

When a big breaker comes, sometimes it knocks folks over. I saw two girls; one had on a blue dress and a blue ribbon on her hat; the other had on a brindle dress and a shoe-string. The shoe-string was on her hat, to tie it down.

They walked right in, but a breaker knocked them over, and all the folks laughed. The brindle one rolled over and over like a log, but the blue

one went endways and turned three somersaults—I counted. The men ran and picked them up, and they coughed and sneezed. The blue one looked hoppin' mad, because the folks laughed; but the brindle one laughed too.

Uncle Ben got me a new pair of shoes. I have got a crab in a bottle of vinegar for the baby.

Your son, DICKENSON H.

VENUS OF MILO.

BY M. D. RUFF.

THE most beautiful lady I ever saw was born about two thousand years ago. In all that long time she has not once turned her head nor ever moved her lips to answer, though men and women everywhere have been her lovers; though artists have worshiped and poets have sung to her; though wise men have written learned treatises and searched mouldy records to discover her story.

She has no color in her face, nor in her eyes or hair. One cannot say that she is blonde or brunette. She stands quiet and majestic in a great room, with a soft, unchanging, lazy smile upon her face, reigning like a queen over many subjects, as cold and silent and colorless as she, but far less lovely. People who love beauty travel from all parts of the world, far and near, to look upon her; but from out this crowd of gazers no fairy-favored prince has ever stepped to give her that magic kiss which would start the blushes into the pale face and set the fair limbs free from the sleep which has bound them through the coming and going of ages.

But I can beguile you no longer with this semblance of an old fairy tale. My "Sleeping Beauty" will never stir; she is imprisoned in a block of defaced and discolored marble; my beautiful woman is only an antique statue, miraculously preserved for us from the days when the Greeks were masters of the world, and of all arts and knowledge as well.

This statue has been named "Venus of Milo." "Venus," because it is supposed to represent the Greek goddess Venus, and "of Milo," because it was found in a garden on the island of Melos, one of the many islands in the Grecian Archipelago.

The garden was probably part of the pleasure-grounds of a wealthy Greek. In the midst, on a little hill, he built his house of marble, and from the wide open porticoes around it on every side, he looked abroad upon terraces, fountains, marble

pavements and statues; upon green waving fields, long avenues of orange and lemon-trees laden with blossoms and fruit, filling the air with sweet odor, vines clustering on the sunny slopes, and the red grapes. In the distance he saw the purple sea forever curving and swelling around countless islands set like jewels in its bosom; he watched the ships dipping and rising before the light wind, stopping at this port, then at that; here unloading, there taking on their cargoes of sweet nuts, figs and wine. Farther beyond still was Athens itself, and the Acropolis shining white and sharp through the clear, luminous atmosphere, against the blue sky.

But these rare sights passed away; invasion and war left only a few broken shafts and columns; the beautiful vineyards ran to waste, the fountains were choked up, the statues crumbled or were carried off by the Turks in their many incursions into Greece and its islands. The garden lay thus despoiled and neglected for many years, till, in 1825, the owner of a bit of it began to clear a hillside for the planting of a vineyard. At the foot of the hill he chanced to strike his shovel against this statue of a woman. It was imbedded in the earth, and had been entirely covered up by the crumbling and washing down of the soil above, and so had lain concealed for hundreds of years.

It was no uncommon thing at that time for workmen and peasants to turn up from the dark earth vases, trinkets, bits of sculpture, and many fragmentary relics of those ancient Greeks who, centuries before, lived and wrought so nobly here. To the present race these tokens had no value that could outweigh the price they would bring in the market; they were too poor to gratify expensive tastes, even if they had had them. Besides, they had grown out of the old faith, and they gave no divinity to the arms and legs and mutilated bodies of the gods and demigods with which their fathers

crowded the earth and air and sea. Yet I am sure the traditions of his pagan fathers must have stirred in the soul of the man who brought back to the light of day this matchless figure.

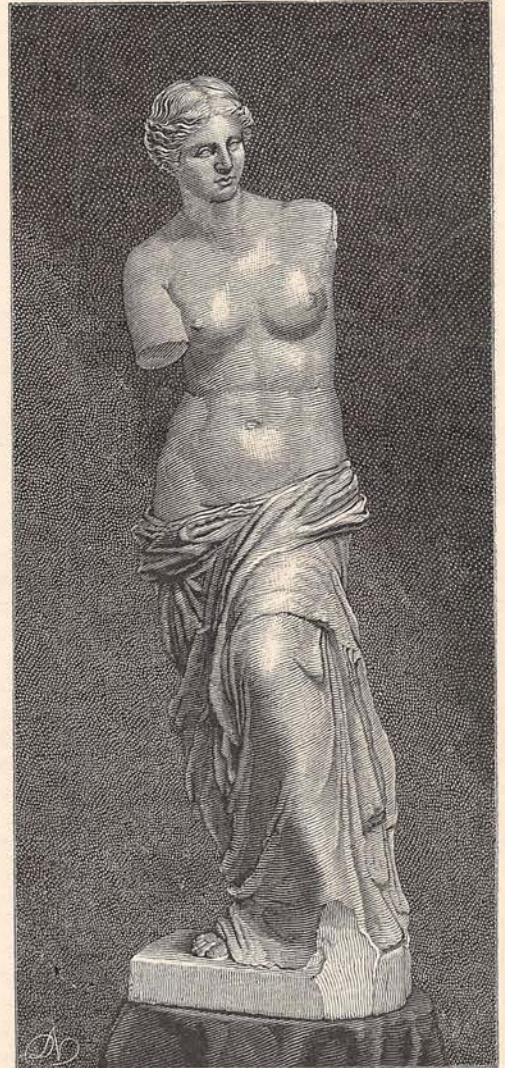
If he had such emotions at all, however, they were happily so slight that he was willing to sell the statue to Monsieur Brest, the French Consul, who, recognizing the value of the prize, bought it for five hundred dollars, and sent immediately for a vessel on which it could be shipped to France. Before this vessel arrived, the Turkish Government heard of the unearthing of the statue and hastily dispatched a vessel to bring it away, offering the owner five times more than the French price.

