



"Mrs. Chinna pointed to what was once the hollow tree."

CHINNA.

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

(Continued from page 159.)

CHAPTER XVI.

FOR a moment the whole encampment was lit by blue flames, and echoed with Mrs. Chinna's shrieks. Then down came the rain, as it had come on the day of the flood, and drowned the burning tree and every sound save that of its own drumming on the earth. The little hut, luckily, faced in such a way that it was protected from the storm. And, by crouching in the furthest corner, it was possible to keep dry.

Gradually the storm passed. The rain ceased, and the thunder rumbled away into the distance. And Mrs. Chinna crept out of the hut, and tried to coax the embers of the camp fire into a blaze. But her efforts were fruitless, and she soon came back, and sat hunched together, sighing deeply, and every now and then breaking out into miserable, bewildered speech.

'What have we done—what have we done?' she moaned. And 'They will kill my man. Already, perchance, he is dead.' And then, all at once, she stopped her moaning to listen eagerly. Her quick ears had caught a sound which the children did not detect till several seconds later.

They heard it then, the sound of feet running swiftly. And, almost immediately, Chinna burst into the clearing. So breathless was he, he was forced to fling himself on the ground and pant. They could see him as well as hear him, for now the moon had risen. Before he could recover sufficient breath for speech, Mrs. Chinna pointed to what was once the hollow tree, and said: 'The spirits have turned their faces from us. See, lord, the tree that was their home is dead.'

And Chinna stared at the still smouldering stump, and the first words he said were: 'Twas not well done of the spirits. I have ever served them faithfully. I have not been like these evil men of the village who turn against the hand that has helped them.'

He was able to stand again now, and he went to the hut, and began to make a little heap of his spare arrows, and another bow that he had. And the silver coins he took from the thatch, beneath which he had hid them. And to Mrs. Chinna he said, 'Make ready. We will go from this place.'

And Mrs. Chinna at once set to work to gather together her few cooking pots, while the children watched and wondered where now they would be taken. Surely Chinna would not leave them behind in the clearing, at the mercy of the angry villagers? Would he listen if they suggested that their own home would prove a safe refuge for the whole party? But it did not seem likely he would consent to embark on an entirely new venture at such a moment. Moreover, it was plain that, already, he had a definite purpose in his mind.

At last, Brian ventured on a question. 'What has happened, Chinna?' he asked. 'Is the sickness just as bad as ever?'

'I know not,' said Chinna; 'I did not wait to see, for, without doubt, it is the intent of these people to deal evilly with me if the sickness does not speedily depart. They shut me within the empty house of the headman when I had made the offerings, and sung the song of

banishment. And they said: "There shalt thou remain until we are very sure that the gods have hearkened to thy voice." And, since the spirits had vouchsafed no answer to my prayer,' Chinna went on, and his voice was bitter, 'my heart failed me, and now I know with what good reason I did not wait, as I have said, to see if the sickness would indeed cease, but at the height of the storm I escaped, while the village people hid within their houses, cowards all. They will not dare to follow in the dark, for of that, too, they are afraid.'

'Where go we, lord?' Mrs. Chinna asked now, her bundle already complete. She placed it on her head as she spoke.

'To the fort of our people,' said Chinna. 'There we shall be safe, and can lie hid until I see clearly what we must do. The people of the village will not follow us thither. They have neither the wits nor the courage.'

His own preparations were finished now, also, and he turned to the children and said: 'Ye, too, shall come with me. Hitherto have ye brought good fortune in your train; perchance, ye will do so even yet.'

And, without further explanation, he moved off into the forest. Mrs. Chinna quickly untied the rope with which the goat was tethered, and thrust the end into Brian's hand. Then after her lord and master she went, and Nancy and Frederick followed, with Brian last of all, leading the goat. And in and out amongst the tree-stems they went for a couple of miles or less, guided unerringly by Chinna, until the little man came to a halt at the foot of a rockstrewn rise. 'The fort is near by, above us,' he said. 'I will go first, and make certain that the road is clear. Wait ye all here until I summon you.'

