

CHATTERBOX.

THE CAMEL RACE



"It was astonishing to see the change that came over Mrs. Chinna's face."

L

CHINNA.

By MRS. HOBART-HAMPDEN,
Author of 'The Secret Valley,' etc., etc.

(Continued from page 143.)

'WHAT is it, Chinna?' Brian asked quickly.

And Chinna answered: 'There is sickness in the village. I feared it might be so when first I heard the drum. And the people think that I have sent it—of this also I was afraid. I must go this night to take it away. And if I fail to do so—and the sickness will not always go at my bidding—then surely my fate is sealed.'

'I don't understand,' said Brian. 'You told me once that, when there was sickness, you made offerings to the spirits; and if that wasn't enough, you let a kid loose; and if the sickness didn't stop then, it was the fault of the people who had sinned. Why should they blame you instead?'

'There are two kinds of spell-workers,' Chinna explained. 'The good, such as I am, work ever to turn evil aside; the bad send it in revenge. They think that, because I was angry last night, and because I threatened them in jest, I have now done this thing.'

'If, when I go to the village and make the offerings,' he went on, 'the sickness does not cease, they will not now acknowledge that the fault is theirs; they will say I only am to blame, and will deal with me accordingly.'

'But that would be very stupid of them,' Brian argued. 'If it was really you who had sent the sickness, of course you could take it away again. And it just proves that it *can't* be you if the sickness doesn't stop.'

'Nay,' said Chinna; 'the workers of evil delight in that which they do. It is well known they will not willingly remove a punishment they have sent; therefore are they put to the torture, that they may be forced by the pain to do so. They will put me to the torture, the people of the village, if I do not cure the sickness. Me—me—me!' he repeated, his voice rising shrilly.

CHAPTER XIV.

'ME—me—me!' Chinna repeated, and then fell suddenly silent. He seemed too disturbed to talk any more. He scrambled on to the raft, and sat in a huddled heap, and signed to Brian to paddle unaided to the mainland again, and, with some difficulty, the task was accomplished. Then, leaving the nets untouched, Chinna at once turned to the path that led to the encampment.

'The fish, Chinna,' Brian ventured. 'We haven't emptied the nets yet.'

'The fish!' Chinna retorted indignantly. 'How shall a man eat at such a moment?' And on he trotted, his shoulders humped to his ears, and Brian followed, not liking to suggest that the rest of them might be hungry, even though Chinna did not wish to eat. Chinna did not speak again until the encampment was reached; then he strode straight across to where Mrs. Chinna sat by the fire, busy, as usual, with her cooking-pots.

'There is sickness in the village,' he said, and looked at her as if he expected she would understand at once all that this implied.

'Sickness,' said Mrs. Chinna cheerfully. She thought at first, as had Brian, that if there was sickness in the village, it was very natural that Chinna should be summoned to fight against it, and banish it. 'I will

brew some medicine immediately,' she went on, and smiled at Brian; 'since all I had prepared was used for another purpose. There will be more gifts. This is good indeed.'

'Good?' Chinna stuttered indignantly. 'Good? Owl, woman! dost thou not understand? They say 'tis I caused the sickness, because I was a little angry when they would have cheated me of my just reward after the death of the striped one. And, also, because they think that I rejected the kid.'

It was astonishing to see the change that came over Mrs. Chinna's smiling face as she listened to this explanation. She looked far more alarmed than Chinna had done when first he heard the drum. Her black skin almost grew paler, and her round eyes threatened to jump out of her head.

'Let us flee to the depths of the forest; let us flee at once, lord!' she gasped. 'I have seen such things before. I know; I know what they will do. Let us go; let us go with great swiftness.'

But Chinna was by this time a little calmer. Also, perhaps, he felt that, since Mrs. Chinna was so frightened, it behoved a great hunter to reassure her. And he said in a more even voice, though still gloomily: 'It is not my way to flee easily, and why should not the sickness depart at my bidding? Make ready such things as I need while I will ask counsel of the spirits. Doubtless they will lend me their aid, and all will yet be well.' And he strode across to the tree, and placed the customary offerings before it, and began to mutter incessantly, and weave strange patterns with his hands in the air.

