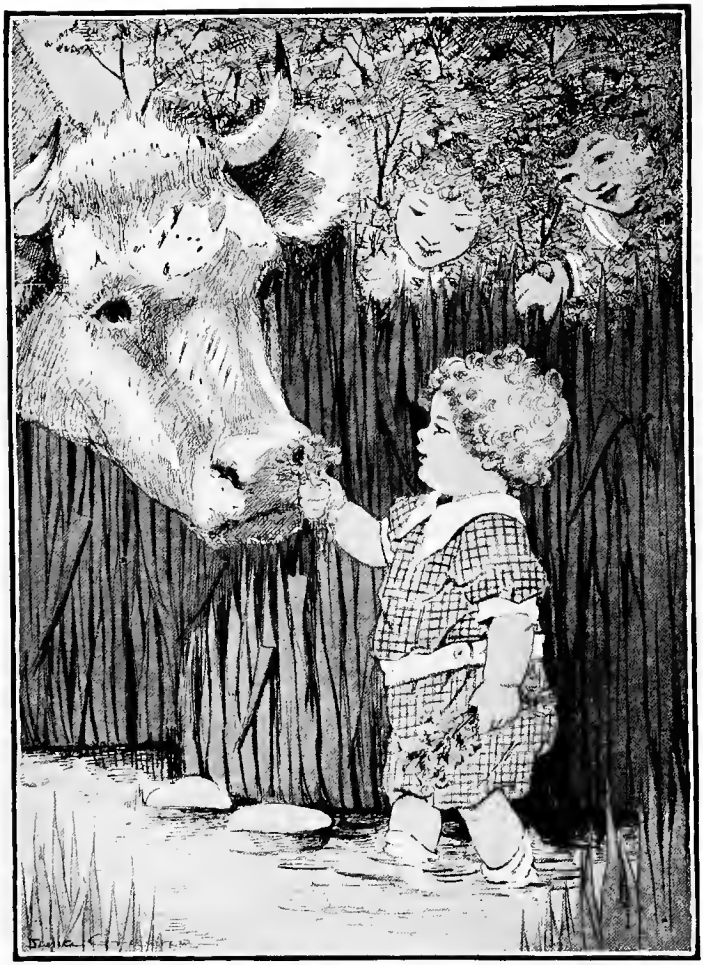
The CURLYTOPS AT CHERRY FARM

HOWARD R. GARIS



"FEEDIN' POSY-TREE TO BOSSY-COW!" GURGLED TROUBLE

THE CURLYTOPS AT CHERRY FARM

OR

Vacation Days in the Country

BY

HOWARD R. GARIS

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By HOWARD R. GARIS

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THE CURLYTOPS AT CHERRY FARM
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THE CURLYTOPS AT CHERRY FARM

CHAPTER I

IN THE MUD

"TED! Teddy! Where are you?"

Janet Martin stood in the hall and called to her brother.

"Here I am, in the bathroom," he answered.

"What you doing?"

"Combin' my hair."

"Oh, you forgot to put your 'g' on!" shouted Janet. "You forgot to put your 'g' on!" and she clapped her hands as though at some joke.

"I don't need any 'g' on my hair," declared Ted, opening the bathroom door and looking out at his sister. "I put on some of the switch-hazel daddy uses when he shaves. It smells good. Want some?"

"Nope, I've combed my hair and it's all fixed now. But you didn't put your 'g' on combing, and I haven't dropped any of my 'g's' to-day."

"Well, I was in a hurry," explained Ted, now using the comb with both hands, the more quickly to get his hair in order.

The children's mother was trying to teach them to speak correctly, and not drop the 'g' of the words where it belonged. Sometimes they forgot, and at other times they remembered. Once in a while Janet would remind Teddy that he had forgotten, and, again, it would be his turn to tease her a little.

"Hurry up and come on out!" cried Janet. "We can have some fun in the swing and hammock. This is the first week of vacation, and we want to have some fun!"

"I'm hurryin'—I mean hurrying—as fast as I can, but my hair is all snarls, and mother'll send me back to fix it if I don't comb it. Wow! That pulled!"

Ted made such a funny face as the comb became tangled in his tightly curling hair that Janet laughed.

"Huh! you wouldn't giggle if it happened to you!" protested Ted.

"Mine was all snarly too, but Nora helped me," said Janet. "Wait, Ted, I'll comb it out for you and then we can go and play," and she ran toward the bathroom, reaching out her hand for the comb.

"You won't hurt, will you?" asked Ted, anxiously.

"Nope! I'll do it easy."

Jan took hold of the comb, but no sooner had she started to pull it through her brother's tangle of hair than he gave a howl, almost like those he used when he was playing Indians with the boys and pretended to be on the warpath.

"What's the matter? Don't yell so!" cried Jan.

"You pull like anything!"

"Well, I can't help it. The comb is caught fast, or something! I've got to get it out," and the little girl did her best to untangle the snarls.

"Ouch! Let it alone!" again Ted howled, and this time his mother's voice called up from the foot of the stairs:

"What *are* you children doing now?"

"I'm combing Ted's hair," answered Janet.

"She's pullin' it," declared Ted, and this

time his sister did not mention the dropped "g." "She pulls awful! The comb's stuck!"

"Wait a minute. I'll come up," said Mother Martin with a half sigh as she started up the stairs, for there was much to do that day and she had hoped that the children could get themselves ready for their play.

"Where's the comb?" she asked, as she entered the bathroom.

"Ted has it," answered Jan. "He wouldn't let me do anything for him."

"She pulled too much," her brother explained.

"I don't see the comb," remarked Mrs. Martin.

"It's on my head—in my hair," explained Ted further.

If you had been there to see him you would not have wondered that he was called "Curlytop" about as often as he was by his regular name. Jan had the same tightly curling hair as her brother, and the two children were often spoken of, even by strangers, as "The Curlytops." The name just fitted them.

"No wonder I couldn't see it," said Mrs. Martin, as she gently brushed aside the hair

on top of her little boy's head and saw the comb caught in a tangle of curls. "It's hidden like a hen's egg in a nest of hay. Stand still now, and I'll soon have you looking nice and tidy."

If Ted's mother pulled his hair he did not speak of it. Once or twice he caught his breath as though about to give a cry, but he held it back, and finally, nicely combed and brushed, he was ready to run downstairs with his sister.

"If their hair keeps on growing and curling," said Mrs. Martin as she put the bathroom in order, "they'll be losing more things in it than combs. Look after Baby William!" she called to Ted and Jan from the window, as she saw them down in the yard.

"We will," promised Jan.

"Where is Trouble?" asked Ted.

"Out in the hammock. But don't swing him too high, or he may fall out," answered his mother.

"All right," assented Jan.

Trouble was the nickname given to the baby brother of Jan and Ted. He was about three years old, and often got into mischief. That was why he was called Trouble.

It was a beautiful, sunshiny day—the last of June—and Monday morning. It was the beginning of the long summer vacation, school having closed the Friday before.

"Now we'll have some fun!" laughed Ted as he ran over the thick, green grass and turned a somersault. "Let's build a tent and play Indians."

"I don't want to play that," objected Jan.

"Then I'll get Tom Taylor," declared Ted. "Here he comes now," and he pointed to a boy, a little larger than himself, who was walking along the street whistling.

"Here's the letter man," added Jan, as she saw the mail-carrier approaching. "I wonder if he's got anything for us."

She ran to the low hedge that was between the Martin side yard and the street, and Ted followed.

"Hello, Curlytops!" was the postman's greeting. "Here's the mail for you. Don't lose it," and he handed Jan two letters. "Any birds been nesting in your hair today?" he asked Ted, putting his hand over the hedge and ruffling up the boy's curls.

"Nope!" answered Ted.

"He lost the comb in it and mother couldn't find it," Jan put in.

"I should think not!" agreed the postman, laughing. "If I had such a head of hair as you two youngsters have, I'd be afraid of losing my whistle in the curls. Then I'd have to stop being a postman until I found it. But run along with the letters, Jan. Your mother may be waiting for them."

He gave a blast on his whistle, and crossed the street, while Jan hurried into the house and Ted waved to Tom Taylor, calling:

"Come on in and we'll play Indians."

"All right," agreed Tom.

He wiggled his way through a hole in the hedge, not waiting to go around to the gate, and he and Ted started for a shady spot under the trees, where Jan soon joined them.

"Come on down to the back lot," urged Ted. "We'll get a blanket and make a tent like the Indians. Jan can be a squaw if she wants to."

"I don't want to," Jan said quickly. "I'm going over and play with Edna Lewis."

"I'll play Indian in a minute," promised Tom. "Let's rest a bit. I just went to the store for my mother. She says I must help a little, even if it is vacation. I like to help, though," he added quickly. "She gave me a

penny for going to the store. Where are you Curlytops going on your vacation?" he asked, and then, without waiting for an answer, he added quickly: "I'm going down to the ocean."

"We were there once," said Janet. "It's an awful big place."

"We're goin' to grandpa's farm," said Teddy, and this time Jan did not speak about the "g" he dropped. Perhaps she was thinking too much about vacation fun.