And he flitted on ahead, and seemed to melt at once into the shadows. The children looked after him, but could see nothing save trees, and yet more trees. No straight wall-line, nor indented battlement.

And, puzzled, Nancy questioned Mrs. Chinna. 'Are there many people in the fort?' she asked.

And Mrs. Chinna answered: 'It is the dwelling-place of no man, and even the defences are no longer standing. But still we call it the fort, for once it was a place of refuge for all our people.'

And before the children had time to wonder what need there was in such a case to reconnoitre first, Chinna reappeared, and beckoned them on. And, after a breathless climb up a steep and rocky path, they found themselves standing on a wide and moonlit plateau, covered with great hummocks, over which grew bushes and creepers and grass. Here and there stone blocks emerged from the greenery, and showed that these hummocks had once been buildings which were now in ruins. And at the further end of the plateau was the beginning—or rather the end—of a wall which had formerly encircled the whole hill. And also there were great stone tanks, sunk deep, which were evidently still water-tight, as the recent rain had filled them to the brim.

(Continued on page 175.)

THE COOK'S OPINION.

THE great scientist, Charles Darwin, was not appreciated by his cook. It is said that one day Mrs. Darwin, troubled because her husband had such a poor appetite, consulted the cook as to how they could tempt him to eat.

'He does not seem to care for ordinary food,' said

Mrs. Darwin. 'Do try to think of something very nice.'

'If you will excuse the liberty I'm taking, ma'am,' said the cook, 'I think that master would be able to take his food better if he got something to do. Idle folks are never hungry.'

Mrs. Darwin was indignant. 'But your master is not an idle man,' she said. 'He is always at work; in my opinion, he works too hard.'

'Excuse me, ma'am,' said the cook; 'but if I may make so bold as to say it, I can't agree to that. With my own eyes I saw him in the garden yesterday staring at a leaf for over two hours—two whole hours! That isn't work, anyhow!'

E. D.

THE KEEPSAKE.

IT was John Prior's birthday, and his little sister, Katie, who was very fond of him, and whom he loved dearly, gave him a birthday present. It was a knife with many blades, which John had chanced to see and admire when he was out walking one day with Katie.

'This is for a keepsake,' said the little maid to her big brother. 'Promise me that you will never, never part with it as long as you live.'

'I promise,' said John, laughing.

Before John's next birthday came round, the great war had begun. John Prior was one of the first to volunteer for active service. After his training in England as an artilleryman he was sent to France. And, of course, wherever John went, he carried with him his precious knife.

One day, when the artillery—protecting the soldiers who were carrying out a flank movement—was in action under heavy fire, something went wrong with one of the guns belonging to John's battery. It seemed to be jammed, and to re-charge it proved impossible. The lieutenant in command of the battery came forward and examined the gun. 'We need a tool,' he said, 'a sharp-pointed instrument—'

Instantly, without speaking a word, John took his knife from his pocket and handed it to the officer. Then he applied himself again to his duty.

With the aid of the knife, the difficulty was surmounted in a moment, and the gun resumed work. Soon afterwards the order came to rejoin the main body of the troops. The position was abandoned.

'If you please, sir,' said John to the lieutenant, as, still under fire, the men were retreating in good order, 'may I have my knife?'

'Your knife?' said the lieutenant. 'Ah, yes! I did not return it to you. I dropped it and forgot to pick it up.'

Then, observing that John looked rather troubled, the officer added, 'Never mind! I will give you a better one in place of it.'

John thanked his officer, but said to himself that he wanted no *new* knife. He wanted the old one—the one which his little sister had made him promise to keep.

So John loitered in the rear, and presently slipped away and turned back towards the spot lately occupied by the battery. A rain of deadly missiles was falling all around him.

Regardless of this, the young soldier coolly went on until he caught sight of his knife, half buried in the

ground. He wrenched it out, wiped it with his handkerchief, and put it into its accustomed home—his pocket. He then ran back to his comrades.

