

CORNELLI

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Cornelli by Johanna Spyri

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JOHANNA SPYRI

CORNELLI

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By JOHANNA SPYRI

AUTHOR OF

"Heidi," "Vinzi," "Dora," "Mäzli," etc.

TRANSLATED BY

ELISABETH P. STORK

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

CHARLES WHARTON STORK, A.M., PH.D.



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FOREWORD

MANY writers have suffered injustice in being known as the author of but one book. Robinson Crusoe was not Defoe's only masterpiece, nor did Bunyan confine his best powers to Pilgrim's Progress. Not one person in ten of those who read Lorna Doone is aware that several of Blackmore's other novels are almost equally charming. Such, too, has been the fate of Johanna Spyri, the Swiss authoress, whose reputation is mistakenly supposed to rest on her story of Heidi.

To be sure, Heidi is a book that in its field can hardly be overpraised. The winsome, kind-hearted little heroine in her mountain background is a figure to be remembered from childhood to old age. Nevertheless, Madame Spyri has shown here but one side of her narrative ability.

If, as I believe, the present story is here first presented to readers of English, it must be through a strange oversight, for in it we find a deeper treatment of character, combined with equal spirit and humor of a different kind. Cornelli, the heroine, suffers temporarily from

FOREWORD

the unjust suspicion of her elders, a misfortune which, it is to be feared, still occurs frequently in the case of sensitive children. How she was restored to herself and reinstated in her father's affection forms a narrative of unusual interest and truth to life. Whereas in *Heidi* there is only one other childish figure—if we except the droll peasant boy Peter—we have here a lively and varied array of children. Manly, generous Dino; Mux, the irrepressible; and the two girls form a truly lovable group. The grown-ups, too, are contrasted with much humor and genuine feeling. The story of Cornelli, therefore, deserves to equal *Heidi* in popularity, and there can be no question that it will delight Madame Spyri's admirers and will do much to increase the love which all children feel for her unique and sympathetic genius.

CHARLES WHARTON STORK

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CORNELLI

CHAPTER I

BESIDE THE ROARING ILLER- STREAM

SPRING had come again on the banks of the Iller-Stream, and the young beech trees were swaying to and fro. One moment their glossy foliage was sparkling in the sunshine, and the next a deep shadow was cast over the leaves. A strong south wind was blowing, driving huge clouds across the sun.

A little girl with glowing cheeks and blowing hair came running through the wood. Her eyes sparkled with delight, while she was being driven along by the wind, or had to fight her way against it. From her arm was dangling a hat, which, as she raced along, seemed anxious to free itself from the fluttering ribbons in order to fly away. The child now slackened her pace and began to sing: