

# **THREE GREEK CHILDREN**



HERA AND THE CHARIOT OF THE SUN

**THREE GREEK  
CHILDREN**

**BY**

**Alfred J. Church**

*with illustrations*

*after Flaxman and the antique*

**YESTERDAY'S CLASSICS  
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## CHAPTER I

# THE HOME IN ATHENS

I AM going to tell you about some Greek children, who lived more than two thousand years ago in a city called Athens. The city stands still, and the ruins of many of its old buildings are to be seen. Most of these buildings were temples, in which the people used to worship their many gods. There was Phœbus, the sun-god; and Hera, the goddess of power; and Athené, the goddess of wisdom; and Demeter, or mother-earth. For they did not know, as did the Jews—who had, you will remember, but one temple,—that there is but one God from whom all good things come down to men. Athens was one of the richest and most beautiful cities in the world, and very powerful too; only at the particular time of which I am writing the people were in great distress. Their enemies sent an army every year into their country, and shut them up in their walls during all the spring and summer time. Thousands and thousands more than the city could properly hold were crowded into it; numbers of people had no houses to live in, and had to do as best they could under carts tilted up, and even in great barrels—any thing that could give them shelter. Even the rich felt this trouble very much, and

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especially the children, who had no out-door games; for the streets were, of course, not fit for them to play in, and they got sadly tired, in the hot days, of being always shut up in their nurseries.

It is a very hot day in July, and the three children I am going to tell you about are feeling very tired and, I am afraid, a little cross. There are two girls, Gorgo and Rhodium (Rhodium means *Little Rose*), and a boy, Hipponax (which is in English *Horse King*). Gorgo and Rhodium are playing with dolls, not made of wax or wood, like our English dolls, but of clay, and painted to make them look like soldiers, sailors, and merchants, or ladies finely dressed, or working women. Gorgo, who is the elder of the two girls, likes soldier dolls, and has divided hers into two little armies. One army she calls Spartans (the Spartans were the enemies who were shutting up the people in the walls), and the other Athenians. She sits on the floor and rolls a ball, first into one army and then into the other. I don't think that she rolls it quite fairly, for more of the Spartans are upset than of the Athenians. Gorgo is just ten years old. Her sister, who is four years younger, does not care about soldier dolls, but is never tired of playing at mother, nurse, and child, with the three dolls which her own nurse has dressed up for her. Hipponax, who is four, is amusing himself with a cockchafer, which one of the servants has caught for him. It has got a thread tied round it, and he holds the other end of the thread in his hand and lets it fly about the room. This is a rather cruel game, and the sisters seem to think so, for when the little boy runs out of the room to get a drink of

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water, Gorgo says to Rhodium: "I do wish that tiresome child would find something else to play with besides these wretched cockchafers. They do make such a nasty buzzing, and, besides, they fly up against one's face, and I don't like the feel of them at all. And I am sure they must be very unhappy. I shall cut the thread while he is away, and let the poor thing go."

"Oh! But he will be so angry," said Rhodium, who is a timid, peaceable child, and rather afraid of her sturdy little bother, who has already begun to think that he is very much better than his sisters.

"He may be as angry as he likes," says Gorgo, and cuts the thread which the little boy had tied to the leg of the chair.

Hipponax came back in just in time to see the beetle fly off through the open window, and very angry he was. He knew that Gorgo had let it go, and, small as he was, was ready to fly at her, when Rhodium, the peacemaker, had a happy thought.

"Brother, dear," she said, "will you have my chariot to play with?"

It was a beautiful little toy of ivory, with four horses made of wood, and so beautifully carved and painted that, but for their size, they might have seemed alive. The girl's uncle had given it to her the year before, when he won the chariot race at the great games of Olympia. Little Hipponax thought it ought to belong to him. "What have girls to do with horses and chariots?" he would say; "but I am the Horse King." It was a special treat for him to be allowed to play with it, and poor

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Rhodium used to look on in great fear while he dragged it about the room, pretending that he was winning a race. This is what he began to do now, and his two sisters played at being the people who look on, and clapped their hands and shouted, while he ran about with it.

Happily, before any mischief was done, the nurse came back, and the children left their play to ask her for a story.

