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The Wanderer.

On a low fence along a dusty highway a little girl sat and whistled. Back of this whistling sprite, a little way up the lane was an old farm-

On the porch a woman appeared. 'Alma she called, 'what are you

'I'm out here on the fence, mamma whistling good-night to the sun. 'Supper will soon be ready.'

'I'll come in a minute, mamma. She turned her head as she spoke and saw a stranger approaching over the ridge, beyond which in the valley gave her. lay the village. As he came down the roadway he seemed very tall and very thin, and his shadow stretched far behind him.

He was an old man with full gray beard and long gray hair. His coat

heavily on a stout cane. The whistle stopped as he neared the child. The old man raised his hands with a strange gesture.

'The child!' he murmured, and stood fast in the roadway. For a full moment he stood there with hands upraised. Then is hands

slowly dropped, a new light came into his face. 'It iss Lena,' he softly said.

'My name is Alma,' said the child. 'It iss Lena's hair and Lena's eyes.' he murmured. 'I am Alma Sedgwick,' said the child. 'I live with my mamma in

the house you see there.' He slowly nodded his gray head, Lena lives far away.'

'Is Lena your little girl ?' 'She was my leetle girl; but she

iss losted. 'That's too bad,' said the child with a tremor of sympathy. 'And

are you looking for her now?' 'I look effryveres,' the old man answered. 'Vat is de use? She comes no more. I call so loudt, Lena!' but she hears me not.' His thin figure suddenly dropped. 'I am so very

tired,' he murmured. He staggered a little and the frightened child caught his hand 'Come with me,' she said 'and rest. My mamma knows just what to do

for sick people. Come.' Holding fast to his hand, she slow-

ly led him to the porch. 'He is very tired, mamma,' exclaimed the child. He is looking for his daughter, Lena. A child like me. She is lost.'

slowly ate the food. And his deep set eyes wandered from the child to the mother.

came this way ?' she presently ask-

'Dere are many vays,' he slowly answered, 'vy not dis vun ?' 'And was it long ago you lost her?' He gravely nodded.

'Long ago,' he answered, so werry long ago.'

'Then she must be a grown woman

'So,' he said with infinite pathos

'That iss why I haf lost her.' He talked little, but listened with an eager air to all that was said. But when the mother tried to learn something about him. his mind proved a blank. He did not even remember his name; he had no friends, nobody would look for him. He did not know whence he came, nor whither he was going. If Lena coul | be found, Lena

would know. His restless gaze, wandering about the room, stopped at a violin box that stood in a corner.

That was my uncle Jim's,' said the child, following his gaze. He left it here when he went away with papa. Would you like to see it?'

He took out the violin and frowned as he looked it over. Then he strung it with infinite care and adjusted the bow. And presently the litt e room was filled with crowding tones, now sweet, now harsb, now sad, now jubilant, and then dying into silence.

The old man lifted his head and looked at the mother in the doorway. 'I vas de king's chapel master, in de long ago,' he said with quiet dignity. 'Now I play something for de

It was a lilting little measure, full of laughter and whispering voices and the patter of merry feet. And when it ended with a sudden thrum

the child laughed.

'More,' she cried, 'more.' 'Den I play you the little folk song will teach it you. Sit here by me

taught Lena,' he said. 'Und after vere you can catch it close.' It was a song of the Rhine, of sunny slopes, of vineyards, of the humble

cot and the mother heart-the song of the wanderer who longs for his boyhood's home. The old man played it through with pathos, and then he had the

child hum it with the violin. Her ear was quick and presently she hummed it alone. The old man was much pleased.

'To-morrow,' he said, 'I will de words teach you. To-night it is

enough.'

peared, stronger and brighter, but said nothing of his future plans. He | seemed anxious to make himself useful as far as possible. He brought in w od, he mended the fence, and then he gave the child her music lesson.

The puzzled mother shook her head. Was it right for her to shelter this stranger of whom she knew nothing? It was evident that he was mentally disordered, although harmless. She would wait longer before she decided what she would

Alma and the old man were inseparable companions. And she never tired of the music lesson he

'She has the werry promising voice,' he told her mother. 'I vill a fine singer of her make. It will not be de feerst time, no, no.'

But one bright summer day in June the child was again sitting on the was long and loose and he leaned fence along the highway. This time she was not whistling. Her clear soprano was warbling the folk song the old man so carefully had taught her. And as she sang, her eyes were intent upon the page of the wonderful German fairy book the old man had sent to the village and bought for her.

She was so absorbed that she did not hear the approach of a huge touring car. There was in the car a lady, who, catching sight of the child, signalled the chaufieur to stop. Then she lightly stepped down and stood there listening to the song. When it ended, she drew a long breath.

'My dear,' she softly called, 'will you come here, please?

The child looked down and saw the lady, a very grand lady with beautiful clothes, and with a winning smile.

'Who taught you to sing that song my dear? There were tears in the beautiful

lady's eyes. 'Father Luke taught me.'

'Father Luke? And will you take

She took the child's hand and together they went up the lane. The old man was sitting on the porch, and the mother of the child was in

As the grand lady approached the eld man looked up and his gaze was troubled one.

'Father, said the grand lady very

He slowly shook his head. Then as she stood with her appeal-

ing eyes upon his face she began the Then the woman, noting his exhaustion, brought him cordial and
cakes. He drank the cordial and
slowly ate the food. And his deep

As the last notes lingering died away, the old man, his face rapt and 'And do you think your daughter shining, turned to the mother of the child.

'There is no odder voice like that,' he simply said. 'It iss Lena! Then the grand lady's arms were around him and her kiss was on his

'Ah, it is very good to see you again, father. And you look so fine

so well, so happy.

'And will you take meaway, Lena'?

'Why, father dear, you want to
visit Lena, do you not? But you may
come back. Lena is only too happy
to find you pgain, and find you so
comfortable. You may come and go

as you please, father. The gray head nodded. 'It is well,' said he. little later the lady talked

to the mother of the child. 'I am Mme Marlatti of the grand opera,' she exclaimed in her quick way, 'and this is my father. He wandered away from us—he has not been the same since my mother died and we have searched so far for him. It was quite by chance we heard of the strange old man who played the violin so beautifully. I hurry, hurry, and lo! he is here!

The voice of the old man inter-

'Undihow about de child, Lena? 'You will make a great singer of the child, father-a great singer.' And the old man's trembling hand touched the child's curls and he

gently smiled.

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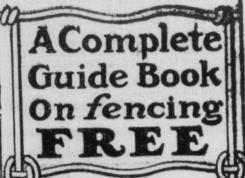
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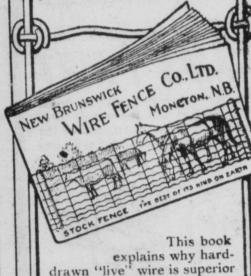
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