'Where have you been, Prior?' inquired the lieutenant, severely.

'To look for my knife, sir,' answered John. 'And I have found it,' he added, joyfully.

The lieutenant frowned at him.

'You might easily have lost your life for that worthless knife,' he said. 'Did I not promise you another?'

'But you see, sir,' said John, with a smile, 'this is the one I wanted—because it is a keepsake.'

E. D.

THE CUCKOO.

THERE'S a cuckoo in the coppice,
Just across the field of mangold.
All among the twigs and branches,
Where the trees are low and tangled.

For a mossy nest she's searching,
Home of chaffinch or of linnet;
When the treasure is discovered
She will drop her small egg in it.

Then across the meadows speeding,
Leave to other birds the hatching
Of her young one, and its feeding,
While's she's caterpillar catching!

Stranger bird than any other,
Won't you even stay to look who
Come's to sit—a foster-mother—
On the egg you've left her, Cuckoo?

LILIAN HOLMES.

MICHAELMAS DAY.

GOOSE for dinner on Michaelmas Day is a very old custom indeed, and a great many of the people who enjoy their helping of goose on that day have no notion of how the idea originated. I do not think any one is *quite* sure, but there is one suggestion that seems to be a likely one.

Michaelmas Day is quarter-day, and quarter-day is rent-day; and in the olden times, when the country folk used to come to their landlord's house, rent in hand, they would also bring along with them a fine fat goose: no doubt with the hope of putting him in a kind humour towards them. They chose a goose, no doubt, as their present because at that time of year the geese are naturally well fed and plump. Evidently the plan worked, and the landlords were pleased, for in time the custom grew so common that the mention of 'one goose fit for the lord's dinner' as part payment appeared in the title-deeds of an estate in the days of King Edward IV.

There is another mention of the old custom in long-ago history that is also interesting to us to-day. It is said that Queen Elizabeth was actually enjoying her Michaelmas goose when she heard the delightful news of the defeat of the Spanish Armada. Whether that goose was a particularly plump and tender one, or whether it was not, I am pretty sure that *that* eventful Michaelmas dinner stood out for ever in the memory of the Good Queen Bess more clearly than any other.

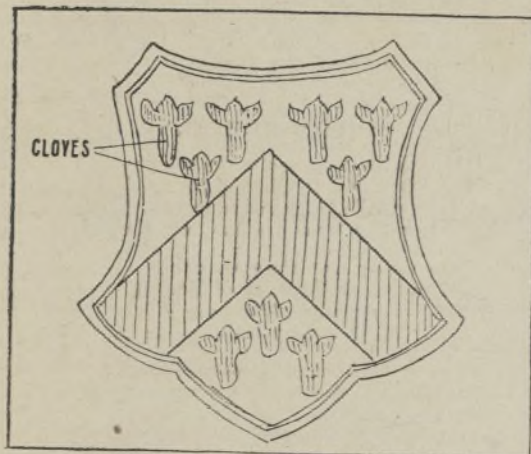
ETHEL TALBOT.

THE ROMANCE OF THE SPICE TRADE.

V.—THE GROCERS' COMPANY: CINNAMON
AND CASSIA.

(Concluded from page 155.)

LET me turn now from the Grocers' Company, whose shield is shown in fig. 1, to some of the spices themselves.



