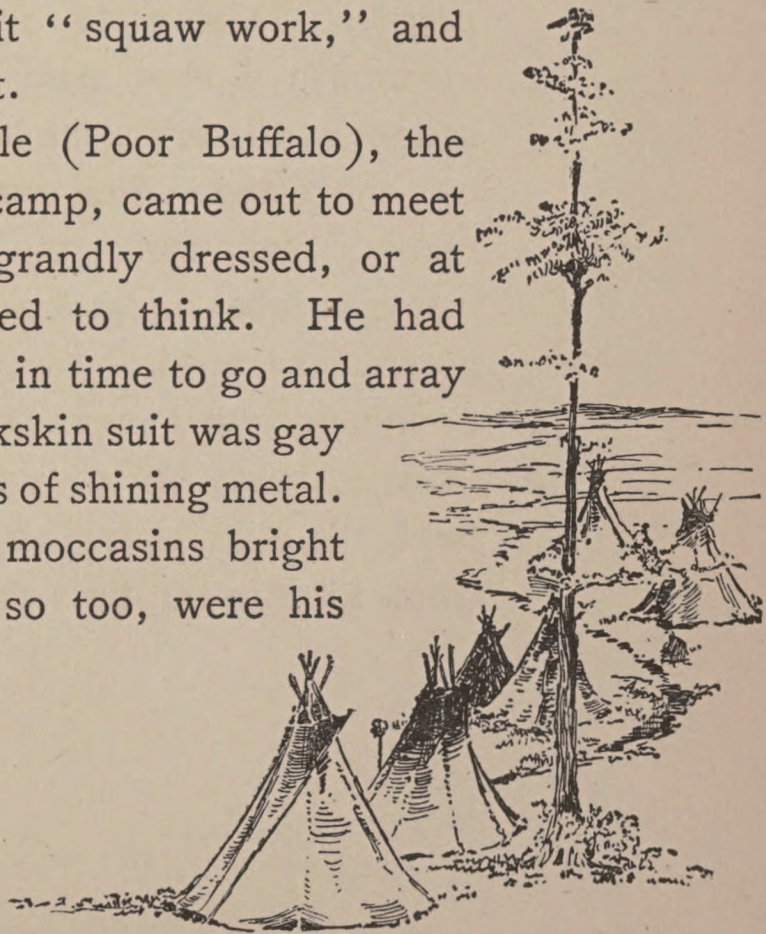
Ten days beyond the river they came to an Apache camp. It was about mid-way of the afternoon, and the sun was shining full upon the level stretch of prairie. It was the first Indian camp Carmio had ever seen and, despite the sadness and terror, he could not help but be interested. The white cloth tepees (tents) from which the smoke was curling, the cross-poles on which the strips of fresh meat hung curing in the sun, the ponies tethered near, the men in their savage dress, dirty, yet glittering with beads and bedecked with feathers, the women but little more than half-clad, and

with their babies in quaint board cradles slung upon their backs; all these made a strange, fascinating scene for Carmio's eyes.

"Get down," said Tab-i-to-sa roughly to Carmio, "and let the women take the ponies."

Sure enough there were the women, and not the men, waiting to take and care for the ponies of the guests. And so Carmio found it to be all through his life among the Indians; the women, and not the men, did the rough work of the camp. The men called it "squaw work," and they were above it.

Soon Pan-tau-tle (Poor Buffalo), the head man of the camp, came out to meet them. He was grandly dressed, or at least so he seemed to think. He had seen them coming in time to go and array himself. His buckskin suit was gay with beads and bits of shining metal. On his feet were moccasins bright with beads, and so too, were his



fringed leggings. His girdle was adorned with beads, buttons, and wolves' teeth, and other more horrible things. Fastened about his neck was his blanket, which fell in folds behind him, and down the center of this was his hair in a long plait, an otter's tail at the end, while owl and eagle feathers were in his hair.

He greeted Tab-i-to-sa first, then each of the other Indians, scowling fiercely at the captives as any of them came into view.

That night the Indians had a great feast and also what they called the eagle dance, a horrid performance in which those who took part were almost nude. As the Indians had some liquor too, the poor trembling captives did not know what might be their fate before morning.

