



“‘Have you come to take the money I offered?’ he asked.”



## THE RED STEER.

BY HAROLD BINDLOSS.

*(Concluded from page 262.)*

DAWSON was wakened by a slight tapping, and nearly went to sleep again while he wondered what it was. The noise, however, kept on, and by-and-by it dawned on him that somebody was knocking at the window. He turned over drowsily, but got wide awake as he saw an indistinct figure outside the glass. For a moment he hesitated, and then jumped out of bed. If the fellow had meant to harm him, he would not have knocked.

'Who's there?' he asked.

'Ah Lee,' said the other quietly, and pushed up the window. 'If you wantee led cow, come quick.'

Dawson knocked on the wall of the next room. 'Get up, Jake. Ah Lee has found the steer.'

'I'm awake,' Jake answered. 'I'll be with you in a minute.'

He opened the door, half-dressed, and, sitting down, began to put on his boots. Ah Lee sat on the window-ledge, and Dawson hurriedly put on his jacket.

'Now,' said Jake, 'where's the steer?'

'In lively stable.'

'Ah!' said Jake, 'it's near the yards, but I hadn't thought about looking there.' He was silent for a few moments, and then resumed: 'There's no policeman in the town, and some of these cow-punchers are toughs, while I imagine the red-haired man's a crook. Well, as he might make trouble if we woke him up and claimed the beast, I think the best plan is to steal it back.'

'Come quick; take led cow,' Ah Lee remarked.

'I'm coming,' Jake replied, and turned to Dawson. 'Waken Pete; he's at the end of the passage. Get out quietly and join us at the stable.'

Dawson went away, carrying his boots, and a minute or two later bent over the hired man's bed. A bushman wakens easily, and Pete got up and listened to what Dawson had to say. Then they crept downstairs, and, finding the door unlocked, went out into the dark. Nobody seemed to have heard them, and they did not put on their boots until they were some distance down the street. It was not paved, and the soil was soft and torn by wheels. When they reached the stable, Jake and Ah Lee were waiting outside, and the Chinaman had a key that fitted the lock. They did not ask where he had got it, but let him open the door, after which Jake struck a match. There were no horses in the stable, but the red steer occupied a stall.

Jake put out the match, and was silent for a few moments. Then he said, 'I think the bush is the best place. Twist that old halter round the beast's horns, Pete, and stick fast to it. Don't go too far, and bring the steer up the middle gangway at the yard just before seven o'clock. I guess they won't miss it till daybreak, and they won't have much time to hunt round then.'

'What are you going to do?' Pete asked.

'Nothing until seven o'clock,' Jake answered with a chuckle. 'In the meantime Tom and I will go back to the hotel.'

Ah Lee locked the door, and the boys waited until he and Pete faded into the dark. Then they returned to the hotel, and climbing up the pipe, got in by the window of Dawson's room. They did not, however, go to sleep, and Dawson thought daybreak was long in

coming; but at length a grey light crept across the bush and the big firs got black and distinct among the drifting mist. A locomotive bell began to toll at the stockyard, and here and there shadowy figures moved about the street.

They waited until they heard steps in the passage and on the stairs, and then went down to the dirty room, which was strewn with cigar-ends and smelt of stale tobacco. The cattle-dealer and the red-haired man were talking when the boys came in, but they separated, and the dealer turned to Jake.

'Well,' he said, with a laugh, 'what about your steer?'

'If I bring the beast along, you'll have to pay up,' Jake replied.

'That's so, but you had better be quick. There isn't much time left. I'm going to the yard now.'

The boys followed after a time, and it was light when they reached the busy yard. A locomotive was shunting a row of cars, and men and frightened animals crowded the gangways and the loading bank. For the most part the cattle had run wild in the bush, and now some charged their drivers, while some packed and surged against the rails. Shouts and bellows broke through the tolling of the locomotive bell and the roll of wheels. Jake and Dawson, however, stood quietly by Mr. Winthrop's animals, and now and then the dealer glanced at them as he hurried past.

'Better take my offer and let me have the stock,' he said the last time he went by.

Jake shook his head and afterwards glanced at his watch. Then he indicated the locomotive, which was bringing in another row of cars.

'That makes up the train,' he said to Dawson. 'If Pete's here in the next ten minutes, the dealer will have time to put our lot on board.'

They waited anxiously. The most part of the stock was already shipped, and the bustle was dying down. A group of men stood on the emptying bank, with the dealer among them, and the locomotive pump began to pant as the engineer got ready to start. Then Dawson saw a man and a big red animal turn a corner.

