

Ethel Turner - Seven Little Australians, 1893
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Seven little Australians
Meg, Pip, Nell, Judy, Bunty, Baby, Gwendoline} ~~Meg Judy Nell Madge paties~~
~~Seven Six Six Pickles~~

Seven Pickles
Chapter 1

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"A nice tea for a fellow to sit down to" no I'll ask if we can have some jam Pip jam or cake, nothing but stingy bread and butter."

"Well Pip you ate all that tin of raspberry at breakfast, & mother says she really –
"Oh dry up Meg, I know all about it, pass us

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around the same board and the young ones partake of the same dishes & I can have their parts in the conversation right nobly

But given a very particular and rather irritable father & 7 children with excellent lungs and tireless tongues, what could you do but give them separate rooms to take their meals in?

C.W. had in addition to this devising had thick felt put over the swing door upstairs but the noise used to float down to the dining room in a cheerful unconcerned manner despite of it

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Seven Pickles Little Australians

Chapter 1 ~~There was the usual Babel going on over tea~~ Captain Woolcot, the father of the seven had certainly had a felt lining put on the swing door upstairs but ~~really~~ nothing on earth would ~~keep in~~ really deaden the fearful babel that prevailed at nursery tea every day. It was a nursery without a nurse ~~too~~ so that partly accounted for it ~~perhaps~~ for Meg the eldest pickle was only 14 and could not be expected to be much of a disciplinarian. ~~The~~ A slatternly but good natured ~~housemaid~~ girl of 18 was supposed to combine the offices of nursery maid ~~too as at~~ & housemaid but there was so much to do in her second capacity that the first suffered considerably. ~~Even~~ ~~Poor little Gwendoline used to get a nasty polishing up in the morning being only fifteen months old and sometimes~~ She used to lay the nursery meals when none of the little girls could be found to help her & ~~she used to~~ bundle on the clothes of the two youngest in the morning & except for that the seven had to manage for themselves.

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The mother, you ask?

Oh she was only twenty ~~one~~, just a lovely, laughing faced girl whom they all adored & ~~who was very little steadier and very little [indecipherable]~~ & very little more of a housekeeper than Meg. Only ~~Gwendoline~~ the youngest of the ~~seven~~ brood was hers but ~~she treated all the lot just the same~~, seemed just as fond of the other six as of it & treated ~~the baby as if it was some~~ it more as if it was a very entertaining kitten than a real live baby & her very own. Indeed at Misrule – ~~that is what the Woolcots & everyone~~ the name their house always went by – that baby seemed a gigantic joke to everyone. ~~In it~~ The ~~child~~ father Captain always laughed when he saw it passed it in the air & then asked someone to take it, quickly. The children dragged it all over the country with them, dropped it countless times, forgot its pelisse on wet days, muffled

it up on when it was hot, gave it the most fearful things to eat, & yet it was the healthiest, prettiest & most sunshiny little baby that ever sucked on a wet fat thumb.

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It was never called Baby ~~either~~ though that was the special name of the next youngest; ~~The~~ Captain Woolcot had ~~called him~~ said "Hello, is this the General" when the nurse had first put the little ~~red~~ staring eyed morsel in his arms, & ~~the General was what~~ the name had come into daily use though I believe at the ~~fine~~ christening service the curate did say something about Francis Rupert Burnand Woolcot. Baby was four and was a little soft fat thing with pretty cuddlesome ways, ~~great blue eyes that she had a very good idea of using, and a great~~ & great smiling eyes & lips very kissable when they were free from jam ~~she possessed the greatest admiration for Judy~~ She had a weakness ~~though~~ however for making the General cry or she would really have been almost a model child. She ~~used to~~ had been found innumerable times pressing its poor little chest "to make it squeak" & even pinching its tiny arms, ~~because she liked to listen to the~~ or pulling its innocent nose just for the strange pleasure of hearing the yells of despair it instantly set up.

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Captain Woolcott ascribed the peculiar tendency to the fact that the child had once had a dropsical looking ~~toy~~ woolly toy ~~that~~ from which the utmost pressure would only elicit the faintest possible squeak; he said it was only natural that now she had something amenable to squeezing that she should want to utilise it. Bunty was six & was ~~very~~ fat & very lazy. He hated scouting at cricket, he loathed the very name of a paper chase & as for running an errand – why, before anyone could finish saying Tea was wanted from the store, he would have utterly disappeared. He was a rather small for his age and I don't think had ever been seen with a clean face. Even at church, though the immediate front turned to the minister might be just passable, the ~~nes~~ people in the next pew ~~used to~~ always had an uninterrupted view of the black rim where washing operations had left off ~~& of a dingy neck.~~

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Seven Little Australians

Chapter 1

Chiefly Descriptive

Before you fairly start this story I should like to give you just a word of warning. If you imagine you are going to read of model children with perhaps a naughtily inclined one to point a moral you had better lay down the book immediately and betake yourself to "Sandford & Merlot" or similar standard juvenile works. Not one of the seven are really good for the very excellent reason that Australian children never are. In England & America & Africa & Asia the little folks may be paragons of virtue: I know nothing about them. But in Australia a model child is – I say it not without ~~un~~thankfulness - an unknown quantity.

It may be that the miasmas of naughtiness develop best in the sunny brilliancy of our atmosphere. It may be that the land & the people are young hearted together & the children's spirits are not crushed & saddened by the shadow of long years' sorrowful history.

There is a lurking sparkle of joyousness and rebellion & mischief in Nature here & therefore in children.

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Often the light grows dull & the bright colouring fades to neutral tints in the dust & heat of the day. But when it survives play days & school days circumstances alone determine whether the electric sparkle shall go to play will o the wisp with the larrikin

type or warm the breasts of the spoiled, single hearted loyal ones who alone can
"Advance Australia"

Enough of such talk. Let me tell you about my seven select spirits. They are having nursery tea at the present moment with a minimum of comfort & a maximum of noise so if you can hear a deafening babel of voices & an unmusical clitter clatter of crockery I will take you inside the room & introduce you to them all.

Nursery tea is more an English institution than an Australian one. There is a kind of bon camaradie feeling between parents & young folks here & an utter absence of veneration on the part of the latter. So even in the most wealthy families it seldom happens that the parents dine in solemn state alone while the children are having a simple tea in another room. They all assemble

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~~Judy came next, - I am introducing you to them.~~

The next on the list - I am going from youngest to eldest you see - was ~~what Pip~~ The "show" Woolcot as Pip the eldest boy used to say. Nell was just ten & had a little graceful fairylike little figure, ~~great clusters of gold hair in~~-clustering in wonderful waves & curls round an almost perfect little face with soft dreamy eyes & a little rosebud of a mouth. You have seen those exquisite child sweet faces on some Raphael Tucks Christmas cards ? I think their artists must just have dreamt of Nell & then ~~paint~~-reproduced their vision imperfectly. She was not conceited either; - her family took care of that, Pip would have nipped such a weakness very sternly in it earliest bud, but someway if there was a pretty ribbon ~~going begg~~ to spare or a breadth of bright material just enough for one little frock, it fell as a matter of course to her.

Judy was only a year older but was the greatest contrast imaginable. Nellie moved ~~in~~ rather slowly about & her every movement was graceful

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&: there was hardly ever a time when she would not have made a lovely picture: Judy I think was never seen to walk, ~~she used to jump &~~ if she didn't dash madly to the place she wished to get to she would progress by a series of jumps or odd little skips ; ~~at~~ in the middle of a nursery meal she generally had to take a couple of runs round the table as a sort of safety valve; her veins, I verily believe, contained quicksilver instead of blood for a more active, restless little mortal never wore frock.

She was very ~~thin slight~~ as might be expected; ~~& had long slim legs~~ & had a small eager face with very bright dark eyes & a mane of very untidy curly dark hair that was the trial of her life. ~~She was~~ Without doubt she was the very worst of the seven probably because she was the cleverest; her brilliant inventive powers ~~were the led~~ ~~them~~ plunged the whole seven into ~~l~~ ceaseless scrapes, & though she often bore the brunt of the blame with equanimity , they used to turn round not unfrequently & upbraid her in suggesting the mischief. ~~Pip as~~ She had been christened ~~Judith~~ Helen so ~~you can understand~~ which in no way ~~that~~ accounts for Judy ~~rather extraordinary~~ name. Her chin & neck but then [indecipherable] are unaccountable things. Bunty said it was because she was always popping & jerking

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herself about like the celebrated wife of Punch. Gwendoline was "Fizz" because Pip used to say she ~~always wa~~ reminded him of ginger ale, ~~that~~ that was always effervescing & bubbling & making a noise.

I haven't introduced you to Pip yet have I; he was a little like Judy only handsomer & taller; he was thirteen & had as ~~very~~ good an opinion of himself & as ~~very poor~~ poor a one of girls as boys of that age generally have. Meg was the eldest of the family & had a long fair plait that Pip used to delight in pulling, a ~~pleasant~~ sweet rather dreamy

face & a powdering of rather pretty freckles than occasioned her much tribulation of spirit. It was generally believed in the family that she wrote poetry & stories & kept a diary but not one of them had ever seen a vestige of the papers she kept so carefully locked up in an old tin hat box.

~~There, do you feel you know them all now, I have introduced the seven to you, besides pointing out.~~

Their father as had you asked them they all would have replied instantly & with considerable pride, was "A military man" & much from home. He didn't understand children very much at all, & ~~thought them~~ was always

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grumbling at the noise they made the money they cost. Still I think he was rather proud of Pip & sometimes if Nellie was very prettily dressed he would take her out with him in his dog cart. He had offered to send the six of them to boarding school when he brought home his young girl wife but she wouldn't hear of it. ~~So he took a house on the outskirts of S some little way up the Parramatta River.~~

They had tried living in the Barracks but after a time everyone in the officers quarters rose in revolt at the fearful pranks of those graceless children so Captain Woolcot took a house ~~out~~ some little way up the Parramatta river & in considerable bitterness of spirit removed his family there. They liked the change immensely ~~though~~ for there was a big wilderness of a garden, two or three paddocks numberless sheds & best of all the water. Captain Woolcot kept ~~two three two~~ splendid horses, [~~indecipherable~~] one at ~~Misrule~~ the barracks & his a hunter & a good hack at Misrule so to make up the children had to go in the shabbiest of shabby clothes, and be taught, - all but Pip who went to the Grammar school - by a very third class governess who lived in mortal fear of her ignorance being found out by

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Chapter II

I hope you are not quite deafened yet, for though I have got through the introductions, tea is not nearly finished so we must stay in the nursery a little longer. All the time I have been talking Pip has been grumbling etc etc.

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her pupils.

As a matter of fact they had found her out long ago as children will but it suited them very well not to be pushed on & made to work so they kept the fact religiously to themselves.

Chapter II

They were all having tea & making a great noise over it when you opened this book & Pip was grumbling fiercely at the lack of good things. The table certainly was not very tempting, the cloth looked as if it had been flung on, the china was much chipped & battered, the tea very weak & there was nothing to eat but great thick slices of bread & ~~non-treacle~~ butter. Still it was the usual tea & everyone seemed surprised at Pip's outburst.

"My father & Esther (they all called their young step mother by her Christian name) are having curried chicken & 3 vegetables & two kinds of pudding" † he said angrily, "it isn't fair"

"But we've ~~had~~ dinner at one o'clock Pip" said Nellie wonderingly &

"Yes ~~but what~~ boiled mutton & carrot & ~~baked apples~~ rice puddn" returned her brother witheringly, "why shouldn't we have chicken & custard."

"Yes why shouldn't we", echoed little greedy Bunty his eyes lighting up.

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~~“Oh I suppose it would take~~

“What a lot it would take for all of us” said Meg pouring out tea ~~in an~~ with a lavish allowance of hot water & sugar.

~~“We’re only children – anything does for us~~ let us be thankful for this nice thick [indecipherable] said Judy in a good little tone.

Pip pushed his chair back from the table, “I’m going down to ask for some ~~curried~~ roast chicken” he said with a look of determination in his eyes “I can’t forget the smell of it.” & they’d got a lot on the table.”

He took up his plate & ~~departed~~ proceeded downstairs, returning presently to the surprise of the children with quite a large quantity on his plate.

“He couldn’t very well refuse” he chuckled.

“Colonel Bryant is there, he looked a bit mad though ~~he fell~~ here Judy I’ll go you ~~Baby~~ begged ~~so I~~ halves”

Judy pushed up her plate eagerly & received a very small division, hardly more than a quarter with great gratitude.

“I just love fowl” said Nell longingly, “I’ve a great mind to go down & ask for a wing, he’d give it me I think”

~~I should~~ You may have noticed that these disrespectful children nearly always alluded to their father as “he”

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Margin note: [300 w 20 pages. Abt 200 pages}
{Book 60,000 words}

Baby in box. Snake, Bunty, Judy. Judy sent to school, comes back, hides in paddock. Meg’s diary. Bunty’s diary. Dick keeps rabbit. Fined.

Cont

“Yes do” said Pip, a twinkle in his eye.

Nell took up another plate & departed slowly to the lower regions. She followed into the dining room at the heels of the housemaid & stood ~~shyly~~ at the side of her father, her plate well behind her.

“Well my little maid & won’t you shake hands with me, what is your name” said Colonel Bryant, tapping her cheek playfully. Nell looked up with shy lovely eyes, “Elinor Woolcot but they call me Nell” she said holding out her left hand, her right was occupied with the plate.

“What a little barbarian you are Nell” her ~~[indecipherable]~~ laughed her father ~~with a~~ but he gave her a quick annoyed glance, “where is your right hand.

She drew it slowly from behind her & held out the cracked old plate, “I thought perhaps you would give me some chicken too” she said “just a leg or wing.”

The Captain’s brow darkened, “What is the meaning of this, - (have you nothing to eat in the nursery,?) (Pip has just been to me too).

“Only bread & butter, very thick” sighed Nellie.

Esther suppressed a smile with difficulty

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“Bunty, you’re a pig” sighed Meg

“Pig yourself, all of you’re had fowl but me you greedy things” retorted Bunty fiercely & eating up the potato.

"No, ~~bab~~ the general hasn't" said Judy & the old mischief light sprang up suddenly into her dark eyes.

"Now Judy" said Meg warningly, - she knew too well what that particular sparkle meant.

"Oh I won't get you in a row you Dear old thing" said Miss Judy dancing down the room and & bestowing a pat on her ~~child~~ sister's fair head as she passed, "It's only ~~Bab~~ the General who'se-? her havin" a bit o'fun".

She lifted him up off ~~the ground~~ hearthrug ~~where he had been kicking & sprawling about during tea~~ out of the high chair where he had been sitting drumming on the table & taking an intelligent interest in all going on.

"It's real action- you're going for to see General" she said & she danced to the door with him.

"Oh Judy, what are you going to do?" said Meg entreatingly.

"Ju-Ju" crowed the general, leaping almost out of Judy's arms, and scenting ~~his~~ fun ~~immediately~~ with the instinct of a veteran. Down the passage they went the other five behind to watch proceedings.

Judy sat down with him on the last step.

"Boy want chuck-churk, pretty chuck-chuck?"

She said insidiously.

"Chuck-chuck" ~~he said~~ Chuck chuck" he repeated looking ~~round~~

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all over for his favourite friends.

"Dad got lots, - all this many" said Judy opening her arms very wide to denote the number in the possession of her father, "Boydie, go get them?"

"Chuch-chuck" crowed the general delightedly & struggling to his feet, "~~when~~ find chuck-chuck.

"In there" whispered Judy giving him a gentle push into the half open dining room door, - "ask Dad."

Right across the room the baby tottered ~~with his uncertain~~ on his unsteady fat little legs.

"Are the children all possessed to night" said the Captain as his ~~smallest~~-youngest son clutched wildly at his leg & tried to climb up it.

He looked down into the little dirty dimpled face, "Well general, & to what do we owe the honour of your presence."

"Chuck-chuck, "chuck- a chuck, chuck, chuck, chuck" said the general going down on to all fours to seek for the feathered darlings that Judy had said were here.

But Esther gathered up the dear, dirty faced young rascal & bore him struggling out of the room.

~~Of course~~ at the stair foot she nearly fell over the rest of the family.

"You scamps, you bad wicked imps"

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she said, ~~boxing~~ reaching out to box Judy's all their ears & of course failing,. She sat down on the bottom step to laugh for a second, then she ~~dropped~~ handed the general to Pip.

"I shall beat every one of you ~~tomorrow~~ night with a broomstick" she said, hastily smoothing her rich hair that the general had clutched gleefully.

They watched the tail of her long silk dress disappear into the dining room once more & returned to the nursery & their interrupted tea.

Chapter III

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but it only makes him more pressed, he says you are the untidiest, most uncivilised lot in Sydney, & that & he will punish you each time so -

"There shall be weeping & gnashing of teeth"

"Oh shut up Judy, can't you let us hear" Dick ~~pulled his~~ put his hand over her mouth & held her by the hair while Esther told the news.

"None of you are to go to the pantomime. The seats were to have been taken for tomorrow night & now instead, you very foolish children, you will all have to stay at home"

There was a perfect howl of dismay & disgust for a minute or two. They had all been looking forward to it with eager impatience almost for a month & the disappointment was really a bitter one to them all

"Oh I say Esther, that's too bad really, all the fellows at school have been," Dick's handsome face flushed angrily "~~my father~~" & just for such a little thing."

"Just because you had roast fowl for dinner" said Judy in a half choked voice, "oh Esther why couldn't you have had ~~beef or~~ cow or horse or hippopotamus, anything but roast fowl"

"Couldn't you get round him Esther" Meg looked anxiously at her

"Dear Esther do"

"Oh you sweet beautiful Essie, do try."

They clung round her eagerly, Baby flung her arms round her neck & nearly choked her, Nell ~~kept~~ stroked her cheek, Dick patted her back & besought her to "be a good fellow." Bunty buried his nose in her hair from the back of the chair & wept a silent tear

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Meg clasped her hand in an access of unhappiness, the General gave a series of delighted squeaks & Judy bestowed a little smack upon him for them in her wretchedness.

Esther would do her best, beg as she had never done before, coax, beseech, wheedle, threaten & they let her go at last with that assurance.

"Only I'd advise you all to be preternature good & quiet all day" she said looking back from the nursery doorway "that would have most affect with him & he is going to be at home all day.

Good! It was absolutely painful to witness the virtue of those children for the rest of the day. It was holidays & Miss - was away but the nursery was put in beautiful order; ~~Bunty~~ & not once did the sound of quarrelling or laughing or crying fly down to the lower regions

"Citizens of Rome, the eyes of the world are upon you" Judy had said solemnly & each one of them had promised to so conduct themselves that their father's heart could not fail to be melted.

Dick put on his school jacket, brushed his hair, took a pile of school books & proceeded to the study where his father was writing letters & where he was allowed to do his homelessons.

"Well, what do you want" said the Captain, looking up with a frown "no, it's

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no good coming to me about that pup, sir, I won't have you keep it."

"I came in to ~~have a quiet study~~ Sir, ~~my algebra~~" said Dick mildly "~~You pay such a lot for me at school & though it is holidays I thought I'd~~ I feel I'm a bit backward with my mathematics so I won't waste all the holidays when I'm costing you so much in school fees"

The Captain gave a little gasp & looked hard at Dick, but the boy's face was so unsmiling & earnest that he was disarmed & actually congratulated himself that his eldest son was at last seeing the error of his ways.

"There are those sets of problems in that drawer that I did when I was at school" he said graciously "if they are any use to you you can get them out."

"Thanks awfully, they will be a great help" said Dick gratefully, "How He examined them ~~in silent~~ with wondering admiration plainly depicted on his face. & "How clearly and correctly you worked" he said with a sigh "I wonder if ever I'll get as good as this, - how old were you father when you did them.

"Just your age" ~~said the Captain but you needn't be discouraged~~ Dick He looked at them with his head on one side, he was rather proud of them seeing he had utterly forgotten now how to work decimal fractions ~~or Surds~~. and could not have done a Quadratic equation to save his life. "Still I don't think you need be quite discouraged Dick, I was rather beyond ~~my the b~~ the other boys of my class in these subjects I remember, we can't all excel in the same thing, & I'm glad to see you are beginning to realize

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the importance of work.

"Yes Father."

Meg had betaken herself to the drawing room & was sitting on the floor before the music cantebury with thimble, scissors, ~~needle & cotton~~ a roll of narrow ribbon & all her father's songs spread out before her that he so often grumbled were falling to pieces

He saw her once as he passed the door looked surprised and pleased, "Thank you Meg, they wanted it badly, I ~~didn't think~~ am glad you can make yourself ~~se~~ useful after all" he said.

"Yes father." Meg stitched on industriously. He went back to his study where Dick's head was at such a studious, absorbed angle, & ~~H~~ with pyramids of books & sheaves of paper all ~~ever~~ round

He wrote two more letters & there came a little knock at the door.

"Come in" he called & there entered Nell. She was carrying very carefully a little tray covered with a snow white doiley & on it was a glass of milk & a plate of mulberries. She placed it before him. "I thought perhaps you would like a little lunch father" she said gently & Dick was seized with a violent coughing fit.

"My dear child," he said. He looked at it very thoughtfully. "The last glass of milk I had Nellie was when I was your age & was a cadet at Sandhurst."

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"But you will drink this." She gave her one of her most beautiful looks

"I would as soon drink the water the maids wash up in, my child" He took a mulberry, ate it & made a wry face, "They're not fit to eat Nellie."

"After you've eaten ~~a good many~~ about six you don't notice they're sour" she said with gentle eagerness

But he pushed them away. "I'll take your word for it. Then he looked at her curiously "What made you bring it Nellie, I don't ever remember you bringing me lunch before" "I thought you might be hungry writing here" she said gently & Dick choked again badly & she withdrew.

Outside in the blazing sunshine Judy was mowing the lawn. They only kept one man & as his time was so taken up with the horses stable work, the garden was allowed to fall into neglect & more than once the Captain had spoken ~~qu~~ vexedly of the untidy grass & said he was ashamed for people to come to the house. So Judy went to the tool house armed herself with an abnormally large scythe & set to work on the long, long grass. "Good Heavens, Helen, you'll cut your legs off," called her father in an

agitated tone. He had stepped out onto the front verandah for a peaceful cigar after the mulberry & Dick just as she brought the scythe round with an admirable sweep & decapitated a whole army of yellow helmeted dandelions.

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She turned & gave him a beautiful smile

"Oh no, father, whiley I can give mow grass with anyone I flatter myself."

She gave it another alarming but truly scientific sweep, "See that, - & th-at - & tha-a-at"

That "Th-a-at carried off a fragment of her dress & "Th-a-a-at switched off the top of a valuable rosebush but there are details to everything of course.

"Accidents will happen even to the best regulated grass cutters" she said composedly & raising the scythe for a fresh circle

"Stop immediately Helen, why ever can't you go & play with your doll & not do things like this" said her father irascibly.

"An' I was afther doint it just to pleasure him" she said apparently addressing the dandelions.

"Well it won't 'pleasure him' to have to buy you cork legs & restock the garden" he said drily "put it down."

"Sure an' its illigance itsilf this side, you wouldn't be afther leaving half undone like a man with only one cheek shaved." Judy affected an Irish brogue at intervals for some occult reason of her own "Sure an' if ye'd just slip down & examine it yirself it's quite aisy ye'd be in yer moind."

The Captain hid a slight smile in his moustache. The little girl looked so comical standing there in her short old pink frock with a ~~tangle of dark hair around her shoulders, her face flushed~~ broken brimmed hat on her tangle of dark curls, her ~~brown~~ eyes sparkling, her face flushed, her great scythe at her side &

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the saucy words on her lips. He came down & examined it, it was done excellently well, - like most of the things Miss Judy attempted, mischief always included.

"Hum," - well you can finish as Joseph's busy, - how did you learn to mow, young lady of wonderful accomplishments." He looked at her questioningly, "& what made you set yourself such a task?"

Judy gave her curls a quick push off her forehead. "Faix "(A) Faix it was inborn in me," she answered instantly "& (B)- Sure & don't I lo-o-ove you" & delight to please you."

He went in slowly, thoughtfully. Judy always mystified him. He understood her least of any of his children, & sometimes the thought of her worried him. At present she was only a sharp, clever & frequently an impertinent child but he felt she was utterly different from the other 6 & it gave him an aggrieved kind of feeling whenever he thought about it which was not very often. He remembered her own Mother had often said she trembled for Judy's future, - that restless fire of hers that shone out of her ~~brilliant~~ dancing eyes & glowed scarlet on her cheeks in excitement, & lent amazing energy & activity to her young lithe body, ~~was a strange wonder might make heaven only knew what kind of a woman of her~~ would either make a noble, daring brilliant woman of her or ~~shipwreck her on the first~~ she would be shipwrecked on some rocks the others would never meet & it would flame up higher & higher & consume her, "Be careful of Judy" had been almost the last words of the anxious mother, when ~~with~~ in the light that comes when ~~this light is fading~~ & this world's is going out, she daw with strange clearness the terrible stumbling blocks & stones in the way of those small quick eager feet.

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And she had died & Judy was right amongst the stones now & her father could not 'be careful' of her because he absolutely did not know how. As he went up the verandah steps again & into the house he was wishing almost prayerfully she had not been cast in so different a mould from the others, wishing he could stamp out ~~all that~~ the strange flame in her that made him so uneasy at times. He gave a great puff at his cigar & sighted; then he turned on his heel & went off into [indecipherable] the stables to forget it all,

The man was away exercising one of the horses in a paddock but there was something stirring in the stables so he went in. There was a little dripping wet figure standing over a great bucket & dipping something in & out with at his ~~great~~ vigorous footsteps [indecipherable] footsteps Baby turned round & lifted a ~~beaming~~ perspiring little face to his. "I'se washing the mitsies for you & Flibberty Gibbet" she said beamingly. He took a horrified step forward, there were ~~two~~ his two favourite Mittens, shivering, miserable in a lather of soap ~~sudsy~~ water & Flibberty Gibbet, the beautiful little fox terrier he had bought for his wife, chained to one of the stalls, also wet & miserable, & very woebegone undergoing the cleansing process & being scrubbed & swilled til his reason was tottering.

"They'se so clean and nicey, no nasty ole fleas in them now, aren't you glad, - you can let Flibberty go on your bed now & Mitsy Black aya is - - -

Poor Baby never finished her speech. She had a confused idea of hearing a "swear word"

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From her father, of being shaken in a most ungentle fashion & put outside the stable, while the ~~Mi~~ unfortunate animals were dried & put in the sun to finish.

But the worst had yet to come & the results were so exceedingly bad that the young Woolcots never again "assumed virtues that they had not".

Bunty of course desired to help the cause as strongly as the others & to that end, his first action was to go into his bedroom & perform startling ablutions with his face, neck & hands. Then he took his soap-shiny countenance & red scrubbed his hands downstairs & sunned himself ~~for~~ under his father's very nose hoping to affect favourable comment.

But he was bidden irritably go away & found he would have to, find fresh means of appeasement ~~his father~~. He wandered into the study but with vague thoughts of tidying the bookshelves but Dick was there surrounded with books & whittling a stick ~~into~~ for a catapult & he went out again. Then he climbed the stairs and explored his father's bedroom & dressing room. Here there was a wide field for his observations, a full dress uniform ~~of his father's~~ was lying across a chair & it struck Bunty the gold buttons were looking less bright than they should so he spent a harmless half an hour in polishing them up. Next he burnished his spurs, which also was harmless & then he cast about for fresh work. There was quite a colony of dusty books in one corner of the room & there was a great bottle of black creamy looking

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varnish stuff on the mantelpiece. Bunty conceived the brilliant idea of cleaning the whole lot & standing them in a neat row to meet his Father's delighted eyes. He found an ~~old~~ handkerchief on the floor of superfine cambric though dirty, poured upon it a liberal allowance of the varnish & attacked the first pair. A bright polish rewarded him for they were patent leather ones but the next & the next would not ~~polish~~ shine however hard he rubbed. There was a step on the stair, the firm well known step of his father & he paused for a moment with a look of conscious virtue on his shiny face. But it fled all at once & a look of horror replaced it. He had stuck the bottle on a great arm chair for convenience as he was sitting on the floor, & now he noticed it had

fallen on to its side & a black horrid stream was issuing from its neck. And it was the chair with the uniform on & one of the sleeves was soaked with the stuff & an immaculate white shirt that lay there too, was inky, horrible.