Nurse was a Spartan woman. Rich people always got a Spartan nurse for their children if they could, for they had a way of keeping them in order without being unkind. She had come into the family just after Gorgo's birth, and could not bear to leave the dear little baby when the war broke out between her country and Athens. And there she had stopped ever since, and the children loved her almost as much as they loved their mother.

"A story, nurse! a story!" they all cried.

"Have you been good children?" she said.

Hipponax hung his head, but as he had not actually beaten his sister she was able to give him a good character.

So nurse made the two girls sit by her, and took Hipponax on her knee, and told them the

## STORY OF THE BOY WHOM DEMETER LOVED

“Once upon a time the goddess Demeter went wandering about the world looking for her daughter, whom she had lost, and in her wanderings she came to this country in which we are now living. There was a poor man that had a small farm about ten miles from the city. He had two children, one a girl of about ten years old, and the other a baby-boy. The girl took care of two goats, which she used to lead out to pasture and milk. One day as she was coming home she saw Demeter, who was dressed as a poor woman, sitting on a stone near the house. ‘Mother,’ she said, ‘is there any thing that you want?’ And when Demeter said nothing, but only shook her head and began to cry (for it was a sad thing to be called ‘mother’ now that she had lost her daughter), the little girl ran to her father and told him about the poor woman. The kind man came out and begged her to come in, though it was but a poor place, he said. Now it so happened that the baby-boy was very ill. Indeed, his mother had no hope that he would ever be well; but when Demeter went up to him and kissed him as he lay in his cradle, at once he began to get better, and before half an hour was over he was kicking and crowing as if he had never been ill in his life. Then they sat down to supper—some curds and whey made out of goat’s milk, and honey in the comb, and apples.”

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“But hadn’t they any bread?” broke in little Rhodium.

“No, my child,” said the nurse; “no one knew then how to make bread.”

“When they all went to bed Demeter said she would sit up by the fire, for she felt she could not sleep. About midnight, when all were sound asleep, she took the baby out of his cradle, and laid him in the middle of the fire. Ah! you look frightened; but she knew what she was about. She had done something to the child that the fire should not hurt him, but only burn out of him what was weak and mortal, so that he should not die like other people. But when this was half done the mother, who was still a little anxious about the baby, happened to wake and put her hand very gently on the cradle. And lo! it was empty! That woke her up, you may be sure, thoroughly, and she sprang out of bed, and going into the other room she saw the child lying in the middle of the fire. She had it out in a moment, making sure that it must be dreadfully burnt, if it was not dead. How astonished she was when she found it was not hurt at all! Then Demeter said, not angrily, but sadly: “Foolish mother, why did you not trust me, and leave him there? Now your child will die some day like other men and women. Still, I will make him a wise man, for he shall learn to plough, sow, and reap. And this is how people first got to grow wheat, and to make bread.”

Nurse had just finished her story when something happened that was very rare indeed—the children’s father came into the nursery, for generally they went

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down to see him. But he now had such good news to tell them that he could not wait.

“There is peace, dear children,” he said; “peace has been made to-day.”

“And shall we be able to go to our dear country home?” said Gorgo.

“Yes,” said he, “though I am afraid you will find it in a very sad state.”

All the rest of the day the children were almost out of their minds with joy. When the two younger ones had gone to bed, nurse said to Gorgo: “Now I am going to tell you a story about another Gorgo, who lived many years ago in my own dear country. I would not tell you before, because I was sure that you did not like my people, and did not care to know any thing about them. But now that we are friends again you shall hear it.

“This Gorgo was daughter to one of your kings, and was about a year younger than you are. One day she was playing with her dolls in her father’s room, when a stranger was talking to him on some very serious business. The stranger wished him to take an army of Spartans on a very dangerous expedition, and when he said no, he offered him money: first ten, then twenty, then fifty talents. When the king heard of the fifty talents he began to be shaken, for all the Spartans, even the kings, are very poor, and this was a great sum of money. Then Gorgo looked up from her dolls and said, ‘Father, go away, or else this stranger will do you harm.’ When she grew up to be a woman she became the wife of that Spartan king who fought with his three hundred men

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against all the army of Persians, and I think she helped him to be the brave man he was.”

