

Children I Have Known

By Broughton Brandenburg

WHENEVER there arises in my mind the picture of Kim sitting astride the Zam-Zammeh after having kicked Lala Dinanath's boy off the trunnions, or of Tom Browne's bruised forehead, or of Becky Thatcher craning her neck to see the drawing on the slate, I feel convinced that the man who wrote

"All men are alike, under their skins, Save in their luck, save in their sins."

must have known many children in many lands, since everyone knows that it is true that "the child is father of the man."

Race and place seem to have little power to differentiate the conduct of a youngster, no matter how differently he or she may behave when grown up and invested in burnoose or frock coat, string of beads or evening gown. Their world under the proper scrutiny is the most cosmopolitan one, the most democratic, the most altruistic, and for us, the tradition-hobbled grown-ups, it never ceases to have an infinite charm. I once saw a United States Senator sit down in his private car and cry bitterly because he had just met at a wayside station a barefooted boy driving a yoke of oxen, as the Senator had once done himself.

What family has not its treasured stories of the odd conceits of the abstract things that its little folks hold?

There is a tiny mite in Beloit, Wisconsin, whose ideas of the great things about which she heard, that were out of her every-day experiences, were a never-failing amusement for those of us who were so fortunate as to be her friends.

She had been taught never to be afraid when left alone or when put to bed in the dark, because, as her mamma said:

"Lucille, the angels watch over you always, and every person has a guardian angel that follows them wherever they go, and if you are good your guardian angel will let nothing harm you."

Lucille and her small brother Bibs were endlessly mystified as to the personal appearances, names and general characteristics of their separate guardian angels, and many times would run as fast as their short legs would carry them around the corner of the house, and drop down into hiding in the grass, hoping to trap one or the other of their guardian angels into following them in haste and thus disclosing himself.

One night the youngsters had been put to bed in the dark, and were thought to be sound asleep. It was a hot summer night, though, and both were wakeful.

There was company down-stairs, and everyone was having trouble with the mosquitoes that were swarming about. Suddenly into the flow of parlor conversation came a wail aloft from Bibs and a call of "Mamma, mam-ma, you tum up yere!" from Lucille.

Mamma went to the foot of the stairway and called up: "What is it, children? What

in the world is the matter with you?" The child replied: "My dardian angel bitted me."

Deeds of real bravery are of frequent occurrence among children, and I think that the bravest lad I have ever known is a little chap who lives in the town of Scilla, the ancient Scylla whose alternate danger to mariners was Charybdis. His name is Gaetano Selinino, and he is a swordfisherman, as are his father and grandfather. The great Italian swordfish play in July off Scilla, and the fishermen put out in boats rowed by three or four men while the *capo* poises in the bow, harpoon in hand.

Standing on a cross-stick on a twelve-foot pole is a sharp-eyed boy who watches for the schools of swordfish making havoc among the sardines, then returning to eat what they have slain. It is then, as they reach the surface, that the *capo* stabs.

An old male swordfish will often dart away after being struck merely far enough to get a good start, and then come back with a rush like a shot big and heavy, and his sword will pierce still impale a man. Only the quick warning that the boy aloft

must give can save the men below. The boy cries one word, and the steersman turns the boat aside. As the swordfish misses his mark and shoots out of the water he is hooked deftly, and gets no more chances to rush.

This last season Gaetano went as usual with his father and grandfather, and one day two big swordfish attacked the boat, and one thrust through the boat and cut Gaetano's cousin's leg half in two as well as splintering the base of the pole on which Gaetano stood. The boy fell into the water, and the boatmen being unable to help him was at the mercy of the fish. Only one turned its attention to the lad. With a courage surpassed by no feat of which I have ever heard, Gaetano swam easily on his side, watching his enemy, and at each rush rolled over a few inches out of the line of the living sword that shot by him.

In a few minutes another boat went to the assistance of the disabled one and picked up the boy. He climbed up to a sunny seat and laughed as the sun dried his clothes.

One day a number of years ago I was swinging idly in a hammock hung between two sand-pines near the house of a friend in the outskirts of Ybor City, Florida, when there appeared at the gate Martha and Jemima, with little Grover Cleveland riding pig-a-back on Martha's shoulders. They were the three children of 'Lisbuth Ann, the housekeeper of "Mis' Travises place" across the way. They were blacker than I can tell, and their hair too kinky to comb, while a perpetual solemnity pervaded them which I was never able to dispel either by teasing or coaxing. On this occasion they marched formally in at the front gate, up the walk to the door without even looking my way, and opened the screen door. Though much surprised at this unusual manner of visit she said kindly:

"Good mawning, children. Come to visit me?" "Ya-yas'm, Mis' Summah, kin we-all see yoh pahlah?" stammered Martha.

"Why, sutinly; come right in." From my place in the hammock I could see into the parlor through the open window, and could hear the conversation. Mrs. Summer was much puzzled by the odd manner and mission of the children, but she ushered them into the room, which had been refurnished not long before.

The two girls stood with little Grover between them, and stared in silence at the floor, then exchanged awed glances. Martha rubbed her stomach thoughtfully, then sighed and said:

"Hit doan mek me sick, nohow." "No' me neiver," echoed Jemima.

"It don't make yoh sick!" cried the astounded hostess. "What is it you mean?"

"Oh, Mis' Trav-is done tell Mis' Selden yoh-all's pahlah kyahpet mek huh sick. 'Mi-ma 'n me



Lucille



Doonya



Mary

Kate



Miguel Baranada



Gaetano Watching for Schools of Swordfish



Theresa Nojik