"Are we really going there, Ted?" she asked her brother.

"Yep! Mother and daddy were talking about it last night. We're to go to Cherry Farm and stay all summer. Oh, what fun we'll have!"

"I'll have fun at the ocean, too," added Tom. "But what makes 'em call your grandpa's place Cherry Farm?"

" 'Cause it's got so many cherry trees on it," explained Ted. "You ought to see 'em! There's more'n a million!"

"There can't be that many cherry trees in the whole world," objected Tom.

"Well, there's a hundred, anyhow," declared Ted. "I've seen 'em, an' I'm going to eat a lot of cherries."

"I wish I had some now," sighed Tom.

"It isn't time for 'em to be ripe, yet," explained Janet. "Maybe we could send you some when they are," she kindly added. "It's an awful nice place at Cherry Farm. I wish you could come with us, Tom."

"Oh, I'll have fun down at the ocean. I'm going to sail a boat on it. Maybe I'll be shipwrecked," and Tom seemed to think that would be great fun.

"I wouldn't want to be shipwrecked," remarked Ted. "My mother read me a story once about a sailor that was wrecked, and he didn't have a thing to eat but his old shoes."

"Didn't he have any bread an' butter with 'im?" asked Tom.

"Nope."

"Then I guess I won't be shipwrecked," decided Tom. "I like bread and butter."

"You could be shipwrecked on my grandpa's farm, and eat cherries," suggested Jan.

"Pooh!" exclaimed Tom. "You couldn't be shipwrecked without an ocean, and there isn't any ocean on Cherry Farm I guess."

"There's a lake!" returned Teddy quickly. "I'm going to sail a boat on that, and maybe I'll be shipwrecked. I'll take

some cherries with me, though. I guess I'll go and fix my small sailboat now. That'll be more fun than playin' Indian."

"And I've got to wash my doll's dress," said Jan. "Oh, look!" she called to her brother. "There's mother in the door waving to us."

"She wants us to run, I guess," added Ted, "for she's waving awful hard."

"I wonder what she does want," murmured Jan.

"Maybe she wants us to go to the store," suggested Ted. "She's got a paper in her hand like she writes down things so we don't forget to remember."

"That's the letter I gave her from the postman," explained Jan, and she and her brother ran faster than before toward their mother.

"Oh, children!" cried Mrs. Martin as Ted and Jan drew near, Tom having gone back home the way he came, through the hedge, "have you seen Baby William?"

"Seen Trouble?" asked Ted, laughing.

"Yes, only I wish you wouldn't call him that name when he's lost!"

"Lost?" cried Ted and Jan in a chorus like twins, only they weren't.

"He must be lost," went on Mrs. Martin. "I can't see him anywhere. Did you go to him when you went out after having had your hair combed?"

"No—we didn't," and Ted spoke slowly. "We forgot."

"Then please go to look for him," went on Mrs. Martin. "I saw him playing in the yard near the hammock, but he may have crawled through the hedge. I'll come after you as soon as I answer the telephone which is ringing. Hurry, and find William!"

"We will!" answered Ted. "Come on, Jan!"

Jan and Ted hurried around to the rear yard of their house to look for Trouble. That, really, was what Baby William was called more often than anything else. Daddy Martin called him a "bunch of trouble," while Mother Martin always put "dear" before the name. To Ted and Jan their little brother was just plain "Trouble" for he seemed to get into so much mischief.

"Where do you s'pose he is now?" asked Jan, as she looked here and there in the yard.

"Maybe he's in the chicken coop," replied Ted. "He hid there once and came out all

covered with feathers, like a rooster."

But Trouble was not there. Though an old hen that flew cackling off her nest probably thought the two children made trouble enough for her, getting her all in a flutter just when she wanted to lay an egg.

"Look in the toolhouse," suggested Ted, when he and his sister had searched in several places without finding their little brother.

Together the two children started toward a small building where the hoe, rake, shovel and other garden tools were kept. This was one of the places where Trouble best liked to come when he could toddle off by himself.

But Trouble was not in the toolhouse. Ted and his sister stood looking about the yard and garden. They were wondering where next to search, and they were wishing their mother would come out to help them, when they heard a sudden laugh. The sound came from the little brook that ran at the lower end of the garden.

"There he is!" cried Ted.

"Oh, I hope he hasn't fallen in!" gasped Jan.

"He couldn't laugh if he had," declared Ted. "His mouth would be full of water."

"Oh, Trouble would laugh no matter what happened," returned Jan. "Come on—let's find him!"

The two Curlytops parted the currant bushes that grew on the edge of the small brook. Then they saw Trouble.

Their little brother was standing in mud and water over his knees, holding out a bunch of watercress to a brindle cow that stood in the brook, reaching out her tongue for the bunch of green.

"Oh, Trouble!" cried Jan. "Oh, Trouble!"

"My! what a sight you are!" exclaimed Ted. "Maybe mother won't give it to you for getting all muddy! What you doin'?"

"Feedin' posy-tree to bossy-cow!" gurgled Trouble. He called any bunch of weeds, flowers or grass a "posy tree."

"Come right here to me this minute!" ordered Jan, as she had heard her mother call. "Come here, Trouble!"

"Trouble can't! Trouble got to feed posy-tree to bossy cow."

"I guess he's stuck in the mud," remarked Ted. "That mud's awful sticky. I've been in it. Trouble is stuck in the mud all right!"

CHAPTER II

A CRASH IN THE KITCHEN

For a moment Jan and Ted stood looking at their little brother, fast in the mud, while Trouble, laughing and gurgling, held out the green watercress "posy-tree" to the cow.

"Oh, how will we ever get him out?" questioned Jan. "Mother will be so worried! What shall we do, Teddy?"

"I'll wade in and get him."

"But you'll get all mud too!"

"I'll take off my shoes and stockings," and the boy began to do this.

There came a laugh from Trouble.

"What's the matter now?" asked Jan, who had been looking to see if she could not find a board with which to make a little bridge over the mud so she could reach her baby brother without getting her feet wet. "What did you do, Trouble?" asked Jan.

"Bossy-cow frow water on Trouble.

Make Trouble all wet!" and he laughed joyously.

"Oh, look!" gasped Jan.

Ted, who by this time had taken off his shoes and stockings and rolled up his knickerbockers, looked and cried:

"Oh, he's soaking wet! He might just as well have gone in swimming!"

Trouble was certainly wet. The cow, in stamping her front legs to get rid of some biting flies, had splashed water from the brook over the little boy standing in front of her, still holding out the "posy-tree" of watercress. Trouble was splattered from his head to his waist, which was all of him that was out of the brook, his fat, chubby legs, far past his knees, now being sunk deep in the water and mud of the brook.

"Get him out quick!" ordered Jan. "The cow might bite him!"

"Cows don't bite," declared Ted. "I'm not scared."

"Well, get him out anyhow," went on Jan. "Oh, Trouble!"

Ted waded in, and, putting his arms around Trouble, pulled out his baby brother, who tossed the greens to the cow. Then, laughing and kicking, thus splashing mud

and water on Ted, Trouble was dragged to dry ground and hurried into the house.

"Oh, my dear Trouble!" cried Mother Martin, who was just coming out to look for him, "you are such a sight! As if there wasn't trouble enough without this!"

"Is there more trouble, Mother?" asked Jan, while the maid, Nora, carried off the wiggling little fellow to wash him.

"Yes, there is more trouble," said Mrs. Martin slowly, while Nora was putting some clean clothes on Baby William. The children's mother still held in her hand the letter Jan had taken to her from the postman. "There is much more trouble."

"What about?" asked Ted.

"It's about Cherry Farm."

"You mean grandpa's—where we're going for our vacation?" inquired Jan, looking at her mother with wide-open eyes.

"Yes. But I don't know whether or not we're going there for the vacation days. That's the other trouble, children."

There was silence for a moment. Ted and Jan, looking with wondering eyes at one another, felt as if, for them, the bottom had somehow or other dropped out of the world.

From the bathroom could be heard the

giggles and squeals of Trouble as Nora was combing his hair. It was not as curly as the tousled wigs of his brother and sister. To Ted and Jan, at that minute, the baby's cries seemed the only real thing in the house.

Not to go to Cherry Farm for their vacation! Could such a thing happen? They just stared at their mother and then at the letter still in her hand.

"Can't we—can't we *ever* go to grandpa's?" asked Jan slowly.

"Then where can we go on our vacation?" Ted questioned, before his mother had a chance to answer his sister.

To the Curlytops Cherry Farm meant a great deal. Ever since they could remember they had heard it talked of at home, and more than once they had gone there for visits, sometimes in winter and again in summer. Grandpa was Daddy Martin's father, and Cherry Farm was the nicest place in the whole world, so the Curlytops thought.

There was a big white house. There were red barns, broad, green fields, shady trees, horses, cows, sheep, a little brook, a lake—oh, so many delightful things! And now——

"Why can't we go to Cherry Farm?" asked Jan again.

"Because there may not be a Cherry Farm any more," answered Mother Martin, and her voice was sad.