The next day when Gorgo played with her dolls, she made them into one army, and made believe they were going to march against the Persians.

## CHAPTER II

# THE HOME AT MARATHON

IN about a week's time the three children were able to leave Athens for their dear country home. Dear it was, though I do not think that even Gorgo, the eldest, remembered much about it, and little Hipponax had never even seen it. But they had heard their father and mother talk about it till they seemed to know it as well as if they had lived there all their lives. It was just about ten miles from the city, and just outside a little village called Marathon. How pleased they were when they found that after all not much harm had been done to the house, and garden, and farm! The reason of this was that one of the Spartan generals had been living there, and that by great good luck this general was the nurse's own foster-brother. He had taken care of the place for his own sake, and also because he knew that its owners were very kind to his foster-sister. So the house was bright, and clean, and ready, with a very little preparation, for them to live in; and the garden was full of flowers, and joy of joys! there was an orchard, with beautiful red pomegranates and apples and pears in it. Behind the house, too, on the slope of the hill, there was an olive-yard, and, what the children thought much

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prettier, a vineyard in which the grapes were beginning to grow yellow and purple. Little Hipponax, who had scarcely been outside the city since he was born, was quite wild with delight. The first morning after they got there he slipped away from the nurse as soon as he was dressed—and you may be sure he did not give her much peace after it had once begun to be light,—and went to explore the beautiful new place for himself. When he found apples and pears hanging on the trees he was quite astonished. He ran into the house, and made his way to his mother's room, where she was still fast asleep; for mothers used to be very tired in those days, just as they are in these, with a family "move."

"O mother!" he cried, "do get up and come and look at this beautiful fruit. Why, it is really hanging on the trees!"

"Why not?" his mother said, for she was still very sleepy, and did not remember at the moment that her little boy had never seen a fruit-tree before.

"Oh, but mother," he went on, "in Athens it never used to hang on trees, but used to lie on boards, or be piled up in baskets in the shops. And I used to think that the men in the shops made it, for it cost a lot of money, you used to say, just like the other things which people make. But now, I suppose, we may have as much of it as we like?"

"Yes, darling," said his mother; "or perhaps we had better say, as much as nurse thinks good for you."

After breakfast, while the little girls were helping their mother get things into order, Hipponax went for

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a walk with his father round the farm. It would not be easy to say what pleased him most, but I think it was the kind looks that all the people that were at work on the farm gave him. In fact, if he had not been a very nice, simple little fellow he might easily have been spoiled. At Athens, his father, whose name I should have told you, was Leon, was not a very great man, but here he was quite the chief person of the place, and the "little master," whom the old servants had never seen before, was made much of. He felt quite hot and ashamed when the old people kissed his hand, and won their hearts by offering his cheek instead. When they came to the vineyard they found a very old man busy tying up some of the clusters that were touching the ground. He did this wonderfully well though he had but one hand. He was dressed like the other laborers, and Hipponax was surprised to see his father kiss him on both cheeks, while he said: "Here is the little one, father. Is he like the old stock?"

"The gods make it flourish!" said the old man, and he stooped down and kissed the little boy.

Then Leon and the old man had some talk together about the vines and other matters of the farm. As they were going home Hipponax said: "Father, why did you kiss the old man and call him 'father'?"

Leon answered: "Wait till to-morrow, my little son, and you shall hear a story that you must never forget as long as you live."

The next day all the family went on an expedition. There was a cushioned carriage drawn by two mules;

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in this the children rode with their mother and nurse. The old man, too, whom Hipponax had seen in the vineyard, went with them. Leon rode on horseback by the side of the carriage. The road ran along the side of a little stream, which was then almost dry. On either side were cornfields, now quite bare, and sometimes a little cottage, with its little clump of old, gray, olive-trees. Some of the cottages were in ruins, but the olive-trees seemed not to have been hurt at all. After they had gone four or five miles they came to two mounds, one of which had a number of little pillars on it. Here the carriage stopped, and the children got down. Then Leon said to the old man, whose name was Sciton: "Sciton, no one but you must take them to see it." So Sciton took the little boy by the hand, and beckoned to the girls that they were to follow. When they came near, they saw that all the pillars had names written on them, some more and some less. Sciton took them to one on which there were about thirty names, and told Gorgo, who, you will remember, was the elder of the two girls, to read them. It was not very easy to spell them out, for the letters were a little old-fashioned. But after she had looked at them about a minute she almost screamed: "Oh, mother, here is father's name, and brother's too!" And sure enough there they were: *Leon, son of Hipponax*. Old Sciton looked proud and sad, too, when he heard it. Then Leon said to him: "Tell them the story, Sciton." So Sciton told them the story of the great battle of Marathon, in which he had himself fought almost seventy years before.