'Pete's coming now!' he cried, and followed Jake, who ran across the yard and stopped the railroad agent. Then they went up to the dealer, and he gave them a keen look.

'Have you come to take the money I offered?' he asked.

'No,' said Jake. 'We have come to deliver you the steer. You said you'd pay the proper sum if I found the beast in time to put it on the cars.' He turned to the other men. 'Isn't that so?'

'He certainly promised; we heard him,' one agreed.

'You have time,' Jake resumed, turning back to the dealer. 'The agent told me he won't send out the train till our bunch is loaded up.'

'Where's the steer?'

'Coming up the middle gangway,' Jack replied, indicating Pete and the animal.

'Very well,' said the dealer. 'Bring your bunch along.'

'In a minute. Suppose you hand out the bills?'

The dealer laughed and pulled out his wallet. 'Here you are,' he said, counting some paper money. 'Now, if you've got it right, fill up this receipt.'

Jake carefully turned over the bills, and then took the other's fountain pen. 'Yes; that's correct. Thanks.'



The dealer gave him an ironical smile. 'Well, so long as you're satisfied! You're a pretty clever kid. In fact, I allow you're much smarter than you look!'

For a time the boys were occupied helping to put the animals on the cars, and then leaned against the rails, breathing hard, as the long train rolled away with its bellowing freight.

'She's off, and we have got the money,' said Jake. 'I felt bad about it last night, and now I'm tired. Let's go along and get breakfast.'

They saw Ah Lee at the kitchen door as they went to the dining-room, and Jake held out a bank-note.

'The red cow's on the train,' he said.

Ah Lee signed him to put the money back.

'I savvy; John savvy much,' he replied, with an urbane smile.

Jake went on with Dawson, and as they entered the dining-room remarked, 'Well, I guess he's right. There's not much worth knowing a Chinaman doesn't know, and I reckon they're as honest as some white men I have met.'

### THE BECKONING LEAF.

A JAPANESE tree, called *tegashiwa*, has leaves which in shape somewhat resemble a human hand. In olden days, when a soldier had to leave home, his farewell meal consisted of a perch, served on a leaf of a *tegashiwa* tree. When the fish had been eaten, the leaf was hung over the door. This was a sign of a very old fancy. The soldier's friends thought that by thus hanging up the leaf they ensured his safety, and that some day in the future there would be a happy homecoming. It was not only the shape of the leaf, but also its movement, which gave rise to this pretty fancy. When stirred by the wind, the *tegashiwa* leaf has the appearance of a graceful beckoning hand. E. D.

### MORE AND MORE SHELLS!

SAID the Snail to the Chicky, 'I hope you don't think That I'm a confounded old 'slacker', I've read in the papers of Germany's crimes, And now I'm determined we'll whack her!'

Said the Chicky to Snailly, with freezing disdain, 'My poor little creature, keep calm! If your love for your country flurries you so, I'm afraid you will do yourself harm.'

'With the best of intentions, I quite fail to see How *you* can help England to win it; But a bright inspiration has entered *my* head, My tail! I must plunge myself in it!

You are doubtless aware that the guns out in France Must be fed with innumerable shells; My friend, I will offer to lay out my "bit"— 'Tis a little, but everything tells.'

Said the Snail, speaking quicker than ever before, 'Hurrah! for you've bagged my own notion, We'll both set to work, and we'll see that we add To the shells that cross over the ocean!'

Said the Snail to the Hen, and the Hen to the Snail,— 'Indeed we've a bright inspiration: Together we'll work, until shortly there'll be An end to this sad conflagration!'

E. M. W.

### BIG TREES.

'THERE!' sighed Rupert proudly. 'That's jolly well planted, isn't it, Uncle? And the day will come when it will be a big, big tree.'

Uncle Wisdom looked down at the single stalk about four inches long with one baby leaf on it, and said, 'It is quite possible, Rupert, that it will grow for a time, but it can never be a big tree without knocking the house down. You have planted it much too close to the parlour window.'

'Oh, dear! oh, dear! I never thought of that,' frowned Rupert. 'Come up again! Come up again!'

A few minutes later he and Uncle Wisdom had replanted the little tree where it would have a better chance, and Rupert fell to admiring it again. 'Fancy, Uncle!' said he. 'Years and years hence it may be large enough for me to climb into its branches. To-day it is only about four inches high; *then* it will be—'; but not being able to think of words to express his thoughts, Rupert waved both hands above his head, and added—'Like that.' As Uncle Wisdom remained silent, he went on, 'How large would it have to grow to be the largest tree in the world?'