And meanwhile Brian told Nancy and Frederick all that had happened, and they all three gathered round Mrs. Chinna to question her.

'Will they really hurt Chinna?' Nancy asked, a lump in her throat.

And Mrs. Chinna poured out a flood of shrill, breathless talk in answer. So fast she spoke in her excitement, it was difficult sometimes to follow her. 'They will hurt him; in truth they will hurt him, if they believe the sickness is of his causing. Thus did other villagers treat my brother, a man all good. His front teeth did they knock out; iron—red-hot iron—did they place beneath his feet, and a bag of red pepper over his head. And, lastly, they threw him into the water; but already the life was gone from him. And when he sank, and did not rise again, they cried, "Here was a sorcerer indeed!"'

She paused to take a long breath, and then rushed on once more, helter-skelter: 'And my uncle—'

But at this, Chinna, who had been listening unhappily all the time, and who probably felt that to hear of the fate of the brother was quite sufficient without having the fate of the uncle added thereto, called indignantly, 'Cease thy gabble, woman! How can I hear the voices of the spirits above the noise that thou makest?'

And Mrs. Chinna subsided into silence, and stirred diligently at the new brew of medicine; while the children removed themselves to the furthest corner of the clearing, where they could talk without disturbing Chinna.

'It's too bad,' said Brian indignantly, 'that they should turn on him again like this. I wish the tiger had eaten every single person in the village, and eaten them quite slowly.'

'Not the children,' Nancy pleaded. 'Anyway, it wasn't the fault of the children.'

'The children too,' said Brian firmly. 'They'll very likely grow up just as disgusting as their fathers and mothers, and their uncles and aunts, and all the other villagers.'

He and Nancy were by this time quite cross with each other, because they were so anxious on Chinna's account.

Frederick alone saw no cause for alarm. 'Chinna's spells are sure to send the sickness away,' he asserted. 'What do you think it looks like when it goes, Nancy? If it's a spotty kind, do you see the spots flying about?'

There was something rather fascinating in the suggestion, and they began to discuss what form a defeated sickness might take, until, presently, Chinna rose to his feet and took the medicine from Mrs. Chinna. And then he adorned his small person with the necklace of nuts of which he had spoken to Brian. The nuts were very large and most elaborately carved.

'What answer did the spirits give?' Mrs. Chinna asked eagerly.

(Continued on page 158.)

MR. DORMOUSE'S VISIT.

SAID Mr. Dormouse to Miss Mole,
'You are such a sweet old soul,
May I come to tea with you?
'Any afternoon will do.'

Said Miss Mole to Mr. Dormouse,
'Though I've never been in *your* house,
If you care to come to tea,
Come by all means, Mr. D.'

Then Miss Mole put on her best,
Tittivated all her nest;
Cleaned her whiskers, smoothed her hair,
And drew out her easiest chair.

'Make yourself at home now, pray,'
She begged him in the kindest way;
'Here are dainties I have stored
For the winter-time, my lord.'

He ate and ate, then fell asleep;
And his slumbers were so deep,
She could not wake him where he sat
In her best chair, sleek and fat.

All the winter through, his nose
Sang a song of sweet repose;
And not till primroses were showing,
Said he, 'I fear I must be going.'

R. B. I.

THE FAITHFUL BIRDS.

SOME French soldiers, on arriving at a village which had been destroyed by the Germans, were astonished to find, in the midst of the ruins, a family of living creatures. Some sparrows, unwilling to quit their native place, and finding not a single tree left in the neighbourhood, had made their nest in the lamp of a solitary lamp-post which, by some miracle, still stood upright. Several generations have been successfully reared in this strange home by the trustful birds, who seemed to know that in time there would be in that desolate place a glad resurrection, which they awaited with a calm confidence. Brave and ingenious little patriots!

E. D.

BOBBY AND THE BIRDS.

WHEN Bobby Grey sets off to school, the way seems very long;
He's wondering, wondering as he goes, whether his home-work's wrong;
He's wishing that he hadn't rubbed those figures off his slate,
And hoping that he isn't very, very, *very* late;
And all the birds on all the boughs, they shake their heads and say,
'Oh, what *can* be the matter, please, with Master Bobby Grey?'