"Once upon a time some people called Persians

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came to conquer this country. They came in ships from over the sea, and there were so many of them that they quite covered all this plain that you now see. Still the Athenians went out to fight with them, and drew up their little army—it was very little compared with the Persians—just under the hills there. Your great-grandfather was among them, and I was allowed to go with him, though I was only a slave then. Well, we waited several days, and began to get sad and dull; and there were some who even talked of making peace. At last one of the generals, who was my master's uncle, persuaded the others to fight. How glad we all were to hear it, and that very night a thousand men from a little town called Plataea marched in to help us. The next day, when we had been drawn up in line and had said our prayers, we set off running towards the enemy. One of the prisoners afterwards told us that they thought we were mad. Well, your great-grandfather and I were in the middle of the line, and we happened to have the very strongest of the Persians to fight with, and we came up to them all out of breath and out of order. There were so many of them that they pushed us back and we had not strength to stand, though we did not wish to move. Your great-grandfather was a very strong man, and could run almost any distance without getting out of breath. He would not give way, and he was left quite alone, and of course I could not leave him. I do not know how many Persians he struck down, but at last one came behind him and aimed a great blow at his head. I put up my arm to save him, and the sword lopped my hand sheer off and wounded him. Then another Persian struck

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him, and we fell both together. I do not remember any thing more; but I heard that the middle of our line was broken—the two ends won the battle. My dear master was dead when they came to look for us, but I was just alive, and when I got better they made me free. That is his name your sister read on the pillar there.”

“Well,” said Leon to little Hipponax, “that is the story you must never forget. Never forget, too, that you have seen one of the ‘men who fought at Marathon.’ ”

## CHAPTER III

# AT THE TOILET

It was one of the little girl's great delights to see her mother dress, or, perhaps I should say, be dressed, for her maid or maids (she generally had two or three waiting on her) used to do very nearly every thing for her. What she used to wear is more than I can tell you. But you can get some notion of what she looked like when the dressing was finished from the picture that you will find with this chapter.

One day Gorgo—little Rhodium happened that day to be not quite well—found a new maid waiting upon her mother. The old one, who had been with her ever since her marriage, was just married. This sort of thing often happens in England. A girl goes into service when she is sixteen or seventeen years old, and then, perhaps in ten years' time, when she has saved up some money, she marries a young man whom she knew at home, or whose acquaintance she has made since, perhaps the baker's young man, or the young fellow that calls for orders from the grocer. But this was not at all what had happened to Lapaxo, for this was the name of the young woman who had just married. In the summer of the year in which Leon was married he had gone on an

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expedition against some towns in Thrace, which is the country that they now call Albania. The expedition did not do very much, for the Thracians were very brave and fierce, and were always ready to meet the Athenians when they tried to land. But they did manage to take one of the towns, coming on it by surprise early one morning, when the country people were going in to market, and the gates happened to be blocked up by a number of carts. When it was taken, all the people in it were sold as slaves. This was a shocking thing to do, but it was one of the ways in which money was got to pay the soldiers' and sailors' wages. This time the general got nearly £30,000 for the slaves he sold. Leon did not think it was wrong; but he had a tender heart, and when he saw poor Lapaxo hiding her face with her hands and crying as if her heart would break, he could not help being very sorry for her. She was the daughter of one of the chief men of the place, and was a very pretty, refined-looking girl. So Leon determined to buy her, and give her to his wife that was to be. He had to give as much as £200 for her, for the slave-dealers who followed the army bid very high. Happily Leon was a rich man, and when he said out aloud: "By Hera, I will give two talents sooner than let her go," the dealers gave up. This was how Lapaxo came to be Elpinicé's maid.