'A great deal larger than *we* shall ever see it,' replied Uncle Wisdom. 'The tallest trees in the world grow in California, British Columbia, and New Zealand. They often climb to a height of more than two hundred feet, and some time ago there arrived in England the trunk of one that had grown in British Columbia. Even when cut down and trimmed of its topmost branches it measured no less than two hundred and fifteen feet. This colonial giant will shortly be raised as a flagstaff in Kew Gardens, and when the Union Jack floats proudly from its summit no one will be able to deny that the recruit from British Columbia is "doing its bit." These trees are often very large at the base; so large that there is more than one in America through which a hole has been made at the level of the ground sufficiently wide and tall to let a coach drawn by four horses and loaded with passengers drive easily through.'

'My word!' exclaimed Rupert. 'Jack's beanstalk would never have done that, I know'

'But there have been trees with *still larger* trunks,' went on Uncle Wisdom, 'though they may not have held their heads so near to the sky. In a famous courtyard at Constantinople there is to be seen (or was) an immense plane-tree, the trunk of which cannot be spanned by eight men holding each other by the fingertips. There is a hollow in the trunk which has often been occupied by some poor family, who would otherwise have been without a home.'

'Hurry up, little tree!' cried Rupert, looking down at his baby. 'You are not big enough yet for a butterfly to shelter under.'

'In France,' went on Uncle Wisdom, 'we are told of a still finer house built inside the sheltering bark. At Montravail, near Saintes, there grew, some forty years ago, a monster oak. At the level of the ground it measured about twenty-seven feet in thickness. Its centre had decayed, though the branches and the outside were as healthy as ever. In the decayed part a room had been hollowed out, twelve feet square and nine feet high. It was surrounded by a comfortable seat carved in the solid wood of the tree, and the apartment was prettily decorated with moss and ferns. The



entrance was a handsome door with glazed panels, while extra light was admitted by a small window cut through the bark.

Uncle Wisdom had just finished speaking when Gwen appeared.

'Oh, I say, Gwen,' shouted Rupert, 'bring some water, quick! Uncle Wisdom has told me about the big trees, and I am going to take care of mine till it has grown into a house!'

JOHN LEA.

## CHINNA.

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

(Concluded from page 275.)

### CHAPTER XXIX.

EVERYTHING happened after that in a whirling confusion, so that later the children found they could scarcely separate one event from another. They were too dazed, indeed, with fear to think clearly; to realise that the tigress had swung round with a snarl to face a new danger that threatened her from the rear. They were altogether too bewildered to understand the meaning of the shots which rang out one after another, and they clung yet closer together as those shots were followed by a growling, gurgling roar. Some one was being killed they thought. But who that some one was they could not guess, since Chinna and Mrs. Chinna, Shib Ram, and their three selves were still safe in the cave.

But now Chinna was running towards the cave-mouth, and had disappeared through it. And now a man's figure, which was not Chinna's, filled the opening. And a voice was calling to them, a voice the children knew—a voice which kept repeating over and over again, 'Oh, my children, my dearest children, have I found you at last?'

And slowly, Nancy and Brian and Frederick grasped the fact that it was their father who was speaking; that, somehow or other, he had succeeded in tracing them; that he had rescued them at the very moment when rescue seemed least possible. And then there followed such a confused babble of joyful greeting, of excited explanations, of voices mixed in inextricable confusion, that it was a long time before Mr. Galbraith could understand what had happened to the children, or they how he had found them. But, little by little, the facts grew clear.

From the first, Mr. Galbraith told them, hope had never been abandoned, for the bearer, standing in the garden high above the river-bed, had caught sight of three white faces as the wreckage of the bridge sped past. And day and night search had been made until there had come a rumour that a strange pale spirit had been seen at a distant village, for the tale of Chinna's attendant had spread from mouth to mouth through the entire country-side.

'It was only a few hours ago we heard the rumour,' Mr. Galbraith explained, 'and ever since I have been riding in the direction of the village. When night came I could not wait, I still pushed on. And then I heard a distant shouting, and I caught sight of the flames, and of the tigress outlined against them.'

'And then you found us!' the children cried happily.

'And then I found you!' Mr. Galbraith echoed thankfully.