"Did—did somebody take it?" asked Ted, and yet he did not quite see how anyone could pick up a big farm and walk off with it, especially when it had on it houses and barns to hold it down, as teacher used to put a weight on the papers of her desk to keep the wind from scattering them about the room.

"Somebody may take it," said Mother Martin. "It's too much for you little folks to understand. However, I'll tell you about it as well as I can. But here comes daddy. Wait until after supper, then we'll talk."

"Hello, everybody!" cried Daddy Martin, coming into the room and catching up first Jan and then Ted. "Where's Trouble?" and he looked around for Baby William.

"Oh, Trouble had—trouble," said his wife with a smile. "He waded in the mud of the brook. Nora is cleaning him now."

"Little Trouble in a brook,
Nora cleans him with a—washrag!"

Daddy Martin laughed as he made up this

little verse. Then came a patter of bare feet in the room, and a joyous cry.

"Ah, here's my bunch of Trouble!" exclaimed Mr. Martin as he caught up the little fellow who, now all sweet and clean, ran crowing and laughing into his father's arms.

"Well, I guess all the trouble is over now," said Daddy Martin, as he tossed William toward the ceiling, being careful, of course, not to bump it, which might have made the plaster fall down. Oh, yes, and it might have hurt Trouble too. I almost forgot that part.

"There's more trouble," said Jan, as her father sat down in the easy chair to wait for Nora to say that supper was on the table.

"More trouble? I hope our old rooster hasn't caught cold! We must send for the doctor at once!"

"No, it isn't that," answered Ted, laughing, for his father was always making some joke about the rooster catching cold.

"What is it then?"

"Grandpa is going to lose Cherry Farm!"

Jan gave a gasp as Ted said this.

"Lose Cherry Farm!" cried Daddy Mar-

tin, as he looked over at his wife in surprise.

"Yes, there is bad news," she said. "But maybe it will turn out all right in the end, as Nora would say. I'll tell you after supper. There's the bell."

And while the family is at table I will tell you just a little about them, so you will feel that you have been properly introduced. I did not have time to do it before, on account of so much happening—Trouble getting stuck in the mud and all that.

I have told you why Ted and Jan were called Curlytops, so you know that much about them, anyhow. And you have really met all the family, from daddy and mother, down to Trouble and Nora, with Ted and Jan coming in between, you might say.

The Martins lived in the town of Cresco in an Eastern State, and Mr. Martin owned a store. He also owned a nice home just outside the place.

Grandpa Martin, who was Daddy Martin's father, lived with Grandma Martin on Cherry Farm. This was near the country village of Elmburg, close to Clover Lake. And, while I am about it, I may as well tell you that the children had an Uncle

Frank Barton, who owned a large cattle ranch near Rockville, Montana. Then there was Aunt Josephine Miller, a maiden lady who lived in Clayton and had a summer place at Mt. Hope near Ruby Lake. She was a sister of Mrs. Martin's. The children always called her Aunt Jo.

Theodore, Teddy or Ted Martin, any of which names he answered to, was aged seven and his sister was six years old. The children's birth anniversaries came on the same day, but they had been born a year apart. I have told you of their curly hair, and I can't do more than add that never were such ringlets, twists, whorls, waves and whatever else goes to make up curly hair, seen on children before. Once Grandma Martin's thimble was lost and—well, I'll tell you about that when we get to it. At any rate "Curlytops" was the best name in the world for Jan and Ted, just as Trouble was for Baby William.

I call him a baby, though really he was getting to be quite a good-sized boy. He was "half-past two years growing on three," as Jan always said whenever anyone asked his age, and he was bright and quick.

"Well, now let's hear about the trouble," said Daddy Martin, as, having finished his

supper, he pushed back his chair from the table, and took his little boy up in his lap.

"I gived posy-tree to bossy-cow, an' bossy sneezed an' I got wet-muddy," said William, reaching up to kiss his father.

"Yes, I heard about what happened to you, Trouble," said Mr. Martin, pretending to bite off one of the baby's ears as a sort of dessert after his meal. "But what is worrying you, Mother?" and he looked over at his wife.

"There is trouble at Cherry Farm."

"What kind of trouble?"

"High water has spoiled the wheat, your father has lost money, and now he may lose the farm."

Mr. Martin gave a long whistle.

"That *is* bad," he said. "Who told you about it?"

"A letter came this afternoon. It was from Grandmother Martin. Here it is."

Jan and Ted watched their father as he read what the postman had left. Then Mr. and Mrs. Martin talked together in low voices.

Jan and Ted did not know what it was all about, but they heard enough to tell them that it was real trouble. Something had hap-

pened to grandpa's farm, he had lost much money, and unless he paid some men more money to get rid of some queer thing called a "mortgage," he might have to move away from Cherry Farm.

And that, Jan and Ted knew, would be dreadful. Dreadful not only for them, for they would have no place to spend the long vacation, but bad also for grandpa and for Grandma Martin. For Cherry Farm was their home.

"However," said Daddy Martin after a bit, "it may not be so bad as it seems now. I'll see what I can do."

Ted and Jan felt better. When Daddy Martin talked this way something good was always sure to happen. It always had, and it always would, they were sure. Daddy Martin could do almost everything.

"Do you think we can go to Cherry Farm?" asked Ted anxiously.

"Oh, yes, I think so," answered his father slowly. "Even if trouble comes it will not get here right away. You'll have the summer there anyhow."

"And cherries?" asked Jan, who was very fond of them.

"Oh, yes. Grandma writes that they'll

have a bigger crop of cherries than ever before. They weren't hurt by the high water that flooded and spoiled the wheat.

"And now I think I'll write grandpa a letter," went on Daddy Martin. "I'll tell him I'll help all I can, and——"

"So will we!" chimed in Jan and Ted, while Trouble gurgled:

"Me help too!"

"Yes, I guess you will—help eat cherries and get sick!" laughed Jan, throwing her arms about him.

"Maybe grandpa won't want us all to go out there for the summer," said Mother Martin. "If he has to save his pennies——"

"Oh, there'll be plenty to eat—there always is at Cherry Farm," said her husband; "and that's all the children want. The old house is big enough for us all, and more. We'll go surely enough. It wouldn't seem right if we didn't. Summer would not be summer without Cherry Farm."

Jan and Ted thought so too.

Daddy Martin had set Trouble on the floor, to go away to write his letter. Mrs. Martin was talking to Nora about the work, while the Curlytops drew their chairs to the table, now cleared of dishes, and began to

talk of what they would do in the country.

"Maybe we can pick cherries and sell 'em," said Ted.

"Maybe," agreed Jan. "If we had a little cart and a pony——"

"Oh, that would be great!" cried her brother. "I could drive and you could dish out the cherries! Let's write a letter to grandpa and ask him——"

Just then, before Ted could finish what he was saying, there came a crashing sound from the kitchen. A look around showed that Trouble had slipped away. The reason for the crash was consequently explained—at least, in part.

"Oh, Nora, what is it?" called Mrs. Martin who had just gone upstairs.

"Oh, nothin' much, Ma'am," was the answer. "It'll be all right, I guess."

"But, Nora! What *was* it?"

"Oh, nothin'; only William pulled a big pan full of milk over on himself. I was goin' to make junket of it, but now Turnover is lappin' it up. It's all right; she hadn't had her supper yet, and the milk'll do her good."

CHAPTER III

AT CHERRY FARM

Ted and Jan rushed to the kitchen. In the middle of the floor, in the center of a pool of milk that flowed all about him like a little lake, sat Trouble, a look of surprise on his chubby face. Near him was a pan that had held the milk. It had bounced right side up after having been pulled from the table, and a little milk had remained in it. This milk a maltese cat was now lapping up.

"Oh, Trouble!" cried Ted.

"And you spilled the nice milk!" added Jan. "And you're all wet again! Oh, Trouble Martin!"

"He's wet, sure enough," said Nora, who did not seem at all angry at the mess in her kitchen. "There was nigh two quarts of milk in the pan. I was goin' to make it into junket, but the baby got ahead of me." She laughed. Nora could laugh easily.

"Oh, my dear Trouble!" cried Mother Martin. "How did it happen?"

"He just got hold of the table oilcloth and pulled on it when I wasn't lookin'," explained Nora. "The pan of milk came with it."

"Oh, Trouble!" said Mrs. Martin with a sigh, "when will you ever learn not to pull things?"

"Trouble all wet—bossy-cow splash water—bossy-cow give milk," said William, rubbing the white fluid out of his eyes.

"He means a cow was to blame for every bit of his trouble to-day," explained Nora. "He was in trouble with a cow in the brook, and now here. But it'll be all right. I've got more milk for junket, and Turnover is enjoyin' herself."

Turnover was the children's cat. She had learned the trick of lying down on her back and rolling over when told to do so. Generally she did that trick to get something to eat.

"Oh, Turnover!" gasped Jan, "what a fine supper you're having!"

And then the cat, thinking she had been told to do her trick, rolled right over in the pool of milk on the kitchen floor.