And now you shall hear about her marriage. For eight years she lived with her mistress, and seemed to have no thought of a change. She would not so much as look at any of the slaves, and when a rich tradesman, who had happened to see her when he was putting up some beautiful purple curtains from Thyatira, wanted

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to make her his wife, she said “No,” quite angrily. (You must understand that this man was a foreigner, for, of course, no Athenian would have thought of marrying a slave.) Well, one day she went with her mistress to a great service in one of the temples, and there were some archers from Thrace keeping the road that the crowd might not push against the ladies. When she saw the captain of the archers, she turned quite pale. He was her old lover. You see the Thracians did not much care for whom they fought, and this young man, who had been away from the town when it was taken, had taken service with the Athenian army, and being a brave and clever fellow, had done very well. He recognized Lapaxo quite as quickly as she had recognized him, and it was not long before he found out where she lived. By great good luck he had served under Leon, and had once helped him when he was wounded. So when he went with a bag of gold, which he had saved out of his pay, and told his story, and wanted to buy Lapaxo’s freedom, Leon said: “No, my good friend, I have long wanted to do something for you, so I will set her free for nothing, and you shall use the money to begin housekeeping with.”

This is quite a long story about Elpinicé’s maid; but I wanted you to know how people got their servants in those days.\* And how, do you think, did the lady get her new one? Why, she was left to her by her aunt’s will. The old lady thought very highly of her, and left her to Elpinicé because she was her favorite niece. “I bequeath,” she wrote in her will, “my chief dresser, Glykerion by

\* Elpinicé means “Victory of Hope.”

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name, to my brother's daughter, Elpinicé, wife of Leon, son of Hipponax. Let her be reckoned as of the value of twenty minas (about £83), for indeed she is the most skilful adorning in Athens. But let not her mistress spare the slipper, for indeed she is as lazy as she is skilful." You must know that ladies used to beat their maids with their slippers if they did not please them.

So Glykerion came to wait on Leon's wife, and this was the day on which she began her duties. She got on well enough, though indeed she seemed to think it all beneath her, till she had done dressing her mistress' hair. Then she began to look about as if for something that she could not find. At last she whispered to one of the slave girls: "Where is the rouge box?" Her mistress heard her, and said: "I never use rouge." Glykerion almost dropped the brush with which she was giving one or two last touches to the hair. Then she recovered herself. "Truly your ladyship has color enough of your own. But a little white-lead——" "No, nor white-lead either," said Elpinicé; "I am quite content to be as nature made me." "Nature!" said the maid, under her breath. "What barbarism! Castor preserve me! What would my old mistress have said?"

Elpinicé thought it a good time, when the maid was gone, to have a little talk with Gorgo about these things. The little girl was beginning, as little girls sometimes will, to think too much about herself. She would look in the glass (I should rather say the "brass," for people in those days used polished brass or silver instead of glass, to see their faces in), and put on a smile or a languishing look, or strike an attitude. Once her mother

## AT THE TOILET

found her trying on a mantle, with a couple of bracelets on her arm that she had taken out of the jewelry box. So now she said:

“I am going to tell my little girl something that happened before she was born. I am afraid she will think that her mother was a very foolish woman. Well, when I was married I was not content to be as nature made me, but used to paint myself red and white with the very things that you heard the maid ask for. I must say this for myself, that I had been taught to do it; it was the custom in our family, as it is in many families still. And this is how I was cured of it. One day, about a month after we had been married, your dear father said, ‘I have a present for you, my love,’ and he showed me a very handsome-looking casket. When I opened it, there was a mantle of rich purple, just the very color that he knew I liked best, and under the mantle a fine gold bracelet wrapped in wool, and at the bottom a number of silver pieces. I was delighted, and threw my arms round his neck and kissed him. ‘You dear, good husband,’ I said, ‘what a beautiful present!’ There was just a little twinkle in his eye. I did notice that, but I was too much pleased to think any thing about it. So I began to count over the money, for I had never even seen so much together before. And as I was counting it, one of the pieces slipped out of my hand and fell on the table. It made such a dull sound, not in the least like the ring of good money, that I cried out: ‘Oh! it must be bad!’ ‘It does not sound well,’ your father said; ‘try another one.’ So I tried another one, and that was just as bad, and then a third and a fourth, till I was quite tired,