And meanwhile, Chinna and Mrs. Chinna watched, shy and silent, from the cave entrance. And presently Chinna crept up to the dead tigress, and looked at the hole in her side and then at the rifle which Mr. Galbraith had carried and which lay now on the cave floor. And Chinna touched the rifle with the tips of his fingers, and the old, irrepressible smile flooded his face suddenly; and he called to Mrs. Chinna: 'O, woman. This is a great man. A greater hunter even than I. Come and let us render him homage. Here is a fit master for us to follow. One worthy of such a servant.'

And Chinna and Mrs. Chinna promptly prostrated themselves on the ground before Mr. Galbraith and rubbed their foreheads in the dust. Nor would they stand up until he had assured them that, henceforth, they should be taken into his service. And then Chinna scrambled to his feet, and pulled Mrs. Chinna up also, and bade her prepare food for all the party while he set to work to skin the tigress. And Nancy helped Mrs. Chinna, and Brian, Chinna, pleased that they could thus display their new accomplishments. And Frederick continued to tell of their adventures in the forest, and a very queer tale he made of it, mixing up facts and fancy as a cook mixes a pudding. It would have been difficult to find happier people. Even Shib Ram shared in the general rejoicing since he had been promised a reward which exceeded his highest expectations. So satisfied was he that he volunteered to fetch a cart from the nearest village in which the children and Mrs. Chinna could travel for the rest of the way.

And thus it was that, towards sunset, they came in sight of the railway and the bridge, and Chinna and Mrs. Chinna had their first glimpse of a railway engine. They stared at it, opened-mouthed and round-eyed, firmly convinced that they were gazing at a most formidable demon. Mrs. Chinna, indeed, slipped with a squeal from the cart to take refuge behind her lord and master.

'Something better than rice and wine must we offer,' said Chinna. 'This is the strangest creature that I have ever seen.'

And, in a moment, the little axe was poised above the head of the goat, and only just in time did Mr. Galbraith seize Chinna's arm and avert the blow. And then the little couple had to be coaxed up to the engine, and it was explained to them that this was a thing of iron and steel only, and that it had no life of its own, but moved by the power of the steam.

'Then the steam is the life,' said Chinna, and would not be persuaded otherwise. 'And this master whom I have chosen is greater than I thought,' he said to Mrs. Chinna, 'since he is not only ruler of the striped ones, but of these strange demons also, whose food is fire, and whose breath is smoke.'

And Chinna and Mrs. Chinna marched beaming behind the cart to the bungalow, and watched, with yet wider smiles if possible, the meeting between Mrs. Galbraith and the children. It was later in the day, when the two were happily engaged in building themselves a small hut in a secluded corner of the garden, that Chinna paused to expound to Mrs. Chinna more fully all that he had learnt in the last few hours.

'Woman,' said Chinna, 'thus it seems to me. Truly some power very great must have protected the children





"The little axe was poised above the head of the goat."

in their wanderings. How else could they have escaped from the perils of the flood, and all the other dangers that beset them?"

"How else, indeed?" said Mrs. Chinna.

"Without doubt this power is worshipped by our master," Chinna went on; "and I think it is a power both good and kind that does not forsake those who put their trust in it. A power that remembers the little and

weak, not only the great and strong. A power that is just, and does not punish for the pleasure of the punishing. Come," said Chinna suddenly, and threw down the armful of thatch he had just lifted, and turned towards the bungalow, and beckoned to Mrs. Chinna to follow him. "We will go learn how we may worship as our master worships."

And thus it came to pass that Mr. Galbraith, looking



up from the work which kept him chained that day to his office table, saw standing before him, salaaming deeply, the small squat figures of Chinna and his wife.

'Master,' said Chinna, 'teach us of thy Master, for we also would serve him faithfully. And——'

'Master, teach us,' Mrs. Chinna echoed.

THE END.

### THE BOYS OF ENGLAND.

WHAT can we do for England?

We boys who are but ten—  
Of course we know what we would do,  
If we were grown-up men.  
For then if we were soldiers  
Like heroes we would fight;  
Or if the shipyards wanted us,  
We'd work with all our might.

What can we do for England?

I wish some one would say—  
It seems as if we didn't count,  
Except for school or play.  
Jim's father's serving at the Front,  
And mine is on the sea;  
And Dick's big brother's in the Yard,  
As busy as can be.

What can we do for England?

Jimmy, Dick, and I—  
'Tis fine to see the regiments  
Go tramping gaily by.  
In step we keep, and wave our flags,  
And join the soldiers' song.  
We shout and cheer with 'three times three!'  
To help our men along.