Bunty gave a wild terrified look round the room for some place to efface himself but there were no nice corners or curtains & there was not time to get into the bedroom & under the bed. Stay, there was a ~~little cupboard~~ movable near the window, a large sized medicine chest, Bunty crushed himself into it, his head legs muddled up, his head between his knees & an ominous rattle of displaced bottles in his ears & the next minute his father was in the room.

"Great Heavens, God bless my soul" he said, & Bunty shivered & then he said a lot of things very quickly – foreign language as Judy called it – pushed something over and shouted "Esther" in a terrifying tone. But Esther was down in one of the paddocks

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with the general so there was no reply. More foreign language, more stamping about Bunty's teeth chattered noisily, he put up his hand to hold his mouth together & the cupboard fell right over on its face precipitating him almost at his father's feet & the bottles everywhere. "I didn't, I haven't me, I wasn't my fault" he howled backing towards the door "Noo yah, boo hoo – ooo Esther, boo yah, Judy, oh, oh-h-h, oh-h-h-h-h" As might be expected his father had picked up a strap that lay conveniently near & was giving his son a very fair taste of it.

"Oh-h-h, ooh-oo, ah-h-h, I wasn't me, I wasn't my fault, it's Dick & Judy, - oh-h, hoo, yah the pantomime, boo hoo, ah-h-h-h-h you're kill-ing ma, hoo, boo, I was only doin' oh-hoo, doing it to please hoo- oo-oo to please you."

His father paused with uplifted strap "And that's why all the others are behaving in so strange a fashion? Just for me to take them to the pantomime?"

Bunty wriggled himself free. Boo-hoo, yes, but not me, I didn't, I never, oh-h-h, hoo yah it wasn't my fault, "it's all the others, boo hoo, hit them the rest."

He got three more smart cuts & then fled howling & yelling to the nursery where he fell on the floor & kicked & shrieked till Meg thought he would have a fit, ~~& his father came &~~

"You sn-n-n-neaks" he sobbed addressing the others who had flown from all parts at his noisy outcry "you m-m-mean

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[margin note: BASS B]

p-p-p-pigs, I h-had n-no fo-owl & I've ha-h-had all the b-b-b-beating y-you sn-s-sn-n-n-neaks, oh-h-h-h, ah-h-h-h." He rolled to & fro as if beside himself.

They couldn't help laughing a little, Bunty was always so irresistibly comic when he was hurt ever so little, but they comforted him a little, ~~or at least tried to~~ as well as they could & tried to find out what had happened.

Esther came in presently looking very worried

"Well" they said in a breath.

"You really are tiresome children" she said vexedly.

"But the pantomime, quick Esther have you asked him" cried Judy impatiently.

~~"No I haven't because it's~~

"Well I started to just now, & I don't think I have ever seen your father more annoyed & angry, he says he would sooner make it worth the Reynold's while to take it off the boards than that one of you should see the slightest glimpse of it." Meg for goodness sake give Baby some day clothes, - just look at her & Judy, if you have any feeling for me, take off that frock. Bunty, you wicked boy, I'll call your father, if you don't stop that noise, Nell take the scissors from the General, he poke his eyes out, bless him."

Esther leaned back in the chair & looked round her tragically. She had never seen her

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husband so thoroughly angered & her beautiful lips quivered when she remembered how he had seemed to blame her.

Meg hadn't moved, ~~Baby~~ the water was [indecipherable] off Baby's clothes & making a pool on the floor, Bunty was still giving vent to spasmodic Boo's & hoo's & the General, mulched of the scissors, was sucking his own muddy book.

A sob rose in her throat, two tears welled up in her eyes & fell down her smooth lovely cheeks.

"Seven of you, & I'm only twenty" she said pitifully "oh it's too bad, oh dear it is too bad"

Chapter II

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7 Australians The Genera

Ch. IV

~~In correct story book parlance it was a~~ The General sees Active service

It was ~~one~~ a day after the events narrated in the last chapter as story book parlance has it. And Judy with a wrathful look in her eyes was sitting on the nursery table ~~with her thin brown~~ knees touching her chin & her thin brown hands clasped round them.

"It's a shame" she said "its a burning, wicked shame, - what's the use of fathers in the world I'd like to know."

"Oh Judy" said Meg who was ~~catching the last of the afternoon light~~ at who was kneeling at the window to finish a book. But she said it mechanically & only as a matter of duty, being 4 years older than Judy.

"Think of the times we could have if he didn't live with us" ~~continued~~ Judy continued, calmly disregarding. "Why we'd have fowl 3 times a day & the pantomime 7 nights a week."

Nell ~~Baby~~ suggested that it was unusual to have such performances as pantomimes on the seventh day but Judy was not daunted.

"I'd like to have a kind of church pantomime" she said thoughtfully, - beautiful pictures & things about Holy lands, & the loveliest ~~hymns~~ music ever heard, ~~of &~~ beautiful children in white singing hymns, & bright colours all about, ~~no sermons nor~~ collection ~~boxes~~ plates to take your only 3 penny bits, oh & no sermons or litany, of course.

"Oh Judy" said Meg, ~~rapidly her her nose almost touching the plate her book so fast was the light fading~~ from the depths of her book. Judy unclasped her hands & then clasped them again more tightly than before. "Six whole tickets wasted, - thirty beautiful shillings just because we have a father,"

"He's sent them ~~on~~ to Mrs Digby Smith ~~with~~ & wrote on the envelope with Compl. J. C. Woolcott" Bunty volunteered.

Judy moaned. "Six ~~wretched~~ horrid little Digby Smiths sitting in the theatre ~~in our seats watching & looking at the fun through in our seats watching~~ with their 6 horrid little eyes watching our fun she said bitterly.

Bunty, who was ~~a little~~ rather mathematically inclined wanted to know why they shouldn't look at it through 12 horrid little eyes & Judy laughed & came down from the table after expressing a ~~wish~~ wicked wish that the little Digby Smiths might all ~~lose their balance~~ tumble over the dress circle rail before the curtain went up.

Meg shut her book with a hurried band. "Has Dick gone yet, Father'll be awfully cross, - oh dear what a head I've got" she said - "where's Esther, has anyone seen Esther"

"My dear Meg," - Judy said, - "why it's at least 2 hours since Esther went up the drive before your very nose, she's gone to Waverley, - why, ~~didn't~~ she came in & told you to be sure to see about the coat & you said M-m, - all right,"

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~~Meg looked utterly wretched, "I was reading" she said in a very abject apologetic voice abjectly apologetic.~~

Meg gave a startled look of recollection. ~~Something about "Before 6 wasn't it she said~~ "Did I have to clean it" she asked in a frightened voice & pushing back her fluffy fair hair back from her forehead, - oh girls, what was it I had to do?

"Clean it with benzine, iron while wet, hang in a cool place to dry & bake till brown" said Judy promptly, "~~didn't you~~ surely you heard Margaret. Esther ~~kept~~ was at such pains to explain." Meg ruffled her hair despairingly. "What shall I do" she said ~~she~~ ~~hear~~ actual tears springing to her eyes, "what will father say, ~~but how can I~~ oh Judy you might have reminded me."

Nell slipped an arm round her neck "She's only teasing, Meggie, Esther didn't polish it & left it in his dressing room, you've only to put it in ~~in a gladstone bag or something his black travel box in a gladstone bag or something~~ & give it to Dick, Pat has to take the dogcart into town this afternoon to have the back seat mended ~~up to the Barracks~~ this afternoon ~~ready for tomorrow~~ & Dick's Pips going in too, that's all, & they're putting the horse in now, you're not late."

It was the coat Bunty had done his best to spoil that all the trouble was about. It belonged to ~~his~~ the Capt. full dress uniform & was wanted for a dinner at the barracks ~~that is~~ same evening. And Esther had been sponging & cleaning at it all the morning & had left directions that it was to be taken to the Barracks in the afternoon. She herself had gone out for ~~the afternoon~~ soon after lunch but ~~she~~ had left the coat wrapped up & a japanned tin trunk that her husband had requested should be sent to his room there to keep various things in. standing ready.

~~The~~ Presently the dog cart came spinning round to the front door in great style, Dick driving & Pat looking sulkily on. ~~They put the bag in at the back wit~~ & the coat inside it & were preparing to start again when Judy came out & stood looking holding the General in an uncomfortable position in her arms.

"Get up here Fizz, - there's lots of room, - there's no reason you shouldn't come too" Dick said suddenly.

"Oh-h" said Judy, her eyes sparkling. She took a rapid step forward & lifted her foot to the high step.

"Oh I say" said Dick, - "you'll have to put on something over that dress, old girl, - it's all over jam & things"

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Judy shot herself into the hall & returned with her ulster; she set the General on the floor for an instant, ~~donned~~ while she donned it, then picked him up & handed him up to Dick & Pip

He'll have to come too," she said - "I promised Esther not to let him out of my sight for a minute, she's been getting nervous about him lately, thinks he'll get broken."

~~Dick~~ Pip grumbled a minute or two but the General gave a ~~merry~~ gurgling captivating laugh & held up his arms so he took him up & held him while Judy clambered in. ~~We~~ We can come back in the tram to the Quay & then get a boat back she said, squeezing the baby ~~b~~ on the seat between them, - "The General loves going on the water.

Away they sped, out down the ~~grass~~ neglected carriage drive, out the gates & away down the road, ~~the~~ Dick, Judy of the shining eyes, & ~~B~~ the General in a ~~with his~~ well worn pelisse woollen hat ~~laughing dimpled face & general roguish smile,~~ & Pat ~~b~~ smiling ~~faced once~~ more because in possession of the reins.

~~They went over~~ A keen wind from the river swept through the belt of gum trees on the Crown lands & ~~played hide & seek in Judy's curls, she opened her lips & drank it in~~ gleefully sent the young red blood ~~dan~~ leaping in through their veins; it played havoc with Judy's curls & dyed her brown cheeks ~~erimson & warm pink,~~ rich red, it made the General kick & laugh & grow restive, & caused Dick to stick his hat on the back of his head & ~~purse up his lips in a joyous~~ whistle joyously.

Till town was reached ~~at last & the claims of conventionality made them sit up~~ when they were forced to yield somewhat to the claims of conventionality. On their way to Paddington ~~they met~~ a gentleman on horseback slackened pace a little. Dick took off his hat with a flourish & Judy gave a frank pleased smile for it was a certain old Colonel she had known for years & had cause to remember his liberality, & good humour.

"Well my little maid - well, Philip lad" he said smiling down at them while his impatient horse danced round the dogcart, - & the General too, - ~~what~~ where are you you all off too."

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"The Barracks, - I'm taking something up for the governor" Dick Pip answered; his eyes Judy was ~~admiring~~ watching the plunging horse with admiring eyes. "And then we're going back home."

The old gentleman managed ~~to~~ in spite of the horse to ~~g~~ put his hand in his pocket. "Here's something to make yourself ill with as you go" he said handing them over 2 half crowns" but don't send me the doctors bill." He flicked the General's cheek with his whip & ~~cantered off~~ gave Judy a nod & cantered off.

The children looked at each other with sparkling eyes. "Cocoanuts?" Dick Pip said. "And tarts & taffee & save the rest for a football? Judy shook her head.

"Where do I come in, with the football, you'd keep the football at school" she said, "I vote Pink jujubes, & ice creams & a wax doll, ~~I vote~~"

"A wax grandmother" retorted Dick "you wouldn't be such a girl I hope," then he added with almost pious fervour "Thank goodness Fizz You've always always hated dolls."

~~I~~ Judy gave a sudden leap in her seat almost upsetting the General & bringing down upon her a storm of reproaches from the coachman. "I know" she said, - & we're

~~Well?~~ almost half way there now,"oh-h-h it will ~~Where, what,~~ be lovely, -

where ~~Where where what what what~~ cried Dick impatiently, & unintentionally mimicking that a long [indecipherable] monarch George III. What, where" said D.

"Bondi Aquarium, ~~switchback,~~ skating, boats, merry go round; switchback & extra" returned Judy succinctly.

"Good iron" said Dick Pip & he whistled softly, while he revolved the thing in his mind. "There'd be something over too to get some tucker with & praps something for the football after all." Then his brow clouded, - "There's the kid, - whatever did you bring him for, - just like a girl, spoiling everything" ~~he said vexedly~~

Judy looked nonplussed "I quite forgot him she said vexedly - "Couldn't we leave him somewhere, couldn't we ask someone to take care of him while we go, - oh it would be too bad to have to give it up,

Oh look it's beginning to rain, we can't take him

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with us.'

They were at the foot of Barrack Hill now & Pat told them they'd have to get out & walk up the rest of the way or he'd never get the dogcart finished to take back that evening.

Pip tumbled out & took the General all in a bunched up heap & Judy alighted carefully after him the precious coat parcel in her arms. And they walked up the asphalt hill to the gate leading to the officers quarters in utter silence.

"Well?" Pip said querulously ~~at last~~, as they reached the top "be quick, ~~what~~ have you thought of anything, ~~be quick~~." That ~~two~~ levelling of brows & pursing of lips always meant deep & intricate calculation on his sister's part as he knew full well.

"Yes" Judy said quietly "I've got a plan that would do. - I think" - - . Then a sudden fire entered her manner "Who is the General's father, - tell me that," she said in a quick rapid, eager way, - & isn't it proper Father's should look after their ~~own~~ sons, & didn't he deserve we should get even with him for doing us out of the pantomime, & isn't the Aquarium too much to miss?"

Well" Pip said slowly, he didn't follow [indecipherable] of it all.

"That's all," - ~~only~~ I am only going to leave the General here at the Barracks for a couple of hours till we come back, his father being the right & proper person to watch over him." Judy grasped the General's small fat hand in a determined way & opened the gate.

"Oh I say!" remarked ~~Dick~~ Pip, "we'll get in an awful row you know Fizz, I don't think we'd better, I don't really old girl"

"Not a bit" said Judy stoutly - "at least, only a bit & the Aquarium's worth that, - look, it's raining & we oughtn't to take him out, really he'll get croup or rheumatism or something, - there's father standing over on the green near the tennis court talking to a man, ~~you go up & talk to him tell him I've taken his coat into his own room I'll slip in quietly along the verandah & into his own room & put the coat & the General on the bed, then I'll tell the a man to go & tell father his parcel's come & I'll fly back to you & we'll catch the~~

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Tram & go to the Aquarium." ~~& he can't~~

~~Dick~~ Pip whistled again softly, he was used to bold proposals from this sister of his but this was beyond everything.

"B-b-but" he ~~be~~ga said uneasily - "but Judy, whatever would he do with that kid for two mortal hours.

"Mind him," Judy returned promptly "it's a pretty thing if a father can't mind his own child for 2 hours. Afterwards, you see, when we've been to the Aquarium, we will come back & fetch him. ~~Then we'll tell father~~ And we'll explain to father how it was raining & we thought we'd better not take him with us for fear of rheumatism, & that has he wasn't in the room ~~so we left him~~ we put him on the bed, & went to catch the tram, why Pip it's beautifully simple."

Pip still looked uncomfortable, - "I don't like it Fizz, he said again & he'll be in a fearful wax."

Judy gave him one exasperated look, - "Go & see if that's the Bondi tram coming" she said, & glad of a moment's respite he went down the path again to the opening & pavement & looked down the hill. And When he turned round again ~~the little girl Judy had slipped through the door in the wall & Judy was gone. He stood He ran up the path & looked through the door in the wall. She was cros crossing the~~

~~"Well, it's done now~~ He stuck his hands in his pockets & walked up & down the path a few times. "Fizz'll get us hanged yet" he muttered once looking darkly at the door in the wall through which she had disappeared. He pushed his hat to the back of his head & stood looking gloomily in front of him & wondering what the consequences of

this would be. There was a light footfall behind him. "Come on" said Judy pulling his sleeve "it's done now, come on lets go & have our fun, - have you got the money safe?"

It was two o'clock as they ~~slipped~~ passed out of the gate & turned their faces up the hill to the tram stopping place.

And it was half past four ~~before they came back~~ when they ~~step~~ jumped out of a town bound tram & entered the gates again for their charge

Such an afternoon as they had had. Once inside the Aquarium even Pip had put his conscience qualms

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~~On one side & was bent all his energies to thoroughly enjoying himself.~~ And Judy was like a little mad thing. She spent a shilling of her money on the switchback railway, pronouncing the swift ~~exhilarating~~ bewildering motion as heavenly. Then they hired a pair of roller skates each & bruised themselves black & blue with heavy falls on the asphalt. And they had a ~~wild~~ ride on the Merry go round but Judy found it tame after the Switchback & refused to squander a second threepence upon it contenting herself with watching Pip fly round & running madly by his side to keep up as long as she could. (The 1st Switchback ~~d.~~ had made Master Pip feel sick on the first journey so he eschewed a repetition & watched Judy go off from time to time, waving gaily from the perilous little car almost with his heart in his mouth.) They finished the afternoon ~~by~~ with a prolonged inspection of the fish tanks & a light repast of jam tarts of doubtful freshness & two pennyworth of pea-nuts. And it was half past four as they hastened up the path to the top ~~Barrack~~ gate of the Barracks.

"I hope he's been good" Judy said as she turned the handle, "yes, you come too Pip," – for that young gentleman hung back one agonised second "twenty kicks or blows divided by two only makes 10, you see."

They went up the stone verandah & stopped at ~~t~~ one door. There was a little knot of young officers laughing & talking close by. Twas as good as a play to see Woolcot grabbing his youngster & stuffing it into a cab & getting in himself all with look of ~~slow~~ & ponderous dignity," one said & laughed at the recollection.

"It was a jolly little beggar" another said "it doubled ~~his~~ its fists & gave the immaculate ~~father~~ His High Mightiness one in the eye & then its shoe dropped off & we all rushed to pick it up as ~~he was in the cab,~~ & it was muddy & ~~the toes very through~~ dilapidated & old Wooly went red slowly ~~as~~ up to his ears he tried to put it own.

A little figure stepped into the middle of the group, a little figure with an impossibly short & shabby frock, thin black-stockinged legs, & a big hat crushed over a tangle of curls. ~~"You are sp~~ "It is my father you are speaking of" she said with quiet haughtiness – "& I cannot tell where ~~v~~ your amusement us. Is my father here or did I hear you say he had gone away."

Two of the men looked a little foolish, the third took off his cap ~~politely~~. "I am sorry you should have overheard Miss Woolcot," he said pleasantly "still there is [indecipherable] harm done is there. Yes, your father

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has gone away in a cab. He couldn't imagine how the little boy came on his bed & as he couldn't keep him here very well I imagine he has taken him home.

Something like a look of shame came in Judy's bright eyes.

"I am afraid ~~we~~ I must have put my father to some inconvenience" she said "it was I who left the Gen - my brother here because I didn't know what to do with him for an hour or two. But I quite meant to take him home myself."

- has he been gone long.

"Yes About [indecipherable] " said the officer looking ~~with interest~~ down quizzically at at her brown flushed face & shining wonderful eyes.

"Ah – thank you, - perhaps we can catch him up, come on Pip" & nodding in a ~~frank~~ but ~~grave way~~ grave, distant way to the group she turned away & went down the verandah & through the gate with her brother.

"A nice hole we're in" he said.

Judy nodded.

It's about the very awfulest ~~row~~ thing we've ever done in our lives – fancy the governor carting that child all the way ~~to M~~ from here, - oh lor."

Judy nodded again.

"Can't you speak" he said irascibly, - "you've got us into this, I didn't want to do it but I'll stand by you of course, - only you'll have to think of something quick"

~~She~~ Judy bit ~~the~~ a finger tip ~~off~~ of one of her gloves & looked melancholy.

"There's absolutely nothing to do Pip" she said slowly" I think we'd better just go straight back & hand ourselves over for punishment, - ~~He~~ll be too angry to hear any sort of an excuse so we'd better just grin & bear whatever he does to us. I'm really sorry too that I made a laughing stock of him up there."

~~Down~~ Pip was a ~~bit~~ explosive. He called her a little ass & a goat & a stupid idiot for doing such a thing & she didn't reproach him or answer back once. They caught a tram & went down to Sydney & afterwards to the boat. They ensconced themselves in a corner at the far end & ~~sat down~~ wrangled cheerfully. Then Pip got up & strolled about a bit. [indecipherable] in a second – with a white scared

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face. "He's on the boat" he said in a horrified whisper.

"Where, where, where – what what what" Judy cried unintentionally mimicking his late deposed Majesty George III.

~~Down~~ In the cabin, looking as glum as a boiled wallaby & hanging on to the poor little General as if he thinks he'll fly away."

Judy looked just a little frightened. "We'd better stay here I think, I absolutely daren't let him see us just yet & it would be no good offering to take the General yet now, - we're in for it now Pip, there'll be no ~~mercy~~ quarter for us."

Pip groaned: then Judy stood up, "let's creep down as far as the engine" she said "& see if he does look altogether merciless.

They made ~~up~~ their way cautiously along the deck & took up a position where they could see without being seen. The dear little General was sitting on the seat next his stern father who had a tight firm hold on the ~~he~~ shoulders of his woolly pelisse. He was sucking his little dirty hand & casting occasional longing glances at his tan shoe which he knew was delicious to bite: once or twice he has pulled it off & conveyed it to his mouth but his father intercepted it & angrily buttoned it on again in ~~his~~ its rightful place. He wanted to slither off the horrid seat too & crawl all over the deck & explore the ground under the seats & see where the puffing noise came from but there was that iron grasp on his shoulders that no amount of wriggling would move. At last the boat stopped at a wharf ~~near~~ not far from Missrule & the Captain alighted carrying his small dirty chuckling son gingerly in his arms. ~~Judy~~ & He walked slowly up the red road along which the dogcart had sped so blithesomely some six or seven hours ago, & Judy & Pip followed at a ~~ver~~ respectful – a very respectful distance. At the gate he saw them & gave a large angry beckon for them to come up. Judy went very white but obeyed instantly & Pip pulling himself

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together, ~~came~~ brought up in the rear.

Afterwards Judy only had a very indistinct remembrance of what happened during the next half hour. She ~~reclected~~ knew there was a stormy scene in which Esther &

the whole family came in for an immense amount of vituperation. Then Dick Pip received a thrashing in spite of Judy's persistent avowal that it was all her fault, that Pip hadn't done anything. She remembered wondering would she receive a thrashing too, so angry was her father's face as he pushed Pip aside after a time & stood looking at her riding whip in hand. Then he flung the whip down & laid a heavy hand on her slight shoulder. "Next ~~week~~ Monday" he said slowly "Next Monday morning you will go to boarding school. Esher, kindly see Helen's clothes are ready for boarding school, - next Monday morning.

Chapter V

Next Monday morning

There was a trunk standing in the hall & a large much travelled portmanteau. And there was a label on it that said Miss Helen Woolcot, Miss Burton, Mt Victoria. In the nursery breakfast was proceeding spasmodically. Meg's blue eyes were all red & swollen with crying & she was still sniffing audibly as she poured out the coffee. Pip had his hands in ~~the~~ his pockets & stood on the hearthrug looking gloomily at his boots & refusing breakfast altogether. The general was ~~thumping~~ crashing his own mug & plate joyously together & Bunty was eating bread & butter in stolid silence. Judy white faced & dry eyed was sitting at the table & Nell & Baby were clinging to either ~~ha~~ arm. All the four days between that black Thursday & this doleful morning she had been obstinately uncaring. Her spirits had never seemed higher, her eyes brighter, her tongue sharper than, during that interval of days & she had pretended to everybody & her father especially, that she thought boarding school must be great fun & she didn't mind at all.

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But this morning ~~when the first mountain train was to carry her so when she actually saw her trunk packed & everything ready she~~ she had collapsed altogether. All the time ~~her~~ before her hot childish heart had been telling her her father couldn't really be so cruel to her, that he didn't really mean to send her away among strangers, away from dear, muddled old Misrule & ~~her tribe~~ all her sisters & brothers; he was only saying it to frighten her she kept saying to herself & she would show him that she was not a chicken-hearted baby. But on Sunday night when she saw ~~her~~ a trunk carried downstairs & labelled with her name & filled with her things a cold hand seemed to close on her heart; still she said to herself he was going to make it seem more [indecipherable]. But ~~on Monday morn~~ now it was morning & Esther had come she could disbelieve it no longer. Esther had come to her bedside & kissed her sorrowfully, her beautiful face troubled & tender. She had begged as she had never done before for a remission of poor Judy's sentence but the Captain was ~~firm~~ adamant. It was she & she only who was ringleader in everything, the others would behave when she was not there to incite them to mischief, & go she should. Besides he said, it would be the making of her, it was an excellent school he had chosen, the ladies who kept it were very kind but very firm & Judy was being ruined from want of a firm hand. Which ~~indeed~~ was in a measure true. Judy ~~right~~ sat bolt upright in bed at the sight of Esther's sorrowful face. "It's no good dear, y there is no way out of it" she said gently "but you'll go like a brave girl, won't you Ju-Ju, you always were the sort to die game as Pip says. Judy gulped down a great lump in her throat & her poor little face grew white & drawn. "It's all right Essie ~~dear~~ there, - you go on down to breakfast" she said in a voice that ~~would~~ only shook ~~shake~~ a little- I'll be dressed in a minute, - oh & leave me the General Esther, I'll bring him down with me. Esther deposited her little fat son on the pillow & with one loving backward glance went out of the door. And Judy pulled the little lad down into her arms & covered the bedclothes right over their heads. And held him in almost a firm desperate clasp for a minute or two & buried her ~~face~~ lips in his soft dimpled neck & kissed ~~till they ached~~ till her lips ached. The baby struggled upwards, objecting with a ~~suffocating~~

[indecipherable] to such suffocating proceedings [indecipherable] clothes & [indecipherable]

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[indecipherable] quick [indecipherable] fashion, did [indecipherable] usual, & then picked up [indecipherable] the passage & into the nursery. All the others were here, & with Esther were evidently [indecipherable] her, the three girls looked tearful & protesting. Pip had just been brought to book for speaking disrespectfully of his father & was looking sullen & Bunty, ~~in the stress~~ not knowing what else to do at such a ~~time~~ crisis had fallen to catching flies & was viciously taking off their wings. It was a wretched ~~breakfast~~ meal. The bell sounded for the downstairs breakfast & Esther had to go. ~~after a pal~~ Everyone offered Judy everything on the table ~~she~~ ~~seemed~~ & spoke gently & politely to her. She seemed to be apart from them, a personage, not to be lightly treated, in the dignity of this great trouble. Her dress ~~tee~~ was quite new ~~tee~~ a neat blue serge fresh from the dressmakers hands; & her boots were blacked & bright, her stockings guiltless of ventilatory charms,- this ~~tee~~ made her a Judy quite different one from the harem-scarem one of a few days back who [indecipherable] use to come to breakfast looking as if her clothes had been pitchforked upon her. Baby addressed herself to her porridge for ~~two~~ one minutes but her next her feelings overcame her & with a little wail ~~of~~ she rushed round the table to Judy. ~~This destroyed~~ & hung on to her arm sobbing. This destroyed the balance of the whole company, Nell got the other arm & swayed to & fro in an access of misery, Meg's tears rained down fast, Pip dug his heel into the hearthrug & wondered what was the matter with his eyes, & even Bunty's appetite for bread & butter ~~fl~~ diminished. Judy sat there ~~limp & unstrung, utterly silent but quite dry-eyed.~~ utterly silent, ~~dry-eyed~~ & with an ~~look~~ expression of utter despair on her young face; she looked like ~~some little~~ a miniature tragedy queen going to immediate execution. Presently Bunty got off his seat covered ~~up his~~ tea with his saucer to keep the flies out, & ~~solemnly~~ quitted the room. ~~Then~~ In a minute he returned with a large pickle bottle containing an enormous green frog. ~~"You can have - I'll give it you to~~ You can have it to keep for your very own, Judy," he said ~~in a sole~~ in a tone of almost reckless sadness "it'll keep you amused perhaps at school." This stintulated self-sacrifice could go no further for this frog was the article of Bunty's heart as they all knew. The others,- everyone fetched some offering to lay at Judy's shrine for keepsakes. Meg ~~gave her a~~ brought her a bracelet plaited out of the hair of a defunct pet pony. Pip gave his three bladed pocket knife Nell a pot of musk that she had watered & cherished two years, Baby her favourite doll, "Put them in the trunk, Meg- there's room on top I think"

Judy said in a choking voice & deeply touched by these gifts- "oh & Bunty dear, put a cork over the f-f-frog will you, it might get

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lost in that b-b-big box.

