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CHAPTER VIII.

DURING the same week Graziella had occasion to go down to the village for something she needed. She was in the habit of rowing across the river (she lived on the side opposite to the village), and walking down the other bank, as it was but a short distance. When she had reached a little bush situated at the end of the sidewalk which was laid for a third of a mile out of the village, she came upon a party of little boys and girls who seemed to be out-picknicking, as some of their mothers sat at a short distance from them with a plentiful supply of baskets in easy reach. The children were nearly all small, and had never been Graziella's pupils, but she recognized them by sight, from having seen them frequently on the play-ground of the school. They were in the grove with a fence between them and the road, and were so absorbed in their play, they did not notice her approach. She was so astonished at the novelty, to her, of the play in which they were engaged, she unconsciously stopped and watched them for some time. They had piled up sticks and stones so as to form