"He read the message eagerly."

SHEEP'S CLOTHING.

(*Concluded from page* 151.)

RIQUETTE, wrapped in the sheepskin, seated herself close beside him, and for some time the two stitched in silence. The big fleece more than covered the small girl, and where the skin of the legs would not meet about her wrists and ankles, all gaps were hidden by the long, matted wool. The soldier arranged the head, so that it appeared quite natural, leaving a slit for Riquette's eyes under the neck.

'I could not have believed it would look so well!' the wounded man cried, when all was finished. 'Go amongst the other sheep, so that I can see. No, don't crawl so fast. They are not sure what to make of you, now they've smelt the wool and decided that you really are a sheep—a rather clumsy little sheep! Riquette, you are a wonderful child!

The little girl returned to sit by the soldier's side and receive her final instructions. The message had been carefully sewn into a slit in the fleece, and Riquette learnt exactly where to find the General, after she had managed to get through the village, which was in the hands of the Germans, unobserved. They looked a quaint pair, the handsome young soldier talking to a—sheep! But both were far too serious to think of the funny side, as Riquette listened to her directions and learnt the pass-word which would help her through the French lines, if she reached them.

Suddenly there came the scuffling and tapping of hundreds of little feet along the road.

'It is more sheep,' whispered Riquette. 'I must go now.'

'I can't kiss you, little one,' the soldier said softly. 'That must wait, until—perhaps—we meet again. But God be with you, for your own sake and for France!'

The next minute Riquette was driving the half-dozen sheep towards the gate. They huddled together for a minute, then scampered out to join their companions. Dropping down on all fours, the little girl slipped in amongst them, and they all pattered away along the road.

There must have been several hundreds of sheep. Riquette could see nothing but woolly bodies and silly, bobbing heads all about her, and the voices of the German soldiers who were driving them sounded from some distance behind. The pattering hoofs raised a great cloud of dust, which hung over the flock, partly hiding them. Riquette was thankful for it, although it got into her mouth and nose and eyes, making her cough and choke and feel utterly miserable. She crouched as she crept along with the slow-moving flock.

It was terribly hot inside the fleece and terribly tiring to run on all fours, yet Riquette dared not fall behind, in case the Germans should notice something strange about her. It was best to keep as far from them as possible, but the only thing which could have made her struggle on was the thought that it was all for France.

It seemed hours and hours before the fields and trees turned to houses, and Riquette knew that they were in the village. They went along the cobbled street, passing many soldiers. One of them called some directions to the men who drove the sheep, telling them in German to put the whole flock into a field just beyond the village, where part of the army corps was to encamp.

Of course, Riquette did not understand what was said, yet nothing could have been better for her plans. Through a gate she went with the other sheep, and once there it was easy to slip into the deep ditch which skirted it, and work her way along until she was out of sight behind a hedge.

Now, at last, she could stand upright and look about her, across a couple of fields, and a belt of straggling woodland, to where, through the trees, she could just see a white farmhouse.

That was the place which she must reach, but it seemed a terribly long way off, and she felt quite dizzy with heat and tiredness. Yet, somehow, Riquette struggled on and on, falling against tree-stumps, hardly able to walk upright, until without warning she found herself in the midst of an amazed group of red and blue soldiers. The little girl had forgotten what an extraordinary object she must appear, but, just in time, she remembered the pass-word which the French officer had given to her.

'Jeanne d'Arc!' she gasped, and fell in a little heap amongst them.

When Riquette came to herself, they had taken off the fleece, and her face was wet with deliciously cool water. Presently she was well enough to be taken up to the farm, and to deliver her message to the General.

He was a charming, white-haired old man, who did not make Riquette feel at all frightened. He read the message eagerly, and the little girl was quite bewildered by the praise which she received from him for her bravery.

Wrapped in a rug and tucked up on the General's own sofa, Riquette slept through all the confusion and noise of the hours which followed, and next day rode to the town which the troops were now to occupy, perched in front of the horse of one of the General's own aides-de-camp.

In that town, to Riquette's great delight, she found her mother and the baby: and you can imagine, without being told, just how delighted her mother was to see the little girl once more, safe and sound, and quite a heroine amongst the French soldiers.