"All right" said Bunty,- ~~I'll get~~ "You'll take c-c-care of it w-won't you Judy, oh Judy-oh- boo-hoo—

The Esther came in, still troubled looking. "The dogcart is round" she said "are you ready dearest, ~~little Judy, dear Judy, little girl Judy do be brave—~~

But Judy was white as death & suffered Esther to put her hat on, to help her into her new jacket to put her gloves into her hand; ~~all in the same silence~~ she submitted to being kissed by the whole family, to be half carried downstairs by Esther, to be kissed again by the girls, then by the two good natured domestics, who, in spite of her peccadilloes, had a very warm place for her in their hearts. Esther & Pip lifted her into the dogcart & she sat in a little huddled up way looking down at the group on the verandah with eyes that were absolutely tragic in their utter despair. Her father came

out out to buttoning his overcoat & saw the look. "What foolishness is this" he said irascibly, "Esther, great heaven are you making an idiot of yourself too, - There were great tears glistening in his wife's beautiful eyes. "Upon my soul, you would think I was going to ~~put the~~ take the child to be hanged, or at least was going to leave her in a penitentiary."

A great dry sob broke from Judy's white lips. "If you'll let me ~~off~~ stay father, I'll never do another thing to vex you & you can thrash me instead hard." It was her last effort, her final hope & she bit her poor quivering lip almost till it bleed while she waited for his answer.

"Let her stay, - oh do let her stay, - we'll be good always" came in a chorus from the verandah. And "Let her stay, Philip," Esther called in a tone as entreating as any of the children. But the Capt sprang into the dogcart & seized the reins from Pat in a burst of anger.

"I think you're all demented" he cried "She's going to a thoroughly good home, & I've paid ~~for her already~~ a quarter in advance already, - & I can assure you good people I'm not going to waste it."

He gave the horse a small touch with the whip & in a minute the dogcart had flashed out of the gate & the small white face was lost to sight.

(Some figure notations at bottom of page)

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Chapter VI

Cat cat

Meg

Meg had always had pretty hair but during the last ~~fortnight~~ 2 months she had cut herself a fringe & ~~used~~ begun to torture it up in curl papers every night. And in her private drawer she kept a jam tin filled with oatmeal that she used in the water every time she washed having read it was a great complexion beautifier. And she ~~used to~~ put vaseline had begun ~~to sleep in gloves~~ & to rub vaseline on her hands ~~before~~ & to sleep in gloves. And to spend her spare money in "freckle lotion" ~~for~~ & to remove that slight powdering of warm brown sun kisses that somehow lent a certain character to her face. These things were the outcome of being sixteen & having found a new friend ~~who was a year older & much sillier & more worldly-wise.~~ Aldith MacArthy learnt ~~music~~ French from the same teacher that Meg had just begun to go to twice a week & after an exchange of chocolates, hair ribbons & family confidences a friendship sprang up. Aldith had three grown up sisters whom she aped in everything & was considerably wise in the world than simple minded romantic Meg. She lent Meg novels, - the Molly Bown style, & Family Herald Supplements, Young Ladies Journals & ~~Meg~~ such & the younger girl took to them with avidity, surprised at the ~~different~~ new world into which they took her, for Charlotte Yonge & Louisa Alcott & Miss Wetherill had hitherto formed her simple & more wholesome fare.

Meg began to dream rose coloured dreams of the time when her fair shining hair should be gathered up into "a simple knot at the back of the head," or "braided into a regal coronet" as the novel heroines' always were. A Pigtail done in three was very unromantic. That was why, as a sort of compromise, she cut herself a fringe & begun to frizz out the end of her plait. Her father stared at her & said she looked like a shopgirl when he noticed it first & Esther ~~said~~ told she was a stupid child but her glass & Aldith reassured her.

The next thing was to surreptitiously lengthen her dresses which were at the short-long ~~p~~ stage. ~~Unknown to~~ In the privacy of her own bedroom she took the skirts of two or three of her frocks off the band, inserted a piece of lining for lengthening purposes, & then added a frill to the waists of her bodices. This dropped the

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skirts a good two inches & made her look quite a tall slim figure as she was well aware. None of this was very harmful. But Aldith after a time was dissatisfied with her waist. "You're at least twenty three, Marguerite" she said once, quite in a horrified way. She never called her friend Meg, pronouncing that name to be "too domestic & altogether unlovely." Meg glanced from her own waist to her friends ~~narrow~~ slender beautiful one & sighed profoundly. "What ought I to be" she said in a low tone & Aldith had answered "Eighteen,- or nineteen, Marguerite at the most,- true symmetrical grace can never be obtained with a waist 23 inches round."

Aldith had not only made statements & comparisons, she had given her friend practical advice & shown her how the thing was to be done. And every night & morning Meg pulled away rubberily at her corset laces & crushed her beautiful healthy little body into narrower space. She had already brought it within a girdle of 21 inches which was a clear saving of two & she had taken all her dresses in at the seams. But she gave up the evening game of cricket & she never made one at rounders now much to the others' disgust. No one to look at the sweet smiling face & ~~pretty half veiled~~ soft calm eyes could have guessed what torture was being felt beneath the pretty, well-fitting dress body. To ~~stoop~~ walk quickly was positive pain, to stoop almost agony but she endured ~~w~~ it all with a heroism ~~he~~ worthy of a ~~better~~ noble cause.

"How long shall I have to go on like this, Aldith" she asked once, ~~aff~~ faintly, after a French lesson that she had scarcely been able to sit through. And the older girl answered carelessly, "Oh you mustn't leave it of of course course, but you don't feel it at all after a bit."

And with this assurance Meg pursued her painful course. Esther, ~~did~~ the only person ~~likely~~ in a position to exercise any authority on the subject, had not noticed at all, & if she had done ~~would probably have only laughed & told her not to be a vain girl,~~ ~~twenty two was not so very much wiser than a~~ ~~except that only she had said once in surprise that Meg's figure~~ "Your figure's getting really quite respectable, Meg,

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indeed if she had done, she would not have thought very gravely of it for it was only 4 years since she too had been 16 & a "waist" had been the most desirable thing on earth. Once she had said unwillingly, "What a nice little figure you're getting Meg, this new dressmaker ~~surely~~ certainly fits better than Miss Quinn "& foolish Meg, with a throb of delight, had redoubled her efforts.

Lynx-eyed Judy would have found her out long ago & laughed her to her utter shame but unfortunately for Meg's constitution ~~the~~ she was still at school it being now the third month of her absence. Aldith lived about twenty minutes walk from Missule so the two girls were ~~frequent~~ always together. Twice a week they went down in the Riverboat to town together to learn how to inquire in French "How is ~~Monsieur~~ Has the baker's young daughter a ~~b~~ yellow hat, brown gloves & the umbrella of that underbaker's niece; And twice a week after they had ~~learned~~ it Aldith answered irrelevantly that the surgeon has some beer, some bread & some butter conducted her friend slowly up & down that happy hunting ground of Sydney youth & fashion, - the Block. "Just see how many hats I'll get taken off" Miss Aldith would say as they started & Meg ~~would~~ by the end of the time Meg would say longingly "How lovely it must be to know crowds of gentlemen, like you do." Sometimes one or two of them would stop & exchange a word or two & then Aldith & she would formally introduce Meg; often however the latter, who was sharp enough for all her foolishness would fancy she detected a patronising & familiar kind of air in these gentlemen's manner. & ~~would flush scarlet~~ As indeed there often was; they were ~~all grown men~~ chiefly men who ~~visited~~ paid calls after dances & such at Aldith's home &

thought that young lady a rather pretty but silly & precious child who wanted keeping in the schoolroom a few more years.

One day Aldith ~~confided~~ gave to Missule brimming over with mysterious importance, "~~Com~~" "Come down the garden Marguerite she said, taking no notice whatever of Baby who had with much difficulty beguiled Meg into telling her the ever delightful story of the three little Pigs. "Oh no, by the hair of my chiny chinchin, Then I'll huff & I'll puff blow your house in"

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had only been said twice & the exciting part was still to be come. Bay looked up with stormy eyes: "Don't Megsie, oh don't go wif that horrid girl Aldiff"

"~~Say~~" "Miss MacCarthy, Baby Dear, Meg suggested gently, catching Aldith's half scornful smile.

"That girl Aldiff" repeated Baby obstinately. Then she relented & put one caressing little arm round her sister's neck."

"I will say Miss MacCarthy iz you'll say ze uzzer little pig too"

"Oh send her away, Marguerite, do" Aldith said impatiently

"I have an enthralling secret to tell you & I'll have to go soon."

Meg looked interested immediately "Run away Baby dear" she said kissing the disappointed little face, - "go & play Norah's Ark with Bunty & I'll finish the piggies to-morrow night or to-morrow."

"But I wants them now" said Bay insisently "~~Aldiff~~"

Meg pushed her gently aside "No, run away pet," – run away at: once, like a good girl & I'll tell you Red Riding Hood too, to-morrow."

Baby looked up at her sister's guest, "You are a horrid old pig, Aldiff MacCarthy," she said with slow emphasis & I hates you hard, an we all hates you here cept Meg; & Pip says you'rø jammy, there & I wis a drate big giant would come & huff & puff & blow you into ze middlest part of ze sea"

Aldith laughed, - a little aggravating grown up laugh that put the finishing touch to Baby's anger. She put out her little hand & gave the guest's arm in its muslin sleeve a sharp nip scientific pinch that Pip had taught her. Then she fled madly away down the long paddocks to the bit of bush beyond.

"Insufferable" Aldith muttered angrily, & it needed all Meg's apologies & coaxing to get her into an amiable frame of mind again & to g induce her to communicate the enthralling secret. At last however, it was imparted with great impressiveness.

Aldith's eldest sister was engaged, - engaged to be married, - oh wasn't it heavenly, - wasn't it t romantic, - & to the gentleman with the long fair moustache, who had been so much at their house lately.

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"I knew it would come, - I had seen it coming for a long time, - oh you I'm not easily blinded" Aldith said ~~eracularly~~ "I know true love when I see it. Though certainly for myself I should prefer a dark moustache – should not you Marguerite"

"Ye-es" said Meg ~~undecidedly~~, her views were hardly formed yet on the subject."

"Jet black, with waxed ends, very stiff" Aldith continued, thoughtfully "& a soldierly carriage, & very long black lashes"

"So should I" Meg said, fired in a moment. "Like Guy Deloraine in The Peril of Adela." Aldith put her arm more tightly round her friend.

"Wouldn't it be ~~lovely~~ heavenly, Marguerite, to be engaged, you & I" she said in a tone of dreamy rapture.

"to have a dark, handsome man, just dying with live for you, going down on his knees & giving you presents & ~~everything~~ asking you out & all, - oh Marguerite, just think of it"

Meg's ~~cheeks were pink~~ eyes shone looked wistful "We're not old enough though yet" she said with a sigh.

Aldith tossed her head. That's nonsense, why Edith is only ~~eighteen~~ 17 & look at your own step-mother - - plenty of girls are actually married at 16 Marguerite, & a man proposed to my sister Beatrice before she was 16"

Meg looked much impressed, & thoughtful. Then Aldith rose to go "Mind you're in time for the boat, to-morrow" she said as they reached the gate" & she said as they reached the gate " & Marguerite ~~let's make ourselves look very ni~~ be sure you make yourself look very nice – wear your cornflower hat & see if Mrs Woolcot will lend you a pair of her gloves, your grey ones are just a little shabby aren't they dear," - & that "H-m" said Meg colouring.

"And Mr James Graham always comes back on that boat, & the 2 Courtney boys, - Alan Courtney told Edith, he thought you seemed a nice little thing, he often notices you he says because you blush so"

"I can't help it," Meg said unhappily, - "Aldith, how ought the ribbon to go on my hat, I'm going to re-trim it again,"

"Oh A square bows, somewhat stiff & well at the side" the oracle said "I'm glad you're going to dear, it looked just a wee bit dowdy didn't it."

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Meg coloured again. "Have you done your French" she said as she pulled open the gate."

Aldith ~~kissed her affectionately for good bye~~ "In a way" she said then taking her friend's face between her litt hands in their neat gants de [indecipherable]

Aldith ~~passed through the gate~~ "In a way" she said Aldith answered, then she put up her chin "those frowsy looking Smiths always make a point of having no mistakes & Janet Green too who [indecipherable] always 4 seasons ~~before dat~~ out of fashion, I prefer to have a few errors just to show I haven't to work hard & be a teacher after, - I - -

But ~~at this point~~ just there she stumbled & fell down her full length in a most undignified manner right across the muddy side path.

It was a piece of string & Baby's vengeance.

Chapter VII

~~It was a month later~~

Meg was looking ill there was no doubt about it. Her pretty pink & white complexion was losing its fresh look, a slightly irritable look had settled round her a mouth that a few months back had seemed made for smiling only And ~~another very sad but significant fact~~ terribly unromantic fact, her nose ~~had~~ was getting quite florid looking. Now a heroine may have the largest, deepest & most heavily lashed eyes imaginable, she may have hair in very truth like that mown from a harvest's middle ~~sheaf~~ floor (c. Swin. August for quot), she may have lips like cherries & teeth like pearl ~~but if her nose is but v~~ a red nose will be so utterly fatal that these other charms will be unnoticed. It cost Meg the greatest tribulation of spirit; she read the Ans to correspondents, in various papers Aldith lent her some x for a remedy, but ~~they all seemed to~~ nearly everyone seemed to be asking for recipes to promote the growth of the eyelashes or to ~~give~~ prevent embonpoints; not one she chanced on said "A Red nose in a girl is generally caused by Indigestion or tight-lacing" she asked Aldith ~~what~~ to suggest something & Aldith thought Vaseline & sulphur

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Mixed together & spread over the affected member at night would take the redness away.

So A every night Meg carefully ~~barricaded~~ fastened her bedroom door with a wedge of wood, keys were unknown luxuries at Misrule - & anointed her nose most carefully

with the greasy mixture lying all night on her back to prevent the chance of it running off on the pillow.

Once Pip had forced his way in to demand a few stitches for his braces which had split & she had been forced compelled to wrap her whole face hastily up in a towel & declare she had violent neuralgia & he must go to Esther or one of the servants.

~~He would have to~~ Had he seen & known the cause there would have been no end to the teasing.

Now a days Meg spent a ver great deal of time in her bedroom that she had all to herself now Judy was away. ~~Here~~ In its privacy she trimmed & retrimmed her hats, altered her dresses, read her novels & sat in front of the looking glass dreaming of being quite grown up & in love. For just now both to her & to Aldith that second ~~stage~~ ~~of~~ & state of life seemed altogether lovely & desirable. Meg used to curl herself up in a big wrecked easy chair that had drifted into her room, & dream long beautiful, hopeless dreams of a lover with "long black lashes & a soldierly carriage." Of course she was wrong to have such thoughts, it was highly reprehensible at the tender age of 16, but then the child had no Mother to guide those erring thoughts & [note: last line missing]

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was a daughter of the South.

~~[indecipherable]~~ Australian girls almost always begin to think of ~~what middle-aged folk~~ term "lovers nonsense" as middle-aged folks call it long before their English sisters do. ~~[indecipherable]~~ While still in the short frock period of existence & while their hair still is free flowing they take the keenest interest in boys, - boys of neighbouring schools, other girls brothers, young bank clerks & such, ~~not and~~ not because they would be good playmates but because they look at them in the light of possible "sweethearts." I do not say English girl children are free from this. By no means; in every school there ~~maybe~~ may be found one or more this way inclined; frivolous, giggling forward young things who want whipping & set to play dolls or cricket. ~~But in~~ ~~Australia here~~ in this young free land of youthfulness ~~the defect is~~ it is not the exception but more frequently the rule & herein lies the ~~gra~~ chief defect of the very young Australian girl. She is like a peach, a beautiful smooth rich peach that has come to ripeness almost in a day & that hastens to rub off ~~its~~ the soft delicate bloom that is its chief charm, just to show its bright warm colouring more clearly.

~~We have most of us met the just left school young lady. She is generally 16 in~~ ~~Australia & she is not "bread & butter at all. She is~~

~~Aldith had carefully brushed away~~ to her own infinite satisfaction, brushed away her bloom & was at present busily engaged in trying to remove Meg's which was very soft & lovely before she touched it. The novels had taken away a little & this "Block" a little more but Meg was naturally fresh minded & innocent & it took time to make any ~~effect~~. small difference. ~~But under it~~ At present under her friend's tutelage she was being inducted into the delightful mysteries of sweethearting & ~~it~~ for the time it quite filled her somewhat empty purposeless young life. But it all ended with an adventure that years afterwards used to make her cheeks tingle painfully at the thought.

After the ~~Fre~~ bi-weekly French lesson as I have said the 2 friends used to come back together in the river boat at 5 o'clock. And by this boat there always came 2 boys by the name of Courtney & a third boy, Aldith's particular pro~~[indecipherable]~~ Graham. Now the young people had become known to each other at

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picnics & such in the neighbourhood but the acquaintance instead of ripening on frequent meeting into a pleasant frank friendship had taken ~~instead~~ the turn of secrecy & silly playing at love. James Graham was in a lawyer's office, a young

articled clerk of 17 in great undue haste to be that ma delightful thing a man. He carried a [indecipherable] & was very particular about his hat & his neck tie & ~~ban~~ books which generally were tan. And he had the faintest possible moustache that he caressed with great frequency & that privately Aldith thought adorable. Aldith's pert spritely manner pleased him & in a very short time they had got to the period of passing notes into each other's hands & sighing sentimentally. Not that the notes contained much harm, they were generally very formal & precise.

"My dear Miss Macarthy" one would run "Why were you not on the boat yesterday. I looked for you ~~for~~ till it was no use looking longer & when the journey was blank. How charmingly that big hat suits you & those jonquils at your neck, Might I beg one of the flowers,- just one please - Aldith
Your devoted friend, James Graham.

And Aldith's written on a ~~note~~ sheet of her notebook with a pink programme pencil out of her purse might be no worse than

Dear Mr Macarthy,

What ever can you want these flowers at my neck for. They have been there all day & are dead & spoiled. I can't imagine what good they'll be to you. Still of course if you really care you shall have them. I will give them to you as I go off the gangway. I am so glad you like this hat. I shall always like it now. Did you really miss me ~~yester~~ on Monday. I had gone to have my photo taken. Meg thinks it is very good indeed but I am sure it flatters me too much.

Yours truly

L. Aldith Evelyn Macarthy.

Now Mr. James Graham had a great friend in one of the before mentioned Courtney boy's,- Andrew by name. He was a tall, handsome lad of eighteen, still a schoolboy, but possessed of fascinating manners & a pair of really beautiful eyes. And since his friend & companion Jim had

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taken to "Having fun" with the "girl Macarthy," & he objected to being left out in the cold; he began to bow in a marked manner & pay attention to her friend .

~~Me blushing~~ Meg who blushed to her ~~br~~ right up to her soft pretty fringe & ~~be~~ every time he spoke to her & looked ~~absolute~~ painfully conscious & guilty. The other boy ~~Go~~ Alan Courtney was tall, & very broad shouldered & not at all nice looking; he had a strong plain face, deep ~~twinkl~~ grey eyes deeply set & a brown hair that looked as if he was in a constant state of rumpling it up the wrong way. He was a University student & a great footballer & he never diverted himself on the long homeward journey in the way Andrew & his friend did. He used generally to give ~~them~~ a half-contemptuous nod as he passed the little group, uncovering his head for the shortest possible period consistent with civility & making his way to the far end of the boat.

~~Meg wh~~ One time ~~Meg was almost positive she heard him mutter~~ as he passed them Aldith was drooping her lashes & using her eyes to ~~great~~ such effect that Meg was almost positive she heard him mutter under his breath "Silly young fools."

He used to smoke at his end of the boat, cigars at the beginning of term & a short black pipe towards the end & Meg ~~thoug~~ secretly ~~thought it~~ he was looked so ~~manly~~ big & manly as he sat there to think how manly he looked & to sigh profoundly.

For I may as well tell you now as later what they ~~silly~~ foolish little thing had done. She had fallen in love, as nearly as it is possible for "sweet sixteen" ~~with Alan~~ to do. And it was with Alan who ~~looked scornfully~~ took no notice whatever of ~~it~~ her beyond the half scornful bow when he could not help it, Alan who had no good looks or pleasant manners, not Andrew who gave her tender glances & chocolates & ~~verses~~ ~~er~~ conversation ~~tell~~ peppermints that said "My heart is thine." Not Andrew who was so well favoured & cheery & had curls that "made his forehead like the rising sun."

Poor little Meg. Of course no one guessed it. She never let even Aldith get a suspicion of it accepting Andrew's little notes & smiles, as if

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there was nothing more she wanted.

But she grew a trifle thin & large eyed & used to make copious holes in her diary every night & to write a truly appalling quantity of verses in which heart & part, & grief & leave, & weep & keep & sigh & die were most often the concluding words of the lines. She endured Andrew ~~because~~ for several reasons. He was Alan's brother for one thing & was always saying things about "old Al." & ~~A~~ She was afraid Aldith might discover her secret if she ~~dis~~ had nothing to do with him. And beside this Andrew had ~~really~~ the ~~most beautiful~~ longest eyelashes she had ever seen & she must have somebody to say pretty things to her even if it was not the person she would have liked.

One day things came to a crisis.

"No more trips on this dear old boat for a month" Aldith said pensively from her corner in the cabin.

"But why- oh this is too much,- why, Miss Macarthy" James Graham said with exaggerated despair in his voice.

~~The class has bee~~ "Monsieur H has given us month's holiday" Aldith returned with a deep sigh. Meg echoed it as in duty bound & Andrew said fiercely that hanging was too good for Mons H,- what did he mean by such inhuman conduct he should like to know & however were Jim & himself to maintain life in the meantime.

It was James who thought of a "way out." "Couldn't we go for a walk ~~along the bank~~ somewhere some evening, just we four" he said insinuatingly & though Meg had at first shaken her head decidedly in the end Aldith & the others prevailed & she promised faithfully to go.

They were to meet in a ~~paddock~~ thickly wooded paddock adjoining the far one belonging to Misrule & to walk for about half an hour returning at eight by which time it was beginning to grow dark.

meg went about for two days with her secret hanging over her like a burden of guilt. She

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wrote much in her diary, composed a few yards of fearsome verse & stayed in her bedroom as much as possible & almost wished Judy was at home that she might confide in her. [indecipherable] Judy was too downright, too sensible, too much ~~above such silliness~~ of a child & a boy, she would never dare to tell her anything of the sort. She could fancy the scorn in her sister's large clear eyes, the ~~contin-~~ringing laughter such a tale would evoke, the clever, scathing ridicule that would fall on her shrinking head.

By the night decided upon the child had worked herself up into a strong state of excitement. 7 6 o'clock was the time settled & as she knew it was broad daylight by then; she felt she really dare not, could not go. Suppose her father or sister, some of her scornful young sisters or brothers should be about & see the meeting, or any of the neighbours why she would never survive the ridicule of it. Why had they not thought of saying 8 o'clock, it would be darker then & they would be far less likely to be seen; she could slip out of the house without any difficulty & run through the paddocks under cover of the kindly dusk whereas if it was light & she tried to creep away at least 2 or 3 of the children would fly after her and offer generously to "come too". It had been very thoughtless of them not to settle a time when they would not be seen she kept saying & then, too afraid to go ~~& a-~~in the light & unwilling for Aldelle to reproach her for not going at all, she did in her excitement ~~talked a~~

questionable thing so questionable that [~~indecipherable~~] for long after she could not think of it without horror.

Her sole thought was so avoid being seen & it never even occurred to her that it was at all strange for her, a young girl, to request the meeting should take place later, in the dark.

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(Chapter VI) 7 Australians – (cont)

It would be horrid going for the walk so early. Let us go later when it is quite dark, it will be ever so much nicer for none will see us. ~~I am writing to Adelle to tell her~~ And let us meet at the end of the paddocks where the brush grows thickly. I am writing to Al. to tell her to go at that time too, she will tell Mr Graham. You must please not kiss me. I should be very angry indeed if you did. I don't like kissing at all. ~~I have given you flowers & things.~~ Don't forget.

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Dear Mr Courtney" she wrote sitting down at her dressing table & scribbling away hurriedly.

I would much rather go the walk ~~in the light~~ when it is dark, I will come out at ½ p 8 instead of 7 & then no one will see us. It will be quite dark on the road along the river. ~~& won't matter.~~ Or in the plantation further along no one would see us. I am writing to Adelle to tell her to go at that time too, she will tell Mr Graham. Don't you agree the walk will be much nicer in the dark?

Hoping to see you

I remain

Yours in [~~indecipherable~~]

Meg.

She slipped this into an envelope, addressed it to A Courtney Esqr. & then wrote a note of explanation to Adelle & told her to be sure to be in the paddock by ½ p 8 & she (Meg) would slip out when the children were going to bed & unlikely to notice. Then she went out into the garden to get messengers for her notes. Little Nellie Flossie Courtney had been spending the afternoon with Nellie & Meg called her back from the gate just as she was going home & unseen by the children entrusted the note to her. "Give it to your brother the minute he comes from school" she whispered, popping a big chocolate at the same time into the little girls mouth. ~~And~~ Bunty was next bribed with the same melting delicacies to run up to Adelle's with the other note & Meg

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breathed freely again, feeling she had skilfully averted the ~~danger of~~ threatened danger attendant on the evening meeting.

But surely the notes ~~or their~~ were fated. ~~or both the children surprisingly careless~~ Bunty delivered his safely enough to the housemaid at the MacCarthy's. "Is there an answer" the girl asked & he said he " 'sposed so, girls always expected one." Aldith who was suffering from a cold & confined to her room, wrote a note to her friend saying she ~~fel~~ was too ill to be allowed out & had written putting Mr Graham off & Meg had better ~~not go~~ write to Mr Courtney & postpone the walk. This note in its pink triangular envelope was transferred to Bunty's pocket among his marbles & peanuts & string. And, as might be expected he fell in with some other choice spirits on the return journey & was soon on his knees playing marbles. He lost [~~indecipherable~~], exclusive of his most cherished agate & returned home with saddened spirits an hour later. Only to find as he went through the gate he had lost

Aldith's note. Now Meg had promised him eight big chocolate walnuts on his return & if this same boy had one weakness more pronounced than others, it was his extreme partiality for this kind of confectionary. He had not tasted one for weeks & it almost broke his heart to think they would be for forfeited.