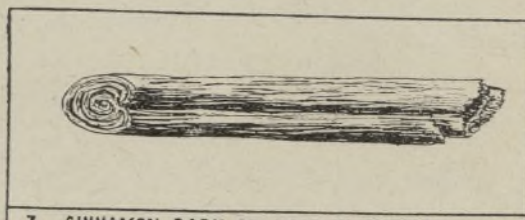
1. SHIELD OF THE GROCERS COMPANY

I think the best known among those still remaining to be described is Cinnamon. We have had spices which were fruits, parts of fruits, flower-buds, roots, but now



2. SPRAY OF CINNAMON

we have one which is a bark. Yes, cinnamon is the dried inner bark of a tree of the laurel family. There are a number of similar trees the barks of which are often sold as true cinnamon, all having an aromatic bark, but the proper one is *Cinnamomum zeylanicum*. Its original home was Ceylon, where even now it grows best, but it will grow, if properly planted and tended, in most tropical countries of the East. It attains a height of thirty or forty feet, and bears loose clusters of not very large white flowers. The leaves are large and very like those of ordinary laurel. Fig. 2 gives a sketch of a spray. The stamens of this plant are rather interesting, having special lids to keep out the wet! At a



3. CINNAMON BARK AS USED IN COOKERY

and B I give two sketches, showing one with its lids shut (A), and one with its lid open (B). The bark used as cinnamon is taken from the younger branches and is an inner layer, not the outside part which we know as 'bark.' This is peeled off in short

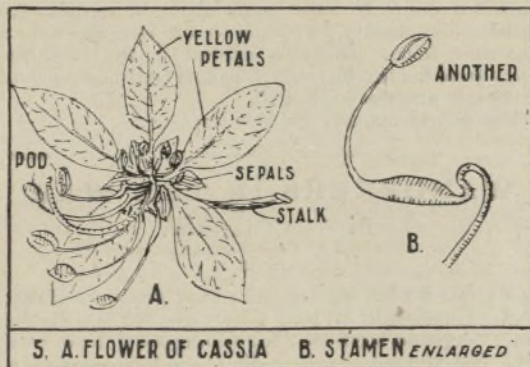


4. SPRAY OF CASSIA

lengths, which promptly curl up, and as it dries it curls tighter, arriving here in what I have seen well described as 'closely rolled quills.' In fig. 3, I show you a piece from my spice-box. If I tried to uncurl it, it would split all to pieces, and it seems to be curled round about three times, and is about three-eighths of an inch thick.

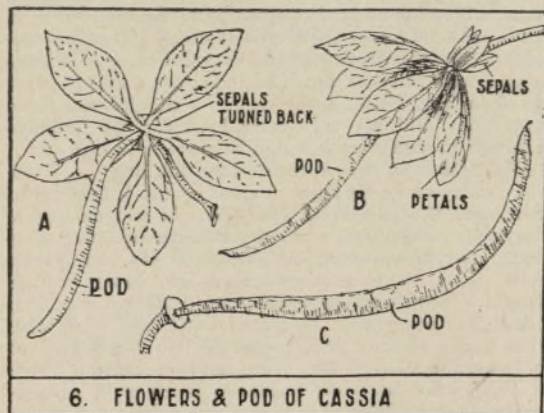
It smells beautifully aromatic, and its colour is shades of warm brown, including, of course, the shade known as 'cinnamon.' Cinnamon is several times referred to in the Bible, the spice being used in oil for sacred purposes and as a perfume.

A near relative of this tree is *Cinnamomum cassia*; this supplies what is known in commerce as 'cassia bark.'



and the buds of the flowers of this same species supply the cassia buds of commerce, both being important in the manufacture of medicine.

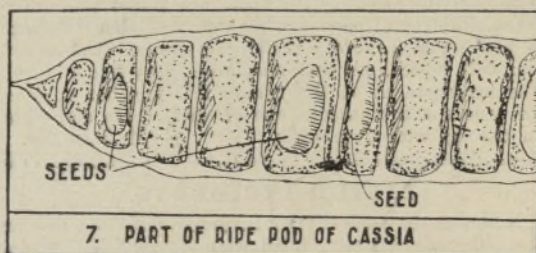
Another spice mentioned in that long list I gave you was *Cassia fistula*. This is a beautiful member of the pea family. Its native land is India, but it is possible to cultivate it in most tropical countries. I was enabled to obtain sketches for you from the Natural History Museum from very beautifully coloured drawings. At fig. 4 I give you a sketch of a spray, very much reduced in size. Here you see the leaves are compound, occurring



in pairs, but having no terminal leaflet. The flowers are in long, loose, hanging clusters, and are of a delightful lemon-yellow in colour, veined with orange. These flowers are most interesting in structure; there are five small green sepals, and five leaf-like petals. These latter seem almost as if they are attached by stalks, so slender are the attachments. There are five long and five short stamens, which are of a curious shape.

