

The Rockwood Review.

bargain."

That was the beginning of our acquaintance. Afterwards we went out several times together, and I found him useful, though I could never depend on him. Once, I remember, in trying to trace the course of the old Servian wall which defended most of ancient Rome, I was convinced that it must have crossed a busy square, or rather under the square, which is now built over the ruins. My friend, the wise archaeologist, said no, impossible. Half joking, I appealed to Zetto. He listened attentively to what we wanted, then led us straight to a den where he sometimes slept, under an old cellar beyond the square. The theory was proved. The cellar wall was twenty-five hundred years old; and the den was the top of an arch of Servius Tullus. So said the archaeologist, looking curiously at the ragged boy who had corrected an error in a learned book.

Gradually I grew to like Zetto, and became thoroughly interested in him. He was a waif, and earned his living in various ways, some of which would not bear investigating. Still, I was kind to him, and he seemed to like me after a time. Then I made a suggestion occasionally; tried to get him out of evil ways and away from evil companions. Often, still, when I am thinking about him, I find myself wondering if the suggestions, the kindness, ever had any influence. Perhaps they did; I think so; though I never saw the evidence.

Late one afternoon I was on my way home from beyond the Tiber, when I stopped at the historic island in the river to "nose" round a minute for anything of interest. Zetto appeared suddenly, surprising me not a little; for I had seen him with some companions miles away earlier in the afternoon. They had all dodged into an alley before I could speak with him.

He was unusually quiet that afternoon, I remember. Generally he was bright and chatty. But I found an old inscription, and

speedily forgot him, trying to make it out. It grew late and cold. A shiver passed over me in the lonely place, and I straightened up abruptly. As I did so I saw a coat-tail vanish behind an old wall near.

"Your 'Father Tiber' was a dirty god at best, Zetto," I said, shivering again. "He will give us the fever if we stay here another minute. Come on!" I started for the bridge at a quick walk; for it is dangerous to get chilled in Rome at sunset. Zetto followed, reluctantly, it seemed.

On the bank of the river I stopped suddenly.

"By the way, Zetto, the old Romans made bulwarks all around that island to protect themselves from the floods. They made it look exactly like a big ship. That broken obelisk over there was once the mast; but the bulwarks are all gone. Have you ever seen a bit of smooth wall there, old, and rounded like a ship's side?"

Zetto thought a moment; then he glanced past me, and his face lightened.

"I don't know, Signore, but there are two gentlemen yonder. Perhaps they live here, and can tell us."

I had not noticed the "two gentlemen" before. They were sitting on the broad slab above the river wall, apparently watching the sunset—a thing I had never seen Italians do before. They belonged to Zetto's class, undoubtedly, but were older and better dressed.

I approached and asked the same question. They sprang from the wall, hats in hand, all politeness on the instant. My first thought was that I had misjudged them. A rapid conversation ensued. They drew close about me, offering their service, pointing out where I could find the thing I wanted (and I found it, too, afterwards, just where they said). With Zetto they were apparently perfect strangers.

Even yet I can only admire the artistic way in which the thing was done. It was too late to go back; for the fever rises in low places at