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THE TOILET

and there was not a single good one among them. Then your father said: 'Just try the bracelet with your nail; perhaps that is not all right, and sure enough, when I tried it with my nail, a piece of gold leaf came off, and showed me the wood underneath. 'Dear me,' said my husband, 'this is a bad business.' As for me, I burst out crying, and one of the tears fell on the mantle, and I saw the beautiful purple color begin to run. 'Well,' said my husband, 'there is only the casket left; let us try that.' And he wetted his finger, and, lo and behold! instead of being ebony, as I had thought, it was only common pine wood painted black! And so all my beautiful present was a mere sham. I threw myself on the couch, and cried as if my heart would break. Then your father came and sat down by me, and said: 'So my darling likes real things, not sham. And quite right, too; and so does her husband. He likes his wife's real face, and not a

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face painted to look redder than it is and whiter than it is; and he likes his wife's real figure, which he thinks just of the right height, and not one that is made about three inches taller than it is with high-heeled boots. And now, my darling, forgive your husband for this little trick, and give him a kiss.' So I looked up, and he had artfully put a looking-glass so that I could not help seeing myself. Oh! what a fright I was, for the tears had run down through the red and white, and made the most terrible mess of my face. Well, that finished the lesson, if it wanted finishing. I never used paint again. And the next day your father gave me just such another present, only this time every thing was real, casket, mantle, bracelet, money, and all."

## CHAPTER IV

# OLD HYLAX

ONE of the new friends whom the children made at the Marathon house was old Hylax. This name means "Barker," and so you will not be surprised when I tell you that old Hylax was a dog. Very old he was, and so weak that he could no longer go out hunting, but used to spend the day lying in the sun, which never seemed too hot for him. You would have thought him dead as he lay stretched out at full length, except that now and then he would make a lazy little snap at the flies. But he used to wake up a little when the hunting party came home; they used always to go and show him what they had caught, and for a minute or two he would look quite young again. They let him hold the hare or the rabbit in his mouth, and the old sparkle came into his eye, and the bristly hair round his neck grew rough, and he gave a very deep growl. Poor old fellow! I wonder whether he thought of the happy time long ago when he was swift and strong? In shape and size he was something like a deerhound, which, I may tell you, is a large, rough greyhound.

I said that the children made friends with him, but I must tell you that he made a curious difference in his

## OLD HYLAX

way of behaving to them. He did not take much notice of the little girls. When they patted him he would just open his eyes, and wag his tail ever so little. But any one could see that he thought much more of Hipponax. He would lift his head and try to lick the little boy's hand, and wag his tail quite briskly. And when Leon, the children's father, came to see him, as he did every morning and evening, the poor old dog used to stagger up on to his feet and lift one of his paws for his master to shake, and look at him as if he loved him, which I am sure he did with all the heart he had. Once Leon came home wetted to the skin with a sudden storm, and went into the house to change his clothes, and did not think of coming out again to say good-night to Hylax. That night the poor old dog seemed not to be able to rest. A groom, who was sitting up with a sick horse, said next morning that he heard him again and again give a little moan as if something was troubling him.

"Is Hylax very old?" said Gorgo to her father the next day when they went to pay him their morning visit.

"Yes," said Leon; "nearly twice as old as you are. Indeed, he is the oldest dog I ever heard of except one. Shall I tell you how I came to get him?"

"Yes, father!" cried all the children together, and Leon began.

"When I was a boy, about two years older than Gorgo, I went with my father to pay a visit to an old friend of his in Arcadia. There are great woods in that country, and wild beasts, such as bears and wolves, which we

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never see here. Well, my father and his friend were very fond of hunting, and sometimes they used to take me with them. Very proud and pleased I was, and though I could not help my heart beating a little quickly when a bear, for instance, stood at bay, I behaved pretty well. Indeed, our host, Pauson was his name, was so pleased with me that he gave me a little hunting spear of my own.

“Well, one day Pauson and my father went after a great wild boar that was quite famous in those parts. As it was a long journey, and would be a difficult bit of hunting, they left me at home. Then I did a very silly thing. The truth was that Pauson’s present had made me quite conceited. I felt as if I were grown up, and what should come into my head but that I would do a little bit of hunting on my own account.