During the days which followed, the Germans were driven back from the village near the tannery, and the French officer was discovered, very weak, but still alive. And one of the first people whom he asked to see in hospital was little Riquette, that he might give her the kiss which he had promised.

V. M. METHLEY.

THE ROMANCE OF THE SPICE TRADE.

V.—THE LONDON SHOWS—CINNAMON AND CASSIA.

I EXPECT many of you have seen the Lord Mayor's [illegible] in London; but I do not expect that you took [illegible] notice of the large number of representatives of City Companies who always attend. In fact, if the truth were known, you very likely thought them all unnecessary and uninteresting. Yes, they certainly are not much to look at, but they are all that remains now to represent the gay times of the past.

Of late years we have had, in various towns, wonderful pageants, depicting the different events of important history associated with the particular town in which the pageant took place. This kind of thing is all very interesting when held just now and then, but in Tudor

days pageants were at least a yearly occurrence. They were the outcome of what were called 'mystery plays,' which were founded upon Scriptural subjects.

Now, in the sixteenth century these plays were very popular, and there is still in existence an account of the doings of the city of Norwich. Here they were arranged by the different traders of the city, each trade being made responsible for the production of a certain pageant or portion of the Scriptural history. The Mercers, Drapers, and Haberdashers had to start by producing a pageant depicting the creation of the world! Now, the Grocers and Raffemen (Tallow Chandlers) had allotted to them the pageant entitled 'Paradise,' or, to give it its full title, 'The Story of Man in Paradise.' As it had to be produced every year, the company naturally had a stock of 'properties' necessary for the players.

Mr. Rees, whose book I have mentioned, gives a list of some of these, and here they are: 'A Griffon, gilt, with a fane to sett on the said top, a rib coloured red, a coat and hose and tail for the serpents, stained with a white hue; an Angel's coat and overhose of aphis skins; and a cote of yellow buckram with the Grocers' Arms for the pendon (pennant) bearer.' Now, does not all this remind you very much of the Lord Mayor's Show? It seems there was a set sort of play, which they performed on a car described thus: 'A House of Wainscot painted and builded on a cart with four wheels.'

The Grocers' Pageant at Norwich was discontinued somewhere about 1570, and all the weird properties came to a bad end. They were, first of all, turned into the street because the Grocers' Company would not pay for their storage, and then, after six years of exposure, they were handed over in lieu of rent!

But, although pageants declined in some parts, they grew in importance in London. You know how Queen Elizabeth loved a show, and naturally this sort of thing was popular in the capital. Pageants of all kinds were given frequently, and the City Companies seem to have vied with one another to produce the most brilliant parade. One occasion always chosen for a gorgeous pageant was the election of the Lord Mayor of London. The Company to which he happened to belong seems to have always made itself responsible for the pageant, or 'Show,' as we now call it. Mr. Rees gives many interesting details of the pageants arranged by the Grocers' Company when a grocer was elected Lord Mayor. For these pageants they spared no expense, one in 1617 costing the Company 882*l.* 18*s.* 11*d.* This sum of course represented four or five times as much as it does to-day. The particular detail which interests us here is the fact that in all these pageants there was always a young Indian very gorgeously attired in robes of Eastern design, seated on a camel. The camel had 'two silver paniers, one on each side, filled with all kinds of fruits and spices,' representing the wealth and trade of the Grocers. At given points the Indian scattered the contents of the paniers to the people, who scrambled for the possession of them. Raisins, almonds, figs, dates, prunes, nutmegs, were scattered around! (I wonder whether this custom gave rise to the practice of throwing coins to the crowds from the windows while waiting for the Lord Mayor's Show? I do not know whether this is done now, but I remember years ago that it always caused much fun.) The Indian boy always carried a banner on which was the arms of the Grocers' Company. The shield of the Company shows a camel at the top, recalling the times when the spices had to be carried long distances by these animals. On the shield there are three groups of cloves, showing again the importance of the spices in the trade of the grocer.

