

his situation, which was certainly as sad—not perhaps as possible, since there was the hope of deliverance when the cities should be surrendered, and his grandfather would do all that could be done for his recovery; but all was as dark and dreary as could be imagined when he came to think it over, as he had never had time or space to do since Hunderik had carried him off.

At last, however, he had time to realize that, though his grandfather and uncle, and even poor Gola, were so far away, and did not even know where he was, there was an Almighty All-seeing Protector ever close to him, and that he might trust to be defended. He said his prayers, and ended with "St. Patrick's Breastplate," kneeling on his heap of ferns, but still so stiff and aching that he dropped down again, very glad to rest. Just then some of the women began to appear from their great boxes, which he now perceived to be beds—almost amounting to the separate cells of a monastery, or what would now be called cubicles, except that conveniences for the toilet were altogether lacking.

The washing, as he found later, for those who esteemed such practices, was done at a spring at a little distance from the dwelling, on the mountain-side, and such attention to the hair as ever was paid was an amusement for the leisure hours of the day. A comb was a great possession, only belonging to the wife of the settlement.

Presently, as he still lay on his heap of ferns, too stiff and tired willingly to move, three children came toward him, two little girls with bright hair, about his own age, and a younger boy. He thought he heard them say, "Come and look at the new pledge boy," but he could not be sure of their language, though he knew well enough when the boy called out, "Give! give!" and snatched at the golden bulla on Attalus' neck. The chain was welded on, and it would not come off, though his hard pull hurt severely, and Attalus with a cry tried to push him away, upon which he roared.

Two or three women rushed up, and one, whose gold necklace and armlets showed her to be Hunderik's wife, struck Attalus a sharp blow, while the child continued to tug at the gold medallion as if he would cut the poor boy's throat. There were loud exclamations all round, and it ended in Frau Bernhild producing a great pair of shears with which she severed the chain, when her boy Hundbert bore it off in triumph, and Attalus was left smarting under the deep wale it had made in his neck, and trying not to cry, but feeling as if he had lost his rank and had been made a slave outright.

The lady spurned him for a moment with her foot, muttering something that he knew well to be "Little slave!" but he was too worn out and dejected to show anger. One of the little girls, who stood by gazing at him, said, "Don't

cry, boy," and the other, "Was it a charm?"

"It showed my rank as a Roman," said Attalus, trying to put this into her language.

"Hundbert will weary of it and throw it aside," suggested the elder of the girls; "I will try to get it again for you."

"But if mother gets it you will never have it," said her sister. "Was it gold?"

"It was. All Roman boys have golden bullas," said Attalus.

"Come and have some milk," said the elder one, in a consoling voice; "Bruna is just bringing it."

This was a refreshing idea, and Attalus rose slowly and with pain, and let the little maid take his hand. Two such creatures were entirely new to him; he had never spoken to a girl in his life, excepting to a beggar at his grandfather's gate; but no one since he had been in Hunderik's charge had till now said a kind word to him, and he could not help looking gratefully up in the fair pink-and-white face full of tenderness such as the girl might have shown to a frightened foal or puppy-dog. Indeed, as they moved toward the door, the great wolf-hounds came leaping round her, and the half-grown ones, with big soft clumsy paws, almost knocked Attalus down, to the laughter of the other girl, while they barked and whined with eager joy, and Frau Bernhild called out, "Roswitha! Valhild! Where are you going?"

"To feed the dogs, mother, and get some milk for the hostage," was the answer of Roswitha.

She led him, accompanied by Valhild, outside the door, into a great space of irregular yard, with a few barns and sheds, a stack or two of fagots, logs of wood around, and other ricks of straw or hay. The house where they had slept was higher and more completely roofed than the others, and the huge crossed trunks of pine-trees that formed the gable ends were at their tapering summits decked with skulls of horses, and on each side of the door stood a tall trunk of pine carved as a pillar. Cows, horses, sheep, goats, pigs, and poultry were scattered all about the yard; there were rudely clad men, women, and children running about, eating, or lounging among them. Only a few seemed to be employed effectively—some of the women were milking, a few of the men grooming the horses, and another was cutting up a sheep that had been killed. There was a kind of pavement before the doorway, but all the rest was a swamp of foulness and dirt, trampled on without caution or regard by bare or merely sandalled feet.

The fowls came flocking round Roswitha, and she threw them scraps and barley, the latter of which she took from the barn behind her. Then stopping one of the women with a bowl of milk she took possession of it, and,