"I 'ike Turnover," gurgled William, as he clasped the now dripping and bedraggled pet in his arms, making himself wetter than ever.

"I'll be glad when this day is over!" sighed Mrs. Martin, but she could not help laughing at the funny picture Trouble made.

His mother carried the baby off to put him to bed; Nora set the pan out of the way, where the cat could finish her supper in peace; and then the maid started to mop the floor.

"I'll make more junket after William's asleep," said Nora to Jan and Ted.

They were very fond of milk made thick and sweet in this way, and Trouble too always ate his share of junket.

The day on which so many things had happened came to an end at last. Trouble was in bed and asleep. So were Jan and Ted. Mother and Father Martin sat up a little later than usual, talking.

"Then you think, after all, we can go to Cherry Farm?" asked Mother Martin.

"Oh, yes. We'll go. Maybe there'll be some way out of the trouble. I want the children to have a happy summer."

"Well, they surely will if they spend their vacation on Cherry Farm."

And, though neither Mother nor Father Martin knew it, the Curlytops were also going to do more than just have fun.

"What are you goin' to do, Teddy?" asked Jan the next morning after breakfast, as she saw her brother out in the yard with a shovel.

"Huh? Who dropped a 'g' letter that time?" asked Ted with a laugh.

"Well, I didn't mean to," responded Janet. "I was wondering what you were going to do with the shovel."

"I'm going to dig a hole," and Ted was very particular to put his g on the ends of words this time, though he forgot oftener than did his sister.

"A hole! What for?" asked Janet. "Are you going to plant something, as grandpa does at Cherry Farm?"

"Nope. I'm just going to dig a big hole and see how deep I can make it. Then it won't seem so long waiting until it's time to go to grandpa's."

"Oh! Let me help?" begged Jan. "I love to dig!"

"I'll let you shovel away the dirt I dig,"

promised her brother. "But don't let Trouble see us."

"Why not?"

"Because he might fall down the hole, and if I make it deep maybe we couldn't get him out."

"Nora took him to the store with her," answered Janet. "He won't bother us for awhile."

"All right. Then we'll dig."

Part of the Martin yard was the children's playground, where they were allowed to do about as they pleased. Ted was fond of digging in the sandy soil, and he often made forts, tunnels and cities in the earth, Jan helping in this play.

Picking out a spot where the soil was soft, Ted began to dig.

"You poke the dirt away when I shovel it up," Ted ordered his sister, for though she sometimes told him what to do, like a "little mother" when it came to anything like this Ted was the "boss."

It was not hard digging, and Ted soon had a hole deep enough for him to stand in, being down in it as far as his knees. As he was shoveling out the dirt, which Janet pushed to one side, the iceman came along.

"Hello, Curlytop!" he called to Ted. "What are you doing?"

"Digging a hole."

"So I see," and the iceman jingled his tongs. "Are you going clear through to China?"

"Where's China?" asked Jan.

"It's where the laundryman does daddy's shirts," explained Ted.

"No, I mean the country where the Chinese laundrymen come from," went on the iceman with a laugh. "It's supposed to be straight down through this earth on the other side, you know. So, if you dig deep enough, you may come to China," and he passed on.

"I'm going to do it," said Ted after a bit, during which time he had dug so deep that only his shoulders were out of the ground.

"Do what?" asked his sister.

"Dig to China. And when I get the hole all the way through I'll take you with me."

"I—I guess I don't want to come," said Janet slowly.

"Why not?"

She thought for a minute while Ted looked at her over the edge of the hole.

" 'Cause what are you going to stand on

when you get all the way through the hole to China? There won't be anything there and you'll fall. I don't want to fall."

Teddy thought this over a minute and then said:

"Well, maybe I won't go all the way to China. I forgot about falling through. But I'll dig a deep hole anyhow."

And he did—so deep that at last Jan had to stand on the very edge of it and look down in it before she could see her brother.

"Don't go down any farther," she begged. "You maybe can't get out again."

"Yes I can," declared Ted. "You get the little ladder we play light street-lamps with, an' I can climb out."

This ladder was a side from an old wooden crib that Trouble no longer slept in, and Ted and Jan often used it in their games.

When Jan brought this and put it down in the hole, Ted could easily climb out.

"I guess I won't dig any more now," he said. "I'll cover up the hole with some boards, and maybe to-morrow I'll go deeper."

Jan helped her brother put some pieces of wood over the hole and then she went off to play with her doll while Ted found Tom

Taylor, and the two boys played marbles in the shade.

That night, just as the Curlytops were going to bed, there was a queer howling in the yard.

"What's that?" asked their mother.

"It sounds like Skyrocket," said Daddy Martin.

"Oh, it is our dog!" cried Ted. "Something has bit him."

"Maybe he has bit some person, or maybe a cat," said his father. "I'll go and see what it is."

The Curlytops waited anxiously until their father came back. When he did he was laughing, and he carried Skyrocket in his arms.

"I found him down in a big hole in the yard," said Mr. Martin. "Poor Skyrocket couldn't get up. He had fallen through the boards that were over the hole. I wonder how it got there?"

"I was going to dig through to China," explained Ted, "but I didn't finish. Is Skyrocket hurt?"

"No," answered Daddy Martin. "But I guess he was pretty badly scared. Don't dig such deep holes any more, Teddy."

Ted promised he would not, and after he and his sister had petted their dog they went to bed.

A few days later everything was ready for the start to Grandpa Martin's home in the country. Ted and Jan, dressed and ready to start for the railroad station, were out on the front porch taking care of Trouble.

"Well, well! you look very spruce this morning!" called the postman as he passed the house. "Where are you going, Curlytop —you and your brother and sister all dressed up so stylish?" and he patted Ted's hair, which seemed more tangled than ever.

"We're going to grandpa's Cherry Farm," Ted answered.

"Save me some cherries," begged the postman. "I love 'em, but nobody ever sends me any in the letters I deliver."

"I guess they'd squash and the juice would run all over if they did," laughed Jan.

"I guess so," agreed the postman. "Well, good-bye, Curlytops, and Trouble too! I hope you have a good time!"

"Good-bye!" they called to him.

A little while after this they were in the

train and on the way to Elmburg. Many of the passengers in the car looked more than once at the curly, tousled heads of Jan and Ted, and one woman remarked:

"Did you ever see such wonderful hair?"

"It must be a task to comb it," said another.

"No wonder the conductor called them what he did as he passed through," said the first woman.

"What was it?" asked the second.

"He named them the 'Curlytops.' But I suppose they're used to that by this time. I never saw such tight curls!"

Nothing much happened on the trip, except that Trouble wanted a number of drinks of water. Ted or Jan brought them to him in cute, little, white paper cups, and Baby William thought they were fine to play with, after he had emptied them.

"P'ease, Teddy, det me a dwink," Trouble begged for about the eighth time. "I's fwirsty!"

So Ted brought the paper cup full of water.

"Dat's dood! bring me annuver!" demanded Trouble, as soon as he had drained the last drop, and piled the cup up with oth-

ers on the window-sill. "I 'ikes water!"

"Better look out or you'll have to swim to grandpa's if you drink much more," laughed Daddy Martin.

Then Mother Martin took Baby William on her lap and talked to him, telling him a little story that sent him to Slumberland, thus giving Ted and Jan a rest from going up and down the car aisle after drinks of water for their little brother.

In the afternoon the train reached the village, and there was Grandpa Martin smiling and looking eagerly at each coach to get the first glimpse of his loved ones.

"Well, well! Here you are! Here you are!" he cried as he saw them. "Right over this way is the team! Pile in! Pile in!"

The patient horses stood waiting. The big wagon held the whole family, trunks and all. Jan and Ted looked curiously at their grandfather at first, as if to see whether his trouble had changed him any. But if he was worrying, he did not show it, and the two Curlytops breathed easier.

"Is the farm there all right?" Jan could not help asking, as grandpa turned the horses down the shady road.

"All there—what the high water didn't

wash away," he answered with a laugh, and hearing this the children felt better.

"And how is Trouble?" asked grandpa, looking at the baby. "Did he cut up any coming down?"

"No, he was pretty good," laughed the baby's mother, and then she and daddy and grandpa talked, while Jan and Ted looked at houses and other things along the road, trying to remember what they had seen on their last visit to the country.

"Oh, there's the house!" cried Ted as the horses trotted around a turn in the highway.

"And there's grandma waving to us!" added Jan. "Oh, I'm so happy!"

"Bless your hearts!" cried grandma, as she kissed them all, snuggling her withered cheeks—like well-kept apples—down on the chubby face of Baby Trouble. "Bless your hearts—every one!"

"You dot any bossy-cows?" Trouble demanded when everyone had seen everyone else, and it was quiet for a minute in the old farmhouse. "I want a bossy-cow."

"What does he mean?" asked grandma.

"Oh, I guess he's thinking of the time he gave some watercress to a cow that was in

our brook," explained Ted, telling how Trouble had been stuck in the mud.

"Bossy cow splashed milk on me," went on Trouble. "I like milk."