There was a very wonderful pageant for the Lord Mayor, Sir Thomas Middleton, a great grocer, in 1613. One of the items was 'five islands artfully garnished with all manner of Indian fruit trees, the middle island with a fair castle especially beautified.' The pageant does not seem to have started complete; but, as they conducted the Mayor on his way to the Guildhall, they were joined by certain cars carrying emblematical figures, several of whom addressed the Mayor, giving him welcome or advice. There was 'Truth,' 'Zeal,' 'Error,' 'Envy'; also 'London,' surrounded by 'Religion,' 'Liberality,' 'Love,' and other figures.

In 1617 there was an even more wonderful 'Show,' which cost 900*l.* Among the expenses were 'fifty sugar-loaves, thirty-six pounds of nutmegs, twenty-four pounds of dates, and fourteen pounds of ginger,' which were, I suppose, thrown to the crowd as usual. One of the cars in this pageant represented a number of Indians working on a Spice Island, some planting nutmegs and others trees; some gathering the fruit, and some taking up bags of pepper.

So you see, although the terms 'Spicer' and 'Pepperer' had departed, the spices were still highly valued. One of the songs sung by a party of supposed spice-planters at the Lord Mayor's pageant in 1681 included the following quaint lines:

'Of cinnamon, nutmegs, of mace and of cloves,
We have so much plenty, they grow in whole groves,
Which yield such a savour when Sol's beams do bless 'em,
That 'tis a sweet kind of contentment to dress 'em.'

(*Concluded on page* 164.)

MAY HAS COME.

MAY has come! The April showers
Called a host of lovely flowers
From their sleep beneath the mould.
Bluebells carpet every dingle,
Purple plumes of lilac mingle
With laburnam's drooping gold.

May has come, and brought the swallow;
Soon the dusky swift will follow;
Sparrows build in cottage eaves;
Nightingales sing in the gloaming,
And the village children, roaming,
Spy their nests amid the leaves.

May has come, with blossoms laden,
Like a pretty rustic maiden,
Garbed in dainty robes of green,
When the sunbeams gay are falling,
And the merry cuckoos' calling
Echoes from the coppice screen.

May has come! In woodlands shady
Lilies bloom to greet their lady;
Kingcups glitter by the stream;
Cowslips nod amid the grasses,
As the gentle Spring wind passes,
And the rosy campions gleam.

MAUD E. SARGENT.

'DONKEY.'

THERE was once a gallant little horse which was also a donkey. That is to say, his name was 'Donkey.' He belonged to a young officer who fell, mortally wounded, in the famous Charge of the Light Brigade. The horse was captured by the Russians.

A few weeks later, in the middle of the night, an alarm was sounded in the British camp. The urgent cry, 'Guard, turn out!' was passed from sentry to sentry, and the soldiers, aroused from sleep, sprang up and prepared for the enemy's attack. The sound of galloping horses was plainly heard. Nearer and nearer it came, and each soldier grasped his rifle firmly, and peered anxiously into the darkness.

But presently some one laughed, and the next moment all the men were shouting with merriment. Trotting towards the British lines was little Donkey. And not alone! A long string of riderless horses followed his lead. What did this mean?

A daring French Zouave had silently crept into the Russian camp and cut the picket-rope of the horses belonging to a squadron of Cossack cavalry. Donkey was among these liberated animals, and the clever little creature started off at once towards his own camp. The Cossack horses, following him, were now in their turn made prisoners. Thus Donkey did a good turn to his own side, and won for himself much honour and praise.

E. D.

A YEAR IN A GARDEN.

V.—MAY.

MAY is the great nest-building month, when the garden is full of the music of the birds. It is much louder and more varied now, and consequently it is much more difficult to distinguish the different notes. There is the 'chink, chink!' of the blackbirk, the song of the nightingale, the trill of the shy grasshopper warbler, the chattering notes of the starlings. The yellow-hammer is busy building and singing now, and

Grasshopper Warbler.

Yellow-hammer.

already some of the swallows have got their eggs laid. But if it turns out a cold month, the swallows always have a hard time in May.