When the next day came Carmio learned that he was to go no farther with the Kiowas. Tab-i-to-sa had traded him to Pan-tau-tle. The poor boy did

not know whether to be sorry or not. All seemed alike to him now in this terrible state. The only regret he had was in seeing fade from view the last face of those who could speak his own language, whose eyes had looked with his upon the sunny skies of their loved Mexico. Now indeed he was alone.

The Kiowas were not more than out of sight when Pan-tau-tle called Carmio to him. He had a grim face, and Carmio was afraid of him the moment he saw him.

By signs and by a few words of Spanish, which Pan-tau-tle had learned from Mexican captives on the plains, Carmio was able to make out the greater part of what was said to him.

“Pull off your clothes!” said Pan-tau-tle. “You no longer Mexican; you Indian now.”

With this he stripped the poor boy and put on him the Indian moccasins, the waist-skirt with its fringe, the leggings,

belt, blanket, and all. He then smeared Carmio's face with paint and gave him a bow and arrows.

“ Now go and kill ! ” said Pan-tau-tle.

Poor Carmio ! he had always been a tender-hearted child. He had never killed in all his life, not even the birds, just for sport. Besides he was young, so young. How could he do what this cruel Indian was bidding him do ?

“ Go kill ! ” repeated Pan-tau-tle ; and to put force to his words, he dragged Carmio out from the camps and made him practise with the poor little prairie dogs, giving him a cruel cuff every time he missed, for he could see that Carmio was not trying to hit. At last Carmio killed one of the little creatures. As he saw his arrow piercing its body, he threw himself upon the ground and burst into tears.

Carmio lived with the Apaches five years, and oh, what a horrible life it was !

Every year he could feel himself sinking lower and lower into it. He had to do everything as the Indians did. Pan-tau-tle would not even let him speak his own language. But there was one thing Pan-tau-tle could not do, with all his power; he could not drive that language entirely from Carmio's memory. To all appearance Carmio was now an Indian. Just to look at him his own mother would not have known him. He wore the Indian dress, he spoke the Indian language, he ate as the Indians did, and oh, how disgusting was their food! For among the Apaches dog meat was thought fine meat indeed, and is still. When Carmio had first been told to eat the dog meat, he had watched every chance to spit it out. But Pan-tau-tle had given him so many severe beatings about it he had at last been conquered. Now Carmio was hardened to it and to many other things that had come to him in this dreadful life.

Pau-tau-tle was a great tyrant, both in

his own tepee and in the camp. The women and children were most afraid of him. He had several wives, which was, and is, the Indian custom. There is no law among these savage people to protect a wife from her brutal husband. He can beat her, he can cut her, he can even kill her, and there is no punishment for him. She is his slave, his dog; he can do as he pleases with her. No one can interfere, not even the chief.

Pan-tau-tle treated all his wives harshly, but to the one called Ton-ke-nah he was especially cruel. She was a poor, hard-worked creature, with a back bent from carrying many burdens, but her eyes were bright still in spite of her troubles. She had been kind to Carmio whenever she dared, had even run risks for his sake. Her own boy was dead, and this motherless one, though not of her own people, drew out the tenderness of Ton-ke-nah. This kindness and love made the one bright spot in all Carmio's sad, terrible

life. He tried to return it in every way he could to show her how much he cared for it, but Pan-tau-tle's watchful eye was ever upon both.

One day Carmio was horrified, after hearing Pan-tau-tle's voice in loud quarrel with Ton-ke-nah, to see him draw back and deal her a blow that sent her spinning to the ground. He then stooped over and kicked her and drew a knife.

Without stopping to think what might be the result for himself, Carmio rushed forward.

"Oh, how dare you!" he cried, his hand clenched, his eyes blazing.

In another moment he had given Pautau-tle a blow with all his might straight in the breast. It stunned the Indian for a second or so. Then recovering himself, he made a savage plunge for Carmio, caught him by the shoulder and dragged him nearer. Then once more the knife flashed in the air, but before it could descend, the arm of Pan-tau-tle

was caught and held, while a voice cried sternly :

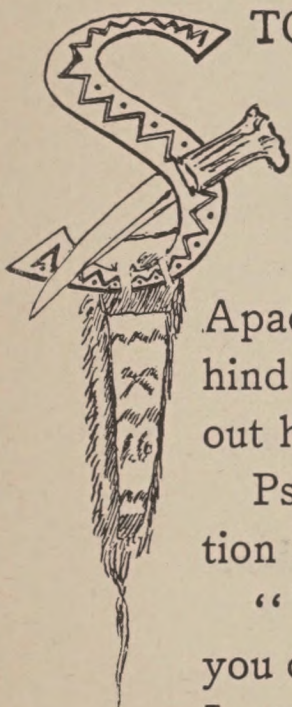
“ Stop ! ”

And the voice was that of one used to command and to be obeyed.