"She'll be stingy enough to say I haven't earned them. #4

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just because I lost that girls stupid letter" he thought to himself, miserably. Then temptation came upon him swiftly, suddenly. By nature Bunty was an arrant little storyteller & it was only Judy's fearless honesty & strongly expressed scorn for equivocation that had kept him in the moderately truthful. But Judy was miles away & could not possibly wither him up with her look of utter contempt. He was at the nursery door now, turning the handy with [indecipherable] hands. "What a time you're been" said Meg from the tale, "Well ?" what did she say? ~~On the ra~~ Just at her elbow was the gay bonbonniere containing the walnuts. "She said alright" said Bunty gruffly. ~~but he had the grace~~ Meg counted out the eight chocolates out into his hand & went back to her book. And Bunty stuffed them into his mouth & went out again as quickly as he could.

The other note was equally unfortunate. Little Flossie went home, her thoughts intent upon a certain Grannie bonnet Nell had promised to make for her new doll. "Gween with pink stwings" she was saying softly to herself as she climbed the steps up to her own door. Alan was lying on the [indecipherable] the verandah, smoking his black pipe. "Gween what, - guinea pigs, - or ~~Crocodiles~~ Wallabies? He lauged.

"Clarice Maud's bonnet that Nell Woolcot is going to make me" she said.

"What have you got there" he said looking at the note in her hand

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"Oh, Meg a letter for you" the child said innocently & ~~handing~~ giving up poor Meg's little epistle up into the very hands of the Philistine.

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Chapter 8

The dusk had fallen very softly & tenderly over the garden & the paddocks & the river. There was just the faintest wind at the water edge but it seemed almost too tired & after the hot ~~summer~~ long day to breathe & make ripples. ~~Then~~ Very slowly the grey ~~soff~~ still light deepened & darkened & a white star or two came out & blinked up away in the very far heavens. Down behind the gum trees over the river there was a still whiter moon & ~~the~~ a stretch of water near was beginning to ~~shine~~ smile up to it. Meg hoped it would not climb past the tree tops before 8 o'clock or the long paddocks would be flooded with light & she would be seen.

At tea-time & up till ½ p 7 she was preoccupied & inclined to be irritable in her anxiety & she snubbed Bunty two or 3 times quite unkindly. That young gentleman had been hovering about her in the almost pitiable way since six o'clock. It was characteristic of this boy that when he had been tempted into departing from the paths of truth, he was absolutely wretched until he had confessed & rubbed his small unclean fists into his wet eyes until he was 'a sight to dream of, not to tell'. Pip said it was because he was a coward & had not the moral courage to go to sleep with a lie on his soul for fear he might wake up & see an angel with a [indecipherable] sword shaveling by his bedside. And I must sorrowfully acknowledge I ~~believe~~ this seemed a truer view of the case than believing they boy was really impressed with the heinousness of his offence. For the very next day if occasion sufficiently strong

offered he would fall again. And the very next night would creep up to somebody & whimper with his knuckles in his eyes that the had " t..t..told a s..s..story, boo hoo."

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By 7 o'clock he was miserably repentant. Several tears had tricked down his cheeks & mingled with the ink of the map he was engaged upon for Miss Marsden. He established himself at Meg's elbow & kept looking up into her face in a yearning love-&-forgive me kind of way that Meg found infinitely embarrassing. For she had begun to suspect from his strange conduct that he had in some way learned the contents of her note & was trying to discourage her from her enterprise. The more he gazed at her the redder & more uncomfortable she became, "You can have my new c..c..catapult" he whispered at last once giving her a tearful imploring look that she interpreted as an entreaty to stay safely at home. At last it was the clock had travelled up to eight o'clock & the children being engaged in a wordy warfare over the possession of a certain stray dog that had str come in-also to Missrule in the afternoon, she slipped out of the room unobserved. No one was in the hall & she picked up the becoming fleecy cloud she had hidden there twisted it round her head & crept out the side door. Down in the garden the ground was white with fallen rose leaves & the air full of their dying fragrance, a great magnolia a clump of pampas grass stood not tall & soft against the sky, some native trees left growing among the cultivated shrubs stretched silver white arms up to the moon & gave the little hurrying figure a ghostly kind of feeling. Out of the gate & into the first paddock where the rose scent did not come & only a pungent smell of wattle & dried grass was in the thin hushed air. More gum trees & more which ghostly arms, then a sharp movement near the fence, a thick sepulchral whisper & a stifled scream from Meg. "Here's the c...c...catapult, M..M..eg, ...t..take it". Bunty said his white & miserable, "You little stupid, - what do you mean coming there like this" Meg said

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Angry as soon as the cold feeling of fear was dispelled. "I only w..wanted to p..please you M..M..Meggie" the little boy said with a bitter sob in [indecipherable] voice. He had put both his arms round her waist & was burying his nose in her white muslin dress. She shook him off impatiently harshly. "Allright, - there, thanks" said "Now go home Bunty, I want to have a little quiet th walk in the moonlight by myself." He screwed his hands knuckles as far into his eyes as they would go, his mouth opened & his lower lip fell down, down "I t..t..old y..y..you a b..b..big st..st..story" he said wept rocking to & fro as he stood. "Did you, - oh all-right, - now go home" she said impatiently "you always are telling stories Bunty you know so I'm not surprised, - there, go along. "B..b..but I m..must tell you all about - about it" he said still engaged in driving his eyes into his head. "No you needn't I'll forgive you this time" she said magnanimously, "only don't do it again, now run away at once or you won't have your map done & Miss Marsden will punish you. His eyes returned to their proper position, likewise his hands. His heart was perfectly light again as he turned & went back to the house again, his sist to go, his sister stan watching him in a fever of impatience. When he had gone a few steps he came back. "D ye want the catapult very much" he said gently "you're only a girl so I don't spect it would be very much good to you, would it."

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"No I don't want it, here take it & hurry back, - think of your map" Meg returned in a very fever of impatience at his slowness.

And then Bunty, utterly happy once more turned & ran away gaily up to the house. And Meg ~~scrambled to~~ let down the slip rail, put in back in its place with trembling fingers & fled in wild haste through the two remaining paddocks. The ~~bush~~ wattle scrub at the end was very quiet, there was not a rustle, not a sound of a voice, not a ~~single~~ sound of ~~w~~ the affected laugh that generally told when Aldith was near. Meg stopped, breathless, & peered among the bushes, ~~ah~~, there was a tall figure leaning against the fence "Andrew" she said in a sharp whisper & forgetting in her anxiety that she never called him by his Christian name, - "Where are the others, - hasn't Aldith come. There was a smell of a cigar & looking closely she saw to her horror it was Alan. ~~& not Andrew.~~

~~Her he~~

"Oh" she said in an indescribable tone. Her heart gave one frightened, alarmed bound & then seemed, to stop bearing altogether. ~~She~~ She looked up at him as if almost pleading for mercy but his face wore the ~~same~~ contemptuous look she had grown to dread, & his lips were finely curled.

"I...I only came out for a little walk, by myself." ~~This~~ she said with miserable lameness never dreaming he knew of the appointment ~~& helping~~ ~~it~~ then in a tone of justification she added "its my father paddock too."

He leaned back against the fence & looked down at her.

~~I suppose~~ "The "Flossie's note should have been for Andrew I suppose," he said – still I am

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~~A Courtney~~ but it was given to me & seemed addressed to me so I opened it."

"You knew it was for Andrew" she said, ~~her eyes flashing fo~~ not looking at him however.

"So I presumed when I had read it, - " he returned slowly "but Andrew has not come back to-night yet so I came instead, - it's all the same as long as its a boy isn't it?" The girl made no reply, only put her hand up & drew the cloud more closely round her head.

His lips curled a little more. "And I know how to kiss too, - I assure you I am quite a good hand at it though you may not think so, - oh yes I know you said you did not want to be kissed but ~~I know~~ then girls always say that don't they, even when they expect it."

Still Meg did not speak & the calm merciless voice went on.

"I am afraid it is hardly dark enough for you is it, - the moon is very much in the way, - do you not think so. Still perhaps we can find a darker place further on & then I can kiss you without danger, - what is the matter, ~~you seem rather silent.~~ are you always as quiet as this?"

"Oh don't " said Meg "in a choking voice. The mocking tone died instantly out of his voice. "Miss Meg ~~what haven't you been behaving a little foolishly lately~~ you used to seem such a nice little girl" he said gently quietly "what have you let that horrid Macarley girl spoil you for, - for she is a horrid girl ~~you know~~, though you ~~are~~ may not think so, -

Meg did not speak or move & he went on with a gentle earnestness that she had not thought him capable of.

"I have watched her ~~quietly~~ on the boat spoiling you day after day & can't help thinking of the pity of it. I imagine

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now I should feel if my little sister Flossie ever ~~fell in love~~ [~~indecipherable~~] began flirt & make herself conspicuous & I wondered would you mind very much if I spoke to you about it, are you very angry with me, Miss Meg."

But Meg ~~had covered her face with her litt~~ ~~put~~ leaned her head down against the rough fence & was sobbing – little dry, ~~pathetic~~ [~~indecipherable~~] broken sobs that went to the boy's warm heart.

"I oughtn't to have spoken as I did at first, - I was a perfect brute " he said remorsefully – forgive me won't you, please little Miss Meg- I would rather cut my hand off than really hurt you."

This last was a bit consoling at any rate & Meg lifted her face half a second, white & pathetic in the moonlight, ~~her soft eye~~ & all wet with grievous tears.

"I...I ...oh indeed I have not been quite so horrid as you think" she said brokenly, "I didn't want to come this walk, - & oh indeed indeed indeed I wouldn't allow anyone to kiss me – oh please do believe me."

"I do, - I do indeed" he said eagerly "I only said it because – well because I am a great rough brute & don't know how to talk to a little tender girl, - dear little Miss Meg won't you shake hands with me & tell me you forgive my boorishness".

Meg extended a ~~little~~ small white hand & he shook it warmly. Then they walked up the paddocks together & he left her at a ~~g~~ broken gate leading into the garden.

"I'll never flirt again while I live" she said with great earnestness as he bade her good bye & he answered ~~heartily~~ encouragingly "No I am sure you won't, - leave it

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to girls like Aldith, won't you, - good bye little Miss Meg.

Chapter IX

Meg's troubles were ~~nearly~~ not quite over however even yet. When she got into the house Nellie met her in the hall & stared at her. "Where have you been" she said a slow wonder in her beautiful eyes.

"I've been hunting & hunting for you."

"What for" Meg said shortly.

"Oh Dr Gormiston & Mrs Gormiston & two Miss Gormistons are in the drawing room & I think they'll stay for every & ever. ~~The General is ill & Esther says she won't leave him for a second~~

"Well" said Meg again.

"And Father is as mad as he can be & having to keep them all amused himself. He's sung "My sweetheart when a boy" & "Mona" & he's told them all about his horses & now I spose he doesn't know what to do.

"Well, I can't help it" Meg said wearily & as if the subject had no interest for her.

"But you just have to" Nell ~~said~~ cried sharply "I've done my best, he sent out & said we girls were to go in & you weren't anywhere so there was only Baby & me."

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"And what did you do" Meg asked, curiously in spite of herself.

"Oh ~~I played~~ Baby talked to Miss Gormiston & they asked me to play" she returned so I played the Keel Row. Only I forgot till I had finished ~~there ought to have been~~ was 2 sharps" she added sadly. ~~And father said—~~"I'm afraid I played B flat all through. "And then Baby told Mrs Gormiston all about Judy leaving the General at the Barracks & about having to go to boarding school for it & the frog Bunty gave her & then Father told us to come to bed & said why ever didn't you come in.

"I'll go, I'll go" Meg said hastily 'he'll be fearfully cross to-morrow about it, oh & ~~go~~ Nell, - go & tell Martha to ~~send~~ in the wine & biscuits & things in half an hour."

She flung off her cloud, smoothed her ruffled hair & peeped in the glass to see if the cool night wind had taken away the traces of her recent tears. Then she went into

the drawing room where her father was looking quite heated & unhappy over his efforts to entertain 4 guests who were of the class popularly known as "heavy in hand."

Play something Meg" he said presently when the greetings were finished & a silence seemed settling down over them all again "or sing something, that will be better, - haven't

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you anything you can sing"

Now Meg on ordinary occasions had a ~~sweet~~ pleasant, fresh little voice of her own that could be listened to with a certain amount of pleasure but this evening she was tired & excited & unhappy. She sang "Within a Mile ~~of~~ Edinbro' town" & was flat all through. She knew her father was sitting on edge all the time & that her mistakes were grating on him & at the end of the song rather than turn around immediately & face them all she began to play Kowalski's March Hongroise. But the keys seemed to be rising up & hitting her hands & the piano was growing unsteady & rocking to & fro in an alarming manner, she made a horrible jangle as she clutched at the music holder for safety & the next minute swayed from the stool & fell in a dead faint right into Dr Gormiston's providentially ~~near~~ extended arms.

~~It was~~ The heavy heated atmosphere in the room, [~~indecipherable~~] ~~coming~~ that had proved too much for her in her unhinged state of mind. Her father looked quite alarmed, the girl's deadlike unconscious face struck him ~~with cold fear~~ with a strange feeling, not one of his children had ever done such a thing before & as she lay on the sofa with her little fair head drooping against the red frilled cushions she looked strangely like her mother whom he had lain out in the church yard 4 years ago & brought another to fill her place in the home. He wondered mechanically as he

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went for a glass of water if his little dead wife thought he had been ~~a bit~~ too quick in ~~installing~~ appointing Esther to her kingdom, & then he wondered if Meg was going to die too & if so would she be able to tell the same little wife that Esther received more tenderness at his hands than she had done.

His reverie was interrupted by the doctors sharp, surprised voice. He was talking to Esther who had been harshly summoned to the scene & who had helped to unfasten the pretty bodice. "Why the child is tight laced" he said "surely you must have noticed it madam,- that pressure if it has been constant has been enough to half kill her,- chut-chut, faint indeed, I wonder she has not taken fits or gone in a decline before this."

Then a cloud of trouble came over to Esther's beautiful face,- she had failed again in her duty; & her husband was regarding her almost gloomily from the sofa where the little figure lay in the crumpled muslin dress, & her heart told her these children were not receiving a mothers care at her hands.

Afterwards when Meg was safely in bed & the excitement all over she went up to her husband almost timidly

"I'm only 20 Jack,- don't be too hard on me" she said with a little sob in her voice "I can't be all to them that she was, can I."

He kissed the bright beautiful head against his shoulder & comforted her with loving words. But again & again that night there came to him Meg's white still ~~sweet~~ face as it lay on the scarlet cushion & he ~~fancied~~ knew the wind that stirred the ~~window~~ curtains at the window had been playing with the grass in the churchyard a minute or 2 since

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[There appears to be some text missing here.]

something was getting over the partition, crossing the floor, coming towards him. He gave a sob of terror & ~~crouched down among~~ flung himself flat on the ground ~~the straw~~ hiding his ~~face~~ little blanched face among the straw.

"Bunty" said the voice again & a light hand touched his arm.

~~He flung up his arms & gave a~~

"Help me, help me" he shrieked, ~~his throat swelling~~ Meg, - Oh Father, Esther! But the one hand was put ~~now~~ heartily over his mouth & another pulled him into a sitting position. He had shut his eyes very tightly so as not to see the ghostly visitant that he knew had come to ~~[indecipherable]~~ minister him for his sins upon ~~them~~ him. But something made him open them & then he felt he could never close them again for amazement.

For it was Judy's hand that was over his mouth & Judy's self that was standing beside him.

"My golly" he said in a tone of stupefaction, staring at her hard to make sure she was real flesh & blood, "how ever did you get here"

But Judy made no answer. She merely took the remaining apple & cake from his hand & sitting down devoured them in silence. "Haven't you got any more" she said anxiously.

Then he noticed what a tall gaunt strange-looking Judy it was. Her clothes were hanging round her almost in tatters, her boots were burst & white with dust, her brown face was thin & sharp looking & her hair was matted & rough.

"My golly" the little boy said again, his eyes threatening to start out of his head "~~what ever have~~

~~"My golly, Judy, what have you been doin'."~~

"I've run away Bunty" Judy said in a quavering voice "I've walked all the way from school, I wanted to see you all so badly."

"My jiggery!" Bunty said.

"I've thought it all out" Judy continued ~~sitting~~ pushing back her hair in a weary way, "I can't quite remember everything just now, I am so tired, but

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everything will be alright"

"But what'll he say"" Bunty said with frightened eyes as a vision of his father crossed his mind.

"He won't know of course" Judy returned in a matter-of-fact manner "I shall just live here in the loft for a time & you can all come to see me & bring me some food, & then presently I'll go back to school" She sank down ~~in a lift~~ among the straw & shut her eyes in an exhausted way for a minute or two & Bunty watched her half-fascinated.

"How far is it from your school" he said at last

"Seventy seven miles" Judy ~~answered~~ & shuddered a little, - "I got a lift in a luggage train from Lawson to Springwood, & a ride in a cart for a mile or two but I walked the rest."

"I've been a week coming" she added after a pause & shut her eyes again for quite a long time. Then a tear or two of weakness & self-pity trickled from beneath her black lashes & made a little mark down her cheeks. Bunty's throat swelled at the sight of them, he had never seen Judy cry as long as he could remember

He patted her thin hand, he rubbed his head against her shoulder & said never mind old girl in a thick voice. ~~Then she struggled to a sitting position again & laughed a little~~

~~And~~ But that ~~brought~~ forced the half a dozen great heavy drops hurrying down from beneath the closed lashes & the girl turned over & lay face downward to hide them. Then she struggled up to a sitting position & positively actually began to laugh "If the Miss Cooks Burtons could see me" she said, - "oh Bunty I've managed everything so beautifully, they think

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Suds-

"What's the difference between a sculptor & a barber

Some mathematical calculations appear and the words: Memo General's age.

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[There appear to be some pages missing here]

thick lumps & rolled it up with the remains of ~~bread & butter pudding cabinet~~ loquat pie tart. These parcels he disposed of down the loose front of his sailor coat, filling up his pockets with sultanas, citron peel, ~~cinnamon~~ currants & such dainties the store bottles held. And then he prepared to make his painful retreat. He climbed upon the shelf once more, put his head out of the window & gave a ~~soff~~ look of despair at the cactus.

And even as he knelt there sounded behind him the sharp click of a turning key. He looked wildly round & there was Martha in the doorway & to his utter horror she was talking to his father who was ~~still in the doorway~~ in the passage near her

"Rows Embrocation, - or ~~even~~ Arnica" The Capt. was saying, - it ~~mus~~ is probably in the pantry, my good girl, because it is the last place I should ~~not~~ expect it to be in, - I left it on my bedroom mantelpiece but somebody has seen fit to meddle with it, - why in the name of all that is mysterious you can't let things alone ~~is a mystery to me~~"

Martha I've never set eyes on the stuff,

"& for what should I be after moving it for, I don't mix the

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pastry with it to make it lightsome, leastways not ordinarily" Martha said tartly. She tossed her head & the action revealed the small kneeling terrified figure at the window. Now the door was only half open & her master was standing just beside it in the passage so she only had the benefit of the spectacle.

Twice she opened her mouth to speak but Bunty made such frantic imploring faces at her that she closed it again & ~~merely looked volumes of anger almo & looked helplessly undecidedly~~ & even ~~took a~~ began to examine the bottles on the shelf near the door to give the boy an opportunity of retreat. ~~He slipped But then a trifle~~ One minute & he would have been in the thick of the cactus that had quite lost its terrors. ~~For him.~~ But the fates were too strong for him. And all because Martha's Tomlinson's shoe was down at the heel. In turning round it twisted a little under her & in trying to recover her balance she put out one hand.

And in putting out one hand she knocked over a jug. And ~~That~~ the jug communicated its shock to a dish which toppled over & coolly pushed the [indecipherable] ~~open tin~~ basin of milk off the shelf onto the floor. Now

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I don't know if ever you have tried to clean a board floor after milk but I am sure you can imagine it would be a disagreeable task. Especially if you had scrubbed well only that ~~moment~~ morning. It was hardly to be wondered at therefore that Martha in her profound irritation at the disaster ~~should~~ turned angrily round & pointing to the figure now stuck in the window, demanded in an exasperated voice, ~~how~~ whether the blessed saints could stand that dratted boy any longer for she couldn't ~~any longer~~ so there.

The Captain took an angry step into the pantry & gave a roar of command for Bunty to come down. The boy dropped in an agony of dread & shrinking.

"Always his hands a pickin- & stealin' & 'is tongue a lyin'" Martha Tomlinson said ~~mopping up the milk to~~ gazing unkindly at the unhappy child. Two, three, four, five

angry cuts from the riding whip in the Capt's hands & Bunty had ducked under his arm & fled howling down the passage & out of the back door. Away across the paddocks he went, sobbing at every step, but hugely commending himself for bearing all this for someone else's sake. He could hardly have believed if any one had told him that he could

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have done anything so absolutely noble & the thought comforted him even while the cuts & scratches smarted. He tried to stifle his sobs as he reached the shed & even stuffed half a handful of currants in his mouth, toward that end. But it was a very tearful, scratched, miserable face that bobbed up the opening near Judy again. She did not move though her eyes were half open & he knelt down & shook her in ~~some~~ ~~alarm.~~

Here's some things Judy, ~~go on & eat them~~ ain't you goin' to eat them." She shook her head very slightly.

"Have some corned beef, or some currants,- There's some peel if you'd rather"

She shook her head again. "Do take them away" she said with a little moan.

~~His face~~ A look of blank disappointment stole over his small headed face.

"An I've ~~been~~ half killed myself to get them,- well you are a mean girl!" he said.

"Oh do go away" Judy moaned, moving her head restlessly from side to side, "oh ~~was there ever~~ how my feet ache- now it's my head & my side,-oh I don't know what it is on."

"I got hit here & here & here & never told on you" Bunty said indicating the places & wiping

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away tears of keen self pity with his coat sleeve, "& I'm scratched all over with that beastly old cactus."

"Do you suppose there are many miles more," Judy said in such a very quick way that all the words seemed to run into each other. "I've walked hundreds & hundreds & haven't got home yet. I suppose its because the world's round & I'll be walking in at the school gate again presently."

"Don't be an idjut" Bunty said gruffly. "You'll be sure & certain, Marian, never to breathe a word of it. I've trusted you & if you keep faith I can go home & come back & no-one will know. And lend me 2/- can you, I've not got much left. Bunty you selfish little pig you might get me some milk, I've been begging & begging of you for hours & my head is going to Catherine wheels for want of it."

"Have some corned beef, Judy dear, - oh Judy, don't be so silly & horrid after I nearly got killed for you" Bunty said ~~weeping silently un-~~ trying with trembling fingers to stuff a little piece into her mouth."

The little girl rolled over & began muttering again. "77 miles" she

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said, "& I walked eleven yesterday, that makes 1177, & six the day before because my foot had a blister that's, 1183. And if I walk 10 miles a day I shall get home in 1183 times ten, that's a thousand & - & - oh what is it, whatever is it, - Bunty, you horrid little pig can't you tell me what it is, my headache too much to work it a thousand & something days, that's a year, two years, - two years, 3 years before I get there - oh Pip, - Meg, three years, - oh Esther, ask him, ask him to let me come home, ~~Esther, Pip,~~ three years, years, years. The last word was almost shrieked 7 the child struggled to her feet & tried to walk. Bunty caught her arms & held her, - Let me go can't you" she said hoarsely "I shall never ~~can~~ get there at this rate. Three years & all those miles, she pushed ~~Bunty~~ him aside & tried to ~~run~~ walk on, but her legs tottered under her & she fell down in a little senseless heap.

"Meg," - I'll fetch Meg, - ~~oh Esther, Meg~~ said the little boy

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in a trembling alarmed voice & he slipped down the opening & ran & hastened up to the house.

Chapter XI

He burst into Meg's bedroom like a whirlwind. "She's in the old shed Meg, & I'm not sure but I think she's gone mad & I've had the awfulest beating & got nearly killed with the cactus for her and never told anything. She can't eat the corned beef either after all. She's run away & oh I'm sure she's mad."

Meg lifted a pale startled face from the pillows "Who on earth, - what -

"Judy" he said & burst into excited sobs "she's in the shed & I think she's mad."

Meg got slowly out of bed, huddled on some clothes, &, even then, utterly disbelieving the wild story, went downstairs with him ~~& out across~~

In the hall they met their father who was just going out. "Are you better?" he said to Meg, "you should have stayed in bed all day, - however perhaps the air will do you more

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good.

"Yes" she said mechanically "I am going out for the rest of the day, indeed I don't expect either Esther or myself will be back till tomorrow morning."

"Yes" repeated Meg.

"don't let the children blow the house up & take care of yourself, - oh & send Bunty to bed without any tea, he's had enough for one day I'm sure."

"Yes" said the girl again - only taking in the import of ~~the last~~ what the last sentence pledged her to when Bunty ~~mut~~ whispered a fierce "sneak" at her elbow. Then the dogcart rattled up & the Captain went away to their unspeakable relief.

"Now what is this mad story," she said turning to her small brother. "I suppose it is one of you untruths, you bad little boy."

"Come & see" Bunty returned & he led the way through the paddocks. Half way down, they

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met Pip & Nell returning earlier than expected from the fishing expedition. Nellie looked sad & was walking at a respectful distance behind her eldest brother.

"She's "You might as well take a phonograph with you as Nellie" he said ~~with~~ casting a look of withering scorn on that delinquent. "she talked the whole time & didn't give me a chance of a bite."

"Judy's home" said Bunty almost bursting with the importance of her knowledge. "No one's seen her but me, I've got nearly killed with climbing up cactuses & into windows & things & I've had thrashing for father & everything but I never told a word, did I Meg, - I've got her up in the shed here & I went & got corned beef & everything, - just you look at my legs."

He displayed his scars proudly but Meg hurried on & Pip & Nell followed in blank amazement. At the shed they stopped.

"It's a yarn of Bunty's" Pip said contemptuously, - "It isn't April the first yet, my son"

"Come & see" Bunty returned, swarming up. Pip followed & gave a low cry. Then Meg & Nell

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with difficulty scrambled up & the scene was complete.

The delirium had passed & Judy was lying with wide open eyes gazing ~~w~~ in a tired way at the rafters. She smiled ~~a-h~~ up at them as they gathered round her. "If

Mahomet won't come to the mountain" she said & then coughed for two or three minutes.

"what have you been doing, Ju, old girl" Pip said with an odd tremble in his voice. The sight of his favourite sister, thin, hollow, cheeked, exhausted was too much for his boyish manliness. A moisture came ~~up~~ into his eyes.

"How'd you come" Ju, he said, blinking it away. And the little girl ~~looked~~ gave her old bright look up at him. "Sure an I keapt no pony but shanks'es at school" she said "were you afther thinkin' I should charter a balloon."

~~And~~ she coughed again.

Meg dropped down on her knees & put her arms round her little thin sister "Judy" she cried "oh Judy, Judy my dear, my dear"

Judy ~~cried too, great~~ laughed for a little time & called her an old silly but she soon broke down & sobbed convulsively. "I'm so hungry" she

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said at last pitifully.

They all three glared up as though they would fetch the stores of Sydney to satisfy her. Then Meg sat down again & lifted the rough curly head into her ~~kn~~ lap. "You go Pip" she said. ~~& bring~~ & bring wine & a glass, & in the meat safe there's some roast chicken, I had it for my lunch & Martha said she would put the rest there till tea." and be quick, Pip"

"My oath" said Pip, to himself & he slipped down & flew across to the house.

"Upon my word" said Martha ~~Fennison~~ meeting him in the hall 5 minutes later, a cutglass decanter under his arm, a wine glass ~~in his~~ held in his teeth by the stem, a dish of cold chicken in his hands & bread & butter ~~at the~~ in a little stack beside the chicken

Upon my word! And what next might I ask."