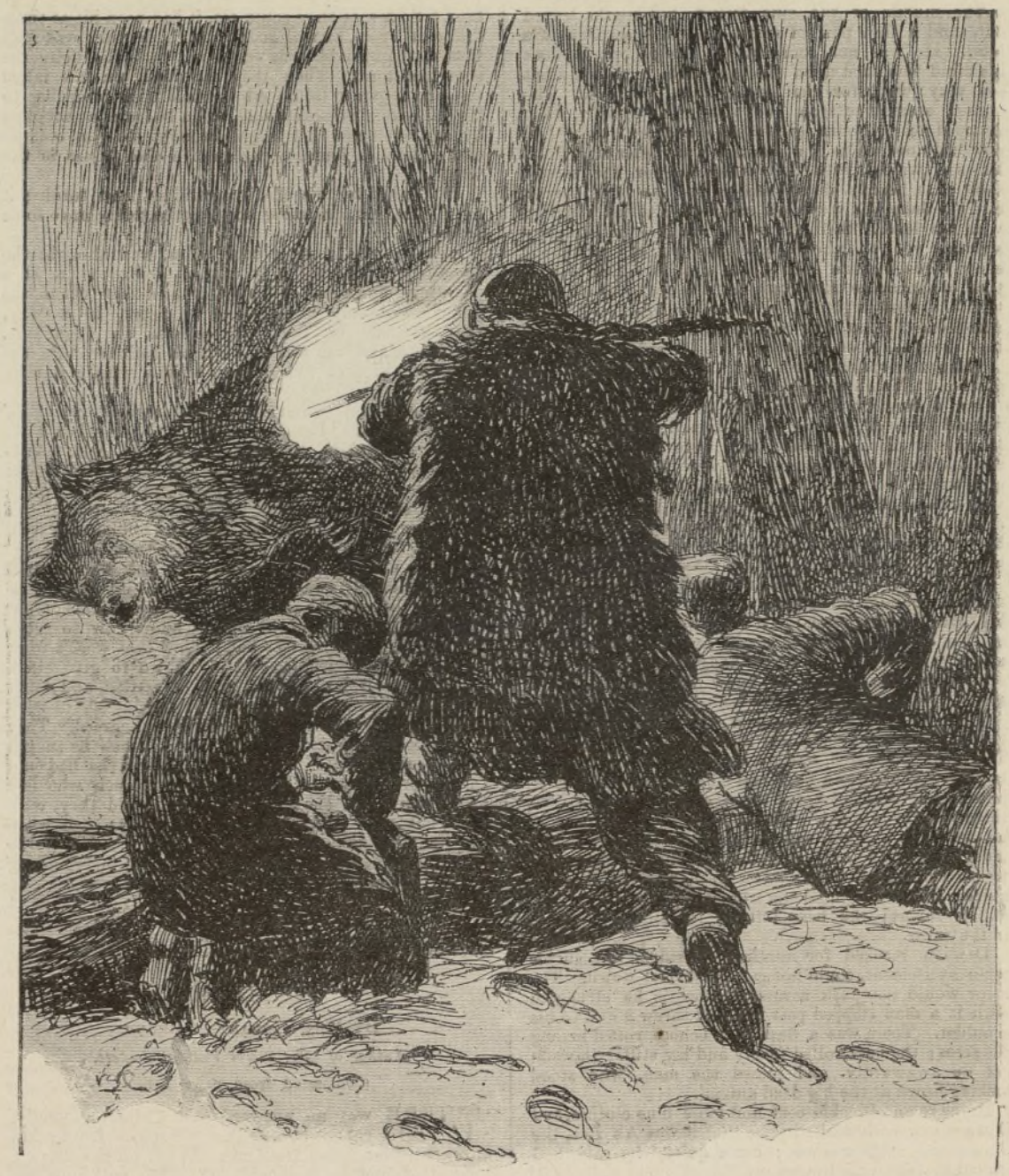
Part of the children's work last winter had been the making of boxes for caterpillars and pupæ. It was quite a new occupation, for neither of them knew very much about butterflies and moths, and still less about their eggs and caterpillars. But one day a neighbour had given to Billy the chrysalis of a butterfly she had found under her garden fence, suspended by a thread of silk round its body. Billy put it in a matchbox and carried it home. It was his first pupa, and he and Babe looked at it with delight when it was safely placed on a bed of moss in the matchbox. It was a curious grey little thing, spotted with black and white dots. Billy put it into a larger box, properly ventilated, with a glass door, and here it stayed very quietly all the winter. Then, one morning at the end of the month, it waked again to light and life. It had already been through quite a number of strange adventures. First of all it was one of a batch of little bright yellow eggs on a cabbage leaf; then it was a tiny caterpillar, eating the cabbage leaf all day long: then it stopped eating, cast its skin for the last time and came out as a chrysalis; it had climbed on the under side of the fence and there it hung by its silken thread till Billy's neighbour found it.