In fig. 5 I show a complete flower at A, and at B an enlarged drawing of a single stamen, which you see has

a curious kink and swelling. This peculiarity gives the flower a confused appearance. Then in the middle there is a slender pistil which is a pod. The flower eventually loses its stamens, and appears as seen at fig. 6, A and B. Finally the petals fall, and it is as at C. This pod grows to be as much as eighteen inches long. It is round in section and quite black when ripe, and as they ripen they twist. Now, the part of the plant included as a spice was a sort of pith which forms a lining to the many



divisions of the pod. In fig. 7 I show you a part of an open pod; the cavities here shown are lined with this pith or pulp, and it is this which is the *Cassia pulpa* of commerce.

Senna is another spice in my list. This is made from the dried leaflets of several species of cassia. Alexandria senna is the leaflets of one kind (a sharp-leaved cassia), and long-leaved senna is made from another ('lengthened cassia'). Senna tea used to be



greatly used as a 'spring medicine' in olden times. 'Salts and senna' it was called. I have never tasted this, but I understand it had a very curious sweetish flavour. The spice is also used in making licorice powder.

The last of my spices for this article is Allspice, or Pimento. This is another member of the myrtle family, like the clove. Its proper name is *Eurenia pimenta*. The flowers are small and white, but the part used as a spice is the dried fruit. These are round and blue-black, like privet-berries when ripe, and about the size of peas. Fig. 8 shows a sketch of a spray. The leaves, you will notice, are long and broad, very like a laurel. The arrangement of the berries is somewhat curious, for you see the middle one of each three sits right on the top without a stalk.

E. M. BARLOW.

LITTLE INCIDENTS.

IN one of the cases of the Liverpool Museum lies an old wooden box filled with coins. To casual observers it seems out of place amid the rich treasures of the Museum. But those who care to look more closely at this old box will discover on the lid a piece of paper containing some information about the box and its treasures. According to the writing on the lid, this box contains the first collection of relics ever made by Joseph Meyer. When he died, Meyer's collection (which he bequeathed to the Museum) was valued at sixty thousand pounds.

The story of how Joseph Meyer became interested in relics of bygone times is worth retelling. When but a small boy he was walking with his grandfather through a Cheshire field, when they saw a ploughman turn up a number of old Roman coins. Young Meyer was naturally interested in these, and his interest was deepened when his grandfather offered him five shillings if he could read the inscriptions round the coins within a month. Meyer won the five shillings, and more besides, for the effort to gain the prize caused him to take an interest in old coins, an interest which he never lost and which was the means of providing him with a lifelong hobby.

It seems a small incident, yet how many careers have been shaped by similar incidents which at the time they occurred seemed but trifles?

Michael Faraday, the great scientist, was only a poor boy. His first occupation was that of errand-boy to a bookseller. Faraday performed his errands so well that at the end of a year his master agreed to teach him the art of bookbinding. Whilst engaged in binding a book he noticed an article on electricity. It was the reading of this article which turned Faraday's thoughts towards science.

Adam Sedgwick, the famous Cambridge professor, was obliged to take long country walks for the benefit of his health. During these walks he began to notice the shape of the land round about him. He began to inquire into the structure of the earth, and thus took an interest in geology. In a short time he became the professor of geology in the University.

Helmholtz, the great German scientist, attributed his choice of a career to a serious illness which confined him to his bed. To while away the tedious hours of confinement, he sent for a microscope. This was the beginning of a great scientific career.