VI

AMONG THE KIWAS

AMONG THE KIWAS



TOP!" said the voice again. "You must not kill the boy. Such as he are of use."

Turning his head quickly Pan-tau-tle was surprised to see the Apache chief, Psait-cop-ta, standing behind him. How had he come there without his knowing it?

Psait-cop-ta seemed to read the question in Pan-tau-tle's face, for he said:

"You were so taken up with the woman you did not see me coming. A fine way, I must say, to receive your chief." Then he continued, "I was afraid I would be too late to save the boy. As to the woman, well——" He did not finish the sentence, only leaned over and gave poor Ton-ke-nah a rough stir with his foot. She had fainted from the pain.

“She’ll come ’round all right,” he said with a shrug and a wicked little laugh, “and I hope she’ll profit by the lesson. As to the boy, it seems you don’t want him, or you wouldn’t have raised the knife on him. Better let me have him.”

Here was a chance Pan-tau-tle had long wanted. Ton-ke-nah thought too much of the boy to suit him.

“How much?” he asked greedily.

“How much do you want?”

“Five ponies,” answered Pan-tau-tle quickly.

“Too much,” said the chief, “a heap too much. I’ll give you two ponies.”

Pan-tau-tle shook his head.

“Two ponies too little. He can do much,” nodding his head toward Carmio as he spoke.

“Well, then, three ponies; but not another one,” said the chief with decision.

“Done,” said Pan-tau-tle. “Take him; he is yours.”

Thus Carmio became the property of Psait-cop-ta, chief of the Apaches.

He lived with the chief two years. It was a hard life, but it was better in many ways than the one at Pan-tau-tle's camp. How very wretched indeed that had been!

The chief was a great hunter. One of Carmio's duties was to attend him on these hunts and skin and prepare for eating the animals that were taken. Sometimes the poor creatures would not be quite dead, and Carmio had to finish them. This went hard indeed with the gentle-hearted boy, for in spite of his savage life of the last years, he still kept much of the tender heart of his childhood and of the dislike to taking life.

It was during his second year with the chief that something happened, a something that changed the whole of Carmio's life. He was now nearly sixteen years of age. Psait-cop-ta and Sait-to-yo, the chief of the Kiowas, were great friends. They often visited each other and now

and then went on long hunts together. The very first time Carmio had seen Sait-to-yo he had liked him, and the chief too seemed drawn to Carmio. Unlike most of the Indians, Sait-to-yo was rather fleshy. He had bright eyes and a good-humored face, though he was known to be very fierce in battle.

More than one time, when they had been on the hunt, Sait-to-yo had looked Carmio over kindly and muttered to himself, " Good! " " good! "

One day Sait-to-yo spoke right out to Psait-cop-ta, and asked him what he would take for the boy.

Psait-cop-ta quickly replied that he was not for sale.

A day or two later Sait-to-yo came back. He had made up his mind that he must have Carmio. He wanted him for his daughter, Ke-a-ko, Ved-dle-ke-ah's wife. She had no son. Carmio should be as a son to her, that is, if the chief could buy him.

After a while Psait-cop-ta agreed to trade, for he saw he could get a big price indeed from the chief if only he pushed him far enough. Three mules, two ponies, three buffalo robes, and two blankets were finally paid for Carmio.

Thus Carmio found himself again with the Kiowas, but it was in a far different position than was his at first. Then it was as a captive, a slave; now it was as the adopted son of the daughter of the chief. But still the life by which he was surrounded was the savage and degraded one of the wild Indians of the plains.

The Kiowas, like the Apaches, lived in cloth tepees, or tents. They were built on poles that were placed in a circle and joined together at the tops. In the center, on the ground, the fire was built, and all around this were the beds, which were mats of straw on which blankets were placed. Each Indian slept with his feet toward the fire.

At the top of the tepee there was a

flap of the cloth known as the windward flap. It was always stretched toward the direction from which the wind was blowing. This was done to keep the smoke from driving the people out of the tepee. As it was, even with the flap raised toward the wind, those inside the tepee had to sit down for the most of the time, for if they stood up the smoke was sure to get in their eyes.