Swallow.

"A lovely white butterfly clinging weakly to the top of the box."

And now it was going through the most wonderful change of all. The sun and the garden were calling it, and it split its case and became a lovely white butterfly. Babe found it clinging weakly and limply to the top of the box. She called Billy and they watched it as its wings filled out and grew stronger. When they came home from school it was walking all over the box, trying to fly, so Billy opened the door and let it out. At first it flew very awkwardly and fell down into the grass several times, but presently a light breeze carried it safely over the top of the hedge out of sight.

After this Babe's quick blue eyes were always looking out for caterpillars. In the orchard, on an apple-tree, she found some pale grey hairy ones, about an inch long, spotted with red and blue. These were captured and placed in a caterpillar house. As the children did not know whether they would turn out to be butterflies or moths, a bed of fine earth covered with moss was placed in the box for the cocoons they might make. A few leaves from the apple-tree were placed in the box too, in a bottle of water; a cork was fitted into the neck of the bottle, and a hole made in it just large enough to admit the stem of the leaves; this was to prevent the caterpillars from crawling down into the water and getting drowned.



"The bear rolled feebly and lay still."

THE CINNAMON BEAR.

(*Concluded from page* 139.)

DAWSON sat down, with his right foot drawn under him, behind the trunk, and tried to brace himself, but his hand shook as he took out two or three cartridges. Jake could not run, and they durst not wait to see if the bear meant to attack them. It might be too late when they found out. The animal was half-way across the opening, and looked very big in the fading light. He doubted if it could be stopped by a shot or two.

The muzzle of the rifle jerked, red sparks leaped out, and a thin puff of smoke drifted past Dawson's head. He was not conscious of the report, because his mind was fixed upon the bear, which he could not see very well, for the smoke stung his eyes. The animal seemed to stop and rise half upright, then dropped on all-fours, and came on faster. Jake had obviously not missed, but his rifle was rather small, and Dawson waited with keen suspense for the second shot. He heard a sharp snap as the cartridge sprang out, but Jake was very slow, and seemed to be struggling with the lever. Still, there was no use in Dawson's shooting yet; the choked-bore gun would carry about sixty yards, but the shot would not hurt the bear at that distance; he must wait until it got quite close, so that the shot might strike it before spreading. The rifle flashed again, but the bear did not stop, and Jake beat the stock upon the trunk.

'Magazine-spring's stiff, and my hand's cold!' he gasped. 'Watch out; you haven't got to miss!'

For a moment Dawson felt unnerved. His throat seemed to swell, so that he was forced to swallow, and his hands shook; besides, they were numbed, and he could scarcely hold the gun. It was doubtful if a shot-gun would stop the bear; he must let the animal get very close, and then there might not be time to load again. One would need a few seconds to replace the burned cartridge. For all that, he must brace up, and he tried to pull himself together.

He thought he heard something behind him, but durst not look round. Struggling hard to keep cool, he fixed his eyes on the animal. It was twenty yards off, and at that distance the shot ought not to scatter much; at ten yards the pellets would hang together in a nearly solid ball. He wished he knew where he ought to aim.

Then he felt the gun butt against his shoulder, though he did not remember that he had thrown it up. The muzzle wavered, but got steady, and he pulled the trigger. There was a flash, and smoke blew in his eyes; he could not see, but heard the ejector snap as the cartridge was thrown out. His numbed fingers slipped, as he pushed in another and tried to close the breach; he must close it, and he forced the barrel up against the tree. The bear was only a few yards off; he must be quick. But as he pulled the trigger there was a curious, double report; the bear fell on its side and rolled in the snow.

Dawson reached for another cartridge, but, in his tense excitement, could not get the barrel down. The lever would not push across, and while he struggled with it a man stepped past him and threw a gun to his shoulder. There was a flash and echoes rolled among the trees; the bear rolled feebly and lay still. Dawson got up awkwardly and joined the man, who stood looking down at the big dead animal.