Oh shut up & hang your grandmother" said Pip brushing past her & going off towards the shed. Meg had set Bunty to ~~find~~ fetch a ladder from the stableyard & fix it up at the opening, so the ascent was less difficult this time. And ~~he~~ Pip knelt down beside her & ~~fed her~~ little sister & fed her with little morsels of chicken & sips of wine, & stroked

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her wild hair & called her old girl fifty times & ~~each with a more loving tone~~ besought her to eat just a little more & a little more. And Judy ~~looking~~ seeing the look in the brown, moist eyes above her, ate ~~& ate~~ all he offered her, though the first mouthful ~~seem~~ nearly choked her; she would have eaten it had it been rhinoceros hide, seeing she loved this boy better than anything in the world. & that he was in such distress. She was better for it & sat up & talked quite naturally after a little time.

"You shouldn't have done it, you shouldn't really, you know old girl" he said uneasily, - "& what the governor will say to you, beats me."

He ~~needn't~~ won't know" she answered quickly

"I'd never forgive whoever told him. I can only stay for a week, I've arranged it all beautifully, & I shall live here in this loft, father never dreams of coming here so it will be quite safe, & you can all bring me food. And then after a week" - she sighed heavily "I must go back again."

Did you really walk all those miles just to see us" Pip said & again there was a strange note in his voice.

"I got a lift or two on the way" she said "but I walked nearly all of it, I've been coming for nearly a week.

"But Judy dearest, where did you sleep, what did you eat, - oh Judy how

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could you do it" Meg exclaimed in deep distress.

"I nearly forgot" Judy said closing her eyes again. I kept asking for food at little cottages & sometimes they asked me to sleep." I only slept outside two nights & I had my jacket then." Meg's face was pale with horror at ~~the~~ her sister's bold adventure. Surely ~~nobody~~ girl in the wide world but Judy Woolcot would have attempted such a harebrained prospect as walking all those miles with 3/6 in her pocket.

"How could you" was all she could find to say.

"I hadn't meant to walk all the way" Judy said with a faint smile, "I had 7/ in a ~~little~~ purse & I knew it would take me ~~all th~~ a long way in the train. But then I lost it after I had started & didn't believe in going back just for that, so of course I had to walk." Meg touched her cheek softly "It's no wonder you got so thin" she said, - "but "Won't the Miss Burton's be raising a hue & cry for you" Pip asked, "It's a wonder they've not written to the pater to say you had skedaddled"

"Oh Marian & I made that all safe" Judy ~~said~~ returned with a smile of recollective pleasure, Marian's my chum you see & does any mortal thing I tell her. And she lives at Katoomba.

"Well" said Meg mystified, as her sister paused

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"Well, you see a lot of the girls had measles & so they sent Marian home for fear she should get it. And Marian's Mother asked for me to go there too for a fortnight. And so Mrs Burton wrote & asked father could I & I wrote & asked ~~me~~ couldn't I come home instead for the time.

"He never told us" Meg said softly.

"No, I spose not. Well, he wrote back & said no to me & yes to her. So one day they put us in the train safely & we were to be met at Katoomba. And the thought jumped into my mind as we went along why ever shouldn't I come home. So I ~~made~~ told Marian I ~~was going home~~ & she could explain to her people I had gone home instead & that she was to be sure to make it seem all right so they wouldn't write to Miss Burton. And then the train stopped at Blackheath & I jumped straight out. And she went on to Katoomba & I came home. that's all. Only you can see as I'd lost my money there was nothing left for it but to walk."

Meg smoothed ~~her hair~~ the dusty, tangled confusion of her hair. "But you can't live out here for the week" she said in a troubled voice "you've got a horrid cough with sleeping outside & I'm sure you're ill" Judy started up, her eyes aflame.

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"If you do" she said "If you do I will run away this very night & walk to Melbourne or Jerusalem & never see any of you again. How can you Meg. After I've done all this just so he wouldn't know. Oh how can you." She was working herself up into a strong state of excitement.

"Why, I should be simply packed back again to-morrow, you know I would Meg. shouldn't I now, Pip. And get in a fearful row at school into the bargain. ~~Instead~~ My plan is beautifully simple. After I've had a week's fun here with you I shall just go back, - you can all lend me some money for the train. I shall just meet Marian at Katoomba on the 25th & we shall both go back to school together & no one will be a bit the wiser & My cough's nothing. You know I ~~always do make a~~ often do get coughs at home & they never hurt me. As long as you bring me plenty to eat & stay with me I'll be all right.

The rest & food & home faces had already done much for her, her face looked less pinched & ~~white~~ a little more wholesome colour was creeping slowly into her cheeks.

Meg had an uncomfortable sense of responsibility, & the feeling that she ought to tell some one was strong upon her but she was over-ruled

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by the others.

"You couldn't be ~~such a sneak~~ mean Meg"

Judy had said warmly when she had ~~said~~ begged to be allowed to tell Esther.

"Such a blab" Bunty had added.

"Such an awful sneak" Pip had said. So Meg ~~he was forced to~~ held her tongue but was exceedingly unhappy.

Chap XII

~~The Siege~~

~~Martha Tomlinson was in a state of irritation the whole~~

On the fourth day of Judy's residence in the loft Martha Tomlinson remarked to her fellow servant & sufferer Bridget ~~that it was her opinion that those blessed children were demented. That not being born an angel~~ them blessed children she believed were in a conspiracy to get her put "Over the River".

~~Now, Over the River~~

Bridget's ~~remarked~~ indigestion was impaired that morning & she merely remarked that she supposed the dear little things only felt a desire to see her in her proper place.

~~W~~ I should explain ~~to you~~ perhaps that "Over the River" meant Gladesville. Which is Sydney's Colney Hatch.

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Many things had led the unhappy Martha to a belief in this conspiracy. For instance, when she went to make Pip's ~~mad~~ bed as usual one morning all the bedclothes had gone. ~~Even the pillow was missing.~~ The white counterpane was spread smoothly over the mattress but there was absolutely no trace of the blankets, sheets & pillows. She hunted in every possible & impossible place, ~~failed in her endeavours to find if any of the children~~ questioned the children & even applied to Esther but the missing things could not be found. ~~I sh~~

~~I shouldn't wonder~~

"There's a man in corduroy trousers hanging round here every night, (I shouldn't wonder if he had something to do with it)" (Pip said gloomily regarding his stripped bed.)

~~But Martha-~~ This suggestion was distinctly unkind seeing the man in corduroy trousers was Martha's most ardent & favoured admirer.

The next day the washing basin in Meg's room went & after that a chair from the nursery & a strip of carpet from the top landing, the rug from the small [indiscipherable], not to mention such small things as the teapot, the spirit lamp, a cups & plates, half a ham & a whole baking of gingerbread nuts. The losses, preyed upon her for the things seemed to disappear while the children were in bed & ~~they all~~ she could get no ~~tangible~~ proof of their guilt nor even find any motive for them abstracting such things. And ~~Pip always~~ after the disappearance of each fresh article Pip used to

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~~meaningly that he wasn't surprised~~ as if quite without an object if the Corduroy trousered gentleman had been ~~about lately~~ there the night before. And as it ~~had~~ always happened that he had, Martha Tomlinson could do nothing but cast a wrathful glance at him & flounce from the room. ~~Pip He had even said he suggested mildly that it would be more comfortable for all parties if when that when the gentleman's~~

furnishing was complete they should make a little list of the things he hadn't taken & make a present of them.

~~He had said once, with a sigh when the chess table vanished was spirited away, that's taking all things together~~

One night the little chess table from the nursery was spirited away. Pip fell upon Martha's neck the next morning early as she was sweeping the carpet & affected to be dissolved in tears. "We never prize the violet" he said in broken tones, "ah Martha Martha, we never felt what a treasure we had in you till now & when your days with us are numbered"

"Get along with you," she said hitting out at him with the broom handle "And I ain't a goin' to leave so don't you think it. You'd h'ave it your own way then too much. No, you don't get shunt of Martha Tomlinson just yet young man."

"But won't he'll be wanting you Martha" he suggested gently: "his furnishing must be nearly finished now. He's not taken ~~get~~ a saucepan

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yet not a flat-iron I know but theres everything else Martha & I don't mind telling you in confidence ~~my fath~~ I'm thinking of giving you a flat iron myself as a wedding present, so you needn't wait till he comes for that."

"Get out with you" said Martha again thrusting the broom head right into his face & nearly choking him with dust. "It's a limb of the old gentleman himself you are."

Away in the loft things were getting very comfortable. A couple of rugs hung on the walls kept out the draught, Judy's bed soft & warm was in a corner, she had a chair to sit in, a table to eat at, even a basin in which to perform ablutions in. And she had company all day & ~~often~~ nearly always all night. ~~Twice~~ Once Meg had stolen away after locking her bedroom door, & had shared the ~~mattress~~ bed in the loft, Once Nellie had gone, & the other night Pip had taken a couple of blankets & made himself a shakedown among the straw. They used to ~~creep up to her~~ pay her visits all day long, creeping up the ~~pole~~ creaking ladder one after the other whenever they could get away unnoticed. Miss – the governess ~~was ill of~~ had had as it happened a fortnights holiday to nurse a sick mother so the girls & Bunty had ~~great fre~~ little difficulty in spending the demands on their time there. Pip used to go late & come back (12)

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early, cajoling notes of excuse out of Esther & even playing the truant once & taken a caning for it afterward without a greatest sangefroid a murmer quite good humouredly.

Judy looked still pale & tired looking ~~but~~ & her cough was rather troublesome but she was fast getting her high spirits back & was enjoying her adventure immensely.

The only ~~thin~~ drawback was the ~~space of the loft~~ was limited decidedly cribbed & confined.

You will have to ~~make~~ arrange things so that I can go for a run" she said one morning in a determined manner, "~~I declare~~ "My legs are ~~shrivelling~~ growing shorter I am sure with not exercising them, I shall have forgotten how to walk by the end of the week"

Pip didn't think it could be done. Meg besought her to run no risks but Bunty & Nell were eager for it.

"Meg could ~~I~~ talk to father" Bunty said & Pip could ~~get Esther into the dining~~ keep teaching the General till Esther wouldn't be frightened to leave the room, & have then me & Judy would ~~slip~~ nick down & have a run & get back before you let them go."

Judy shook her head. "That would be awfully stale" she said. "If I go I sahll stay down some time. Why shouldn't we have a picnic down at the River."

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"Oh yes, let's" said Bunty cried with sparkling eyes.

"I am sure we could manage it especially as its Saturday & Pip's-at-home hasn't got to go to school" Judy continued, thinking it rapidly out. Two of you could go & get some food, tell Martha you are all going for a picnic, she'll be glad enough to get rid of you, then you go on, two others can ~~keep the~~ watch if coast's clear while I get down & across the paddocks, & once we're at the corner of the road we're safe."

It seemed feasible enough & in a very short time the preparations were all made & Baby, Nellie & Meg had started off with the first baskets. Pip was ~~keeping~~ mounting guard at the shed & had undertaken to get Judy safely away & Bunty had been stationed on the back verandah to keep care & whistle three times if there was any danger.

He was to wait for a quarter of an hour by the kitchen clock & then ~~if~~ bring the big billy & a bread loaf & join the others at the corner. It was slow work waiting & he stood ~~like~~ on one leg like a meditative fowl & reviewed the events of the last few exciting days He had a depressed feeling ~~but~~ at his heart but why he could hardly tell. Perhaps it was the ~~still-un~~ lie he had told his father & which was still unconfessed because the horse was seriously lame & his courage failed

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every time he thought of t ~~his-e fath~~ sting of his ~~father's~~ that riding whip. Perhaps it was ~~the~~ reaction after the excitement, Or ~~a-sense~~ it may have been ~~the-of-she~~ a rankling feeling of ~~the~~ injustice at the small glory his brave deeds on Judy's behalf had evoked with the others. They did not seem to attach any importance to them, ~~to appreciate him at at all though he was always~~ & indeed laughed every time he alluded to them or drew public attention to his cars. Two or three of the scratches on his legs were really bad ones, & while he was standing he turned down his stockings & gazed at them with pitying eyes & something like a sob in his throat,

"Nobody cares" he muttered & ~~a-tear~~ one of his ever ready tears fell splashing down on to one extended bare leg, "Judy likes Pip best & he never climbed the cactus.

Meg thinks I tell stories & Nellie says I'm a greedy pig, - nobody cares"

Another great fat tear gathered & fell.

~~"Are you"~~ "Have you take root there" ~~asked his~~ a voice asked. His father, smoking near the long open window, had been watching him & marvelling at his rare & exceeding quietness.

Bunty started guiltily & pulled up his stockings. "I'm not doing nothing" he said

aggrievedly after a minute's pause, "Nothing at all, I'm goin to a picnic

"Ah - indeed, - ~~well only thinking about well suppose you do something~~" the Captain ~~continued~~ said the Capt, -

~~"I wasn't do~~ Bunty turned a little pale but remarked again he wasn't

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doing nothing.

The Captain felt in a lazy, teasing mood & his little fat, dirty son ~~was the~~ looked comic was the only subject near.

"Suppose you come here & confess every bit of mischief you've done this week" he said gravely,

"I've the whole morning to spare & it's time I saw to your morals a little."

Bunty approached the arm of the chair indicated but went whiter than ever.

"Ah, now we're comfortable, - well there was stealing from the~~m~~ pantry on Tuesday, that's one," he said encouragingly, - now then.

"I n-never did n-nothing else" Bunty ~~stammered~~. gasped, he felt certain it was all ~~up~~ over with him & the cricket ball episode was discovered. He even looked nervously round to see if the riding whip was near. Yes, there was Esther's silver topped one

flung carelessly on a chair. He ~~even~~ found time to wish ~~Esther~~ fervently Esther was a tidy woman.

"Nothing at all, Bunty, on your word?" said his father in an impressive tone.

"I ~~n-n-never~~ was p-playing m-m-marbles. he said in a shaking voice "how c-could I have sh-shot anything at y-y-your horse."

"Horse – ah! said his father & a light broke upon him & his face grew stern. "What did you throw at Mazeppa to lame him," – answer me at once. X

~~"I n-n-n ever threw anything" Bunty~~

Bunty gave a shuddering glance at the whip.

"N-N-Nothin'" he answered, "Nothin' at all,

~~True'n honour~~ My c-c-cricket b-b-all was up in the st-st-stables, I was only

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p-p-playin' marbles."

The Captain gave him a little shake. "It was a cricket ball

~~"Speak the truth or I'll thrash you within an inch of your life.~~

"Did you throw lame the cricket ball at Mazeppa with a cricket ball" he said sternly.

"N-no I n-never, I ~~N-never~~ Bunty said ~~whispered~~ white to the lips "it just rolled out of my p-p-pocket M-M-Mazeppa was passing & h-h-hit his l-leg on it"

Speak the truth or I'll thrash you within an inch of your life" the Captain said standing up & ~~picking up~~ seizing Esther's whip, "Now then sir, - was it you who lamed Mazeppa"

"Yes" said Bunty bursting into a roar of tears crying & ~~shrinking~~ madly dodging the whip. "But I wasn't one, I wasn't Then as the strokes descended on his unhappy shoulders he filled the air with his familiar wail of I wasn't me, I wasn't my fault.

"You contemptible young cur" said his father pausing a moment when his arm ached with wielding the whip, - "lying to me as you did, ~~By heavens~~ I'll thrash this mean spirit ~~out of you~~ of lying & cowardice out of you or kill you in the attempt.

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Swish, swish, swish. "What sort of a man do you think you'll make." Swish, swish, telling a lies just to save your wretched skin. Swish swish, swish swish. "~~I'm dyin'—oh I'm dyin'—I know!~~" "You've killed me, oh you've killed me, I know you have" yelled the miserable child squirming all over the floor. "I wasn't me, I wasn't my fault, hit the others some."

Swish, swish swish. "Do you think the others would lie so contemptibly, - Philip never lied to me, Judy would cut her tongue out first. Swish, swish swish. Going to a picnic are you. You can picnic in your bedroom till to-morrow's breakfast. Swish, swish, - pah get away will you." Human endurance could go no further. The final swish had been actual agony to his smarting, quivering b shoulders & back, he ~~gave one~~ thought of the ~~gay, heedless to the others, now the others heedless & gay~~ the others happy & heedless were out in the sunshine, trudging merrily off to the river without of thought of what he was ~~doing~~ bearing & his very heart seemed to burst ~~with~~ in the hugeness of ~~his~~ his bitterness & despair.

~~Yah, boo-hoo~~ "Judy's home" he ~~seere~~ said ~~sobbed~~ in a choking, ~~hurrying~~ passionate voice. "She lives in a shed shed in the cow paddock. Boo hoo hoo, they're keepin' it secret from you. Boo

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Hoo, hoo, she's gone to the picnic & she's run away from school.

Chap X111

The Captain was walking slowly across the paddocks with the ~~his white~~ cabbage tree hat he kept for the garden pushed back from his brow. He was rather heated after his

tussle with his second son and there was a thoughtful light in his eyes. He ~~could~~ ~~hardly~~ did not believe the truth of ~~what~~ Bunty's final ~~accusation~~ remark but still he considered there was sufficient ~~truth in~~ probability in it ~~not~~ to make a visit to the shed not altogether superfluous. Not that he expected to find his errant daughter there for had not Bunty said there was a picnic down at the River but he thought there might be some trace or other. The door of the shed swung back on its crazy hinges & the sunlight streamed in & made a ~~dusty~~ bar of glorified dust across the place. There was no sign of habitation here unless a hair ribbon of Meg's & some orange peel might be considered as such. He saw the shaky ~~old~~ home-made ladder resting against the hole in the ceiling & thought he had more respect for his neck than his children had for theirs, he ventured his safety upon it. It creaked ominously as he reached the top step & crawled through into the loft. There was a ham-bone, a box of dominoes, ~~some knuckle-bon~~ & a burst pillow this side of the partition, nothing else, so he walked across & looked over.

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"Very cosy" he murmured "I shouldn't mind camping here myself for a little time" & it even came into his head to do & be there as a "surprise Party" when Judy returned. But he dismissed the idea as hardly compatible with dignity. ~~His cigar went out as he~~ remembered hearing rumours of missing furniture in the house & almost a smile came into his eyes as he saw the little old table with the spirit lamp & tea-pot set thereon, the bed clothing & the washing basin. But a stern look succeeded it. Were seventy seven miles not sufficient obstacle to Judy's mischievous plans. How had she dared thus to defy him ~~& set him at naught~~, a child of 13 & he her father. His lips compressed themselves ominously & he went down again & strode heavily back to the house. "Esther" he called in a vibrating voice at the foot of the stairs & "Coming, dear, - half a minute" floated down in response. Half a minute passed ~~seventy~~ 10 times & then she came, the ~~bright faced~~ beautiful young mother with her laughing faced wee son in her arms. Her eyes looked so tender & soft & loving that he turned away

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impatiently, he knew quite well how it would be, she would beg ~~for~~ ~~for~~ & entreat him to forgive his little daughter when she heard, & ~~of~~ when she looked as bright & beautiful as she did just how he could refuse her nothing. He stood in profound meditation for ~~one~~ a minute or two.

"What is it you want, John" she said "oh & what do you think, I have just found another tooth, a double one, come & look.

He came half unwillingly & stuck his little finger into his infant son's mouth. Esther guided it till it felt a tiny hard substance. "The ~~fifth~~ 3rd" she said proudly, - aren't you pleased."

"Hum" he said. Then he meditated a little longer & after a minute or two rubbed his hands as if he was quite pleased with himself.

Put on your hat Esther & the General's" he sat patting that young gentleman's head quite affectionately. "Let us go down to the River for a stroll, the children are down there picnicking ~~at the old place~~ so we can be sure of some tea."

"Why - yes, that will be very nice," she said, "won't it Bababsie, won't it sweet son. She called to Martha who was dusting the drawing room in ~~her~~ a cheerfully blend way peculiarly hers. "The general's hat, please Martha, the white sun hat with strings, it's on my bed I think or a

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Chair or somewhere, oh & bring down my large one with poppies in ~~tee~~ please as well please.

Martha departed & returned with the headgear, ~~which~~ after some search. And Esther tied the white sun hat over her own ~~head~~ & curly crinkly hair & made the General ~~crow leap~~ with laughing from his seat on the hall table. And then she popped it on the Captain's head & put the Cabbage tree on her son's & occupied several minutes thus in pretty play. Finally they were ready & moved down the hall.

"Master Bunty is locked in his room, on no account open the door Martha" was the Capt's last command.

"Oh Jack" Esther said reproachfully.

"Oblige me by not interfering" he said ~~stiffly~~. "allow me a little liberty with my own children Esther. He is an untruthful little ~~scamp~~ vagabond, I am ashamed to own him for my son."

And Esther reflecting on the many shiftinesses of her stepson & was able to consoled herself with the ~~knowledge that~~ hope that it would do him good.

They went a short cut through the bush to avoid the public road & the ~~favoured~~ blue sun kissed ~~river~~ laughing river stretched before them. "There they are" Esther cried "in the old place as usual, look at the fire, little sweet son, ~~puff puff~~ see the smoke, Boy bonny, - ~~four~~ five

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of them, why who have they got with them" she said in surprise as they drew nearer the ~~chattering~~ group on the grass.

Before they were close enough to recognise faces the group suddenly seemed to break up & fall apart. One of the members turned sharp round & fled away across the grass, plunging into the thick bracken & bush & disappearing from sight in less time than it takes to tell.

"Who ever had you with you" Esther said when they reached the children.

~~Pip~~ There was a half second's silence, then Pip threw some sticks on the fire & said coolly "Oh Only a friend of Meg's, - a kid frightened kind of kid who ~~I believe has quite~~ has quite a dread of ~~the mili soldiers~~ the pater. I believe she imagines soldiers go round with their swords sharpened ready for use." He laughed lightly, Nell ~~gave~~ joined in in a little hysterical way & Baby began to cry. Meg, white as death, picked her up & hurriedly began telling her the story of the 3 Bears for comfort.

~~But~~ Esther looked a little puzzled but of course never dreamt of connecting the flying figure with Judy.

And the Captain seemed delightfully blind & unsuspecting. He lay down on the grass, & he let the General swarm all over him, he made jokes with Esther

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& he told several stories of his young days & never even seemed to remark that his audience seemed ~~nervous &~~ inattentive & constrained.

"Haven't you made some tea" Esther said at last, "~~we made sure you would have~~ we love billy tea & thought you would be sure to have some."

"Bunty hasn't ~~to have brought the billy~~ come, he was to have brought the billy" Pip said half sulkily. He had suspicions that there was something behind this great affability of his father, ~~could had have found out anything~~ & he objected to being played with.

"Ah" the Capt said gravely "~~Put not your trust in billies~~, that is unfortunate, When I came away Bunty did not seem very well & was thinking of spending the rest of the day in his bedroom."

Pip made up the fire in a dogged way & Meg flashed a frightened glance at her father who smiled affectionately back at her.

After an hour of this strained intercourse the Captain proposed a return home: "It is growing a little chill" he said "I should be grieved for the General's new-born tooth to

start its life by aching, - let us go home & make shift with tea-pot tea. So they ~~went~~ gathered up the

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baskets & made themselves into a procession. He insisted on Pip & Meg walking with him & he sent Baby & Nell on in front one on either side of Esther who was alternately leading & carrying the General. ~~And when they got home~~ This arrangement as indeed Pip shrewdly suspected was to prevent the possibility of any intercourse or formation of new plans.

And when they got home he invited them all to come into his ~~smoking room study~~ smoking room, a little slit of a ~~room~~ place off the dining room. Esther took the Gen. upstairs but the others followed him [indecipherable].

"Sit down, Pip my boy" he said genially. "Come Meg, make yourself at home, take a seat in that arm chair. Nellie & Baby can occupy the lounge."

They all sat down ~~helpless~~ ~~where he told them~~ & gazed helplessly where he told them ~~but~~ & watched his face anxiously.

He selected a pipe from the row over the mantelpiece, fitted a new mouthpiece to it & carefully filled it.

"As you are all ~~here~~ in possession of my room" he said in an urbane voice "I can hardly smoke here, ~~can~~, I am afraid. I will come & talk to you again later on ~~presently~~. ~~At~~ I am going to have a pipe first ~~outside~~, in the old loft in the cow paddock. Keep out of mischief

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till I get back." He ~~lit his pipe~~ struck a match, lighted his tobacco & without one glance at the silent children left the room, locking the door behind him.

Chapter XIV

Once more ~~the Captain~~ he crossed the paddocks & once more pushed open the creaking door. The orange peel lay just where he had seen it before only it was a little drier & more dead. The hair-ribbon lay in exactly the same knot. The ladder creaked in just the same place ~~but~~ & again ~~only~~ threatened to break his neck when he reached the ~~loft~~ top ~~safely~~. The dominoes were there still, the ham-bone, ~~black~~ ~~now with ants~~ & the pillow, occupied the same places, the only difference was the former was black now with ants, & a wind had been ~~at~~ playing with the pillow & carried the feathers in all directions. He crossed the floor, not softly but just with his usual measured military step, nothing moved. He reached the partition & looked over. Judy lay across the improvised bed, sleeping a sleep of utter exhaustion after her ~~run~~ rapid

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flight from the river. She had a frock of Meg's on that made her look surprisingly long & thin, he was astonished to think she had grown so much. ~~He noticed the~~

"There will be no end to my trouble with her as she grows older" he said half aloud, & feeling extremely sorry for himself for being her father.

Then a great anger & irritation rose within him as he watched her sleeping so quietly there. Was ~~there to be no~~ she ~~never to have peace~~ always to be a disturber of his peace, was she always to thwart him like this.

"Judy" he said in a loud tone.

The closed eyelids flew open, the mist of sleep & forgetfulness cleared from the dark eyes & she sprang up a look of absolute horror on her face.

"What are you going here may I ask" he said very coldly.

The scarlet colour flooded her cheeks, her very brow & then dropped down again leaving her white to the lips, but she made no answer.

"You have run away from school I suppose" he continued in the same inflexible unemotional voice.

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- have you anything to say.

Judy did not speak or move, she only watched his face with parted lips.

"Have you anything to say for yourself, Helen" he repeated.

"No father" she said in a dry perfectly unemotional voice & dropping her eyes as far as she could. Her face took a hard, worn, strained look that might have touched him at another time but he was too bitterly angry with to notice.

"No excuse or reason at all?"

"No father."

He moved toward the opening. "A train goes in an hour & a half, you will come straight back with me this moment" he said in an even voice. "I shall take precautions to have you watched at school since you cannot be trusted. You will not return home for the Xmas holidays, - & probably not for those of the following June," besides Judy. It was as bad as a sentence of death. The room swam before the girl's eyes, there was a singing & rushing in her ears.

"Come at once" the Captain said.

Judy gave a little caught breath

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it ticked her throat & she began to cough.

Such terrible coughing, a paroxysm that shook her thin frame & made her gasp for breath. It lasted two or three minutes, though when she put her handkerchief to her mouth to try to stop it.

He watched her in a kind of unpleasant fascination.

She was horribly very pale when it ceased & he noticed the hollows in her cheeks for the first time.

"You had better come to the house first" he said, less harshly "& see if Esther has any cough stuff. Then in his turn he caught his breath & grew pale under his bronze. For the handkerchief that the child had taken from her lips had scarlet horrible spots staining its snow whiteness.

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Chapter X1V

In which punishment is evaded

So after all there was no dog cart for Judy, no mountain train, no ignominious return to the midst of her school fellows, no vista of weary months unmarked by holidays. Instead there was a warm soft bed, & delicate foods for her, & loving voices & the doctor every day ceaseless attention.