"But I don't want you taking any more baths in it," laughed his mother. "You may go out and play with him," she added to the two Curlytops. "Be careful he doesn't get into mischief!"

"Come on!" cried Jan. "We'll go outside and have some fun, Trouble!"

"Trouble!" exclaimed Grandma Martin. "What a name for a dear, sweet little baby!"

"Well, he's a dear, sweet, little bunch of trouble—sometimes," laughed Daddy Martin.

"We see bossy-cow?" asked William, as he took hold of his sister's hand on one side, and Ted's on the other.

"Yes, if we can find one," promised Jan. "Come on!"

Trouble was very willing to go. He toddled along down the side path out toward the barn. Some chickens, in their wire-fenced yard where they were kept so they could not scratch the garden, cackled at the children, and an old rooster crowed.

"Dat our roosterfer?" asked William,

making the name a little longer than it needed to be.

"No, that isn't our roosterfer," laughed Jan. "It's one just like ours, though. Oh, Trouble, you mustn't throw a stick at the nice rooster!" she cried, for her little brother had let go of her hand and had tossed a stick over into the chicken yard, making the fowls scatter about with many a surprised cluck.

"What are you doing, Trouble?" asked Ted.

"Make roosterfer crow see if he got cold like our roosterfer," was the answer. "Trouble want hear roosterfer crow."

"Oh, never mind about the roosterfer," beguiled Jan. "Let's go to see the bossy cows."

This was what William wanted, so away he toddled, leaving the chickens in peace. The children went out to the barn, where some of the horses, which the men were not using at different places on the farm, were eating hay or grain in their stalls. Ted and Jan always liked to look at the horses. Sometimes one would put its head over the lower half of the closed stall door and look at the little boy and girl, letting them rub its velvety nose.

While Jan and Ted were doing this of course they could not keep hold of Trouble's hands, nor did they watch him very closely. So, when they looked for him a little later, they did not see their small brother.

"Oh, where can he have gone?" gasped Janet. "And mother told us to be so careful in watching him!"

"He can't be very far off," answered Ted. "He was here a little while ago. Come on, we'll look!"

They went out of the barn, one of the horses calling, or whinnying, after them. The door had been left open when they went into the barn, and of course Trouble could have gone out that way.

But when Jan and Ted looked around the barn, near the corncrib, up past the smokehouse and in near-by hiding places, where they, themselves, often hid, they did not find Trouble.

"Oh, where can he be?" said Jan again and again.

"We'll find him!" Ted declared.

But this time Trouble seemed to have hidden himself very carefully. Nor did he answer to the calls Jan and Ted gave. They did not want to call their father or mother,

for they were not yet quite ready to give up and admit that they, themselves, could not find their little brother.

"Let's look down in the lane," said Ted after a bit.

This lane was a long, grassy one between two big meadows, and was a sort of driveway leading to a far-off part of Cherry Farm. Other farmers besides Grandpa Martin sometimes used it, though it belonged to him and came to an end near his barns.

So down the lane went Jan and Ted, calling for their little brother. They walked on a little way and then stopped to listen.

"Hark!" called Ted suddenly, when his sister had finished her last cry for the missing child.

From behind some bushes a little way ahead of them came a baby voice saying:

"I found de bossy-cow! I found de bossy cow! But he's a 'ittle bit one. Such a 'ittle bit!"

"There's Trouble!" cried Jan joyously.

"Yes. But I wonder what he has," said Ted.

They ran ahead, and there, behind the bush, they saw Baby William sitting on the

ground and holding to the horns of a big goat that was standing in front of Trouble, looking at him as though in great surprise.

"Why Trouble Martin! What *are* you doing?" cried Jan. "Come away from that goat this minute! He may hook you!"

"Dis a bossy-cow!" Trouble murmured, holding with one hand to the long horns of the animal and with the other stroking the chin whiskers. "Nice bossy-cow!"

"It's a goat!" cried Ted, walking toward the child and wondering if the goat would butt him if he lifted Trouble out of the way.

"Dis a bossy-cow!" insisted Trouble. "Bossy-cow got horns. Dis got horns. Dis bossy-cow!"

"Get up off the ground," ordered Jan. "How did you get there?"

"Nice bossy-cow push me down here," said Trouble.

"I think the goat must have butted him a little," said Ted. "But the goat is a gentle one, I guess. He didn't hurt Trouble. Get up!" he said. "Come here, Trouble."

"No! Can't."

"You can't come! Why not?" asked Ted in surprise. "Why can't you come away

from the goat—I mean bossy-cow, Trouble?"

"'Cause Trouble am a hen now. Trouble goin' to sit on hen's nest and watch for 'ittle chickens. De bossy-cow he push me in chickie's nest an' I goin' to be hen! I dess I didn't break *all* de eggs!" He moved a little to one side, still keeping hold of the goat's horn, and showed Ted and Jan that he was, indeed, sitting in the midst of the whites and yellows of the broken eggs of a hen's nest which had been made under the bush.

"Oh my!" gasped Ted. "He *is* right in with the eggs! Oh, what a mess he'll be! Oh, Trouble!"

"Such trouble!" echoed Jan.

"Dat me. I's Trouble!" cheerfully observed Baby William. "An' I's dot a bossy-cow!"

CHAPTER IV

THE GOAT WAGON

THE CURLYTOPS stood and looked at their little brother. That was all they could do for a few seconds. It all seemed so very queer and funny. There sat Trouble right in the middle of the hen's nest, and he had sat down so hard, or rather, the goat had pushed him down so quickly, that many of the eggs were broken.

"I's a chickie—dat's what I is," said Trouble. "An' I dot a bossy-cow. He's all mine—I ketched him. He was jumpin' over de grass like a grasshopper an' I ketched him. I got him now!"

"Yes, he has got him," remarked Ted. "It's a fine goat, too. I wonder whose he is?"

"Dis a bossy-cow, an' I ketched him," said Trouble again. "I's a hen, too, an' I's goin' to have 'ittle chickies!"

"Chickens can't come out of broken eggs —anyhow not till after the hen sits on 'em and the chickens break the shells themselves," explained Jan. "I saw a chickie break out of the shell once. But, oh, Trouble! you are such a sight! What will mother say, I wonder?"

"She like de bossy-cow," answered the little fellow.

"It isn't a cow. That's a goat," said Ted. "And it's a wonder he didn't butt you and hurt you."

"I guess he's tame," remarked Jan. "He looks like a nice goat."

Ted went up to the animal Trouble was holding by the horns and patted it. The goat made a soft bleating sound, like a sheep, and seemed to like being rubbed.

"He *is* a nice goat," went on Ted. "I wish we could keep him."

"He's mine," announced Trouble. "He's a 'ittle bossy-cow, isn't him?"

"Well, you can call him that," laughed Jan. "Let go of him, Trouble, and let's see if he'll run away."

Baby William let his chubby hands slip from the goat's horns, and the animal backed away a few steps but did not leave the place.

Instead he came close to Ted and rubbed his little black nose on the boy's hand.

"He likes you," said Jan. "Oh, wouldn't it be great if we could keep him for our own, and hitch him to a pony cart, Ted?"

"A pony cart would be too big. It would have to be a goat cart."

"I's got a go-cart at home. We can put de 'ittle goat-bossy-cow in dat an' div him a wide," put in Trouble in his own peculiar language.

"Brother Ted means a *goat* cart—not a baby-carriage *go*-cart," explained Jan. "Oh, Trouble, wouldn't it be nice if we could keep the goat?"

"Yes. Him's my goat," said Trouble, but he was more interested just then in himself. He had pulled himself to his feet by taking hold of some of the branches of the bush over his head, and now he turned half around to look at the seat of his little bloomers.

"Oh, Trouble!" cried Ted, laughing, "you look just like a fried egg!"

"Or an omelet!" added Jan. "What shall we do with him?"

Ted did not know. Nearly always when his little brother fell in the mud, or got dirty from playing in the yard, his mother

or Nora took charge of him. Neither of them was at hand now. What could be done?

"We could let him ride home on the goat," said Ted, scratching his head as he had seen his father do when he was trying to think.

"Oh! are you going to take him home—to grandpa's?" asked Jan.

"We've got to. Can't leave him here. He's got to be washed and dressed and——"

"I was talking about the goat," laughed Jan.

"Oh! I meant Trouble. But we'll take the goat home, too. He may belong to somebody else, but maybe we can keep him a little while and have some fun. Wonder what his name is?"

"Bossy," said Trouble. "Him's a bossy!"

"No; that's a cow's name, and this is a goat," explained Jan. "We'll have to think up a name for him. But, oh, Trouble! how are we *ever* going to get you clean? Those eggs are so messy!"

"That's what I meant by letting him ride the goat," went on Ted. "Most of the whites and yallers would come off on the goat."

"Then we'd have to wash it," said Jan.

"That would be easy," declared Ted. "All we'd have to do would be to let him swim in the brook."

"Dere's a brook over here," said Trouble, waving his hand to show where he meant. "I frowed stones in it, an' den I found de bossy-cow-goat. I wash myse'f in de brook."