There is a story told of how a man was saved from

insanity by the sight of a butterfly. He had been brooding and brooding over his misfortunes until he was on the verge of madness. One day he wandered into the country and threw himself down on a grassy bank to rest. Presently a butterfly lighted on a spot close beside him. He began to watch the little creature, and his curiosity was aroused. Before he left the spot he felt a desire to know more about butterflies. To satisfy this curiosity, he commenced to read about them and study them. This new interest in life took him away from his troubles, and in a short time he recovered his health and was well again.

Small incidents, and yet how important!

WANDERERS IN THE WAR.

By A. A. METHLEY.

CHAPTER I.

'GOOD-BYE, Dermot, old chap; good-bye, Harris. Hope you'll all have a jolly good time. Hailes, don't forget to send me that fishing-rod. Now we're off! See you next week, Wilbur. So long—good-bye.'

Roger Mervyn leaned out of the railway-carriage window, waving his straw hat to the group of school-boys on the platform, in the forefront of which stood his friend, the red-haired American, Sam Wilbur; and then, when the shouts of farewell had died away, he settled himself comfortably in a corner and took out the magazine which he had just bought at the bookstall. It was a beautiful morning, and the boy felt happy and excited as he started on his journey, for the summer holidays had begun, and he was going down into the country to stay with his uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Danvers, at Monkton Ashe.

Roger had been several times before to Monkton Ashe, where his uncle was rector, and he knew that it was a splendid place, with trout-fishing, golf, ponies to ride, a fine tennis-lawn, and several large country houses, with families which included boys and girls of his own age, within easy reach. Besides all these attractions, Val, his only sister, back for the holidays from her French school, would be there with him.

Roger Mervyn was fifteen years old, and his sister was twelve and a bit; but in spite of this difference in their ages, the pair were great friends and comrades. Val was a clever, high-spirited girl, with any amount of pluck, energy, and common sense, and she could ride, swim, skate, and even climb trees as well as her brother himself. They had always done everything together, and, indeed, had never been separated until two years ago, when Roger went to Craven and Val to her school at St. Denis-sur-Meuse. Roger was not quite certain where St. Denis was—he never had been much good at geography—but he knew that it was somewhere in France.

Usually the boy and girl had been to Scotland in the summer with their father and mother, but now Major Mervyn's regiment had been ordered to India, and his wife had accompanied him to the East. They would not be home again for several years, and in the meantime it had been arranged that Roger and Val should spend their holidays at Monkton Ashe.

'You will have fine times there, my boy,' Major Mervyn had said to his son; 'plenty of riding, golf, and the rest of it. And, remember, you must look after Val. Your uncle and aunt are quiet, stay-at-

home people. They are not used to children, and Val is always inclined to be a bit reckless. I trust you to take care of her.'

'All right, Father.' Roger had spoken rather huskily, for he had just said good-bye to his mother, and there seemed to be a lump in his throat; and then Major Mervyn had shaken hands with the boy, and given him an extra half-sovereign to add to his term's pocket-money.

Roger remembered every detail of that parting, and how lonely he had felt when he stood on the wharf at Tilbury and watched the great P. and O. liner vanish into the yellow river fog. It had been February then, and Val had already left for her French school after the Christmas holidays. She had not been home at Easter, so that it was now nearly eight months since the brother and sister had met, and although Roger pretended to be indifferent, and would most likely greet Val with the most casual of salutations, he was really looking forward eagerly to seeing his sister again. He smiled to himself as he thought of how she would be waiting to welcome him on the platform at Monkton Ashe, and of all they would have to talk about as they drove through the narrow, tree-shaded lanes towards the Rectory.

Roger opened his magazine. It certainly would be awfully nice to see Val again; and then the train drew up at a station, the carriage-door was wrenched open, a porter piled bags, suit-cases, and bundles of golf-clubs on to the rack, and two men—one brown-faced and clean-shaven, the other with eye-glasses and a grey moustache—got in.