For the violent exertion, the scanty food & out the 2 nights in the open air had brought the girl to indeed a perilous pass. One lung was badly inflamed the doctor said, though the blood had come from a diseased tissue of the chest (?) & it was a marvel mystery to him he said how she had kept up so long; an ordinary girl would have given in long ago it was & taken to her bed long before. it was just the But then he was not acquainted with indomitable spirit & pluck that were Judy's characteristics that had kept her up so long.

"Didn't you have any pain" The man of stethoscope & he said, marvelling at her condition asked, marvelling again quite taken aback to find such spirits & so serious a condition together.

"Hm, sometimes I think in my side sometimes" she answered carelessly. "How long will it be before I can get up, doctor?"

She used to ask the latter question

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of him every morning though if the truth be known she felt secretly more than a little diffident at the idea of standing up again.

There was a languor & weariness in her limbs that made her doubtful if she could run about very much slower mode of progression she despised besides this there was the sharp gnawing pain under her arms & the cough was agony while it lasted.

Still she ~~used to enjoy herself more than a little~~ was not ill enough to lose interest in all that was going on and used to insist upon the others telling her everything that happened outside, - who made the biggest score at cricket, what flowers were out in her own straggling patch of garden, how many eggs the fowls laid a day, how the guinea pigs & canaries were progressing & what was the very latest thing in clothes or boots the new retriever puppy had devoured.

And ~~they~~ Bunty used to bring the various pets one after the other & let them run loose on ~~Judy's~~ the counterpane, & Pip ~~would~~ did most of his carpentering on a little table near her so she could see ~~all he did~~ each fresh stage.

And Meg who had almost severed

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her connection with Aldith ~~used~~ devoted herself to her sister & waited on her hand & foot; ~~she used to go in the kitchen every morning & burn her pretty face scarlet in the manufacture of some date creams or fresh dainty Turkish delights to tempt the little girl's capricious appetite;~~ she made her all kinds of little presents, ~~such as a boot bag, brush & comb bag with compartments, a brush & comb bag with the monogram J.W. worked in pink silk, a little work basket with needle book, pincushion & all complete.~~ Judy feared she should be compelled to betake herself to tidy habits on her recovery.

Her pleasure in the little gifts started a spirit of competition among the others. For one whole day Pip was invisible, but in the evening he turned up & walked to the bedside ~~with a pleased warm~~ proud face. He had ~~actually~~ constructed a little set of drawers, three of which actually opened under skilful coaxing. "It's not for doll clothes" he said after she had exhausted all the expressions of gratitude in common use "Because I know you hate them, but you can keep all your little things in them you see, hair strings & thimbles ~~& brooches~~ & things."

There was a sound of dragging outside the door & presently Bunty came in backwards lugging a great

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~~box~~ a strange thing. It seemed to be five or six heavy pieces of board nailed together haphazard. "It's a chair" he explained, wiping the perspiration from his brow, "oh, I'm going to put some canvas across it of course so you won't fall through, but I thought I'd show it you first.

Judy's eyes smiled but she thanked him warmly. "I wasn't goin' to make any stupid thing like Pip did" the small youth continued, looking deprecatingly at the little drawers, "This is really useful you see, when you get up you can sit in it Judy by the fire & read or sew or something, - you like it better 'n' Pip's, don't you."

Judy temporized skilfully & averted offence to either by asking them to put the presents with all the others near the head of the bed.

"What a lot of things you'll have to take back to school Ju" Nell said as she added her contribution in shape of a pair of crochet cuffs & a doll's ~~woolen~~ jacket.

But Judy only flashed her a reproachful glance & turned her face to the wall for the rest of the evening.

That was what had been hanging over her so heavily all this long fortnight in bed, the thought of

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school in the future.

"What's going to happen to me when I get better Esther" she asked next morning in a depressed way when her step mother ~~was~~ came to see her.

"Is he saving up a lot of beatings for me & shall I have to go back the first week."

Esther reassured her. "You won't go back, ~~at any rate~~ this quarter at all, very likely not next either Judy dear, he says you shall go away for a time with some of the others for change till you get quite strong, & between you & me, I think it's very unlikely you will go back ever again."

With this dread removed Judy mended more rapidly, surprising even the doctor by her powers of recuperation.

~~She had one rather bad relapse however & a good deal of harm was done thereby.~~

~~She One day afternoon she had been allowed to get up for a few hours with the strict injunction that she was to keep very quiet & not exert herself in any way.~~

In a ~~fortnight~~ 3 weeks she was about the house again, thin & ~~large~~ great eyed but full of nonsense &

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even mischief ~~again~~ once more. The doctor's visits ceased, he said she had made an good ~~excellent~~ recovery & ~~though they must always be careful of coughs & colds for her there was not much fear of any~~ so far but should have change of air & surroundings & ~~ge~~ be taken a long way from the sea air. "Let her run wild ~~again~~ for some months Woolcot" he said at his last visit "it will take time to ~~make~~ quite shake off all this & get her strength & flesh back again." ~~but I should tell you privately that the mischief already done might be radical under unhealthy~~

"Certainly, certainly, she shall go at once" the Captain said. He could not ~~shake off~~ forget the shock he had received in the old loft 5 or six ~~or 7~~ weeks ago & would have agreed if ~~she~~ he had been bidden to take her for a sojourn in the Sahara. The doctor had told him the mischief done to her lungs was serious "I won't say she will ultimately die of consumption" he had said "but there is always a danger of that vile disease in these nasty cases. And little Miss Judy is such a ~~feverish~~ wild, unquiet ~~ii~~ subject. She seems to be always in a perfect fever of living & to possess a capacity for joy or unhappiness quite unknown to slower natures. Take care of her Woolcot, & she'll make a fine woman some

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day, - ay, a grand woman."

The Captain smoked four big cigars in the solitude of his study before he could decide how he could best "Take care of her." ~~He thought &~~ At first he thought he would send her with Meg & ~~Judy will~~ & the governess to the mts for a time but then there was the difficulty about lessons for the other three. He might ~~engage~~ send them to school or engage another governess certainly but then again there was expense to be considered. ~~The g~~ It was out of the question for the girls to go alone for Meg had shown herself nothing but a silly little goose in spite of her 16 years, & Judy needed attention. Then he remembered Esther too was looking unwell, ~~first the General's~~ the nursing & the General together had quite worn her down & she looked ~~quite~~ a shadow of her bright beautiful self. He really ought to send her ~~too~~ as well, & the child of course. And again the expenses & And ~~the~~ again the other children. He remembered the Christmas holidays were ~~almost due~~ not very far away, - what would become of the house with Pip & Bunty & the two youngest girls running wild ~~with~~ & no one in authority.

He sighed heavily & ~~knocked~~ shook the ash from his fourth cigar upon the carpet.

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Then the postman came along the drive & past the window. He looked ~~gave up~~ ~~The Capt.~~ with a broad smile & touched his helmet in a pleased way, - it almost seemed as if he knew ~~by the touch~~ that of one of the letters ~~that~~ he held the solution of the problem that was making the Capt's brow all criss-crossed with frowning lines. A fifth cigar was being ~~extracted~~ taken from the case, a ~~fresh line~~ wrinkle was deepening just over the left eyebrow, a twinge of something very like gout was ~~extracting~~ calling forth a word or two of "foreign language" when Esther came in with a smile on her lips & an open letter in her hand.

"From Mother" she said, "~~Boelagabilli~~ Yarrahappini's a wilderness it seems, & she wants me to go up & take the General with me for a few weeks. — just think Jack I haven't seen the old place since we were married & the dear old people sin

"Ah" he said. It would certainly solve one of the difficulties.

"Oh & Judy too."

"Ah-h-h" he said. Two of the lines smoothed themselves carefully from his brow

"And Meg, because she is looking pale."

The Capt. placed the cigar back in the case. He forgot there was such a thing as gout.

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"The invitation could not have been more opportune" he said "accept by all means Esther, - "nothing could have been better, & it is an exceedingly healthy climate. The other children can - -

"Oh, Father expressly stipulates for Pip as well."

"Upon my word your parents ~~are most~~ have a large enough fund of philanthropy, - anyone else included in the invitation?

~~"Do you think so? Well Mother says~~

"Only Nell & Baby & Bunty ~~must would feel left out if she didn't ask them, so she hopes you will allow them to come as well~~ & oh & Mother ~~hopes~~ says if you can run up ~~at the end from Fri~~ any time for a few days you know without her telling you how pleased she will be to see you."

~~"This is The hospitality The far famed hospitality~~

"The hospitality of squatters is world-famed but these this breaks all previous records Esther." The Captain got up & stretched himself with the air of a man released from a nightmare

"Accept by all means, everyone of you, on their own heads be the results but I'm afraid ~~Boelagabilli~~ Yarrahappini will be a sadder & a wiser place

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Before the month is over."

But ~~he never dreamt~~ just how much sadder or how much wiser he never dreamt.

Chapter XV

They filled a whole compartment ~~of course~~ at least. There was one seat ~~or two~~ vacant ~~I believe~~ but people seemed shy of taking it after a rapid survey of them all. The whole seven of them & only Esther as bodyguard, - Esther in a pink blouse & sailor hat with a face as bright & mischievous as Pip's own!

The Capt had come to see them off with Pat to look after the luggage. He had brought the tickets, 2 whole ones for Esther & Meg, & 4 halves for the ~~Gen~~ others. ~~The General & Baby were~~ Baby was not provided with a ticket even a half much to her private indignation, - it was an insult to her four years & a $\frac{3}{4}$ half she considered to go free like the General. But the cost of those scraps of pasteboard had made the Capt look unhappy, - ~~then~~ he only received eighteenpence change out of the £10 he had tendered for ~~Boelagabilli~~ Yarrahappini was on the borders of the Never-Never Land.

He spent the ~~change~~ eighteenpence on illustrated papers, - scraps, Ally

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Sloper, Comic Cubs, Funny Folks & such, evidently having no very high exalted opinion of the literary tastes of his family. And he provided Esther with a yellow back on which was depicted a lady in a ~~purple~~ green dress fainting in the arms of a gentleman attired in purple. And Meg with "~~Stepping Heavenward~~" Mark Twain's Jumping Frog because he had noticed a certain air of wistfulness & melancholy in her eyes lately.

Then bells clanged & a whistle shrieked, porters flew wildly about, & farewells were said sadly or gayly as the case might be. There was a woman crying in a quiet hopeless little way on the platform, & a girl with sorrowful loving eyes leaning out ~~the~~ a 2nd class window towards her. There was ~~the~~ a ruddy brown-faced squatter ~~man~~ in a felt [indecipherable] cap & slippers to whom the 800 mile journey was little more of an event than dining. And there was the young man going selecting & thinking England was little further ~~since~~ seeing his wife & child were waving a year's goodbye from the platform. There were sportsmen going 200 miles after quail & wallaby, & cars full of ladies returning to the wilds after a short little [indecipherable] yearly tilt with society & fashion in Sydney. And there was the 8 we are interested in, clustering round the door & 2 windows & smiling & waving cheerful goodbyes to the

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Captain. ~~He looked quite ye~~ He did not look at all cast down as the train ~~glided away~~ steamed fussily away, indeed he walked down the platform with almost a jaunty air as if the prospect of 2 months bachelordom was not without its redeeming points. It was ~~2 o'clock~~ ½ p 6 in the ~~morning~~ afternoon when they started & they would reach Curlewis which was the nearest railway station about 5 the next morning. Sleeping berths had been out of the question with so many of them but in the rack with the bags were several rolls of rugs, & 2 or 3 air pillows against the weary hours. ~~For oh they were~~ The idea of 40 hours in the train had been delightful to ~~them~~ all the young ones, none of them had been for more than a distance of 40 or 50 miles before & it seemed perfectly fascinating to think of rushing on & on through the blackness as well as the daylight.

But long before ~~8~~ 6 10 o'clock a change came o'er the spirit of their dreams. Pip & Nell & Baby had had a quarrel about the rights of window room, & were too tired & cross to make up again, Pip had hit Bunty over the head for no ostensible reason & received two kicks in return, Judy's head ached & ~~there wasn'~~ noise & was not calculated to cure it, Meg had grown weary of reading & was

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staring out into the moving darkness & wondering whether Alan would notice she was never on the riverboat now. ~~And The~~ And the poor little General was filling the hot air with ~~wailing~~ expostulations in the shape of loud roars at the irregularity of the treatment he was undergoing.

Esther had underdressed him & made a picture of him in a cream flannel nightgown & a pink wool jacket. And for half an hour he ~~appreciated the novelty of~~ had submitted good temperedly to be handed about & tickled & ~~kissed~~ half smothered with kisses, he had even permitted Nell to bite ~~h ea~~ his little pink curled toes severally & say as surprising amount of nonsense about a pig that ate all the roast beef, & four other pigs that did similarly absurd things, ~~He~~ had even hardly remonstrated when ~~Bunty had~~ there had been a dispute about the possession of his person & Bunty had clung to his head & body while Nell pulled vigorously at his legs.

But after a time when Esther made him a little bed on one of the seats & tried to lay him down upon it a sense of his grievances came over him. He ~~could not see why~~

had a swinging cot at home with little gold bars at the foot to blink at, - he could not see why he should be mulched of it & made to put up with a rug 3 times doubled. He was accustomed too to a shaded light, a quiet room & a warning Hsh, Hsh

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at whenever anyone forgot themselves sufficiently to make the slightest noise. Here the great yellow light flared all the time & every one of the noisy creatures at whose hands he endured so much were within a few feet of him.

~~He lifted~~ So ~~more in sorrow than in anger~~ he lifted up his voice & wept. And when he found weeping did not produce his gold barred cot, he raised his voice two notes, & when even then Esther only went on patting his shoulder in a ~~distracted~~ soothing way he ~~reared~~ burst into roars absolutely deafening. Nellie dangled all her long curls in his face to ~~distract~~ engage his attention, but he clutched them viciously & pulled till the tears came into her eyes, - Esther & Meg sang in turn till they were hoarse, Judy tried walking him up & down the narrow space but he stiffened himself in her arms & she was not strong enough to hold ~~the~~ him. Finally he dropped off into an exhausted sleep drawing deep sobbing breaths & little hiccoughs of sorrow. Then Bunty was discovered asleep on the floor with his head under a seat & had to be lifted into an easier position & Baby, bolt upright in a corner was nodding like a little pink & white daisy the sun has been too much for.

One by one the long hours dragged away further & further through the silent

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Sleeping country ~~rushed~~ flew the red-eyed ~~tireless~~ train, swerving round ~~cuttings~~ zig-zag curves, slackening up steeper places, flashing across the endless stretching plains.

~~Up crept~~ The blackness grew gray, & paler grey & miles & miles of monotonous gum saplings lay between the train & sky. Up burst the sun & the world grew ~~pink~~ soft & rosy like a baby waked from sleep, then the gray ~~crept~~ gathered again, & the pink, quivering lights faded out & the rain came down, torrents of it, beating against the shaking window panes, whirled wildly ahead by a rough morning wind flying across from the mts.

Such a ~~weary~~, crushed, dull-eyed, yawning weary eight they were as they tumbled out [indecipherable] to the ~~Bala woolly siding~~ when the five o'clock came. Judy coughed at the wet, early air & was hurried into the little waiting shed & wrapped in a rug. When the train ~~rushed~~ tossed out their trunks & ~~ba~~ portmanteaus & rushed on again, leaving them desolate & miserable ~~in the behind~~ looking after it. The sound of wet wheels slushing through puddles, the crack of a whip, the even falling of horses feet & they

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were all outside the shed looking ~~up the~~ beyond the white railway palings to the road. A great covered waggonette driven by a ~~huge~~ great wide yellow oilskin with a man somewhere in its interior, & a high buggy from which an immensely big man was climbing. "Father"

"Father!" Esther cried rushing out into the rain & ~~clasping~~ She put her arms round the dripping macintosh & clung fast to it for a minute or two. Perhaps that is what made her eyes so wet & ~~shiningly happy~~.

"Little girl, - little Esther child" he said & almost lifted her off the ground as he kissed her, tall though Meg considered her. Then he hurried them all off into the buggies, 5 in one & 3 in the other. There was a 25 mile drive before them yet.

"When did you have ~~your last refreshment~~ anything to eat last" he asked, their depressed looks of the children were making him quite unhappy. "Mother has sent

you biscuits & sandwiches but we can't get ~~bre~~ coffee or anything hot till we get home."

Esther 9 o'clock Esther told him, at a ~~station~~ Newcastle but the little ones had been asleep & missed it.

The horses were whipped up & flew along over the muddy roads at a pace that Pip, despite his

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Weariness, could not but admire.

But ~~everyone was very silent~~ it was a very silent miserable drive & the General wept with hardly a break from start to finish.

At last when everyone was beginning to feel at ~~the~~ very end of their patience had come a high white gate broke the monotony of dripping wet fences. "Home" Esther said joyfully. She jumped the General up & down on her knee "Silly boy blue, Mum fell off that ~~fence~~ gate when she was three." She said looking at it affectionately as Pip swung it open. Splash through the rain again, the wheels went softly now for the way was ~~thick~~ covered with wet fallen leaves.

"Oh where is the house" Bunty said peeping through Pip's ~~house~~ arm on the box seat & seeing still nothing but an endless vistas of gum trees." I thought you said we were there, Esther."

"Oh, the front door is not quite so near the gate as at Misrule" she said & indeed it was not.

It was fifteen minutes before they even saw the chimney, then there was another gate to be opened.

A gravel drive now, trimly kept, - high box round the flower beds, a wilderness of rose bushes that pleased

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Meg's eye, two chip tennis courts almost under water.

Then the house. The verandah ~~struck you first~~ was all they noticed, it was such a width, ~~quite~~ as wide as an ordinary room, & there were lounges & chairs & tables scattered about, hammocks swung from the corners, & a green thick creeper with rain blown wistaria for an outer wall.

"O-o-oh" said ~~Bunty~~ Pip – ooh I am stiff – ooh I say, what are you doing." For Esther had deposited the General on his knee & leapt out of the waggonette up the verandah steps.

There was a tiny old lady there with a great housekeeping apron on. Esther gathered her right up in her arms & they kissed & clung to each other till they were both crying. "My little girl", sobbed the little old lady, ~~patting~~ stroking with eager hands Esther's wet hair & wetter cheeks.

And Bunty who had followed close behind laughed & looked ~~up at~~ from the tall figure of his step mother to the little one of her mother.

Esther darted back to the buggy & ~~sn~~ seized took the General from Pip, & springing up the steps again placed him in her mother's arm.

~~He's as fat as an~~ "Isn't he a fat

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'un" Bunty said, sharing in her pride

"Just you look at his legs."

~~And~~ The old lady sat down for one minute in the wettest chair she could find & she cuddled ~~her~~ him close up to her. But he doubled his little cold fists, & fought himself away & yelled for Esther. Mr Hassal had emptied the buggies by now & came up the steps himself.

"Aren't you going to give them some breakfast little Mother" he said & the little old lady nearly dropped her grandson in her distress.

"Dear dear,- well, well" she said "Just to think of it, - but it makes one forget."

In ten minutes they were all in dry things, sitting in the warm dining room & making prodigious breakfasts.

"Wasn't I hungry" Bunty said ~~slicing the top off his fourth~~ 3rd egg. His mouth was full of toast & butter & he was slicing the top off his 4th egg.

"The dear old plates," Esther said picking hers up & looking affectionately at the blue roses depicted thereon. "And the last time I ate off one I - -

"Was a little bride with the veil pushed back from your face" The old lady said "& everyone watching you cut the cake. Only two have been broken

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since, dear oh yes, & Martha the girl who came after Emily, chipped off the handle of the sugar basin & broke a bit out of the slop basin."

"Where did Father stand" Meg asked. She was peopling the wedding guests, the ham & the chops & toast & eggs had turned to a great wedding white towered cake with silver leaves.

"Just up there where Pip is sitting" Mrs Hassal said "and he was helping Esther with the cake because she was cutting it with his sword, such a hole you made in the table cloth Esther,- my very best damask one with the convolvulus leaves but of course I've darned it,- " dear dear."

~~At this point Baby~~ Baby had upset her coffee, all over her self & her plate & Bunty who was next door. She burst into tears of weariness & nervousness at the new people & slipped off her chair under the table. Meg picked her up.

"May I put her to bed" she said "she is about worn out,"

"Me too" Nellie said laying down her half eaten scone & ~~looking~~ & pushing back her chair. "Oh I am so tired."

"So'm I" Bunty ~~choked~~ finished up everything on his plate in choking haste & stood up.

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~~So~~ So just as the sun began to smile & chase away the sky's heavy tears, they all went to bed again to make up for the broken night & it was ~~te~~ six o'clock & tea time before one of them opened their eyes again.

Chapter XVII

Yarrahappini in the sunshine ~~with a hot still midday wind midday air slumbering over~~ the kind of sunshine that pushes the thermometer's silver thread up to 100.

~~Yarrahappini full of life~~ Right away in the distance on three sides was a blue hill line & blue soft trees. ~~But all the plain stretching between was brown. Brown burnt grass with~~ And up near the house the trees were green & beautiful & the flowers a blaze of colour. But all the stretching plain between was brown. Brown burnt grass with ~~here & there~~ an occasional patch of dull green, criss crossed here & there with fences that ran up the little hills that ~~here & th~~ in places broke the plain's straight line, & disappeared in the dips where rank grass & bracken flourished.

~~In places from the windows of the stat homestead it looked as if in certain places whole paddocks were moving slowly about. At least that was what Nellie had~~

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~~declared the first morning as she knelt stood in her nightgown on her bed & looked out over the country new country her eyes had opened upon.~~

The head station consisted of quite a little community of cottages on the top of a hill. ~~There had been a red weatherboard place~~ Years ago when Esther had been thr was

no bigger than her own little General there had been only a rough red weatherboard place on the hill top of th & a bark hut or two for outhouses. ~~But the wool market had been favourable~~ And Mr Hassal had been in the saddle from morning to night & Mrs Hassal worked harder than any two of his own stockmen & Mrs Hassal had lain aside her girlish accomplishments, her fancy work, her guitar, her water colours, & had scrubbed & cooked & washed as many a settler's wife has done before, until the anxiously watched wool market had brought them better days.

Then a big stone cottage reared itself slowly right in front of the little old place with its garden plot where nothing more aristocratic than pig's face & scarlet geranium had ever grown. A beautiful cottage it was with ~~its~~ a plentitude of lofty rooms its many windows & its deep verandah. ~~And bea trees & flowers were planted & grew up~~ The little red home was kitchen & ~~servant~~ bedrooms now for the 2 women servants & was joined to the big place by a covered way. A hundred yards away there was a two roomed cottage that was occupied by the son of an English baronet who for the consideration of 70 pounds a year & rations

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~~consented~~ ~~condescended~~ to keep the Yarrahappini business books & gave out the stores. Further still two bark ~~cottages~~ humpies stood back to back. ~~Teerora~~ the black who lived in one who had grown gre grey & bent since he first helped to settle firmly the red cottage that had arrived ready built on a bullock dray.

~~Teerowera~~ Tellawonga a bent old blackfellow lived in one & did little else than smoke & give his opinion on ~~the every new sheep & cattle that came to the place~~ the weather every morning. Twenty years ago he had helped to ~~drive in the pe~~ make a steady foundation for the red cottage that had arrived ready built on a bullock dray. Fifteen years ago he had killed with his tomahawk one of two bushrangers who were trying to stick up Yarrahappini in the absence of its master, & he had carried little trembling Mrs Hassal & tiny Esther to a place of safety & gone back & dealt the other one a blow on the head that stunned him till assistance came.

So of course he had earned ~~th~~ his right to the cottage & the daily rations & the pipe that never stirred from his lips.

Two ~~stockmen~~ lived in the other cottage when they were not out in the distant parts of the run.

Close to the house was a long weatherboard building with a heavy padlocked door. "Oh Let's go in" Nell said, attracted by the size of the padlock, - "it looks like a treasure house in a book, - mayn't

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we go in please little grandma."

They were exploring all the buildings, the ~~seven~~ six children in a body, Mrs Hassal ~~wit~~ whom they all called little grandma much to her pleasure, & Esther with the boy.

"You must go & ask Mr Gillett" the old lady said "he keeps the keys of the stores - see, over in that cottage near the tank, & speak nicely children please." "Such a gentleman," she said in a low tone to Esther, "so courteous & obliging, - if only he did not drink so"

Meg & Judy went with Baby hurrying after them as fast as her short legs would allow.

"Come in," a voice said when they knocked & at the same moment ~~a red nose showed itself at the~~ a man opened the door. Such a great gaunt man with restless, unhappy eyes, a brown broad brow & a neatly trimmed beard, ~~but oh such a red nose.~~ Judy stated that Mrs Hassal had sent them for the keys, - if he had no objection. He asked them to come in & sit down while he looked for them. ~~& they~~ ~~th~~ Meg was surprised at the room as her blue eyes plainly showed. There were bookshelves on which she saw Shakespeare & Shelley & Rossetti & Tennyson, William Morris & many others she had never heard of. There were neatly framed

photographs of English & Continental scenery on the walls. There was a little chased silver vase on a bracket & some of the flowers from the passion vines on it. The table with the remains of breakfast on it was as nice on a small scale as the table she had just left in the big cottage.

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He came in back from the inner room with the keys. "I was afraid I'd lost them" he said - "The middle one opens the padlock, Miss Woolcot, the brass fat one is for the two bins, & the long steel one for the cupboard."

"Thank you so much, I'm afraid we disturbed you in the middle of your breakfast" Meg said standing up & blushing because she thought he had noticed her looking surprised at the silver bookshelves.

~~He held~~ He disclaimed the trouble & held the door open for them with a bow that had something courtly in it.

He watched them go over the grass from his window, at least he watched Meg in her cool summer muslin & pale blue belt, Meg in her shady chip hat with the shining fluffy plait hanging to her waist. Judy's long black legs & crumpled cambric had no element of the picturesque in them. Mrs Hassal unfastened the padlock of the store room.

Such a confusion of oh's & ah's there was from the children. ~~Bunty~~ Bunty Baby had never seen so much sugar together in his her life, so she looked as if he would have liked to have been let loose in the great bin for an hour or two. And the currants, - there was a big wooden box brim full, - about forty pounds, Mrs Hassal thought. Bunty whipped up a handful & pocketed them when everyone was looking at the mountain of candles.

"Home-made, - my dear, why yes of course" the old lady said, - "why I wouldn't

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dream of using a bought candle anymore than I would use bought soap.

She showed them the great bars of yellow cleaning smelling stuff, with the finer paler coloured for toilet purposes. Hams & sides of bacon hung thickly from the rafters, - those are mutton hams" she said pointing to one division, "I keep those for the stockmen.

Pip wanted to know if the stores were meant to serve all their lives, there seemed enough of them, he was astounded to hear that every six months they were replenished.

~~Thirty or forty men~~, 20 or 30 men, counting the boundary riders & stockmen, at different parts of the place, - & double that number at shearing times - it's like feeding an army, my dears" she said, - "& then you see I ~~knew you were all coming~~ had to make preparations for all of you, Bunty especially" Her little grey eyes twinkled merrily as she looked at the small youth.

~~I only took a handful~~ You can have them back "Bunty said half sulkily. & He produced half a dozen currants from his pocket "I shouldn't think you'd mind with such a lot, we only have a bottleful at home" On which the old lady ~~missed~~ patted his head, unlocked a tin & filled his hands with figs & dates.

~~Where do you keep the all the wool & hides & things" said Pip who had a soul above home-made soap & the metal dips for the candles. "Are they in that shed over there" he pointed from the door~~

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"And have you to cook every day for all those men" Meg said, wondering what oven could be found big enough.