"Oh!" exclaimed Jan. "Maybe we can wash off some of the egg before mother sees him, Ted. She'll blame us for not keeping watch of him."

"He ran out of the barn before I saw him," said Teddy. "Well, come on, let's go to the water. Wait, though. I don't want this goat to get away. I'll tie a piece of string to his horns and lead him along with us."

Ted found a piece of thin cord among the many things in his pockets, and fastened a bit to the horns of the goat. If the animal had not wanted to go along with the children the string would not have pulled him, for it could have easily been broken. However the goat seemed to have taken a liking to the Curlytops, and it followed Jan and Ted as they led their little brother toward the brook.

It was not far from where Trouble had sat down in the hen's nest, and then, tying the goat to an old stump near by, Ted and Jan started to clean Baby William's bloomers of the egg stains. They stood him on the edge of the brook, and by using bunches of grass for wash cloths they got off some of the sticky whites and yellows. Trouble was kept quiet while this was going on by being allowed to pet the goat which came and stood near him.

"Him's a nice goat," said Trouble, and Ted and Jan thought the same thing.

Jan was scrubbing rather hard with a bunch of grass at a very eggy-yellow spot on one leg of Trouble's bloomers when, all of a sudden, the little fellow slid backwards, and before his brother or sister could catch him he sat down "splash!" in the shallow water of the brook.

"Oh, oh!" gasped Ted, almost slipping into the stream himself, he was so surprised.

"Oh, Trouble!" murmured Jan. "Oh, dear!"

"Dere! Now 'ook what you did!" said Trouble himself, never offering to get up. "You pushed me in! But I get nice an' clean *now!*" and he smiled joyously, for the

water was warm and Trouble always liked to have his bath, more than once jumping into the tub before all his clothes were off.

"Yes, I guess you will get nice and clean," laughed Ted. "Don't you care, Jan," he said to his sister. "This is the best way to wash off those eggs. Come on, Trouble, get up, and we'll squeeze as much water out of you as we can. Then we'll take you home."

"Will you wide me on de bossy-goat?"

"Yes, we'll ride you on the goat if he'll let you stay on his back."

Jan and Ted wrung as much water as they could from Trouble's bloomers. They were very wet, but falling into the brook had taken out most of the egg stains. Then the little chap was lifted to the back of the goat. The animal did not mind in the least.

"He's been ridden like this before," decided Ted. "And I guess he's been hitched to a wagon, too."

"Oh, if we only could do that!" sighed Jan. "It would be such fun!"

"Maybe we can," her brother told her as he held Trouble on the goat's back with one hand and guided the animal with another hand on one horn. Jan did the same on the other side.

"Where can we get a wagon?" Janet asked.

"Make one," said her brother. "There's lots of old wood around grandpa's barn. Wait till we get home."

On the way, riding on the goat's back, Trouble told how he had slipped out of the barn and how, after throwing stones in the brook, he had seen what he thought was a " 'ittle bossy-cow." He had taken the goat by the horns. This the animal, being very gentle, let him do without offering to butt him. Then Trouble led the goat along until, half by accident and half in playfulness, the goat had shoved Baby William backward into the nest of the hen that had stolen away from the chicken yard to lay her eggs under the bush.

"Oh, my dear children! what in the world have you been doing?" cried Mother Martin as she saw the little procession come down the path toward the house. "Where have you been?"

"Oh, Mother! Trouble found a goat, and we're going to keep him!" cried Ted.

" 'Ittle bossy-goat," put in Trouble.

"And he sat down in a hen's nest, but we washed him off!" added Jan.

"Who, the goat or Trouble?" asked Daddy Martin with a laugh.

"Trouble," answered Ted. "He was all whites and yallers, but he's pretty clean now, and please may we keep him?"

"Who, Trouble or the goat?" asked Grandpa Martin.

"Both," laughed Jan.

"He's an awful nice goat, and Trouble just loves him," went on Teddy.

Then the older children told what had happened, and Trouble was carried away, kicking and crying, to have clean, dry clothes put on him. He wanted to stay and play with the goat, but Nora promised he should see his new pet in a little while.

"I think I know whose goat that is," said Grandpa Martin, after looking at the animal. "They moved away and couldn't take the goat with them. They left him with Farmer Emery, but I did hear that Emery didn't want him, because Billy was always wandering off.

"I guess the goat must be lonesome for children, because the folks that owned him had half a dozen. They were always riding or driving him. Emery hasn't any young folks on his farm, and the goat has run away

once or twice. Emery doesn't care much about him."

"Then may we keep him?" begged Ted.

"Well, we'll see," half-promised grandpa. "If Emery doesn't want him, and the family that used to own the goat doesn't claim him, I guess we've got room for him here. He's a good and gentle animal," went on the old gentleman to Mrs. Martin, who seemed a bit worried. "Ted and Jan can manage him all right."

"I wouldn't want them to get hurt," said Mother Martin.

"This goat wouldn't hurt even Trouble," declared Ted. "He's awful nice. Aren't you, Nicknack?" he asked, patting the new pet.

"Nicknack! Is that his name?" asked Daddy Martin.

"I named him that," explained Ted. "He ate so many things when we were riding Trouble home on his back—grass, weeds, some paper from an old tin can. It was just like the nicknack crackers you buy in the store—all different kinds. So I called him Nicknack."

"It's a nice name," said Janet. "We call our goat Nicknack."

"Better wait until you're sure he's yours," suggested her father.

"Oh, I guess they can keep him," put in Grandpa Martin.

And he was right. Mr. Emery had no use for the goat. The family who had left him could not be found, having moved far away, and, as Grandpa Martin said, there was plenty of room at Cherry Farm for the goat.

"Well, our Curlytops have been here only one night," said Mother Martin the next morning, "and they've found a goat. If they keep this up, by the time we leave Cherry Farm, we'll have a regular circus."

"Never mind, as long as they have a good time," returned her husband, smiling.

The children, even Trouble, were out before breakfast to look at the goat that had been put in a colt's box stall for the night. Nicknack was glad to see his little friends, and bleated softly as they opened the door of his new home. One of the farm hands had given him some hay and oats to eat.

"And now to build the goat wagon," said Ted, after breakfast. "May we take some old boards and wheels if we can find them in the barn, Grandpa?"

"Yes, take anything you like."

"I's going to have a bossy-goat ride!" laughed Trouble, who, it seemed, did not get over the idea that the goat was part cow. I suppose it was because both animals have horns.

Feeling quite happy now that they were going to have a real goat for their very own, and feeling very glad at the chance of having some rides in a wagon that Nicknack would pull, Ted, Janet and Trouble started for the barn.

"Do you really think you can make a wagon?" asked Janet of her brother.

"Course I can," he answered. "Didn't I make a house, lots of times—a playhouse that we had fun in?"

"But a wagon is different," said the little girl. "A playhouse stays in one place, but a wagon has to go around and around on its wheels."

"I know," said Ted, as if he had thought it all out long before, "a wagon has to have wheels on it, and I'm going to put wheels on this one. Then Nicknack can pull us all over the farm."

"Will he pull me, too?" asked Trouble.

"Of course he will," laughed Janet, giving

her small brother a big hug. "You can have a nice ride."

"On his back?" asked Trouble. "Like I see in pictures!"

"He means those cowboy pictures—like in the Wild West," put in Ted.

"Oh, no, I don't guess you could ride *that* way, William," went on Janet. "You might fall off. It's lots nicer to ride in the wagon."

"Couldn't I ride on Nicknack's back if you holded me on?" Trouble wanted to know.

"Well, maybe. We'll see," said Janet, who did not want to make any promises. Baby William was always sure to remember them no matter if everyone else forgot.

"I 'ikes a goat," murmured the little fellow, as he walked along beside his brother and sister. "I 'ikes a goat—much!"

"Yes, Nicknack is a fine goat. I hope he'll always live with us," said Ted.

They were almost at the barn now, when, all at once, the children heard some one shouting.

"What's that?" asked Janet.

"Maybe the barn's on fire!" cried Ted, starting to run.

"Wait for me!" begged Janet.

"An' me, too!" added William, for Ted had let go of his hand as he started off.

The shouting kept up, and the children could hear one of the men who worked on the farm calling:

"Look out! Look out! He's loose! He's running away!"

Ted stopped running and looked back at his sister and little brother.

"Oh, what is it?" asked Janet, her eyes big with wonder.

"I—I guess maybe the bull has got loose," said Teddy. A few days before, a farmer who lived some miles away from the children's grandfather had asked Mr. Martin if a bull, which the farmer had bought, could not be kept for a while in the barn on Cherry Farm. Mr. Martin had said it could be, and the animal, which was quite wild, had been shut up in a distant part of the stable, where he bellowed all day long.

"Oh, if it's that bad bull," said Janet, "we'd better go into the house and stay there."

"Maybe it's only one of the horses," said Teddy, after thinking it over a bit, and listening to the calls of the man in the barn-

yard. "If it's only a horse we don't have to be scared."

The truth was that Ted wanted to see what was going on, even if the bull had gotten loose, and he did not want to have to go back to the house with his sister and Trouble.

