

JENNIE HALL

BURIED CITIES,

VOLUME 3:

MYCENAE

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Buried Cities, Volume 3: Mycenae

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BURIED CITIES
BY
JENNIE HALL

The publishers are grateful to the estate of Miss Jennie Hall and to her many friends for assistance in planning the publication of this book. Especial thanks are due to Miss Nell C. Curtis of the Lincoln School, New York City, for helping to finish Miss Hall's work of choosing the pictures, and to Miss Irene I. Cleaves of the Francis Parker School, Chicago, who wrote the captions. It was Miss Katharine Taylor, now of the Shady Hill School, Cambridge, who brought these stories to our attention.

FOREWORD: TO BOYS AND GIRLS

Do you like to dig for hidden treasure? Have you ever found Indian arrowheads or Indian pottery? I knew a boy who was digging a cave in a sandy place, and he found an Indian grave. With his own hands he uncovered the bones and skull of some brave warrior. That brown skull was more precious to him than a mint of money. Another boy I knew was making a cave of his own. Suddenly he dug into an older one made years before. He crawled into it with a leaping heart and began to explore. He found an old carpet and a bit of burned candle. They proved that some one had lived there. What kind of a man had he been and what kind of life had he lived—black or white or red, robber or beggar or adventurer? Some of us were walking in the woods one day when we saw a bone sticking out of the ground. Luckily we had a spade, and we set to work digging. Not one moment was the tool idle. First one bone and then another came to light and among them a perfect horse's skull. We felt as though we had rescued Captain Kidd's treasure, and we went home draped in bones.

Suppose that instead of finding the bones of a horse we had uncovered a gold-wrapped king. Suppose that instead of a deserted cave that boy had dug into a whole buried city with theaters and mills and shops and beautiful houses. Suppose that instead of picking up an Indian arrowhead you could find old golden vases and crowns and bronze swords lying in the earth. If you could be a digger and a finder and could choose your find, would you choose a marble statue or a buried bakeshop with bread two thousand years old still in the oven or a king's grave filled with golden gifts? It is of such digging and such finding that this book tells.

MYCENAE



HOW A LOST CITY WAS FOUND

Thirty years ago a little group of people stood on a hill in Greece. The hilltop was covered with soft soil. The summer sun had dried the grass and flowers, but little bushes grew thick over the ground. In this way the hill was like an ordinary hill, but all around the edge of it ran the broken ring of a great wall. In some places it stood thirty feet above the earth. Here and there it was twenty feet thick. It was built of huge stones. At one place a tower stood up. In another two stone lions stood on guard. It was these ruined walls that interested the people on the hill. One of the men was a Greek. A red fez was on his head. He wore an embroidered jacket and loose white sleeves. A stiff kilted skirt hung to his knees. He was pointing about at the wall and talking in Greek to a lady and gentleman. They were visitors, come to see these ruins of Mycenae.

"Once, long, long ago," he was saying, "a great city was inside these walls. Giants built the walls. See the huge stones. Only giants could lift them. It was a city of giants. See their great ovens."

He pointed down the hill at a doorway in the earth. "You cannot see well from here. I will take you down. We can look in. A great dome, built of stone, is buried in the earth. A passage leads into it, but it is filled with dirt. We can look down through the broken top. The room inside is bigger than my whole house. There giants used to bake their bread. Once a wicked Turk came here. He was afraid of nothing. He said, 'The giants' treasure lies in this oven. I will have it.' So he sent men down. But they found only broken pieces of carved marble—no gold."

While the guide talked, the gentleman was tramping about the walls. He peered into all the dark corners. He thrust a stick into every hole. He rubbed the stones with his hands. At last he turned to his guide.

"You are right," he said. "There was once a great city inside these walls. Houses were crowded together on this hill where we stand. Men and women walked the streets of a city that is buried under our feet, but they were not giants. They were beautiful women and handsome men.

"It was a famous old city, this Mycenae. Poets sang songs about her. I have read those old songs. They tell of Agamemnon, its king, and his war against Troy. They call him the king of men. They tell of his gold-decked palace and his rich treasures and the thick walls of his city.

"But Agamemnon died, and weak kings sat in his palace. The warriors of Mycenae grew few, and after hundreds of years, when the city was old and weak, her enemies conquered her. They broke her walls, they threw down her houses, they drove out her people. Mycenae became a mass of empty ruins. For two thousand years the dry winds of summer blew dust over her palace floors. The rains of winter and spring washed down mud from her acropolis into her streets and houses. Winged seeds flew into the cracks of her walls and into the corners of her ruined buildings. There they sprouted and grew, and at last flowers and grass covered the ruins. Now only these broken walls remain. You feed your sheep in the city of Agamemnon. Down there on the hillside farmers have planted grain above ancient palaces. But I will uncover this wonderful city. You shall see! You shall see how your ancestors lived.

"Oh! for years I have longed to see this place. When I was a little boy in Germany my father told me the old stories of Troy, and he told me of how great cities were buried. My heart burned to see them. Then, one night, I heard a man recite some of the lines of Homer. I loved the beautiful Greek words. I made him say them over and over. I wept because I was not a Greek. I said to myself, 'I will see Greece! I will study Greek. I will work hard. I will make a bankful of money. Then I will go to Greece. I will uncover Troy-city and see Priam's palace. I will uncover Mycenae and see Agamemnon's grave.' I have come. I have uncovered Troy. Now I am here. I will come again and bring workmen with me. You shall see wonders." He walked excitedly around and around the ruins. He told stories of the old city. He asked his wife to recite the old tales of Homer. She half sang the beautiful Greek words. Her husband's eyes grew wet as he listened.

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