What can we do for England?

My father said to me,  
The day he went to join his ship,  
For 'somewhere' on the sea—  
'Bob, my boy, do all you can,  
For mother and the rest;  
And whether it be work or play,  
Give always of your best.'

What can we do for England?

We boys who are but ten—  
Perhaps what Father said will do  
Till we are grown-up men.  
Because we all have mothers,  
And so you see 'tis plain,  
Our work it is to care for them,  
Till our dads come home again.

That we can do for England!

And neither sulk nor shirk,  
If we are called away from play,  
To take our share of work.  
Our best we'll always offer,  
We boys who are but ten—  
And England will be glad of us,  
When we are grown-up men.

AMY WHIPPLE.

### WANDERERS IN THE WAR.

By A. A. METHLEY.

(Continued from page 279.)

#### CHAPTER XI.

THE sound of guns! Roger and Val stared at each other in awestruck silence, for here was the grim reality of war at last. All the beauty and sunshine seemed to have been struck out of the summer day at one blow, as Jules said those ominous words, and Roger Mervyn felt that he had reached a turning-point in his life, and had suddenly become a man, confronted with a man's difficulties and responsibilities.

He sat motionless for a minute, listening to the far-away mutter that was now so full of a new and terrible significance, and then he got up from the grass, and drew himself to his full height, squaring his boyish shoulders as if preparing for the burden that was to be laid upon him. 'Come, Val,' he said. 'Hurry up. We mustn't waste any more time. Ask Jules if he can manage to walk to the house. I'll give him an arm, and you can carry the basket.'

Jules struggled bravely to his feet in answer to Val's question, but he was still very weak and footsore, and the trio made but slow progress through the wood and across the garden. When at last they reached the house, it was to find Suzanne waiting for them on the steps, with her round, good-humoured face looking strangely worn and haggard. She hurried to meet the children, hardly noticing Jules in her agitation, and they discovered that she had already heard the news of the German advance, and was full of anxiety for her charge, Mademoiselle Val, whom she had expected home more than half an hour ago.

It was old George Bernard from the neighbouring farm who had brought the bad news from St. Denis. He had gone into the town that afternoon to make some purchases, and had found the whole place in a state of wild consternation and confusion. The enemy was at hand, no one could say what would happen, already the sound of the guns could be heard, and the Belgian refugees who had been flocking into the town all day brought terrible stories of bombardments and of burning villages.

The inhabitants of St. Denis were now fleeing by hundreds with the other fugitives, so the old farmer said, and there were no trains and no vehicles to be had. His son was away at the Front, but he himself intended to lose no time in taking his daughter-in-law and the little ones to some place of safety. Marie was already making preparations, and they would leave at dawn, as soon as he had had time to mend the wheel of the donkey-cart, on which the household gear and treasures would have to be carried.

Poor old Suzanne had listened to Bernard's fearsome tales with a beating heart, and her anxiety had increased when Roger and Val could not be found in the house or garden; but now that they were safe at home again, together with her favourite little Jules, she quickly recovered her self-possession, and was ready with practical help and advice. She questioned Jules while she bathed and dressed his wounded hand, Val listening eagerly, and from time to time giving her brother an English version of what was being said.

When the wound had been bound up again in a clean



white handkerchief, and Jules was comfortably established in a large armchair, with a bowl of strong soup at his side, Roger and Suzanne, with Val as interpreter, held a council of war, and plans for the coming journey were discussed and considered.

'You will go with us, Suzanne, we can't leave you here,' Val insisted, but the old woman only smiled and shook her head resolutely.

'No, no, Mademoiselle Val, I shall stay here, and look after the house as Madame bade me. "I leave everything to you, Suzanne," that is what she said when she went away, and you wouldn't have me desert my post. Besides, I am old and rheumatic, it tires me to walk far, and I am not afraid of Germans. They will march in as they did before, and after a time they will march out again. I shall fasten the shutters, and put up the big bar across the front door. The villains shall not come in, never fear.'

'I'll stay here, too, and protect Suzanne.' It was Jules' shrill voice that now made itself heard, and getting up stiffly from his arm-chair, he limped across the room, and patted the cook's broad solid shoulder. 'Roger and Mademoiselle Val, they must go, of course—did not Roger come out all the way from England to fetch his sister? But for Suzanne and me it is different. Besides, we will put up a flag with a red cross; soldiers do not attack a house where there is a wounded man, and it will be all right. Suzanne takes care of the house, and I take care of Suzanne—and she will make omelettes and ragouts, and those little tarts with jam in them, every day.'