When Bobby Grey comes out of school, the birds all hear him shout;

And every one begins to sing with joy as he comes out—
Thrushes and Blackbirds, Robins, too, as glad as glad can be;

'Hurrah!' they sing; 'he's quite cheered up! Hurrah!
and Tirra-lee!

It's really quite a treat to us to see him look so gay!
But—tell us what *was* wrong with you this morning,
Bobby Grey!'

ETHEL TALBOT.

THE STORY OF SOME ORDERS AND DECORATIONS.

II.—ORDERS OF KNIGHTLY CRUSADERS.



YOU have already heard how Knighthood was at first a system by which vassals held lands from their lords—superior on condition of military service, and have seen too that knights were not bound into an Order until the time of the Crusades.

The story we have to tell concerns the two famous orders of military or fighting monks—the Knights Templars, or Red Cross Knights, and the Knights Hospitallers, or Knights of St. John, neither of whom were ever to take part in wars carried on by Christian princes, but to fight only against unbelievers.

The Order of the Knights Templars was founded in 1118 by Baldwin II., King of Jerusalem, for the purpose of protecting the highways of the Holy Land against the numerous robbers who infested them, so that Christian pilgrims might journey in safety to Jerusalem to visit the Holy Sepulchre. It consisted originally of certain noblemen, horsemen, who banded themselves together, and took a vow 'to serve Christ and renounce their own wills for ever.' There were only seven of them, and so poor were they that they had but one horse between two.

In addition to being required to be perfect men-at-arms, the Knights Templars were bound by very strict religious rules, and wore a white mantle (as a symbol of the purity of their lives) to which, later on, a red cross

was added. Their name of 'Templars' arose from the fact that they were granted quarters by the King of Jerusalem within the sacred enclosure of the Temple.

For one hundred and fifty years these valiant men, with the knightly spirit of chivalry and self-sacrifice, waged war against fierce and powerful enemies. In the forefront and thickest of the fight was always to be seen the banner of the Templars, for *Beau Séant* (as it was called from their war cry) led to victory or to death. It was half black and half white—'fair and favourable to the friends of Christ, black and terrible to His enemies.'

Nor were these soldiers of the Cross less faithful and courageous when called upon to declare their faith, for upon being taken prisoners by the infidel Turks they were commanded to give up Christianity or die. Unhesitatingly two hundred and thirty of them chose death, and thus became the first martyrs of the Order. In their last great military exploit, in 1291, the larger number of the Order perished, those who survived retiring to their possessions in Europe.

The Knights Templars first formed a home in England in 1128, when the Master of their Order visited our shores to obtain help against the Infidels. They established themselves, to begin with, in Chancery Lane, but after their return from the Second Crusade built, on what was then a large space of meadow-land extending from Fleet Street to the River Thames, a great monastery and handsome church protected by gates. The circular form of the latter was in imitation of the Temple of Jerusalem, and still stands to this day. On the tiled



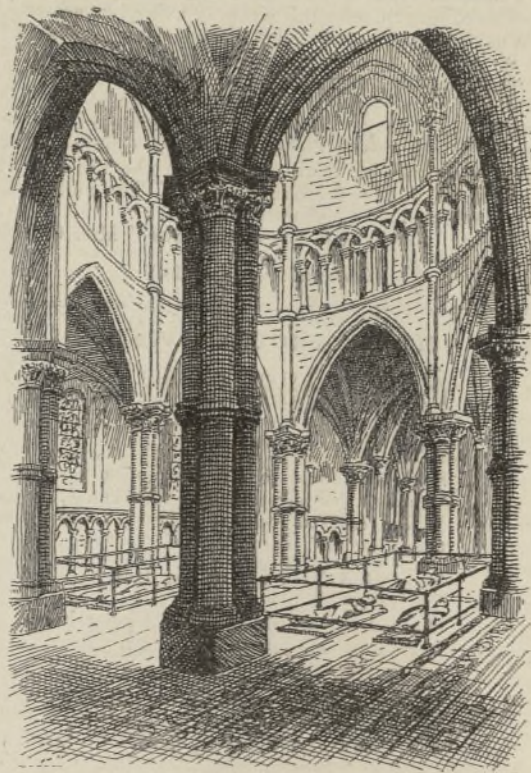
Tombs of Knights Templars in the Temple Church, London.

pavement of the round part are figures of knights in full armour; you can tell crusaders by their crossed legs. On the tiles, too, among other emblems, is their badge—two men riding on one horse.