He wore an old skin coat and loose blue clothes, and Dawson saw with dull surprise that it was Ah Lee, the Chinaman. 'Hear shoot; come quick,' he said, and smiled at Jake, who limped up.

Jake nodded. 'Well, I'm glad you came in time!' Then he held out his hand for the other's gun, and put his finger in the muzzle. 'Six dollars at the cheap sport stores!' he exclaimed. 'It's lucky she's full-choke!'

This was not quite what he meant to say, but his brain was dull, and the others silently examined the bear. So far as they could see, it had been hit at three different spots, and although the rifle's mark was only just distinguishable, one could not miss the holes the shot had torn. Then they sat down on the fallen tree and began to talk. Ah Lee had been returning to his camp from a distant ranch when he heard a shot close by, and explained that he had brought his gun because one sometimes found a pigeon or a blue-grouse in the woods.

Jake asked for one of his cartridges, and turning it over, remarked, 'Number six; you certainly have some sand!'

Dawson was getting cool again, and thought the compliment justified. It needed pluck to fire at a charging cinnamon with small bird-shot when the animal was only a few feet off; but, in a way, the shortness of the distance was an advantage. An ounce and an eighth of lead, gathered into the space of three or four inches, strikes with a terrible shock.

'I don't know what's the matter with my gun,' Jake resumed. 'Perhaps she got a jar when I let her drop; perhaps the oil got stiff with cold. Anyhow, my fingers were cramped and awkward; you're sometimes clumsy when you try to be too quick. Well, I suppose we ought to skin the brute; but I've had enough. Ah Lee can have its hide, and we'll pull out for the ranch.'

He got up, and after thanking Ah Lee, who stopped behind, limped away with Dawson. 'I reckon he deserves the skin,' he said. 'A cinnamon's hide ought to be worth a pile, and the Chinks know how to get a good price for anything; but I allow that wasn't what he was after when he butted in. Tried to give him a hint I knew it, but I'd got kind of rattled, and didn't say what I meant.'

Dawson understood his comrade, and agreed. They had pulled Ah Lee out of the water when he might have been drowned, and it looked as if he had not forgotten. After all, it did not matter much who had killed the bear. The brute was dead, and they were tired, but safe. For all that, Dawson was glad when the lights of the ranch began to twinkle among the trees. The minute or two he had spent in crouching behind the fallen tree had shaken him worse than he thought.

HAROLD BINDLOSS.

CHINNA.

By Mrs. Hobart-Hampden,

Author of 'The Secret Valley,' etc., etc.

(Continued from page 147.)

'THERE was no answer,' said Chinna gloomily. 'Yet I cannot believe that the spirits' favour has altogether been taken from me. What offence have I committed that so it should be? They will help me. Surely they will help!'

'Oh, let us flee while yet there is time,' Mrs. Chinna besought again, wringing her hands.

But Chinna answered: 'Peace, woman; such matters are too high for thine understanding. I will not flee until I am very sure it is needful to do so.' And, at that, he slipped softly into the darkness of the

forest, for night had come by this time—a black and heavy night, obscured by thick clouds.

CHAPTER XV.

It seemed very lonely in the forest when Chinna had gone, most extraordinarily lonely, and each sound that pierced the silence took on an aspect sinister and threatening. A barking deer called on a high, alarmed note that suggested the presence of some stealthy pursuer. And the monkeys, perched in huddled groups on the trees surrounding the encampment, surely murmured and whispered together of danger to come? And overhead the thick clouds banked and banked, and the air was breathless and very still.

The children could not sleep. Nancy and Brian were too anxious, and Frederick too excited. He was determined to remain awake until Chinna returned, that he might hear all about the fight with the sickness and the victory that must certainly have resulted. They all sat round the fire, despite the heat, for its cheerful light was most companionable. Its dancing flames defied the loneliness of the forest, and kept, it seemed, all the dark, secret terrors at bay.

Mrs. Chinna was very restless, and the fact that a storm was brewing seemed to add to her disquiet. She fussed over one little task after another, and threw so many stones on the heap beneath the tree that it perceptibly increased in size.

'The spirits are angry to-night,' said Mrs. Chinna. 'They will speak presently with loud voices. (She meant that it would thunder.) 'And, perchance, the people of the village will say that it is because he, my man, has done wrong.'