Roger did not at first pay much attention to his fellow-travellers, for he had opened his magazine at an exciting story. When that was finished it was time for lunch, and after the sandwiches, cakes, and ginger-beer had disappeared, he felt drowsy, and almost fell asleep in his corner of the carriage.

He was roused at last by the voices of the two men, who, having laid aside the newspapers in which until now they had been absorbed, were talking earnestly together.

'Things certainly look bad,' the younger said, filling his pipe, and then touching the paper on his knee. 'What do you think of it, Burke? Does it really mean war? Or will things settle down again as they have done before?'

The other shrugged his shoulders, and his face was very grave. 'One can't say for certain, of course,' was his reply; 'but I don't like the news to-day. In my opinion, this time it does mean war.'

'War!'—the younger man repeated the word almost eagerly. 'Well, you ought to know, Colonel; but I suppose England won't be in it?'

The grey-haired man shrugged his shoulders again. 'If it is war, it seems to me that every one will be in it,' he said. 'In fact, I think so seriously of things that I'm going over to Paris to-night to fetch home my little girl. I don't want her to be out there if any trouble comes.'

'Really, you think it so bad as that? But of course you'll feel more comfortable when you have Betty at home. Well, here's my station. Good-bye, and a pleasant journey.'

The two shook hands as the train slowed down, and when the bustle of arrival and departure was over, the man who had been called Burke took up his newspaper

again. Roger sat watching him, and wishing that he could summon up courage enough to ask some questions.

War! The air of the stuffy railway carriage seemed suddenly to be charged with excitement and suspense. What did it all mean? What was going to happen? Like most boys of his age, Roger had been almost completely absorbed in school interests, and during the last week of term, when cricket-matches, prize-givings, and house-suppers had been the order of the day, he had hardly glanced at a newspaper, or had time to realise that, in the great world outside, strange and terrible things were happening. At the same time, he was a sensible, intelligent boy, and had always been a great deal with his father, Major Mervyn. Some day he intended to be a soldier himself.

After a few minutes Roger picked up the newspaper which the departed traveller had left behind him, and began to study the startling headlines on the first page.

Colonel Burke looked up from his own paper and watched the boy's intent face with amusement. 'Well, sir,' he said at last; 'these are anxious times. May I ask what is your opinion of the European situation?'

Roger coloured, for he knew that the speaker was laughing at him. But the keen blue eyes twinkled behind the glasses, and although the grey moustache had a fierce twist, it did not entirely conceal a very kindly smile.

'I don't know anything about it, sir,' he said shyly. 'But I could not help hearing what you were saying just now. And—and do you really think that there is going to be war?'

'Yes, I'm afraid I do,' was the reply. And then the man went on to explain what he meant, and, spreading his newspaper on the seat of the carriage, showed Roger a map and pointed out the different countries that might soon be at war together—Germany, Austria, Russia, Serbia, France—perhaps England!

The boy felt awed and bewildered, for he felt as if some great tempest, of which until now he had only heard the distant thunder, were about to overwhelm the whole world.

'The Germans are determined to smash France,' Colonel Burke said, in conclusion. 'They have been preparing this for over thirty years. I am going over to Paris at once, to fetch my little girl back from school.'

'My sister is at school in France, too,' Roger told his new friend. 'At least, she was there. She is at home now for the summer holidays. She came yesterday, and went down to Monkton Ashe. I shall meet her there to-day.'

'Ah, I see! Well, it's a good thing she is safely in England. I wish my Betty had got home yesterday. There is going to be trouble on the Continent—bad trouble, I'm sure of it, and English children are best at home.'

He said the last sentences almost under his breath, as if he were speaking to himself; but Roger's keen ears caught the whispered words. He felt glad that Val was already in England and out of any possible difficulty or danger.

Colonel Burke reached his destination soon after that, and when he had collected his luggage he shook hands with Roger as if they had been old friends.

'I change here,' he said; 'so good-bye, my boy; and I hope you and your sister will enjoy your holidays together.'

(Continued on page 170.)



"Do you really think there is going to be war?"