

note in these Pagan gardens. And the light voices of children thrilled through the languorous air and rang out in the sunshine.

For it was the children's hour in the Villa Borghese.

The stalwart nurses in their flowing ribbons, with immense gleaming pins, almost like daggers, stuck through their head-dresses, walked proudly, carrying, or wheeling, their charges, the dark-eyed *blmbi* of Rome. Older children, clasping dolls, or carelessly cherishing as accustomed possessions, beloved but thoroughly known, large Teddy bears, walked or skipped blithely along the paths, crying out like birds to each other, darting to and fro as if full of mysterious purpose not to be divined by their elders, or gazing at the horsemen and motors with a concentration behind which lay virginal tracts of desire, of dewy hopes, of bright, springing imaginations. Some boys were playing football, not cleverly, but lustily, exercising their limbs with a riotous joy, and filling the air with their shouts. Many young girls, with bright, watchful eyes and demure lips, moved slowly with their English or German governesses towards the Pincio.

It was a Saturday, and at three o'clock there would be music in the kiosk from the band of the Carabinieri.

So fine was the afternoon that a crowd of people would probably be there. It was early in November, and though the gay season of Rome had not begun, would not begin till after Christmas, though the Costanzi had not yet opened its doors to opera-goers, and though many of the Roman aristocracy still lingered in their country places, yet numerous palaces and apartments were already occupied, most of the diplomats accredited to the Quirinal and the Vatican had returned to their duties, and in the hotels and the innumerable pensions there was a goodly number of guests. So the young girls and their governesses walked towards the Pincio, intent on hearing the music, but still more intent on having a peep at the world.

As the hour struck, the conductor took his stand in the pillared kiosk, settled his peaked cap firmly on his head with an air of martial resolution, threw back his long cloak, lifted his arm, and the first notes of a potpourri of airs from *Aida* rang out to the waiting crowd.