~~Not exactly~~ Dear no ~~Esther answered~~ " the old lady answered oh dear dear no, each man does everything for himself in his own hut, they don't even get bread, only

rations of flour to make damper for themselves. Then they get a fixed quantity of meat, tea, sugar, tobacco & one or two other things.”

“Where do you keep the wool & hides & things” Pip said Pip who had a soul above home made soap & the metal dips for the candles, - “I can’t see any shed or anything.

Mrs Hassal told him they were a mile away, down by the creek where the sheep were washed & sheared at the proper seasons which would be in a fortnight 3 months But the heat was too much to make even Pip want to go just then, so they attached themselves to Mrs Hassal, leaving little grandma with Esther, the General & Baby, & went over to the brick stables near.

~~They were not very full just now, &~~ There were three or four buggies under shelter, but no horses at all, they were further afield. Across the hill paddock they went & up the hill, half a dozen answered Mr Hassal’s strange whistle, the others were wild unbroken things that tossed their manes & fled away at the sight of people to the furthest parts near the fence.

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Pip chose one, a grey one with long fleet looking legs & a narrow beautiful head, he prided himself upon, knowing something about ‘points’. Judy ~~ask~~ picked a black with reddish restless eyes, but Mr Hassal refused it, because it had a temper so she had to be contented with a brown with a soft, beautiful nose. Meg asked for something very quiete in a whisper Judy & Pip could not hear & was given a buggy horse that had carried Mrs Hassal eighteen years ago. Each horse animal was to be at the complete disposal of the young people during their stay at Yarrahappini but the rides would have to take place before breakfast or after tea, they were told if they wanted any pleasure out of them, the rest of the day was unbearable on horseback. ~~Meg~~ Nellie was disappointed in the sheep, exceedingly so, she had expected to find great snow white beautiful creatures that would be tame & allow her to put ribbon on their necks & lead them about. From the hill tops ~~they~~ she the first morning she ~~And when she saw great paddocks full after paddock full of with its~~ brown slowly moving mass, she ran down through the sunshine with Pip Bunty to ~~seem~~ view them ~~ele~~ closer “Oh what a shame” she exclaimed actual tears of actual disappointment in her eyes when she saw the great

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fat things with their long, dirty ragged looking fleece.

“Wait for ~~a week or two~~ 2 or 3 months little woman” Mr Hassal said, “just you wait till we give them their baths.”

Chapter XVII

~~Shearing at Yarrappini Pip assists in Cattle Drafting~~

To wheel the wild scrub cattle at the yard

Pip could hardly sleep on the twentieth night for thinking of the ~~shearing on~~ cattle drafting that was on the programme for the morrow. He wanted some fresh occupation At first he had been certain he could never tire of shooting rabbits. Mr Hassal had given him “the jolliest little stunner of a gun,” & ~~Feeræra~~ had gone out with him ~~once or twice~~ the 1st day & had been very scornful about his enthusiasm when he shot two. ~~Ba~~

“Ba’al, ~~you do good~~ good gun do. Plenty fellow rabbit long scrub, budgery way north, budgery way south, budgery way eb’ly where. ~~Ba’al good gun do~~ Ba’al good barbed wire fence do, ba’al good poison do. ~~Rabbits~~ Bah!”

But Pip was not be discouraged & really thought he had done great good to the Yarrahappini estate in shooting those two soft fleet brown things. He took them home & displayed them proudly to Judy, cleaned his ~~new~~ perfectly clean gun & sallied forth the next day. ~~Feeræra~~ took his pipe from between

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his lips for a moment & laughed when he saw him again a loud ~~rœ~~ cackling laugh that made Pip flush with anger.

"Kimbriki ~~tœ~~ & Kimbriki too! Rabbit he catti, curri curri, now. Boy come long with cawbawn gun, oh rabbit he jerund now go ~~all-catti~~ go burri, grass grown, ~~œn-burri~~ sheep get fat, - budgereel!, ha, ha! budgeree.

Pip understood his mixed English enough to know he was ~~p~~ making fun of him & told him wrathfully to "shut up for a Dutch idiot," Then he shouldered the ~~his~~ gun he was so immeasurably proud of & went off the other side of the barbed wire fence where was the hunting ground of the little rodent that ~~alone~~ would not allow Mr Hassal to grow rich.

He shot 5 that day, 4 the next, 7 the next, but after a time he voted it slow & went after gill birds with more enjoyment but less certainly of a bag.

Every day was filled to the brim with enjoyment & but for the intense heat The first month at Yarrahappini would have been one of absolute ~~perfect~~ content & happiness.

There was ~~the shearing to look forward to~~, some wallaby hunting to look forward to, for Esther a ball on a ~~neigh~~ the next station, 45 miles away, & for ~~all the shearing~~.

Pip a participation in Cattle drafting.

To-morrow & to-morrow too. Rabbit he go away quickly now Boy come along with big gun, rabbit he afraid now, go under the ground. Grass grow, sheep get fat, - good! ha ha, good!

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Breakfast was very early the morning of the great event, ~~b~~ by 6 it was almost over & Pip in a fever of restlessness was telling Mr Hassal he was sure they would be late & miss it.

Judy had pleaded hard to be allowed to go but everyone said it was out of the question, indeed it was doubted if it were wise to allow Pip to face the danger that is inseparable with cattle drafting. But he had forcibly carried the day & ~~got himself up~~ dressed himself in so business like a way that Mr Hassal had not the heart to refuse him. He came down to breakfast in a crimson shirt & a pair of old serge trousers fastened round the ~~belt~~ waist with a leather belt ~~a~~ in which an unsheathed bowie knife, freshly sharpened jauntily was stuck. ~~jauntily in~~ No persuasion would induce him either to wear a coat or sheath the knife. The grey was brought round to the front door with Mr Hassal's own splendid horse. Mr Gillet was there too on a ~~rœan~~ well groomed roan, he had three ~~long~~ stockwhips ~~in his hand~~, two quite sixteen feet long, the third a shorter one he presented to Pip whose face glowed. ~~He dug~~ "Hurrah, Fizz" he said standing up in his saddle & brandishing the whip around his head, - Hurrah What wd you give to change places? He dug his heels in the animals side & went helter skelter at a wild gallop down the hill.

Meg ~~sprang down the steps, her face~~

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pale, her eyes frightened, "Please keep your eyes on him Mr G all day, Mr Gillet" she said looking up so that gentleman who was the last to start, "he is so wild careless & after all he is not used to all this." "He shall come to no harm – for your sake Miss Meg" Mr Gillet said. He looked down at the little fair face with wistful admiration, & rode away. Meg read the look & blushed faintly & he rode away instantly. "I'm sure I'm old enough to put my hair up" the girl thought said to herself as she went up the steps again ten minutes later. "Oh how sorry I am for him. She went off to a shady nook in the garden to make up a romance of a black sheep of noble family, cut adrift & giving up drink & every evil way because a young girl asked him so. taking to drink

and coming out to a new land because of some proud beautiful lady in England had refused him love. She had read something very much the same in the last young Ladies' journal that Aldith had sent her.

A mile & a half away at the cattle yards there was the strongest excitement. Pip wondered mightily where all the men had sprung from, there were some 20 or 30 of them, stockmen, two or 3 shearers "on the wallaby", Pip as their parlance expressed their lack of employment, two black boys exclusive of ~~Teereer~~ who was smoking & looking on with sleepy enjoyment, & several others of the station hands.

In the first yard there were ~~some~~ 500 cattle : that had been driven there the night before & that just ~~present~~ now ~~present~~ gave one the idea of a sea of horns & wildly lashing tails & horns. Such

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horns, great branching terrific looking things that they gored & fought each other madly with, seeing they could not get to their common enemy ~~the~~ outside. Just for the first moment or two Pip felt a little disinclined to quit the stronghold of his horse's back. The thunder of hoofs & horns, the wild charges made by the desperate animals against the fences made him fear for the strength of the nails. But everybody else had gone to "cockatoo", - to sit on the top rail & ~~lee~~ of the great enclosure & look down at the maddened creatures, & Pip so at length he fastened his bridle to a tree & clambered somewhat gingerly on to the fence keeping a wary eye all the time on the cattle. At a sudden signal from Mr Hassal the men dropped down inside, half one side & half the other. The object was to get ~~half~~ a hundred or two of them into the forcing yards adjoining, the gate to which was wide open. Pip marvelled at the courage of the men, for a moment his heart had leaped to his mouth as bullock after bullock essayed to charge them but the air resounded ~~full of~~ with cracks from the mighty stockwhips & ~~deafening~~ sticks & the beast after beast retreated towards the centre with fences dripping with blood. Then one huge black creature with a bellow that ~~shook~~ seemed to shake the plain made a wild rush to the gate, the whole herd at his heels. Like lightning the men made a line behind, shouting, yelling, cracking their whips to drive them onwards. Pip ~~†~~ stood up & halloed, absolutely beside himself

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with excitement. Then he held his breath again. Mr Hassal's ~~great figure & a magnificent figure~~ one of the ~~el~~ black boys was ~~ere~~ creeping up near the gateway through which the ~~wild tumult re~~ tumultuous stream of ~~ba~~ horns & backs were pouring. Half a dozen mighty blows & the last leader fell back for an instant driving the multitude backwards behind him. In that second the two had slipped up the rails & the herd was in two divisions.

Two lines of stockmen again, whips crackings, bellows, blood, horns, hide & heels in the air & some ~~fifty~~ forty or fifty were secure in a third yard, a long narrow place with a gate at the end leading into the final division. Pip learnt from Mr Gillet the object of these divisions, - some of the beasts were ~~what he called~~ worthless, worthless things, & had been assigned to a buyer, ~~who wanted their horns & hides~~, for a couple of pounds a/head just for horns. Others were prime fat creatures, ready for the butcher & Sydney market. And others again were splendid animals of great value for prize & breeding purposes & were to be made into a separate draft. The man at the last gateway was doing all the important work of selecting, he was armed with a short, thick stick & as the other men drove the animals down towards him, decided ~~in a~~ with lightening speed to which ~~th~~ class they belonged. A ~~sharp~~ heavy blow on the nose, a sharp, rapid series of them between the eyes, & the most violent brute plunged ~~me~~ blindly whither the driving sent him. All day the work went on & ~~but by evening & not till~~ just as the great

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hot purple shadows began to fall across the plain, they secured the last rail, & the babble was over, & the animals in approved divisions.

Pip ate enough salt beef & damper to half kill him, drank more tea than he had ever disposed of at one sitting in his life 14 years, swung himself into his saddle in close imitation of the oldest stockman there, & thought of he had a great evil looking pipe like ~~Tooreera's~~ [indecipherable] & the the rest of the men's, his happiness would be complete & his manhood reached.

He reached home as tired as "a dozen dogs & a dingo" & entertained his sisters & Bunty with a graphic account of the days proceedings dwelling lengthily on his own prowess & the manifold perils he had escaped. The next day both ~~he & Judy too~~ ~~was allowed to~~ rode to with Mr Hassal & Mr Gillet to the yards to see the departures. The best of the contingent which Mr Hassal had only wanted to separate, not to sell, were driven out through their gate & away by the half a dozen stockmen back to their old fields & pastures stale. The worthless lot, some hundred & 50 of the wildest of them with half a dozen stockmen ~~on~~ mounted on the best horses in the place, were with released from their enclosure in a state of frenzied desperation & with much crackings of whips & yells mustered into a herd & driven

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away across the plains in the direction of the road. And some hour or two later the Market best "beef" lot were driven forth & quick reigned at Yarrahappini once more. During the two days of excitement the children all decided on their future professions which, not unusually were all to be of a pastoral nature if in life Pip was going to be a stockman & brand & draft cattle all the days of his life. Judy was going to be his aide-de-camp provided he let her stay in the saddle the whole time & invested her with a whip just as long as his own. Meg thought she should like to marry a very the richest squatter in Australia & have the Governor & the Premier come up for shooting & things, & give balls to which all the people within a hundred miles would come on horseback. ~~Bunty inclined to sheep shearing~~ Nell decided she would make soap & candles when she arrived at years of discretion, like Mrs Hassal, & Baby inclined to keeping a field paddock cram full of pet lambs with ribbon on.

Bunty did not wax enthusiastic over any of the ideas.

"I'd rather be like Mr Gillet" he said & his eyes looked dreamy.

~~"Pooh, - no business books & figures for me, give me an unbroken horse with a sixteen foot whip 100,000 acres of salt bush land, well stocked~~

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"Pooh no books & figures for me, - give me a horse & the salt bush country" said Pip. Hear, hear! chimed in Judy.

"Stoopids!" said Bunty. "Doesn't Mr Gillet keep the store keys, - just think of those currents & figs."

Chapter XVIII

Esther had gone to a ball. Not in the a dress of delicate colour with great puffed sleeves & a dazzling neck bare & beautiful, not through the darkness to a blaze of lights & swinging music.

She had gone early in the broad light of the morning in a holland suit with a pink blouse & sailor hat. Under the front buggy seat where Mr Hassal sat there was a box containing a beautiful gown all primrose silk & delicate wavelets of chiffon. And there were primrose shoes & stockings & fan in a hat box on her knee, & a lovely trained white under skirt with billowy frill of torchon that sight of which made Meg wild to be grown up. But she was not going to none of these things were to be doned any of them for many an hour yet. The ball was a neat little matter of fifty five miles away

across country so she had to start tolerably early of course in order to ~~he should~~ have comfortable time to "tittivate" as Pip expressed it.

The children as compensation for not going ~~to a ball~~ were to

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have a very recherche picnic of their own ~~15 miles~~ away from the house. A boundary rider had reported that A magnificent ~~iron bark~~ blue gum they called King [indecipherable] had ~~fallen some fifteen miles away~~ been blown down during a violent gale & Mr Hassal immediately declared that whatever the trouble it must be brought up ~~nearer to the homestead~~ for the foundation of a bridge across the creek where the sheep washing took place.

~~But for escorting his daughter to the ball he would have gone f to the place & seen about it himself; as it was he ordered out the bullock team & great trolly & sent four or five men with it with instructions to pick up a couple of men from the distant pubs to help in the task. It was 20 miles away altogether & ten miles beyond the head of the creek which had scooped out the earth & rocks till it made itself a beautiful ravine just there, with precipitous he rocks & boulders that the kangaroos & 2 wa behind skipped across & played hide & seek with the hunters, behind great towering blue gums & red gums & blackwood & wattle & t-trees that went from below or seemed to lose themselves in the blue blue sky canopy overhead above.~~

~~Tooroora told of bang it ha,~~ They called the place (Kurangi-Bahloo) in native names (Duck-Water) & it had always held it a favourite spot for picnics; Tooroora told of a family Bunyip that dwelt where the water had made a pool deep & beautiful & the delicate ferns had crept tenderly to fringe its sides. ~~It was the The~~ & the blackwood & ti-trees made a curly girdle. The

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~~Mist Mr Flogeman~~ water hen made a home there, the black swan built among the ~~bush~~ grass like reeds, the bell bird & the coachwhip, the tewinga, & the laughing jackass, the rifle bird & regent filled the air with sound if not with music; And the black snake & the brown snake, the whip & the death adder ~~fl increased & multiplied~~ glided gently among the ~~leaves fallen leaves~~ bushes & held themselves in cheerful readiness for picnicens.

That was why a condition was attached to the freely granted picnic. Everyone might go, & go on the bullock dray but the picnic was to take place ~~at the head of the~~ above the ravine & no one was to venture down on pain of being instantly packed back to Sydney. They all promised ~~cheerfully~~ faithfully Mrs Hassal, tiny as she was had a way of commanding implicit obedience. Then an incredible number of hampers brimming over with good things were packed & the party started. Mr Gillett ~~was going~~ went to ~~act as a kind of~~ give an appearance of steadiness to the picnic & see nothing untoward happened. He had a ~~book in~~ & Heine in one pocket, against the long day, a bulging Tennyson in the other & a sheaf of English papers ~~in his~~ under his arm & ~~as he too~~ as he climbed on to the trolly where the whole seven where already seated. ~~Te~~ The seven, even so. Judy had absolutely

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lingo

dingo

A bishop's cat

A schoolboy bold the truant played

And went to catch hunt a dingo

D with an I n i with an g n

N with a G G with an O

He went to catch hunt a dingo

Thus set

At school there was a stout b cane kept for
To help to lear To help to teach each lingo
L with an I and N.G.O.
Sing hey for the wag & the lost dingo
Ha for the cane & lingo

Now is not thys a prettie song? a moral tale

I think it is by jingo.

J with an i-n.g.o.

I vow it is, by Jingo.

The Master Speaks.

“Look at your book” said the master cried

He tore his hair & his fist he shook.

Everywhere roving eyes he spied

“You little rascal, look at your book

Is this the way you stamp every day you

Treat me who just for your own good delay you

Sums muddled. French all fuddled

Sums jumbled. Declensions mumbled.

Latin Toffee & cakes in your pockets crumbled

You wretched young loafer

You blockhead, you dunce with the soul of a cook

Look at your book! Do! Look at your book.

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VIII When the sun went down

Come away children call no more

Come away, come down, call not more.

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Chapter 18 (cont)

refused to stir without the General & had promised on her life “not to allow any harm to come near him. Mr Gillet gave a glance almost of dismay when he found ~~there were to be no exceptions~~ whole number was to be present without the subtraction of the mischievously disposed ones or the addition of anyone but himself weighted with authority. ‡ For a moment he distrusted his own powers ~~if~~ in such a situation. Judy ~~ea~~ caught the doubting look.

“You’re quoting poetry to yourself, Mr Gillett” she said.

“No – why indeed no, Miss Judy, what made you think so” he said, & looked at her in surprise.

~~“You’re quoting & I know exactly what it is” she said solemnly, – “it’s Shakespeare or Milton or somebody.~~

“I can hear it distinctly she said “your eyes are saying it & your left ear, not to mention the ends of your moustache.”

“Judy!” reproved Meg who ~~was the only quiet one of the party~~ something had made very quiet

~~“And what are they saying.~~ He pretended to be alarmed, shut his eyes, held his left ear, covered his moustache, “What can they be saying?” he said.

“Oh that I was where I would be!

Then I would be where I am not:

But where I am I still must be

And where I would be I cannot,"
– Meg I wish you'd stop treading on my toes."

After that even Mr Gillett grew gay to show he was enjoying himself & the bullocks caught the infection of the brimming spirits behind them & moved a little but faster than

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snails.

When they had crept along over about five miles however the show motion & the ~~beating~~ heat that beat down sobered them a little.

"If some one does not sing a song or tell a tale, or dance or do something I shall get out & stick ~~needles~~ hat pins into the bullocks" Judy said.

She stood up to relieve her cramped ~~up~~ limbs & even attempted a pas-de-seul but a rut in the road effectually spoiled the grace of it. She subsided in a heap again.

~~"Couldn't you say some poetry Mr. Gillett" Meg said shyly.~~ How would you like some verses Miss Meg said Mr Gillett. His hand went to his pocket, the large & lumpy Tennyson was drawn out but a groan burst from Judy & Pip & Bunty & Nell & Baby.

"I'd rather get out & drag bullocks & all" Pip said so the book was replaced.

"A tale with something in it now" Judy said, – "a laughing jackass if you can't think of anything better." ~~There~~ One, † solemn faced, mysterious looking had settled on a fence & ~~was—had~~ thus suggested itself.

"Well you might hear a worse story than about the jackass or Kukuburra or Goburra ~~whichever~~ or Settler's Clock, whichever you it may please you to call it." Mr Gillett said & stroked his moustache thoughtfully, – "only ~~Tooroora~~ is the person to tell these aboriginal legends, mine is only got at 2nd hand from him."

Judy settled herself to listen & jogged the General to keep him quiet. ~~Pip heaved~~

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He dismounted & picked it up. Meg stretched out her hand for it without looking at him but he untied the bow & folded it at slowly round his big ~~rough~~ hand.

"May I keep it for my blue ribbon?" he said in a low voice, – "Ye I know the conditions that attach".

"If you would, – oh if you would" Meg breathed rather than said. Then Judy galloped up & they rode home three abreast.

It was such happiness to her all the hot long days that followed: ~~perhaps never again would she experience such pure dis~~ I think. To a very girl there are few just entering life there can be few purer, ~~holier~~ deeper feelings of pleasure than ~~the kn comes with~~ the knowledge that she is influencing for good some ~~life older~~ man or woman older than herself, more sin-worn & earth wearied.

Poor little Meg. Her tender, rose dreams had pictured him a man among men again, holding up his head taking his place in the world, going back to the old country & claiming his noble lady, ~~love again &~~ all through her.

And then she went to swing in a hammock on the back verandah & all her castles came tumbling about her ears dealing her sharp bitter blows. There was a thick creeper of passionfruit vines behind her & ~~the other side~~ through it she could hear Tooroora talking to the cook.

"Marre Gillet on the burst again" he said & chuckled through the ~~ees~~ side of his lips where his pipe did not rest.

Meg sat up in horror. Since she had been at Yarrahappini she had heard the phrase applied to various of the hands [indecipherable] enough to know it meant a reckless drinking bout.

~~"I expected it,~~ "Lor, I'm not surprised" the woman said "he's been too sober late days to last, – 'spose he's been trying to last the visitors out but found it too much, – who's got the keys?"

"Mis' Hassal" he said " & you're to help her, - ba'al good for stores today, Marse Gillet, -he he, ha ha!

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That was what had happened to him all these three days she had not seen him, he had ridden over to the next station she had heard, on business but had not dreamt such a thing had overtaken him.

The fourth day she had seen him ~~once or twice~~ in the distance, once coming out of the store room & looking exactly like himself only he stooped a little more, & once smoking outside his own door.

The fifth day was the picnic.

(Gives back ribbon, Meg hard, - he advises her.

Just as lighthearted & merry as the others she could not feel with this disappointment at her heart, this shaken trust in human nature. How weak he has, she thought, - how ignoble! - All her pity was swept away in her a young large indignation. She had hardly shaken his hand when they had met in the morning, & all the drive she was cold & dignified towards him persistently cold to him.

After lunch ~~they p seat~~ the party became scattered. Judy took the General & went to lie down ~~and~~ in the shade of ~~some w~~ a wattle gum near the slip panel that leading ~~into the grassed paddock~~ where some of the ~~bulls~~ cattle were grazing. Pip & Nell Bunty occupied themselves with catching locusts, Baby & Nell gathered wild flowers, Meg ~~was gathering up~~ knelt down to collect the spoons & forks & ~~covering the food~~ left with table napkins from the inroads of the ~~sand flies~~ flies & ~~insects~~ ants; she had brought a book & intended to go over to Judy's patch of shade presently.

"~~Let me~~ I will do this, - you look hot Miss Meg, sit down quietly" Mr Gillet said.

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"Wait till I heave this loquat at him" said Pip extracting one from his pocket & dislodging the bird from the fence, "he might hear the lies about himself & feel hurt." "Once upon a time" said Mr Gillet, once upon a time ~~in~~ when this ~~Golden Age~~ young land was still younger & incomparable, more beautiful, when Tooroora's ancestor's ~~had been~~ were brave & strong, & happy as careless children, when ~~they~~ their worst nightmare had never shown them~~set~~ so evil a time as the white man would bring their race, when, - -

"Oh get on" uttered Pip impatiently.

"Well said Mr Gillet, - when in short an early golden age wrapped the land in its sunshine a young Kukuburra ~~with~~ & its male spread their wings & set off towards the purple mountains beyond the gum trees. ~~Every night~~ They rested at night & for a time during each day to feed on worms, lizards, bush mice & grubs which were then the only food eaten by Kukuburras.

One day as they flew across a bilwy, which is a small stream Miss Judy they were much alarmed to see a great Wipparoo, - Tooroora's name for a snake Pip - lying on a log. Its head was erect, its mouth wide open & its neck very much inflated: just above the monster's head, fluttering & screaming wildly hovered a beautiful little bird that the Kukuburra at once recognized as the Jeeda, - the little blue wren. The wipparoo seemed to be doing all he could to terrify the lovely little creature, now almost exhausted from fear & excitement. Still it

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flew nearer & nearer gazing madly into the glittering eyes of the serpent, until at last with one piercing cry it fell helplessly into its gaping jaws.

The Kukuburra were very grieved to see so sad an end of the poor Jeeda & flew away swiftly from the sight of the dreaded Wipparoo. Soon however they saw him gliding hurriedly through the grass, doubtless homeward bent ~~having supper se~~

~~daintily to take his~~ with his dainty supper. Jus On the way there was a log burning slowly away & the Wipparoo seeing it lay down beside it, being very drowsy & slept the sleep of the unjust. In his dreams he saw the Jeeda again hovering above him & suddenly raising his head, high in the air, he opened his terrible jaws, when lo! out fluttered the beautiful little bird & quickly flew away save & sound.

"Good iron" said Bunty softly, - go on.

The Kukuburra were so delighted at seeing the Jeeda's wonderful escape that they burst into a fit of loud laughter – the first time ever bird was heard to laugh. Then the great red sun that ~~Tææææ~~ & all the Korees call Euroka sank down behind the orange flaming mountains & the world grew dark. A tall young Koree who was coming that way saw the Wipparoo & with one blow from his strong nulla nulla or ~~axe~~ club as we translate it, cut of his it's head

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from its body.

"I'd have swung it round my head & cracked its back like Tooroora does" Pip said, "Are you sure he didn't, Mr Gillet?"

"I would'nt take an oath either way" said that gentleman "as the Koree is by now gathered to his forefathers & therefore not available as a witness. To continue the Kukuburra slumbered all night in ~~an~~ a ti-tree hard by but when the sun crept up the sky again, they woke with a laugh on their lips – beaks I should say Miss Judy – remembering the escape of the Jeeda from the merciless Wipparoo. And ever since, so strongly did ~~it~~ tickle the incident tickle their risible faculties, at sun rise & sunset & occasionally between whites, these particular birds burst into the cacchinations of laughter you are all familiar with, & whenever they see a serpent, they catch it with their strong beaks & kill it as the Koree did, - Miss Meg that silver gray gum ~~without~~ before you, ~~guileless of leaves~~ indicates Duck-Water.

How glad they were to unfold themselves & stretch out their arms & legs on the ground at least. ~~Pip declared anything so~~ No one had dreamt driving in a ~~Sull~~ behind a bullock team could, have been so ~~flat~~ so 'slate flat & unprofitable' as it was after the first mile. ~~The dray was to go on the 10 miles further to where the fallen giant lay & bring it right up to the creek that lay below them.~~ Then it was to deposit it ~~by the~~ on the bank & pick up the picnic party again

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in the cool of the evening.

~~"I'm afraid it will be late before they get back"~~ "I doubt if they will be back when before the sun goes down if, they don't go a little quicker" Mr Gillet said, - "it is lunch time now."

They were in a great grassed paddock that at one end ~~sloped~~ fell abruptly down to the ravine known as Duck-Water. A belt of great trees made a shade ~~along~~ at one side. ~~At~~ Along the other was a barbed wire fence that showed they had not got away from the Yarahappini estate even yet; & higher up was a lonely bark hut of one of the stockmen.

They went up in a body to speak to him, before he jointed the bullock team & to view his solitary dwelling. Just a ~~f~~ small room ~~with w~~ it was with a wide fireplace where hung a billy, a frying pan & cups & a spoon. There was a bunk in one corner with a couple of blue blankets on it, a deal table & two chairs, in the middle of the room, a cupboard made out of a ~~Cæææ~~ Soap box to hold rations over the fireplace, a

suspended hanging bag of mosquito net held out with whalebone for meat. The walls were papered with man a copy of Illustrated Sydney News & the Town & Country Journal & there the was a month old Daily Telegraph lying where the owner had lain it down. A study in brown the stockman was, brown dull eyes, brown dusty looking hair, brown shrivelled skin, sun dried & shrivelled, brown unkempt beard, brown trousers of corduroy & brown coat. His pipe was black, - however a clay that looked as if it had been smoked 20 years.