As time went on they became possessed of great wealth and property both in England and France, and this not only caused great jealousy, but, if report tells true, tempted our brave soldiers of the Cross to give up all attempts to recover the Holy Land. Worse still, they grew both proud and haughty, gaining in consequence many enemies.

In the reign of Edward the Second they were persecuted and imprisoned, while members of the Order were enticed into France, and, together with those holding lands

there, received still more cruel treatment at the hands of the King, Philip the Fair, who had numbers of them tried and condemned, and then either burnt alive or hanged. Finally, by a decree of the Pope, in 1312, their Order was done away with, and their property given to the Knights Hospitallers.



Interior of the Temple Church, London.

Whatever their faults may have been in later times, the memory of the earlier deeds of the Knights Templars is a memory of which England may well be proud.

Equally ancient is the Order of the Knights Hospitallers which came into existence even earlier than that of the Templars, and with the same simple beginnings. It was originally founded by some pious Italian merchants who obtained leave to build a refuge or 'hospice,' as it is called, for the entertainment of pilgrims and the care of the sick. This was the chief difference between Hospitallers and Templars; the latter were under no obligation to nurse the sick or relieve the poor, their duty being simply to make war against the Infidels.

The year 1099 marked the beginning of the Knights Hospitallers as a regular religious Order, for it was then that Gerard (who became their first Master) proposed a distinct habit or dress, consisting of a black robe and a white eight-pointed cross. His successor went a step further by making the Order a military one, adding to their duty of ministering to the sick and poor that of defending the Holy Sepulchre. From that time onward they were also fighting monks and, together with the

Templars, took a prominent part in the Crusades, indeed in every battle and siege they were to the front, the Templars occupying the post of honour on the right and the Hospitaliers that on the left.

Almost at the same time as the foundation of the Order in its military form in Palestine a branch of it was set up in England, in Clerkenwell, and in less than a hundred years it grew to be a very powerful and wealthy organization—so wealthy, in fact, that by the year 1237 they were able to send men and money to the help of the Holy Land.

But we are sorry to say that though both Orders were doing good work, they were not only rivals, but often enemies. However, they laid aside their jealousies in the face of a common danger, and when the final storm burst upon the Holy City (now once more in Christian hands) they fought in this and in the later Crusades side by side as true brothers-in-arms, outvying each other in deeds of valour.

After the final defeat of the Christians, the small surviving band of Hospitaliers withdrew to Cyprus, and later on to Rhodes, while we hear of them last at Malta, where they remained until driven out by the French in 1798. They were then scattered in different directions over Europe, the once illustrious Order of St. John of Jerusalem thus coming to an end after having existed for more than seven hundred years.

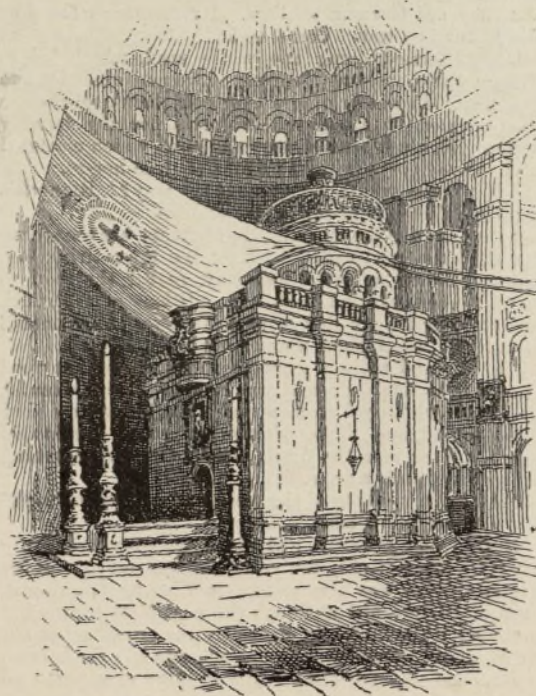
The branch of the Order in England was revived in 1831, but did not attract much attention until the time of the Franco-German War, when they rendered great service to the wounded.

