

THE RICE POT AND THE SEED OF YOUTH

A legend

By ANGELO K. OZOA

ONCE there was an old couple living in a certain village. They were very poor, but were kind.

One day an old man in rugged clothes came to the house of the couple and asked for food and lodging. They fed the visitor and treated him very hospitably. They gave him their bamboo bed and their only other mat and blanket, while the couple slept on the floor.

The next day the husband found out that they had nothing to eat, for their guest had eaten all the food. He was talking with his wife about what to do and where to get their next meal when the visitor spoke to them.

"You have no more rice?" The visitor asked. "If there is no more rice, please bring the pot to me."

The old couple looked at each other for a moment, and then the wife went to the little kitchen to get a pot which she gave to the stranger.

"Also please give me a ladle and a plate," the strange man asked.

The husband gave him the ladle and the plate. Then he and his wife watched what the stranger was going to do with the pot, the ladle, and the plate.

Holding the ladle, the stranger began to take out rice from the empty pot.

The couple rubbed their eyes to be sure that they were not dreaming.

"Give me one more plate," the stranger said.

Another was given to the stranger, and this was soon filled with hot, steaming rice.

The wife began to tremble with fear because she was thinking their visitor



was a witch, and he was trying to play on them a trick.

"Who are you?" the husband finally asked.

Suddenly, the stranger was transformed into a handsome, dazzling figure, and said, "I am God. I have come to test you. I have found you kind and hospitable, and so I shall give you this rice pot as a reward. This pot will always be full." Saying so, the stranger stood up. "I am going now. Good-bye." Instantly the stranger disappeared.

A week later, another stranger came to their house. They welcomed the stranger and entertained him with all hospitality and kindness. When he left, he gave a seed to the couple, saying, "Plant this seed. When it grows, gather the leaves and place them in the water that you use for bathing." And then the stranger bade goodbye.

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THE RICE POT

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The couple planted the seed in their yard. A week later leaves began to spring up. These the couple gathered and placed in the water. While they were bathing, they found that their wrinkles began to disappear, their gray hair became black and their eyes keener. They had become young again!

The couple were very happy, and with their rice pot ever filled, they became prosperous. With their prosperity, however, some change began to creep into their ways of living. They became proud and selfish and wicked.

MOZART

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position, was sunny-tempered, and liked jokes. He was a phenomenal prodigy as a boy, and when he became a man he was just as great a musician and composer.

Mozart was born twenty-four years later than Haydn (discussed in the March, 1940, issue of *The Young Citizen*), and he improved the symphony which Haydn had developed. Some one has said that Haydn showed Mozart how to do things, and in return Mozart showed Haydn how to do them better.

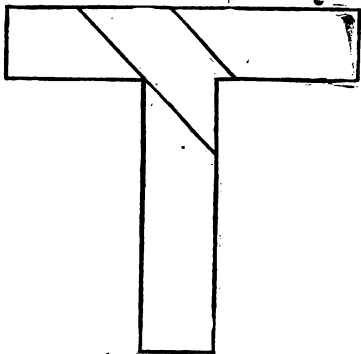
He did not live to be an old man—he died in 1791 at the age of 35—but although his life was short, he wrote nearly seven hundred musical compositions, which include every form of musical composition known to his day. He wrote much church music, as well as some operas, three of which are still heard. During his lifetime he composed some of the most beautiful music that man has ever made—music which we like to hear again and again.

One day a sickly looking beggar, almost blind, and foul-smelling with skin eruptions all over his body, knocked at the door of the couple's now beautiful, imposing mansion.

When the couple saw the beggar, they called their dog to drive the poor man away.

Suddenly, before their eyes, the shabby, foul, sickly looking beggar turned into a dazzling, beautiful sight—the same person who had given them the rice pot. "You know who I am. I have come to test you again. I have found that wealth has made you proud, unkind, and wicked. Since you have not made good use of your wealth, I shall take it away from you. Not only that: I shall make you old again." And then the dazzling figure strangely disappeared.

Right then and there, the couple found themselves in their old, shabby hut, with their pot which was always empty. Their skin was wrinkled again, their hair gray, and their eyes dimmer.



THE "T" PUZZLE BLOCKS ASSEMBLED.