'But perhaps they'll say it is because the spirits are angry with them, and not with Chinna,' Frederick suggested, and this seemed to comfort the little woman somewhat.

'It may be so,' she said; 'it may well be so. In truth, my man has ever done good to all, and never harm. Why, then, should not the spirits fight on his side?'

And she grew more cheerful, and began to tell the children tales of Chinna's prowess. And she spoke of the wild things of the forest as people speak of those they know well. There was a striped one, very large, but with a short tail, she said, who ruled over a certain portion of the forest. And sometimes he would choose to sit in the very centre of a narrow track, so that none might pass to right or left of him. But, if he was treated with due respect, and addressed by high-sounding titles, such as 'Maharajah,' 'Cherisher of the Needy,' and the like, he would move aside courteously, and harm none.

'The striped one that my man slew yesterday hunted always with his mate until he took up his abode in the house of the headman,' Mrs. Chinna went on. 'Doubtless she seeks him now everywhere. It would not be well to meet with her in her wrath.'

'I wonder what made him go into the village?' said Brian.

'Maybe, in some way he was injured,' Mrs. Chinna answered, 'and so could no longer follow the swift wild things. Some such reason there must have been to drive him to the haunts of men, for the creatures of the forest leave not the forest easily. But the spur of hunger is sharp.'

And Brian remembered how the tiger had limped. He had covered the ground quickly for a short distance, it was true, but probably he would soon have grown weary.

'It is for this same reason that the striped ones first take to eating men,' Mrs. Chinna explained further, 'if other food, even cow-flesh maybe, is hard to come by. Man cannot run far; man is easily caught. But, once the striped ones have eaten of human flesh, then does a spirit enter into them which drives them to eat of it again and again. There is a tale of a striped one that I know.'

She looked round, smiling at the children, her fears forgotten for a while, because every one was so much interested in her stories, and this pleased her simple soul. It was not often she found herself the most important person present, for she was used to consider herself vastly inferior to Chinna, though she in no way resented the fact.

'Once there was a man and a woman,' Mrs. Chinna began, 'and they were returning together from a fair. Through the forest they walked, since their village lay on the further side. And it was dark. And the woman said, "I am afraid, lord"; and the man made answer, "Peace, peace. What need of fear, since I am with thee?" Moreover, he had in his possession a most powerful charm of which he had not told her. Now, after a little, there came a rustling in the undergrowth.' Here Mrs. Chinna paused impressively, and the children glanced hastily at the forest, as did Mrs. Chinna also, and she hurried on again, lest she should be too afraid to tell the rest of the story. 'And the rustling grew louder, and forth there crept on to the path a striped one, very fierce. And the woman screamed, and said, "Lo, this is death." But the man replied, "I have here a powder, half of which I will give to thee and half of which I will swallow. And, at that I shall become a striped one myself, and drive this other away. And afterwards I will return to thee, and thou must place the second half in my mouth, and I will take my own shape again."

'And, as he said, so it was. In his mouth he placed one half of the powder, and no longer was he a man; but the woman saw two striped ones on the path before her. And one drove the other afar, and returned to her thereafter with open jaws and eager tongue outstretched. And, lo, so fearsome was the sight, that the woman dropped the powder in the mud, and, screaming, fled. Therefore was she slain by him she had betrayed, and who never might be a man again. And afterwards did he live on human flesh only, seeking always a new revenge.'

A low roll of thunder interrupted Mrs. Chinna at this point, and was followed very shortly by another. The storm was coming up with great rapidity, and, scarcely was there time to seek the shelter of the hut before its full force swept over the encampment. For a while the rain held off, and the lightning darted and flashed everywhere at once with a keen and blinding light. Hither and thither it sped like some cruel lance-point guided by a cunning hand. And, all in a moment, the hollow tree flared up towards the sky, one mass of blue and yellow flame.

And upwards rose, too, a shriek from Mrs. Chinna, a shriek of horror and despair. 'See, see,' she wailed, 'the spirits are angry with us. They have destroyed the tree; they will abide with us no longer.'

(*Continued on page* 162.)

"With open jaws and eager tongue outstretched."