It was not in human nature to resist this. The Turks were given possession of the statue, and were embarking it on their vessel when the French ship arrived on the scene. A dispute and struggle arose, and later accounts say that the arms of the Venus, which had been detached for safer transportation, were seized by the Turks and are still in their possession. The first account was that the arms were gone when the figure was taken from the ground, also one foot broken off and several deep scratches about the shoulders and drapery. However this may be, the arms are still missing, and to this day the noble figure stands as you see in the picture.

It was placed in the Louvre, a magnificent art gallery in Paris, and at once called forth the profoundest admiration from artists and students and savans. Each one had some theory regarding the action of the figure, which the loss of the arms makes it impossible to determine. Some thought it was a Venus taking the apple designed "for the most beautiful;" others, that it was Venus embracing Mars; others, that it was a Venus coming from the bath with hair unbound and gathering her drapery around her, or Venus using a polished shield for a mirror; while others argued that it was no Venus, but the protecting nymph of the island of Melos, or the figure of a Victory resting a buckler upon her bended knee and inscribing upon it the name of a hero.

Of the genius who created this figure nothing certain is known, in spite of the research and skill of students. From the manner of workmanship it is concluded that he came after the time of Phidias,—whom you will hear named as the father of Greek sculpture,—and belonged to the later school of Lysippus, he who, pointing to the passers-by, said to his pupils, "There are your teachers." But when the Greeks themselves had such questions of doubtful authorship to settle they said that the statue fell from heaven; and we may be content to decide this question in the same way. The man who lived and died two thousand years ago is not likely to contradict us to-day.

But the adventures and perils of our fair lady are not yet over. During the late war between France and Germany, when Paris was besieged, and the shells were whizzing and flying over the walls, when women gathered their babies in their arms and ran



VENUS OF MILO.

shivering through the streets seeking safety, when strong men filled the air with shrieks and groans of death, then this lifeless, defaced statue was remembered and protected. It was put into an oaken chest, padded and cushioned, and at night a body of tried and faithful men bore it to a secret place in an underground cellar, known only to themselves. I have read furthermore that it was placed in a

niche in an inner wall and built closely around with plaster and cement, so as to be not only safe from German shells, but hidden from German eyes and hands; for they would not have lost much time in bearing away the lovely figure to enrich their own capital of Berlin.

I like to think of these brave Frenchmen, so devoted and true to art. I believe they would have laid down their lives in this cause, knowing that France had many other brave men to fill their places, but that in all the world there could never again be such a work as this lovely "Lady of Milo."

She lay in the dark and damp, through all the rack and ruin of those fearful summer days; she escaped the bursting shells and the communists' fires, and when the danger was past and men's thoughts turned again toward beauty and grace she was replaced in the Louvre, and stands there now as serene and gracious as ever, the most perfect type of that pure Greek art which all the world studies, but cannot reproduce.

Do you wonder why? It would make a very long story to give you all the reasons. But one great reason is that our artists and sculptors despair of finding any living models, either of men or women, so noble and natural and simple as those which the Greeks saw around them everywhere. For they made it the business of their lives to grow sleek and blooming; from beautiful children to beautiful men and women, and so on to a happy, vigorous old age.

In that olden time "a child was taught to read, write and cipher; to play the lyre and chant the national odes, celebrating brave deeds and great victories; to wrestle and to perform all other bodily exercises." Youths and maidens went daily to the gymnasium, and there were practiced in running, leaping, throwing the lance and discus, and in every other exercise which could make them strong, healthy and agile. Then the wise were strong

and the learned beautiful. There were no narrow chests and stooped shoulders; no pale faces and blinking eyes from desk and study and school-room; no warped muscles from work-bench and loom. Artisans, philosophers, poets, rich and poor, went alike through a daily course of training, ate sparingly, and lived through all seasons in the open air. "For there is no winter in this land: Evergreen oaks, the olive, the lemon, the orange and cypress form in the valleys and on the hillsides an eternal summer landscape; they even extend down to the margin of the sea, and in February, at certain places, oranges drop from their stems and fall into the water." In this mild and balmy atmosphere they required scant clothing and light diet. They had neither cold nor heat to guard against; the kindly fruits of the earth were all they needed to keep them in health and courage.

Now look carefully at the picture of the Venus, always remembering that it is a copy from a plaster cast, a copy of a copy, and therefore imperfect. It will serve only to introduce you to the statue; then if you are in New York, Philadelphia or Boston, go to the Academy of Fine Arts and see the life-size cast. You will hardly like it at first, but look more than once; study it; insist upon liking it; for by your admiration of this you may measure your power to appreciate any other work of true art. Venus stands, you see, simply and easily, without affectation or weariness. If she could come out of that marble stillness and walk across the room you would know what is meant by the "poetry of motion." I saw it the other day in an Indian woman. She was wrapped close in a dingy, dirty red blanket, and her face showed nothing but brutal, low instincts, but she walked through the staring crowds on the streets with such dignity and directness, such an erect and pliant figure, such a full and perfect play of muscles that I said to myself, "So the Venus of Milo would walk if she were wakened from her long sleep in the marble."