The experience gained by the new Knights of St. John during this conflict proved to them the need of

greater proficiency, with the result that in 1877 the St. John's Ambulance Association was definitely founded in England. Its chief object was to teach people how to render 'first aid' in cases of accident or sudden illness and also as to the transport of the sick and injured. The rules ordered that the work should be carried on 'in peace or war, irrespective of race, class, or creed.' Training centres were by degrees established all over the country, but it was not until the rise and marvellous success of the 'first aid' instruction that it obtained the national recognition it now enjoys.



First Aid by the St. John's Ambulance Association.



Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem.

Finally there grew out of the parent society the 'St. John's Ambulance Brigade,' a voluntary organization for the rendering of 'first aid' by members who held certificates of the Association. The Brigade is now famous the world over, for not only in mine, factory, or crowded street are its members ever ready to render help, but the certificate-holders are enrolled in a corps which supplies thousands of trained orderlies (as they are called) to work in military and other hospitals. We learn that it numbers not less than 1594 divisions, 53,164 members, and has 200 auxiliary hospitals in England and one in France. The latter is at Etaples, and among the colony of British hospitals in and around this place the one known as the 'St. John's Brigade Hospital' is very conspicuous. It consists of fifteen large well-ventilated huts, these being connected by covered causeways adapted for wheeling patients to and fro in all weathers.

Most appropriately the Order of St. John of Jerusalem has its headquarters at St. John's Gate, Clerkenwell—

all that remains of the famous monastery of the Knights Hospitallers, founded in 1100.

Perhaps some of you wonder why the members of St. John's Ambulance Brigade wear a red cross on their uniform, and think possibly that it and the Red Cross Society are one and the same thing. Nothing of the sort. The British Red Cross Society was an organization founded in 1905 to supply trained nurses in time of war. The term 'Red Cross,' however, is used as a symbol for both nursing and ambulance work, and refers, in war-time, to the care of the sick and wounded. The red cross on a white ground became in consequence the emblem adopted by the modern Knights of St. John. It is the cross of Switzerland, and is used out of compliment to a Swiss gentleman, who in the Franco-German War first recognised the need of organized help, and now—as the badge of the Order—it stands as a symbol of help to the wounded and oft-times of comfort to the dying. When the Great War broke out these two societies joined hands, so to speak, and formed what is known as the 'Joint War Committee'—the only institution which carries voluntary aid to the sick and wounded of the British forces on land and sea in every region of the War. If space did but permit we could tell you something of the wonderful work done by its motor ambulances, but as it is we must content ourselves by saying that the Joint Committee has over one thousand of these serving in the British Army in France and Belgium.

So you see the spirit of the old Hospitallers lives again in the modern Knights of the Order of St. John, who have not only revived the original work for which it was founded—the tending of the sick—but do it under still higher ideals, for their deeds of mercy are not confined to their own countrymen, or even to their allies, but are performed 'irrespective of race, class, or creed'—true and chivalrous knights indeed! C. M. FOOT.

SHEEP'S CLOTHING.

RIQUETTE had been left behind. Everything happened so quickly that it all seemed like a horrible dream. Last month the circus came to Lourville: this month . . . the Boches.*

Between, there had been hurry and excitement, and good news and bad news and much talking. Riquette's father did not talk, but he looked very stern as he put on his uniform, and kissed his wife and the two children.

'I must go at once to my regiment,' he said. 'But get to Paris with the children as soon as you can, Marie—surely they won't reach Paris!'

Riquette's mother had no time to cry when her husband left her, she was so busy packing as much as she possibly could into the baby's perambulator. Then she put Baby on the top of the pile, where he sat sucking his thumb contentedly, and the three set out for the little railway station, four miles away.

It was a very hot, very dusty morning; from behind the low hills to eastward came a sullen growling of thunder, although the sky was blue and unclouded.