The last words of this long speech were accompanied by a winning smile, and old Suzanne smiled too as she put one arm round her little protector. 'Yes, Jules is right,' she said. 'He and I will stay here. He is wounded, and I am old, so we cannot travel with the rest, but you and your brother, Mademoiselle, why should not you go with George Bernard and his folk? Marie is a good, kind woman, she will take care of you, and if the ankle is weak and tired, there will be the donkey-cart, you can ride on it with the furniture and the babies.'

This seemed to be a good plan, and certainly it was the best thing to do under the circumstances, for Roger's ignorance of French was a tremendous disadvantage to him, and he had dreaded the prospect of the long journey alone with Val. His experiences in the station at Boulogne, after John Boughton left him, and the scene of confusion on the quay, had given the boy a foretaste of what travelling in war-time might be. With George Bernard, however, as a guide, and his daughter-in-law to look after Val, things would be very different, and the boy's face brightened as he listened to his sister's translation of Suzanne's proposal.

'Oh, yes, that will be splendid!' he exclaimed; and then it was arranged that Roger and Val should go to bed early, so as to have a few hours' sleep before it was necessary for them to start off on their journey.

'I will wake you soon after midnight,' Suzanne said, 'and go with you myself to the farm. Bernard told me they could not get off before three o'clock. Come, now, Mademoiselle, your supper has been ready for an hour and more. You must make haste, for I want you both to be in bed by nine o'clock.'

It seemed very strange and adventurous to be awakened at midnight in the warm, summer darkness,

and Val could hardly believe that she had been asleep at all, when she opened her eyes to find Suzanne standing beside her bed, with a candle in one hand, a can of hot water in the other, and a dark shawl over her head in preparation for the walk to the farm.

The little girl sat up in bed and stretched her arms sleepily, but Suzanne would not let her loiter, for she realised, as Val herself could not do, the full seriousness of the situation. 'Come, Mademoiselle, you must be quick,' she said; 'Monsieur Roger is already nearly dressed. Put on your thick boots, dear little one, it may be that you will have to walk far to-day, and the warm coat. Now I must go and get some hot coffee ready for you to have before we start.'

Suzanne bustled out of the room, and in a very little while Val crept down the dark staircase to the kitchen, where she found Roger with his knapsack strapped ready on his back and a cup of steaming coffee in his hand. Suzanne was busily packing a light basket with bread, cheese, slices of ham, and a bottle of milk, for, as she said, there was no knowing when they would get another good meal.

Neither Roger nor Val will ever forget that hurried breakfast in the dimly-lit school kitchen, with Suzanne wiping away tears as she prepared for the journey, and Toto, lively as ever, although it was the middle of the night, scampering hither and thither, wagging his tail, licking their hands and begging for scraps of food with all his usual noisy cheerfulness.

Jules was sound asleep upstairs, tired out after all his terrible experiences, and Suzanne would not let him be roused, even to say good-bye.

At one o'clock it was time to go, and then Suzanne lit an old lantern, wrapped the shawl more closely round her head and shoulders, and led the way out of the house.

The farm was about half a mile away, and both Roger and Val had been there often during the past three weeks, but everything looked different now, and the wood showed black and mysterious on either side of the narrow road. When they arrived at the farm it was evident that the preparations for departure were nearly complete, for a cart stood at the open door of the house, and in the bright light that streamed from door and window, it could be seen that it was piled high with household gear and bundles of all shapes and sizes.

There was a great feather-bed tied into its place with rope, many old-fashioned boxes, a child's wooden cradle, bright copper pots and pans, some baskets of fruit and vegetables, an armchair, and a blackbird in a wicker cage. Val thought of Suzanne's promise that she should herself ride on the donkey-cart if she were tired, and she could not help smiling as she wondered where a place could be found for her among all the heterogeneous treasures and rubbish that the family were taking with them on their flight.

There was no sign to be seen of the farmer or of any of his family, but after a minute, as they listened, the sound of low voices was heard. Following the sound, they made their way through a gate that led out of the paved yard into an orchard beyond.

'Hullo, what's up?' Roger said the words under his breath with a little gasp, and Val clung tightly to Suzanne's arm. They both stared wide-eyed at the strange scene before them.

(Continued on page 290.)





"The two made but slow progress through the wood."