~~“Isn’t it lonely here” Meg said,~~ “Wouldn’t you like to be nearer the homestead?” Meg asked “Isn’t it lonely here.”

“Not t’er mention” the brown man said to his

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pipe or his beard.

“What do you do with yourself when you’re not outback?” asked Pip

“Smoke” said the man

“But on Sundays & ~~when~~ in the evenings”

“Smoke” he said

“On Cursmas day” ~~Baby said~~ ~~lisp said~~ ~~“what does you d~~ & pressing to see the strange man ~~“what~~ zen what does you do?

“Smoke” he said

Judy wanted to know how long he’d lived in the little place, & everyone was stricken dumb to hear he’d been there 7 years.

“Don’t you ever forget how to talk?” she said in an awestruck voice but he answered laconically to his beard that there was the cat.

Baby had found it already under the kerosene tin that did duty for a bucket & it had scratched her in 3 places. Brown like its master it was evil-eyed, fiercely whiskered, thin as a rail, still there was ~~an intimate connection & affection~~ the deep affection of years between the two.

Mr Gillett told him of the squatters wish that he should go with the other men & help with the tree. He pulled a brown hat over his brow & moved away towards the bullock dray which had crept up the road by now to the hill top.

~~“There’s Water in the tub, nearer than creek”~~ he muttered to his pipe before he went, & they found the tub-tank & gladly filled the billyies ready for lunch.

Mrs Hassall’s roast fowls & duck tasted well even though they cooked ~~in the sunshine beyond the point~~ she themselves again in the sunshine as they lay on the plates. And the apple tarts & apricot turnovers vanished speedily & of the fruit salad that came forth from 2 screw top bottles not a teaspoonful remained to tell a tale.

They piled up two plates

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full of good things & put in ~~Mr~~ the Brown man’s cupboard & Mr Gillett lay his unread English papers on the chair near the cat

“That Telegraph’s 2 months old” he said deprecating seeing Meg smile ~~approval on his act~~ upon him her first smile that day.

Chapter XIX

She in her virginal beauty

As pure as a pictured saint

How should his sinning & sorrow

Have for her danger or taint?

~~The reason our placid pale Margaret had been reluctant of her smiles was on account of the very man who alone missed them.~~

A kind of tingle of a warm friendship had sprung up during the month between the little fair-faced girl who looked with such serene blue eyes toward a future she felt must be beautiful, & the man who ~~only~~ looked back to a past all blackened & unlovely

by his own acts. He rode with the little girls every day because Mrs Hassal was afraid of them going long distances alone, & seeing Judy ~~was a~~ seldom walked her horse & Meg's steed had not a canter in it, it fell out that he kept his horse beside the slow one all the time.

"You remind me of a little sister I had who died" he said slowly to Meg once "perhaps if she was alive now I should not be quite so contemptible."

Meg's face had flushed scarlet & a shamed look had come into her eyes. It seemed altogether terrible to her that he should know she knew of his ~~weak~~ failing.

~~Won't she be~~ "Perhaps it makes her sorry now" she said in a whisper he scarcely heard & then she grew pale at her boldness & rode on a little way to hide her distressed looks.

Coming back the blue pale ~~pretty~~ ribbon that tied the strands of her sunny plait together ~~fell~~ blew off

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& looked at him with calm surprised eyes. "Say whatever you please, I do not mind in the least." He sat up & played with the handle of a strap while he spoke.

"You have brothers, he said, - some day they will ~~step a little aside~~ go a little astray, for it is only women & ~~angels~~ like you, Miss Meg, who keep to the path always. Don't be too hard on them, don't ~~pick up your dainty skirts~~ make an effort to show them the difference between your whiteness & their blackness, they will see it right enough but they won't like you to draw their attention to it. Try & look gentle & forgiving, they'll feel ~~mis~~ quite as miserable as you ~~may~~ could wish them to feel & ~~the world has a Set the World with a capital W~~ keep the monopoly of frowns & cold worlds, it likes The world has a beautiful frown of its own & an ~~whole~~ endless vocabulary of cold worlds words, ~~let the little sisters~~ wouldn't it do if the little sisters left the monopoly of them."

"Oh-h-h," said Meg. ~~There was a shamed crimson in~~ her cheeks were crimson & all the dignity had oozed out of her voice.

~~Suppose~~ He buckled the strap with infinite care & ~~on~~ went on again in ~~his a~~ a low tone

"Suppose Pip did something very wrong someday & the World flung stones at him till every inch of him ~~w~~ he felt bruised all over & miserable. ~~all over~~. And suppose, feeling very wretched he came home to his sisters. And Meg because ~~she was good herself~~ wickedness was abhorrent to her, ~~flung~~ threw a few more little stones so that the ~~m~~ pain might teach him a lesson he could not forget. And Judy ~~flung her arms around him~~ & because he was her brother & in trouble flung her arms round him & encouraged ~~him~~ & strengthened him helped him to fight the World again & ~~said never~~ & gave him never a hard word or look, thinking he had had plenty. ~~Whose~~ Which sister's ~~would have most~~ influence would be greater, little Miss Meg?

Meg's little soft mouth was quivering, her eyes were on the ground because the tears would have splashed out if she had

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lifted them.

"Oh-h" she said again "Oh, how very horrid I have been,- Oh-h-h."

She covered her face with her hands for one of the quickly gathered tears was trembling on her ~~eyelashes~~.

~~You~~ Mr Gillett dropped the strap & the pipe ~~very quickly~~. & looked across to her with tender eyes

"I am more than twice your age Miss Meg, old enough nearly to be your father, - ~~you will forgive me say~~ You will forgive me for saying all this, won't you. I was thinking of my ~~eth~~ little sister who died. I had another little sister ~~too~~ too a year older but she was hard & ~~had all a good woman's scorn for sin~~ I only went to her once. She is one of

the best women in England but her lips are severe. Little Miss Meg, I could not bear the thought of you growing hard to li'
~~Meg was putting the forks & spoons & knives higgledy piggledy into the a basket, she had forgotten the number.~~
Half a dozen big tears had fallen down among the forks, Meg was crying because it was borne upon her what a very hateful, un~~h~~ creature she was. First Alan lectured her & spoke of his sister, & now this man.
He misinterpreted her silence.
~~"Have I no right to speak~~
"I have no right to speak to you like this because my life has been any colour but white,- that is it, isn't it Miss Meg?" His voice he said with great sadness.
Meg dropped her sheltering hands.
"Oh no" she said ~~with tearful eagerness eagerly~~ "How can you think so. It is only I am so horrid." She rummaged in her pocket & brought out the ribbon.

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"Will you take it again" she said "oh please, - just to make me feel less horrid,- oh please take it." She looked at him with wet, imploring eyes & held it out.
He took it, ~~the little crumpled ribbon~~ smoothed its crumpledness & placed it in his pocket book.
"God bless you" he said & the tone made Meg sob.
~~Then they left the baskets & walked together over the paddock to the belt of trees where Judy's pink frock~~

Chapter XX

Across the grass came a little flying figure, Judy in her a short pink frock with her wild curls blowing about her face.
"Miss Judy, are you a candidate for sunstroke - where is your hat?" Mr Gillet said asked. ~~with horror~~
Judy shook back her dark tangle of curls
"Sorrow a know I knows" she said "it's a banana the General is afther dyin' for & sure it's a dead body I shall live to see misself if ~~you~~ you've eaten all the oranges ~~are~~ gone."
Meg pushed the bag of fruit across the her cloth & tried to tilt her hat over her tell tale eyes.
"I spose you've been reading stupid poetry & making Meg cry" Judy the little girl said look with an aggressive glance from Mr Gillet to the book on the grass. You really ought to be ashamed of yourselfes at a picnic too, ~~thank goodness though~~ it's been a saving in ~~on~~ oranges though, that's a mercy."
She took half a dozen great fat ones from the bag, & as many bananas, ~~& u~~ & went back with flying steps

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to the belt of trees where the General in his little holland coat could just be seen. He was ~~eating hand~~ calmly grubbing up the earth & putting it in his little red mouth when she arrived with the bananas. ~~And~~ He looked up at her with an adorable smile.
"Baby!" she said swooping down upon him with one of her wild rushes, "Baby!" She kissed him fifty times, it almost hurt her sometimes, this feeling of love for this little fat dirty ~~le~~ boy. Then she gathered him up on her knee & wiped as much of the dirt as possible from his mouth with the corner of his coat. ~~Then~~ And she took the skin off a banana & put it in his small chubby hand. He ate some of it & squeezed the rest up ~~it~~ ~~gleefully~~ tightly in his hands, gleefully watching it come up ~~through~~ between ~~th~~ his wee fingers in little worm-like morsels.
Then he smeared it over his dimpled face & even rubbed it on his hair while Judy was engrossed with her fifth orange.

Of course she had to whip him for that, or pretend to which came to the same thing. And then he had to whip her which ~~did was~~ did not only mean pretence.

He ~~whipped~~ beat her with a stick he found near, he smacked her face & pulled her hair & bumped himself up & down on her chest, & all in such a solemn, painstaking earnest that she could only laugh even when he really hurt her.

"Dood now?" he said at last anxiously. ~~Then Judy sobbed wept~~ And she began to weep noisily with covered face & (indecipherable) show in the ~~most~~ proper penitent way. & then he put his darling arms round her neck & hugged her & said Ju-Ju in a choking little voice, & patted her cheeks & gave her a hundred eager, wide wet kisses till she was better.

Then they played chasings & the General fell down ~~forty~~ twenty times & scratched his little bare

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knees & hands & struggled up again excitedly & staggered on,

~~Then they played hide & seek & Judy always left a bit of her pink frock showing behind the tree on which he clutched her triumphantly~~

Presently Judy ~~sat down,~~ a stood still in a hurry; there was a tic working its slow way into her wrist. Only its two back legs were left out from under the skin & for a long time she pulled & pulled without any success. Then it broke in two & she had to leave one half in for little Grandma & kerosene to extract it on their return.

~~It had taken her three or four minutes~~ ~~three or four~~ 2 or 3 minutes it had taken her to move it & when she looked up the General had toddled some distance away & was ~~going on~~ travelling along as fast as ever his little fat legs would carry him, thinking he was racing her. Just as she started after him he looked back, his eyes dancing, his face dimpled & mischievous & oh so dirty.

And then, ah God!

It is so hard to write it; ~~now even now my pen halts & goes slowly.~~ It has had only happy writing to do so far & now!

"You rogue" Judy called pretending to run very quickly. Then the whole world seemed to rise up before her. There was a tree falling, one of the great gaunt naked things that had been ringbarked long ago & lately struck with lightning. All day it had swayed on to & fro, rotten through & through; now there came up across the plain a puff of wind & ~~just across~~ down it went before it.

One wild ringing cry Judy gave & ~~fairly gave up the (indecipherable).~~

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then she leaped across the ground, her arms outstretched ~~toward~~ to the little ~~unc~~ lad ~~running straight~~ trotting with laughing eyes & lips straight to Death.

The crash shook the trees around, the very air seemed splintered.

They had heard it, - all the others, heard the ~~girl's loud~~ cry & then the horrible thud.

How their knees shook, - what blanched faces they had as they rushed towards the sound.

They lifted it off the little bodies, the long silvered trunk with the gum dead & dried in streaks upon it. Judy was face downwards, her arms spread out.

And underneath her was the General, a little shaken, mightily astonished but quite unhurt.

Meg clasped him for a minute but then laid him down & ~~†~~ gathered with the others close around Judy.

~~Only the dark thick curls & huddled figure~~

Oh the little dark, quiet head! The motionless body in its pink crushed frock, the small thin outspread ~~arms~~ hands.

"Judy!" Pip said in a voice of beseeching agony.

But there was only answer was the wind at the tree tops & the frightened breathings of the others.

Mr Gillet remembered there was no one to act but himself. He went with Pip to the stockman's hut & they took the door down off its hinges & carried it down the hill.

"I will lift her" he said & passed his arms round her little figure ~~lifting~~ raised

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her slowly, slowly, gently, upwards, laying her on the door with her face to the sky. But she moaned oh how she moaned! Pip whose heart had leapt to his throat at the first [~~indecipherable~~] sign of life almost went mad as the little sounds of agony burst from her lips.

~~But then~~ they raised the stretcher & bore her up the hill to the little ~~hut~~ brown hut at the top. Then Mr Gillet spoke, - ~~first to Meg & Pip~~ outside the doorway, to Meg & Pip who looked dazed, ~~blind~~ stunned.

"It will be hours before ~~help~~ we can get help & it is 5 now" he said "I will go to the house, it is 14 miles, - Pip there is a doctor at Booliwooli, 10 miles along the road. Fetch him, run all the way. I will go back home, - 14 miles Miss Meg, I can't be back all at once, I will get bring a buggy, the bullock dray is too slow & jolting even when it comes back. You must watch by her, give her water if she asks, there is nothing else you can do."

"She is dying?" Meg asked said "Dying?"

~~He looked at her & knew~~ He thought of what might happen before he brought help & dare not leave her unprepared.

"I am afraid so, - her back" he said gently

I think her back is broken, I am afraid. he said very quietly If it is it means death.

~~Don't move her~~

Pip fled down the road that lead to the doctor's.

Mr Gillet gave a direction or two & moved away again. Meg sprang after him.

~~She will~~ Will she die while you are away, - no one but me?" Her eyes were wild, terrified.

~~Who can tell~~ he said "you can do nothing but watch, I must go.

"God knows" he said. It was almost more than he could bear to go & leave this little girl alone to face so terrible a thing.

"God help me" the girl moaned ~~as she went back to the hut, clos~~ closing her hands but not looking at the hot, low hanging sky. "Help me God, - God help me, help me!

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Chapter XX1

~~When the sun went down~~

~~Such.~~

Such a sunset! Down at the foot of the small hill there was a flame coloured sky with purple clouds massed in banks high up ~~ag~~ where the dying glory met the paling blue. The ~~trees had~~ belt of trees had grown black, & the orange streaks between seemed ~~to~~ & stretched a hundred sombre still motionless arms against the orange background. All the wind had died & the air hung ~~strange~~ hot & quiet still & freighted with the ~~strange~~ Silen wonderful ~~mysti~~ strange silences of the Bush.

And the top of the hill, just within the doorway of the little brown hut, her wide eyes on the flaming wonderful heavens, ~~her hand in Meg's,~~ Judy lay dying.

She was very quiet now though she had been talking, - talking of all sorts of things.

She ~~said~~ told them she had no pain at all.

"Only I shall die when they move me" she said.

Meg's heart lay like ice within her. She was sitting in a little heap on the floor beside ~~the~~ her, she had never moved her eyes from the face on the pillow of ~~they had made~~

~~from with the macintoshes,~~ macintoshes, she had never opened her white lips to say one word.

Outside the bullocks dray stood motionless against the sky, Judy said they looked like stuffed ones having their portraits taken; she smiled the least little bit but Meg said "Don't" & writhed.

~~Th~~ Two or 3 of the men had gone on superfluous errands for help, the others stood ~~about~~ some distance away talking in ~~low~~ subdued voices. There was nothing for them to do. ~~M~~ The brown

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man had been talking a little [indecipherable] He had soothed the General off to sleep & laid him in the bunk with a blue blanket tucked round him. And he had made a billy of tea & asked the children with tears in his eyes to drink some but none of them would. Baby had fallen to sleep on the floor, her arms clasped around Judy's lace up boot. Bunty was ~~knelling~~ kneeling standing with a stunned look on his white face, behind the stretcher. His eyes were on ~~the~~ his sister's hair but he did not dare to let them wander to her face for fear of what he should see there.

Nellie was moving all the time, now ~~flying~~ to the fence & to straining her eyes down the road ~~that~~ where the evening shadows ~~we~~ lay heavily, now to flinging herself face downward behind the hut & saying, "Make her better God, God make her better, make her better, oh can't you make her better."

Greyer grew the shadows around the hut, the bullocks' ~~were~~ outlines had faded & only an ~~long~~ indistinct ~~m~~ mass of soft black loomed across the light.

Behind the trees the fire was going out, here & there were yellow vivid streaks yet but the flaming sun edge had dipped beyond the world & the purple delicate veil ~~dropped down~~ was dropping down. ~~The~~ A curlew's ~~mournful~~ note broke the silence, once, wild, ~~met~~ mournful, unearthly.

Meg shivered & sat up straight.

~~A new light came into Judy's eyes.~~

Judy's brow grew damp, her eyes dilated, her ~~mov~~ lips trembled.

"Meg" she said in a whisper that cut the air "oh Meg I'm frightened. Meg I'm so frightened."

"Judy! ~~Help me!~~" said Meg's heart.

"Meg, say something, Meg help me, look at the dark Meg, Meg say I've ~~not~~ I can't die, oh why don't they be quick."

Nellie ~~had gone~~ flew to the fence again. Then to say "Make her better, God, oh ~~God~~ please God.

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"Meg I can't think of anything to say. Can't you say something Meg, aren't there any prayers for the dying in the prayer book. I forget. Meg say something."

Meg's lips moved but her tongue uttered no word.

"~~Oh~~ Meg I am so frightened I can't think of anything but "For ~~these & all other mercies~~ what we are about to receive" & that's the Grace isn't it. ~~Mrs Hassal says Meg so it won't do will it~~ And there's nothing in "Our Father" that would do either. Meg I wish we'd gone to Sunday School & learnt things. Look at the dark Meg, oh Meg hold my hands."

"Heavens won't be dark" Meg's lips said. ~~She could only find a [indecipherable]~~ Even when speech came it was only a [indecipherable] ~~words phrase~~ talking phrase that fell from them.

"If it's all gold & ~~wa~~ diamonds I won't want to go," The child was crying now "oh Meg I want to be alive, - how'd you like to die Meg when you're only 13,- Think how lonely I'll be without you all. Oh Meg, ~~Meg~~ oh Pip, Pip, oh Baby, Nell!"

[This paragraph struck through]

Meg wiped away the heavy frightened stre Her tears streamed down her cheeks, her chest rose & fell. She shut her eyes so she could not see the gathering shadows. Meg's arms were round her, Meg's cheek was on her brow, Nell was holding her hand, Baby her feet, Bunty's lips were on her hair.

Like that they went with her to the Great Valley that is where there are no lights even for childish, stumbling feet. The shadows were cold & smote upon their hearts, they felt the wind from the Water on their brow but only she her feet who was about to cross could hear the low lapping of the waves.

Pip came just as her feet touched the water, she kissed him, & left her hand in his. Then the Wind blew over them all & with a little shudder she slipped away & he

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The tears streamed down her cheeks, her chest rose & fell.

"Oh Say something Meg, - hymns - anything."

Half the ~~hy~~ Book of Hymns, Ancient & Modern danced across Meg's brain, ~~It was so hard to find one~~ Which one could she find think of that might bring comfort in this ~~strange still hour?~~ quiet into those feverish frightened eyes looking so that were fastened on her face with such a frightened, imploring gaze look.

Then she opened her lips

"Come unto me ye weary

And I will give you rest

Obl...

"I'm not weary, I don't want to rest" Judy said in a fretful little way.

Again Meg tried

"My God my Father while I stray

Far from my home on life's rough way

Oh teach me from my heart to say

Thy will be done.

"That's for old people" said the little tired voice

"He won't expect me to say it."

Then Meg remembered the most beautiful hymn in the world & said ~~all she remembered of it~~ 2 three verses she knew without a break in her voice

Abide with me; fast grows the eventide

The darkness deepens: Lord with me abide

When other helpers fail & comforts flee

Help of the helpless oh abide with me.

Hold Thou Thy Cross before my fading eyes

Shine through the gloom & point me to the skies

Heaven's morning breaks & earth's vain shadow flee

In life, in death O Lord, abide with me."

~~"Judy!" said a wild voice & Pip~~

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Judy grew quiet & still more quiet. She shut her eyes so she could not see the gathering shadows. Meg's arms were round her, Meg's cheek was on her brow, Nellie was holding her hand, Baby her feet, Bunty's lips were on her hair. Like that they went with her right to the Great Valley, where there are no lights even for stumbling, childish feet. The shadows were cold & smote upon their hearts, they could feel the ~~wind~~ ~~stra~~ wind from the strange waters on their brows but only she who was about to cross ~~could~~ heard the low lapping of the waves.

Just as her feet touched the water ~~Pip came. The doctor~~ there was a figure in the dark doorway.

~~"Judy"~~ "Judy" said a wild voice & Pip brushed them all aside & fell down beside her.

"Judy, Judy, Judy"

The light flickered back in her eyes. She kissed him with loving pale lips, once, twice, she gave him both her hands, - & ~~one of her old~~ bright her last smiles.

"Judy" he moaned "Judy, Judy"

Then the Wind blew over them all & with a little shudder she slipped away.

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Chapter XX11

"Peace, come away, the song of woe

Is after all an earthly song

Peace, come away"

She seemed a thing that could not feel

The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force

She neither hears nor sees.

Rolled round in earth's diurnal course

With rocks & stones & trees.

They went home again, the six of them & Esther who ~~would go~~ all her days "would go the softer, sadlier" because of the price that had been paid for the life of her little sweet son.

~~Yarrahappini seemed to crush~~

The very air of Yarrahappini seemed to crush them, & ~~lay~~ hang heavily on their souls.

So when the Captain, who had hurried up to see the last of his poor little girl, asked if they would like to go home, they all said yes.

~~They left Judy in the churchyard~~

There was a green ~~patch~~ space of ground on the hill top behind the cottage & a clump of wattle trees dark green now but gold crowned & gracious in the spring. This is where they left little Judy.

All around it Mr Hassal had white palings put; ~~it looked like a little~~

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the short grave was in the shady corner of it. The place looked like a tiny churchyard in the children's ~~play city~~ country where there had only been one death. Or a green fair field with one little garden bed.

Meg ~~watched a sun rise tenderly over~~ it was glad the little mound looked to the east; the suns died behind it, the orange & yellow & purple suns she could not bear to watch ever again while she lived. But ~~They East~~ was away in the East they rose tenderly always, & ~~delicate~~ & the light crept up ~~across the sky~~ to the hill top, ~~across the sky~~ in delicate pinks & trembling blues, & brightening greys, but never ~~in the~~ fiery yellow streaks that made the eyes ache with ~~unsh~~ hot tears.

There was a moon making it white & beautiful when they said good bye to it on the last day. They plucked a blade or two of grass from the fresh turfs & turned away.

Nobody cried; the white stillness of the far moon, the ~~white far stars~~, far pale, hanging stars, the faint wind stirring the wattles held back their tears till they had closed the little gate & left her alone on the quiet hilltop.

Then they went back to Misrule each to pick up their threads of ~~their~~ life again ~~who~~ & go on with the weaving that, Thank God, must be done, ~~And Thank God for the hearts of the young~~ or hearts would ~~burst or~~

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break every day.

Meg had grown older; she would never again be ~~young~~ quite so young ~~again~~ as she had been before that red sunset sank into her soul.

There was a deeper light in her eyes, ~~it was as if such tears as she had wept wash more girlish shallowness~~ clear the sight, till Life ~~may be seen~~. Becomes a picture a thing more distinct & far reaching. ~~She told herself she must make~~

~~Aldith tried to claim her again when she went back~~

Nellie & she went to church the first Sunday after their return. ~~Aldith~~ Aldith was a few pews away, ~~Aldith~~ light-souled as ever, dressed in gay attire, flashing smiling coquettish glances across to the Courtney's pew & the Sinclairs siblings just ~~in front~~ behind.

~~Meg marvelled~~

How far away Meg had grown from her. It seemed years since she had been engrossed with the ~~set of dress drapery, & the correct modes of bow-making, & turn~~ the dip of "Umbrella skirts" & the ~~adv~~ best method for ~~soften~~ making the hands white. Years since she had tried a trembling prentice hand at flirtations. Years almost since she had ~~refused & then~~ given the little blue ribbon at Yarrahappini that was doing more good than she dreamed.

Alan looked at her from his pew. The little figure in its sorrowful black, the bright hair under its plain hat, the chastened droop of their young lips the wistful sadness of the blue eyes

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He could hardly realise it was the little ~~foolish~~ scatter-brained girl who had written that letter & stolen away through the darkness to meet his graceless young brother. He clasped her hand when church was over, his grey eyes ~~looked~~ with the quick moisture in them, made up for the clumsy, stumbling words of sympathy he tried to speak. ~~& faile~~

"Let us be friends always, Miss Meg" he said as they parted at the Misrule gate.

"Yes let us" said Meg.

~~And The firm, frank friendship that was the result~~

And the firm, frank friendship became a beautiful thing in both their lives, it strengthening Meg & it ~~made~~ the boy gentler.

Pip ~~was often~~ became his laughing, ~~noisy~~ high-spirited self again as ever the most loving boy will thanks to the merciful making of young hearts but he used to get sudden fits of depression at times. & disappear all at once, in the midst of a game of cricket, or football, or ~~leave the~~ from the table ~~perhaps~~ when the noise was at its highest.

~~Bunty's told a face was~~ presented to the world just as grimy a face as of old, & his ~~small hands were even more grubbier small hands~~ more grubby if possible hands for he had taken ~~to of late an engineer~~ mechanical turn of late & spent his spare moments in manufacturing printing machines – so called

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& & engines that required labelling ~~& such~~ out of an old stove & some pots & rusty frying pans rescued from the rubbish heap. But he did not tell quite so many stories in these days, that deep sunset had stolen even into his young heart & whenever he felt inclined to say "I never, it wasn't me, it wasn't my fault" a tangle of dark, ~~quiet~~ curls rose before his eyes just as they had lain that night when he had not dared to moved his eyes away from them.

Baby's legs engrossed her very much at present for she had just been promoted from socks to stockings & all who remember the occasion in the grown life will understand the importance.

~~Nell grew prettier every day & Baby do not altered very much, unless it was that she former grew more & more pretty.~~ Pip had his hands full with trying to keeping her

from growing conceited; if brotherly rubs & snubs were of any avail she ought to have been ~~will be never know~~ be as lowly minded enough for all pe as if she had red hair & a nose with a heavenward bent. Esther ~~says~~ she wished she could buy a few years, ~~half a~~ a stern brow & dignity in large quantities from ~~anywhere~~ some place or other; ~~she thought that~~ there might be a chance then of the name Misrule ~~going back to its ancient name of~~ being exchanged for its baptismal one of B-Glen The River House. ~~The Captain~~ But oddly enough everyone no one seemed to ~~likes her best just as she is~~ echoed the wish.

The Captain ~~has~~ never smoked at the end of the side verandah ~~ever~~ now; the ~~badly~~ ill-kempt lawn ~~to makdes~~ him see always a little figure in a pink frock & battered hat ~~weidin~~ mowing the ~~lawn~~ grass in a blaze of sunlight.

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‡ Judy's death ~~has~~ made his six living children dearer to his heart though he showed his affection ~~no~~ very little more.

~~And the little General is the delight & sunshine & adoration of them all Blue rib.~~ The General grew ~~the same~~ chubbier & more adorable every day; ~~it is the b~~ it is ~~not saying too much~~ exaggeration to say they all worshipped him in his little kingly babyhood for the ~~little~~ dear life had been twice given & the second time it was Judy's gift & priceless therefore.

My pen has been moving heavily, slowly for these last two chapters, it ~~is~~ refuses to run lightly or freely again just yet so I ~~will say good by~~ lay it aside or I shall sadden you.

Some day if you would care to hear it I should like to tell you of my young Australians again, slipping a little space of years.

Till then, Farewell & adieu.

The End

Finis

Completed

Totally finished !!!

[Transcribed by Donna Gallacher, Lynne Palmer, Rosemary Cox, Allanah Jarman for the State Library of New South Wales]

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