"Well, if it's a horse I'm not afraid," said Janet. "Let's go on."

"Could I have a ride on a horse?" asked Trouble.

"Oh, not now!" cried Janet. "He's running away, maybe, and he might run away with you!"

Trouble shook his head. He would not like that. He took hold of his sister's hand on one side, and Ted's on the other, and together the three children started on toward the barn once more. They could still hear the cries:

"He's loose! He's loose! Look out!"

All at once Ted cried:

"Oh, it's our goat Nicknack! He's the one that's loose! Look at him!"

And, as he pointed, Janet and Trouble saw the goat running about the barnyard with a farmhand chasing after him with a stick. Around and around ran the goat, and

around and around after him ran the man, calling:

"Whoa! Whoa there, nice goat! Don't run away!"

But the goat was running away, and he didn't "whoa" when the man told him to.

"You stay here," directed Ted to his sister and little brother.

"What you going to do?" asked Janet.

"I'm going to help catch that goat," answered Teddy.

"Oh, maybe he'll butt you!" exclaimed Janet.

"No, he won't do that," went on Ted. "That goat knows me, and he don't know that man. That's why he's scared, I guess."

"Is the man scared?" asked Janet, as she saw him chasing around after the goat.

"No, but I guess Nicknack is," answered Teddy. "I've got to help catch him so he won't be scared. You stay here with Trouble," and he led his sister and Baby William to a place near a corner of the barnyard fence where he thought nothing could hurt them.

"I wants to come wif you!" begged Trouble, as Teddy started off.

"No, you stay with sister and I'll give

you a nice ride in the goat wagon when brother makes it," promised Janet.

"I wants a wide now," said Trouble, as he watched the goat running, "I 'ikes to wide fast."

"Not as fast as that, I guess," replied Teddy, with a laugh, for Nicknack was fairly flying around the barnyard. "You'd fall off, Trouble, and bump your nose."

Baby William didn't want anything like that to happen, so he did not again ask to ride on the goat.

The farmhand kept on chasing Nicknack, calling him to stop, but the goat would not. Then, as Ted came near, and opened the gate of the yard around the barn, to go in, Nicknack saw what was going on.

Suddenly the goat made a dash for the open gate.

"Look out! He's coming! He'll try to get loose, and if he gets out maybe you'll never catch him again!" cried the hired man.

Ted tried to close the gate, but he was not quick enough. Right past him ran the goat, knocking the little boy down, but not hurting him, I'm glad to say.

"Ugh!" grunted Ted as he struck the

ground. His breath seemed to be knocked out of him, as it once was when he was struck by a football.

"Oh, Ted! are you hurt?" cried Janet, who saw what had happened.

"No. I'm all right," he answered.

The hired man, who ran out of the gate after the goat, stopped to pick up Teddy and brush some of the dirt off his clothes.

"I never did see such a goat!" cried the man. "Look at him go!"

The goat had run out of the barnyard now, jumped over a low fence and was running down the road.

"Come on!" cried Ted. "We've got to get him! What made him run out of the stall?"

"I did; but I didn't mean to," explained the man. "I was taking him some more water, for he seemed very thirsty, when I stumbled and dropped the pail. The water splashed all over him, and he got scared, I guess. He gave his head a yank, broke the strap and ran out.

"I ran after him, but I couldn't catch him. Then you opened the gate, and there he goes!"

"But we've got to get him!" cried Ted,

who was all right again after being knocked down by Nicknack. "We've got to get him. Come on!"

He and the hired man ran down the road after the goat. They were glad to see, a little distance down, that Nicknack had now stopped and was nibbling the grass.

"Now we can get him," declared Ted.

"You'd better go up to him yourself," said the hired man. "He might be mad at me, thinking I spilled that water on him purposely. You go up to him, and I'll stay back."

So Teddy, holding out his hand, walked toward Nicknack, calling gently:

"Come here, Nicknack! Come here, nice goat!"

The goat stopped nibbling the grass and looked up. He seemed to know Ted, and did not run any farther. The hired man hid behind a tree so the goat would not see him.

Slowly Ted walked toward his new pet. Still Nicknack did not run, and he let the small boy take hold of the broken strap by which Nicknack had been tied in the stall.

"Now he's all right," Teddy said as he led the goat along the road and back into the barnyard. Nicknack did not try to run

any more. He really had been frightened when the water was spilled, and all he thought of was running away. But he seemed to know that Ted would be kind to him.

"Oh, I'm so glad you got him back," said Janet as she walked to meet her brother.

"Where's Trouble?" asked Ted, as he looked for Baby William.

"Oh, I forgot all about him!" exclaimed Janet. "There he goes!" and she pointed to him, walking toward a little brook that ran across one end of the barnyard.

"Catch him 'fore he wades in and gets his feet wet!" cried Ted, as he led Nicknack on.

Janet ran after her little brother, whom she had let stray away while she watched Ted go after the goat, and caught Baby William just in time. He was about to paddle in the water.

Then Nicknack was put back in the stable, and he seemed glad to be at rest once more.

"Now we can make our cart," said Ted.

"I think you had better go and put on your play clothes before you start to make your cart," said their mother, who had come out just at the end of the trouble with the runaway goat.

This the children did, but were quickly out at the barn again.

Wearing their old clothes, so that a little dirt would not hurt, and having promised not to let Trouble stray away this time, Jan and Ted started to build the goat wagon. In the barn were many odds and ends of boards that Ted felt sure would be just what he wanted. He knew how to hammer, nail and saw, for his father had given him a chest of tools one Christmas. Jan, too, could nail two boards together, even if some of the nails did go in crooked.

Ted found part of an old little express wagon that he had played with a year or two before while at Cherry Farm. Only two wheels were left, but one from a broken wheelbarrow made another for the goat cart, and for a fourth wheel he found an iron one that had been on a churn.

The wheels were of three different sizes, but Ted said he didn't think that would matter any.

"It'll be all the more fun," declared Jan. "It'll be such a funny, wiggily motion when we ride that it'll be like sailing in a boat on dry land."

"We'll ride out first and see how fast the

cherries are getting ripe," proposed Ted, as he hammered away at the goat wagon.

"And when they get ripe and are ready to pick, we'll help grandpa cart 'em in and sell 'em. Then maybe he'll have lots of money and won't have to lose the farm," said Jan.

"Do you think he will lose it?" asked her brother anxiously.

"I don't know. But I know there's some kind of trouble, and grandpa and grandma are worried. I heard them talking with mother and daddy quite late last night. There's some trouble about Cherry Farm."

"Yes, here I is. I hasn't runned away!" called Baby William.

"Oh, we were talking about another kind of trouble, not *you!*" laughed Jan as she hugged and kissed him.

Then she helped Ted make the goat wagon, while Trouble looked on.

CHAPTER V

UPSIDE DOWN

WITH hammer and saw and nails, with bits of rope and string, here a piece of tin and there a board, the goat wagon was finally built. It did not look very spick and span. Rather it looked like some of the funny things the circus clowns make when they do their queer tricks in the ring.

But there were four wheels, even if they were of different sizes, to the wagon Jan and Ted had made, and there was a seat for them, with room in between for Trouble. And, as Jan said, the uneven wheels gave the wagon such a queer, wobbly motion that it was ever so much more fun riding in that than in a regular store wagon.

"Maybe we'll get a new wagon after we learn to drive the goat," said Jan, as she watched Trouble combing out Nicknack's whiskers with a pine-cone he had picked up.

"Maybe," assented Ted.

"I like the way this wagon rides. It's part like a swing and the other part is like a seesaw," observed Jan, when Ted, pulling the cart himself, had given her a ride about the front yard, to see how the wagon rode before they hitched the goat to it.

"It will do until we get a new one," her brother agreed.

"How are you going to hitch Nicknack to it?" Jan suddenly demanded.

"Oh, I can make a harness. There's lots of old straps in the barn."

"But what about a bit? And reins? Haven't you got to have an iron bit for Nicknack's mouth, like grandpa has for his horses?"

"I think I can put a strap around his nose, with reins on each side of it. I saw a camel harnessed that way in the circus," answered Ted. "I don't like to put a bit in a goat's mouth."

Ted had been told by his grandfather that a goat's mouth is not hard like a horse's.

"Maybe a strap would be better," agreed Jan.

And while Trouble sat in the rebuilt wagon and pretended to drive Nicknack with

a string tied to the goat's horns, Jan and her brother patched together a sort of harness. Grandpa and Daddy Martin helped them some, but the children could easily tell that something was wrong at Cherry Farm. Never before, in all their visits, had they seen the faces of Grandpa Martin and Grandma Martin so sad, and the two men did not talk and laugh as they used to do.

But the Curlytops did not think long about this sadness, for they were too eager to have fun; though they would have done anything in the world, if they could, to help their own dear daddy and their mother, and, of course, grandpa and grandma.

"Just wait until the cherries are ripe," said Ted, as he put the finishing touches to the harness. "Then we'll help pick them and cart them to market. As soon as we hitch up Nicknack we'll go over to the cherry grove and see how big the green ones are."