When they reached the station, they found it crowded with people, all tired, all dusty, all carrying babies, or bundles, or baskets.

'When does the next train start for Paris?' Riquette's

mother asked the ticket-collector at the entrance. He shrugged his shoulders.

'Who knows?' he said. 'Perhaps to-morrow—perhaps next week!'

'To-morrow! next week! But I want to go now—to-day!'

'So does everybody!'—he pointed to the crowded platform—'but all trains are taken for the soldiers, and I can promise nothing. You must wait like the others.'

Riquette and her mother and the baby waited, sitting on the curbstone outside the station. It grew hotter and hotter, and all the time thunder grumbled and growled behind the hills. They waited until a little knot of women and children came running down the street, white-faced and wild-eyed, saying one word again and again to everybody as they passed by.

'Uhlans! Uhlans!'

Riquette's mother heard the word, and her own face grew white as she snatched at the skirt of one of the newcomers.

'Where are they—the Uhlans?' she asked, nervously.

'They were at Estercourt, only six miles away, this morning—at any moment they may be here, with all the German army close behind them. Hark! Don't you hear?'

'The thunder?'

'The thunder?—no! It is the sound of great guns!'

Riquette's mother sprang to her feet, and began to push the perambulator up the street in a great hurry.

'We must go, little one—we must go!' she cried feverishly. 'We cannot wait here if the Uhlans are coming.'

'Who are they?' Riquette asked, running beside her mother.

'They are German soldiers. I remember what they did in the last war. Come, come!'

They hurried along the white road, which led to distant Paris, amongst a throng of women, children, and old men. Presently others overtook them: soldiers in dust-covered blue and red uniforms, looking terribly weary; huge waggons, cavalry and guns, which clattered and swayed past, drawn by teams of tired horses.

'Why are you all coming this way?' Riquette's mother called out to one of the soldiers.

'Because, for the moment, the Germans are too strong for us!' the man called back. 'We are retiring to a better position a few miles away, to bar the road to Paris. There are millions and millions of Germans, and the English are driven back also, for the moment! Best hurry, the Uhlans may be near!'

Thicker and thicker grew the press, filling the road from side to side. Presently, a rumour spread amongst the tired, frightened women that the Uhlans were very close behind, and Riquette's mother pushed the loaded perambulator into the ditch, and left it there, catching up the child in her arms.

'My baby, my baby!' she cried, and ran on, calling to Riquette to follow her.

But by now the little girl was thoroughly tired out; after all, she was only ten years old, and very small for her age. She was almost too tired to be frightened, even of Uhlans, and although she kept close behind her mother for a little while, presently the crowd separated them, and in a very few minutes she was left far behind.

Riquette was too tired really to mind even that; all she wanted was to lie down somewhere and shut her burning, smarting eyes, and sleep and sleep. . . .

* The French slang name for German troops.

She saw a half-open gate close beside her, and, hardly thinking what she was doing, she turned through it. Within was a cobbled yard surrounded by sheds, and into the nearest Riquette stumbled, only realising that it was cool, and dark, and delicious after the glare outside. She fell against a great pile of something soft and pungent-smelling; she was too tired to struggle up again. In a few minutes the child had burrowed herself a little nest, and was sleeping almost like a dead thing.

Riquette slept, and slept, and slept. Evening came, and night, and still she did not move. It was broad daylight when she woke at last, and then some minutes passed before she could remember what had happened.

The little girl found herself nearly buried in a pile of brown bark shavings. Through the open front of the shed she saw a sunny yard, surrounded everywhere with other sheds, holding huge piles of calf and sheep skins, some already turned into leather, others still covered with wool or hair. The air was full of the curious smell of hides and bark, and Riquette knew that the place must be a tannery.

Only a wall separated her from the road, and from the noise she could tell that crowds of people must still be passing along it. There was a tiny window above her head, and scrambling up on the pile of bark, she managed to look through.

Great numbers of horses and waggons and soldiers were passing, but they were quite different from the soldiers of yesterday. These were dressed in dull greenish-grey, with ugly flat caps or grey-covered helmets. Riquette had heard and seen enough to know at once who they were.

'Les Boches!' she whispered, with wide, frightened eyes.

