

RUDOLF THE MUSICIAN



By Maud Regan.

Out in the quaint old street the children romped and sang, for the soft spring rain that had been falling all day long had ceased at last, and now from the west where the sun was setting in crimson glory, there poured a flood of ruddy light, gilding the peaked roofs of the odd little dwellings and bathing in liquid radiance the whole of the village street.

At the open windows the mothers sat talking in desultory fashion, while they watched the children at play, pausing now and then to croon soft lullabys to the drowsy little ones nestling in their laps.

Memories of the recent rain still lingered in the tiny pools of water which had found a resting place in the flags of the uneven pavement where the grooves worn by generations of restless feet were deepest, and there an occasional sparrow dipped his thirsty beak or fluttered

the water in sparkling drops from his dusty wings, fearless and unmolested.

Down in the garden of the gray stone house where Rudolf, the musician dwelt, the rain still lay heavily on the grass, and when the breeze swayed the branches of the giant lindens great drops were shaken shower-like to the ground with a soft pattering sound pleasant to hear.

Very quiet the old house was, set far back in its large old-fashioned garden where roses ran riot, for the Gray House was not then, as now, a place of pilgrimage, and he whom dead the world has delighted to honor, living found few to praise him, and fewer still who cared to listen to the wondrous strains which stole out from the old piano when his thin white hands wandered to and fro among the keys.