After Carmio had been there some time, one day terrible tidings were brought to camp. Chief Sait-to-yo had been slain in battle with the Utes. At once the whole camp was plunged into mourning. Sharp knives were brought and given to his wives, and with them they slashed themselves on their faces, breasts, and arms until the blood flowed in a stream down their clothing. All the time they were screaming and making most horrible noises. One poor thing let her knife slip; it went in too far; an artery was cut, and in a little while she was dead.

Poor Carmio! The sight of the blood made him sick, the awful noises were in his ears, and he felt he should surely die with the horror of it all if he did not get away. He stole out of the camp and hid himself in a clump of trees near the river bank.

When he went back to the camp they had brought the body of the chief for burial. It was now ready for the grave. The knees had been drawn up to the breast, and it had been wrapped around and around like a bale of goods. All the clothing that he had had was burned; so were his saddles, his bows and arrows, and the bridles and other trappings of his horses. Those things that would not burn were broken to pieces and carried after him to the grave. His ponies were led in the procession, and at the grave they were killed one by one, so



that they might, according to the Indian belief, follow their master to the happy hunting grounds.

One day not long after this the news came that the government had set apart a certain reservation, or parcel of land, for the Kiowas, as it had done for the Apaches, the Comanches, and the other tribes, and they must go and live there. It was that portion that is still occupied by them, the portion lying along the Washita River, to the south of the Cheyenne, Arrapahoe, and Wichita reservations. Of course Carmio went with them, for he was now looked upon as a Kiowa.

By the death of Sait-to-yo, Carmio had lost the best friend he had among the Indians. Poor Ke-a-ko wanted to keep him, but her husband, Ved-dle-ke-ah, who had been afraid of Sait-to-yo while he lived, now grew very harsh and unkind to Ke-a-ko, and told her she must get rid of Carmio. Ke-a-ko had at last to consent, but there was one thing she would

not do. She had made up her mind firmly to that. She would not sell Carmio. He should at least be no one's slave. So, calling him, she bade him good-bye with the tears in her eyes, and told him he was free. The parting was a sad one on Carmio's part too, for he had grown much attached to Ke-a-ko, yet there was joy in it also, for now he was free, now at last there was no one to whom to answer but himself.

He went to the agent who had been sent there by the government, told him his story, and asked for work. He was given a place at the government storehouse.

When Carmio was seventeen and a half years old the first government school was opened at the agency. In his home in Mexico, when he had been a lad of eight or nine years, and his dear, patient mother had packed his lunch and his books in the little basket each morning and followed him down the road, we have seen how

Carmio did not like to go, how he would gladly have kept from it if he could; but now—strange transformation—there came over him a great, a deep longing to go to school. He felt that he must learn. He could no longer put it off. He was so ignorant. He must at least learn to read and write. What little he had known in his Mexican home had been almost forgotten. What wonder in the sad and terrible life he had led among the Indians? All these better desires on the part of Carmio, the longings to learn, to get out of the darkness of ignorance, had come because he was older and wiser. When he had been a child he had been very foolish; he had not appreciated the blessings by which he had been surrounded. How many there are like Carmio!

When Carmio told the agent his desire, he at once made plans to help him, and in a short while Carmio was entered as a pupil, and never was there a more faith-

ful or more industrious one. He knew the need of it now.

Carmio was two years at the school. In that time he had grown to be a fine, manly young fellow. He wore Indian clothes no longer, but a civilized dress given him at the school. He had now a fair education, and had begun to help in the teaching. Then such a strange, such a wonderful, such a beautiful thing as happened to Carmio!

VII

GOOD THINGS FOR CARMIO

GOOD THINGS FOR CARMIO



ONE day at the school Carmio heard them talking about a missionary who had come. A missionary—what did that mean? They told him it meant one who had come to teach. What had he to teach? Carmio wondered. Was it anything different from that which was taught in the school? Oh yes, it was something very, very different, they assured him. Did the missionary charge for the teaching? Oh no, it was “without money and without price.” Could any one go to the teaching? Yes, any one, even the poorest and the lowliest. Why, how good that was, thought Carmio; and the missionary must surely be in earnest.