She stared out, almost too terrified to move. Herds of sheep and cattle passed, driven by German soldiers; while Riquette watched, half-a-dozen terrified sheep ran into the yard and huddled together, but the rest went on without heeding them. Presently, the little girl slipped down and sat in a forlorn heap upon the bark. Then, suddenly, she sprang up and stood listening; from somewhere close at hand there came a sound.

When Riquette's father fell from the ladder and broke his arm, he had made a sound like that. It was somebody hurt—and at once Riquette forgot to be frightened any longer. The little girl always longed to help anything in pain—babies, or kittens, or puppies, or even worms cut with the spade.

Riquette found that the sound came from one of the other sheds. Presently she discovered a young man lying almost hidden by a huge pile of undressed hides. He wore the uniform of a French officer, and he lay huddled sideways, white-faced and with eyes tightly closed, though his forehead was wrinkled as though something hurt him very badly. Riquette watched for a little while, then very timidly she said, 'Monsieur!'

At once the soldier's eyes opened, but they looked dull and clouded. He spoke very slowly, in a queer, gsping way, as though every word hurt him.

'Who are—you?'

'Riquette, Monsieur.'

'Where—do you—come from?'

'Lourville—oh, miles from here! Mother and Baby and I ran away when we heard the Uhlans were coming, and I was left behind.' Riquette's eyes filled with tears at the thought.

'Poor child!' The soldier spoke very kindly. 'I—was left behind—too.'

'It's horrid, isn't it?' Riquette said confidentially.

'Yes!' He closed his eyes and frowned again with pain.

'Does something hurt you?' Riquette asked gently.

'Yes, my leg—it's broken. But that doesn't matter—at least, it *does* matter terribly, because I can't move, and I was carrying a message—to the General. They hit me a few hours ago, but I managed to crawl here without being seen—then I suppose I fainted.'

'Is this message so important?' Riquette asked timidly.

'Yes. If the General does not receive it, it may mean the loss of our army—of Paris itself. Ah, it is terrible to think what may happen, because I cannot take it!'

It made Riquette miserable to see how unhappy he looked. 'Oh, can't I help you, Monsieur?' she cried. 'Couldn't I take the message to the General?'

'A baby like you!—no—it's quite impossible! It would be far too dangerous if the Boches caught you, and suspected.'

'I am not a baby at all,' Riquette said with dignity. 'I am ever so much older than I look; and if it is to save our army—to save Paris—oh, Monsieur, may I not try? Because—I am French, too, and being so small, I might slip through somehow. Is it far?'

'No, that makes it worse for me; I had so little further to go. Our positions are just beyond the next village—not more than a couple of miles away. The General will wait there for this message from the Commander-in-Chief—which will never reach him!'

'It shall!' Riquette clasped her thin little hands. 'Monsieur, I *must* take it! Could I not disguise myself—somehow?'

'As a German soldier?' The officer laughed, but kindly.

'No, no—but something!' Riquette's eyes, bright and dark as those of a squirrel, sought here and there about the yard and sheds. And suddenly the little girl jumped up, clapping her hands excitedly. 'Monsieur, I know, I know!' she cried. 'I will dress as a sheep! I prayed that I might think of something, and it came!'

'A sheep!' The wounded man stared at the child, as though he fancied she must have gone suddenly mad.

'Yes; the Boches drive them past—right through the village, I expect. When another flock comes by, I will drive out these poor beasts here and run out with them—as another sheep, see you?'

'How can you?'

'Monsieur, here are the sheepskins: it is only to fill one with a body. Well, I will be that body.' Riquette spread out her hands with a triumphant gesture. 'Never before have I been glad that I am so *very* small for my age.'

Without waiting to hear the soldier's opinion, the little girl ran to the nearest pile of skins and dragged out a huge, woolly fleece. Pulling it over her shoulders, she showed the wounded man that it met easily round her slim little body.

'And although it is dirty, what matter, since it is for France? But, alas! what is to be done? I have neither thread nor a needle.'

'I have both.' The soldier pulled out a neat little housewife. 'It seems a crazy plan, child, but we will try.'

(Concluded on page 154.)



"She showed the wounded man that the fleece met easily round her."