“The day after Pauson and my father started—they were to be away three or four days—I got up very early in the morning, managed to get out of the house without waking any of the servants, and was off, with my spear in my hand, into the wood. I had not gone half a mile when I heard a rustling in a thicket, and there, right in front of me, was a bear!”

“O father!” cried little Hipponax, “were you very much frightened?”

“Well, to tell the truth, I think that I was. Generally bears leave people alone if they are left alone themselves. But this happened to have a cub with it. It turned, looked at me, growled, and then trotted towards me. I was not too frightened to remember what I ought to do. So I

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knelt on one knee, and planted my spear, which, after all, was not much more than a toy, as firmly as I could upon the ground, and waited. When the bear was close to me she lifted herself upon her hind legs and tried to hug me. If I could have held the spear firm, of course she could not have done it, but I was not strong enough. The point just pricked the beast's skin, and then the creature got its fore paws round me. Just at that moment it was knocked over by something that jumped on it from behind. This was a big dog that had been left behind by the hunters, because she had a litter of puppies to attend to. She had seen me go out, and followed me, either because she wanted some amusement, or because she knew that I was a foolish young creature, and must be taken care of. Anyhow, she came just in time. What a fight she and the bear had, rolling over and over on the ground! but of course the bear was much the stronger, and when two woodcutters came by a few minutes afterwards the poor dog was nearly dead. As for me, I had got no harm, except a terrible fright that made me dream of bears for many a month to come. One of the little puppies was given to me, and I took a great deal of trouble in rearing it, for at first it was too young to lap, and I had to put the milk down its throat. That puppy is old Hylax there."

"But, father," said Rhodium, who was always on the look-out for stories, "you spoke of another dog that was as old as Hylax. Tell us about him."

"Another time, my child. One story a day, or I shall have no more to tell."

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But the time came that very evening. They were coming home from a walk when Sciton met them with the news that Hylax was dying. Indeed, when they came to his kennel he seemed dead. But when his master spoke to him he opened his eyes and wagged his tail just a little way, and drooped his ears just once, and then he died. When the children looked at their father they were almost frightened to see the big tears rolling down his cheeks. Before they went to bed he told them this story.

### **THE STORY OF ARGUS**

“Once upon a time, all the kings and chiefs of Greece went to fight against a great city called Troy. Ten years they fought against it, and when at last they took it, many of them had great trouble in getting home again. And of all none had greater trouble than a certain Ulysses, who was king of an island in the Western Sea. He wandered about for ten years, and all his ships were wrecked, and all his companions perished, so that when he did get back at last he was quite alone.

“And, I am sorry to say, he found great trouble at home. Most people thought that he must be dead, for, you see, he had been away from home twenty years, and for the last ten nothing had been heard of him. So a number of princes came and wanted his wife to choose one of them for a husband, and while she went on putting them off, for she would not believe that he was dead, they stayed in his house, and killed his oxen

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and sheep and swine, and drank his wine. When at last he came back no one knew him; indeed, he did not want to be known, for he had to see whether he had any friends left, and to think how he was to get back his own again. So he disguised himself as a beggar, and went to one of his old servants. This man was very kind to him, though he did not in the least know who he was, and took him the next day to the palace. There Ulysses saw a poor old dog lying on a dunghill. And he said to the old servant: ‘Why do they let this dog lie in this way? I can see that he is of a good breed, though he does look so wretched.’



ULYSSES AND HIS DOG

“‘Ah!’ said the man, ‘his master went away twenty years ago, and is long since dead, and the careless women do not look after the poor creature. Things go very wrong when there is no master in a house.’

“But the old dog—his name was Argus—heard his

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master's voice, and lifted up his head, and when he saw him he knew him at once. He wagged his tail, and drooped his ears, just as you saw old Hylax do this afternoon, and then he died. He had waited for his master twenty years, and he saw him at the last."

"Thank you, father," said the children.

And then Rhodium asked: "Did not Ulysses have some adventures while he was trying to get home?"

"Yes," said Leon; "and if you are good children you shall hear some of them some day."