The missionary came, and the little



chapel was built, the chapel where the "good teaching" was to be had "without money and without price." Every Sunday the bell in the little steeple called the Indians from over the plains to the "teaching." They came on their ponies, or walking, having waded the streams, or from the cloth tepees near at hand with the blue smoke curling from their tops. This bell, the first they had ever heard, was a source of great delight to the Indians. They would stand in front of the mission house in groups listening to it, and almost holding their breath until it had ceased to ring. They called it "the sweet tongue that spoke beautiful things." The organ too, played by the missionary's little daughter, gave them deep pleasure. At first they would only sit and listen to it in awe and silence, but after a while they were persuaded to try to follow the hymns. It was not a very musical effort on their part, for very few Indians can really sing, but it was such a

joy to them to help make "the beautiful sounds" that the spirit was there if not the harmony.

The Indians came in their savage dress—the men in war-paint, feathers, and blankets; the women with their short skirts, leggings, and beaded moccasins, and with their babies in board cradles on their backs, the long horns of the cradle sticking above each mother's head, one on each side, like the horns of some great animal. These cradles they would place against the outer ends of the benches. Sometimes there would be a whole row of the cradles with the little fellows within tightly laced up to the chin, and unable to do anything but stare about them wisely and blink their eyes, for not even one little hand was allowed to come out. Here they would stay quiet all through the services, for an Indian baby rarely ever cries, unless he is in pain. That is very different from some babies I have seen in civilized places that



disturbed the minister and all the people just because they felt cross and ugly. But an Indian mother teaches her baby better than that.

What was it the missionary had come to teach? Carmio felt that he must know. They said it was something very different from what he had learned at the school. What could it be?

What was it? Oh, something the strangest and the most beautiful of all of which Carmio had ever heard. Jesus, the Saviour, the pitying, the loving one—he had come to die for us, and through him, and him alone, we have forgiveness for our sins. How easy it all was! “Only believe and thou shalt be saved.” That was what the missionary kept saying over and over.

Away down in his heart Carmio still carried some remembrance of his early religious teaching in Mexico. The Virgin was yet something real to him. Through all the terrible events that had come to

him in his wretched life among the Indians this faith had not been taken entirely away from him, the faith, the belief in the Virgin. It was dimmed, it is true, but the flame was still burning. Many times in the midst of his woe and desolation, Carmio had prayed to the Virgin and, poor little fellow, he wondered why it was she never heard him.

But what was this the missionary was saying? "Through Jesus, the Redeemer, and through him alone, we have forgiveness for our sins." Why, how strange was that! Carmio had been taught to regard the Virgin as having more power with God than any one. Even the Saviour could do nothing unless Mary permitted it, or rather suggested it. God had always been represented to him as an angry judge. If he was to be reached it must be through the Virgin. Therefore Carmio had begun his prayers with the name of the Virgin rather than that of God. It was always with words something like

these, "Holy Mary, mother of God, most blessed Virgin, hear a poor sinner now and always."

But what was this sweet, this strange, this wonderful thing the missionary told him? God was our father, Jesus our Saviour, and to God alone we were to pray, who, for the sake of Jesus, the dear Saviour who died for us, forgives our sins. How plain, how simple, how beautiful it all was!

Yet Carmio was still troubled about the Virgin. Those teachings of his childhood were too strong to be overcome easily now, though nearly eleven years had gone by since he had heard them. He took his doubts, his perplexities, to the missionary, and soon how clear it all was, and how happy too was Carmio in the new, the precious Saviour he had found.

"Missionary," said Carmio one day, "I see you are troubled about the right one to help you talk to the Indians. Try me; I think I can do it. You tell me

and I will tell the Indians. I know all three languages, Apache, Comanche, and Kiowa, and I know English too."

Thus Carmio became the missionary's helper and interpreter, a great blessing indeed, for good interpreters were few on the reservation.

But Carmio was soon to meet a great struggle, the greatest he had known in all his life, because so different from any that had come to him.

When Carmio had been given his freedom by Ke-a-ko, one of his first thoughts was of his far-away home, his mother, and his brothers. But alas, Carmio had forgotten the name of the town near which they had lived, and had only a faint idea as to the part of Mexico in which it lay. His family name too had been forgotten, though his given name, Carmio, he had kept through all. It was the one link that bound him to his home. He remembered his mother's name, for they had often endearingly called her "Mamma

Martina''; and his brothers too, Paulo and Jacinto. Ah, Jacinto! was it not from his ranch Carmio was carried away by the awful Comanches? Could he ever forget that? Sometimes he felt like starting out and walking on and on until he should find his loved ones from whom he had been so cruelly taken. But where was that home? How was he to find it?

One day Carmio happened to be at the government store. Several traders were there who had come to purchase cattle. Two of them had lately been to Mexico. Carmio heard them talking about it. He listened with ears strained to catch every word, for was it not his own loved land about which they were speaking? Suddenly a name was mentioned. At sound of it Carmio almost leaped from the box on which he was sitting. "Jacinto Hernandez!" Why, that was his own brother's name! The moment he heard it he remembered it. How could he ever have forgotten it?

“Oh, sir,” he said to the trader, “tell me if he were alive; if you really saw him! He is my brother—pardon me for being so excited—my own brother whom I have not seen for all these years!”

“Yes, as fully alive as he could be,” replied the good-natured trader, who knew something of Carmio’s story and felt sorry for him.

“And the mother”—Carmio’s voice almost failed him as the loved name was pronounced—“was she there? Did you see her? Is she yet alive?”

“The Signor Hernandez had no mother living with him,” said the trader slowly and in a low tone. He felt sorrier than ever for the boy.

For a moment all seemed dark before Carmio. Oh could it be that she was really dead, his own sweet Madrecita? Then he remembered—and oh, the joy in that remembrance—his mother lived with her other sons some miles from Jacinto’s; she was probably yet alive.

“Oh how can I reach them?” he exclaimed, “how let them know that I am still alive? Could I not go? Could I not walk?”

“No, my boy,” said the trader, decidedly. “It is hundreds of miles, and the country is wild.”

“Send them a letter,” said the storekeeper to Carmio. “They will answer it and tell you what to do.”

A letter! In all his life Carmio had never sent or received a letter. How strange it was to think of it now! He had been to the post office, he had seen others getting and sending the queer little packages, but it had never struck him that he could in this way send to or receive a message from his loved ones.

The name of his brother's post office was obtained from the trader, the letter written and sent, and then came the long and trying days of the waiting. At length the answer came, and oh, what joy it brought to Carmio!

Yes, the dear mother was yet alive, and so were the brothers. But the mother had not been very well for some time, and now this shock of hearing that he, her youngest born, yet lived, had been a great one to her, though one of joy. He must hasten to come, for they were impatient to see him. Money was enclosed for his expenses, and he was given clear directions.

Now began the struggle with Carmio. How he longed to go! yea, with every throb of his heart. It seemed to him, looking backward over all the wretched and lonely years, that there could be no joy on earth equal to this of being with his loved ones again. But how could he go away from the new life that had come to him here, the new, strange, sweet life of the past few months? How could he leave the missionary and the mission church and the good that he knew he was helping to do? Jesus, the dear Saviour, had done so much for him. Could he

turn his back on the work now, the work for Jesus, the work that he saw so plainly was for him to do? But on the other side was the dear mother who had loved him too in her earthly way, who had given up much for him, whose arms were at that very moment aching to clasp him to her heart again.

The missionary saw the struggle and pitied Carmio with all his heart, but he thought it a question for the boy alone to decide. It would be better so. Somehow he felt that Carmio would make the right choice, so he prayed for him and waited.

At the end of a day or so Carmio came to the missionary and said:

“Missionary, I have chosen. I will go to my mother and brothers. I will see them again. My heart cries out for that and I cannot say it nay. I will fold my mother in my arms; I will tell of the Saviour I have found and beg her to let him be her Saviour too. Then I will

come back. I will bring her if she will but come. If she will not, then I must. I feel that I must, missionary. Jesus shows me so plainly how I am needed here."

But before Carmio could make ready to go another letter came. The dear mother had passed into the beyond. The shock of hearing that he was yet alive had been too great for her in her feeble condition. The sacrifice need not now be made. There was but the one choice for Carmio.

Long and bitterly Carmio wept. The bitterest tears were at the thought that the mother had gone before he could tell her of the precious Saviour who alone can forgive sin. He went to see his brothers, stayed for a few months, then came back.

Should you go to Anadarko, and while there attend the services at the little mission church, you would see a dark-faced young man, with very bright eyes and a quick, intelligent manner, standing

beside the minister during the sermon. Each sentence the minister speaks is slowly and carefully repeated to the Indian congregation. Sometimes his eyes fill with tears as he adds his own words of persuasion. The young man is Carmio.



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