The goat seemed very willing to be hitched to the queer wagon Jan and Ted had made from odds and ends. True, it might not be like the smart cart and real harness he was used to, but Nicknack was a good goat, and he did not mind pretending that this queer rig was just the finest ever made. At least

he might have made-believe, if goats ever do such things, of which I am not quite sure.

"All aboard now!" called Ted one afternoon, when the wagon and harness were ready. "All aboard!"

"Anybody would think this was a boat!" laughed Jan, as she led Trouble down off the back steps, ready for a ride.

"Well, it does wobble like one," laughed Ted. "You wait and see! That's why I called 'All aboard!' Come on. Get in!"

"Me goin' to drive!" shouted Trouble.

"No, not at first," answered his brother. "I'll have to wait and see how Nicknack behaves. I'll let you drive after a bit."

"Then me holler 'giddap!' " insisted Baby William, who was eager to do something.

"Yes, you may make Nicknack giddap," agreed Jan, lifting him into the wagon.

Mother and Grandma Martin, as well as Nora, who had come to the farm, too, came out to see the children start off.

"How cute they look," said grandma.

"Yes. I hope nothing happens—that that queer contraption holds together," remarked Mother Martin.

"Well, if anything does happen I have a nice picture of them," put in Nora, who had

a little camera. She had "snapped" the trio as they started off in the wagon drawn by Nicknack. "It'll come out lovely, I think."

Along the shady, grassy lane Ted drove Nicknack. The lane led to the cherry grove where hundreds of trees had been in blossom.

Now the blossoms had fallen off, and in place of each one was a little round green ball, that, when the sun had warmed it and the rain had wet it, would turn into a beautiful, big black or red cherry. Grandpa Martin's cherries were known all around Elmburg, and even on the other side of Clover Lake, as the best in that part of the country.

"And maybe we can ride to Clover Lake after we go to the cherry grove," said Jan, as they jogged along the lane where the yellow dandelions looked like spots of gold in the green, velvet grass.

"Maybe," assented her brother. "I don't know whether Nicknack is afraid of water or not."

"He wasn't the day Trouble sat down in it after he broke the eggs," laughed Jan. "Besides, this wagon is so like a boat that maybe it will float on the lake."

"Maybe!" agreed Ted.

It surely was a queer cart, with two hind wheels alike, but with two different sizes for the front ones. As it rolled along first the left front end would rise up and then the right would do the same. If one had stood back of them and looked at the two Curly-tops, with Trouble seated between his brother and his sister, one would have thought them on the back of a camel or an elephant. That was the way the goat cart swayed, up and down and sidewise.

But the wheels stayed on, which was more than Ted's father and grandfather had dared to hope at first. And the harness, though much patched and made from many bits of straps and ropes, stayed on the back of Nicknack. So that the goat pulled the cart along after a fashion.

"And he guides good, too," said Ted, as he pulled first on the left-hand cord and then on the right. "See how easy it is, Jan."

A sort of muzzle of straps had been put around Nicknack's nose, and on either side of it was a long cord. The cords were the reins, Ted not having been able to find light leather straps that were long enough. But the cord reins did very well.

"Yes, he does guide nice," agreed Jan, for when she pulled on the left cord Nicknack turned that way, and when she pulled on the right cord he went that way.

"Me want to drive de bossy-goat!" insisted Trouble, and they let him pull gently first on one cord and then on the other. He laughed and kicked his heels against the bottom of the cart when he found the goat would turn aside for him.

"Don't kick too hard, Trouble," said Ted, as his little brother kept up the drumming with his heels on the cart floor.

"Why not?" asked Jan. "He's got his old shoes on. It won't hurt them."

"No, but it may hurt the cart," replied Ted. "This bottom isn't very strong, and it may drop out all of a sudden."

"If it does, won't we drop too?" asked Jan.

"Yes. That's why I don't want Trouble to kick so hard."

"But he wants to kick," said Trouble.

Janet looked over the side of the little wagon to see how far they would have to fall in case the bottom did drop out, but seeing soft grass all around her she concluded they would not be hurt if they did have such an

accident. Nevertheless, she held Trouble's feet so he could not kick.

At first he wiggled, trying to get them loose; and to quiet him Jan reached over and pulled some long dandelion stems. Snipping off the yellow flower, she blew through the hollow stem, making a little noise as though she had blown a tin trumpet.

"Here, Trouble," she said to her baby brother, "blow the dandelion horn."

He puffed out his red cheeks and blew, making a tiny squeak which so delighted him that he forgot all about kicking the bottom out of the goat wagon.

On and on rode the Curlytops along the lane, on one side of which were pastured some cows that came and hung their heads over the fence, chewing their cud as they looked at the goat drawing the wagon. On the other side of the lane were some sheep, and some of them ran along the fence, as though they would like to get out and go with Nicknack and the children.

At last they came to the cherry grove. They rode along under the hundreds of trees, and on many were some quite large green balls, up among the leaves. On other trees

were smaller ones. These green balls would turn into ripe cherries a little later.

"Grandpa is going to have a lot of them," said Ted, as he guided Nicknack under the bending branches. "Maybe the cherries will make him rich if he does lose his farm."

And, though Ted did not know it, the cherries were to have a large share in clearing away the troubles of Grandpa Martin.

"I's hungry!" suddenly announced Baby William, after they had been riding some time in the cherry grove.

"Well, let's eat," suggested Jan. "I've got the lunch."

"Lunch!" cried Ted. "I didn't know you brought any lunch!"

"Yes, grandma put some up for us in a little basket when you were harnessing Nicknack."

"Goody!" roared Trouble.

And, oh, how good that lunch tasted! There were slices of bread and butter with just enough jam on, and no more. There were sugar cookies with just enough sugar sprinkled over the top, and not a grain too much. There were crisp brown crullers, just brown enough and not a smitch more, I do assure you!

Even Trouble had enough, and when he was hungry he was very, very hungry, like the little girl with her forehead on her curl, or the curl on her forehead, I forget which. So you can easily know that Grandma Martin's lunch was just fine.

"Now we must go back," said Ted, after a bit. "Mother told us not to stay too long. And, besides, Jimmie Dell is coming over to play ball with me to-day."

"And Mary Seaton said she'd come over and we're going to have a play-party for our dolls," added Jan. "So I 'spect we'd better go back."

Jimmie and Mary were two children who lived not far from Cherry Farm, and who, on other visits, had played with Jan and Ted.

So the Curlytops started back in the goat wagon with Trouble. They left the cherry grove, trying to remember how it looked, so they could tell grandpa the good news about the fine crop he would have, and they turned into the grassy lane again.

Now the lane was down hill going home, and this made Nicknack run rather fast. It was so easy pulling the wagon down the slope, you see.

"Whoa, there! Whoa!" cried Ted once or twice. "Don't go so fast!"

For when the goat ran fast the queer wagon wobbled more than ever on its uneven wheels, and Jan had to hold tightly to Trouble so he would not slip out.

But Nicknack was like some horses. He went faster toward his stable than away from it. Besides, he was hungry. For though the children had given him bits of cake and bread, still he wanted hay and oats.

So Nicknack ran rather fast on his way home through the grassy lane, and some old sheep who saw him went:

"Baa-a-a-a-a! Baa-a-a-a-a!"

It was as if they, too, were calling:

"Whoa!"

But Nicknack did not stop. On and on he went faster and faster, and Ted pulled as hard as he could on the cord-reins, for he knew that was how grandpa stopped the farm horses when they ran too fast.

And then something happened. Two or three things happened, to tell you the truth.

Ted pulled so hard on one cord-rein that it broke. This yanked the goat's head around sharply to the left and he almost ran into

the fence. Then one of the front wheels came off and, before Jan or Ted could do anything to stop it, the goat wagon turned upside down, throwing them out.

Then the harness broke, and Nicknack pulled himself completely away from the cart, though he did not mean to. But when he found he was free, he looked at the upset wagon and then began to nibble the grass at the side of the lane.

Ted and Jan picked themselves up off the soft ground. They had not been in the least hurt, and both were ready to laugh. That is, they were after a first look at the upside-down wagon. But when they glanced around a second time and could not see Baby William anywhere, they did not feel so much like laughing. They were a little bit frightened.

CHAPTER VI

THE LITTLE LAME BOY

"WHERE's Trouble?" asked Jan, as she got up and brushed some dried grass out of her hair, for her head had bumped the ground.

"Yes, where *is* Trouble?" added her brother, and he looked up in the air, as though he might see Baby William floating around like a circus balloon when it gets loose. If Trouble had been like a rubber ball he might have bounced up in the air. But he was not in sight as Ted looked up.

"Where, oh, where, can Trouble be?" asked Jan again.

And then came a little, faint cry, as though far off.

"Was that Nicknack bleating?" asked Ted.

"It didn't sound like him," answered Jan. "What did you do with our little

brother?" she asked of the goat, who said never a word, but kept on eating grass. The noise sounded again.

"Maybe it was a sheep," suggested Ted.

But the sheep were far away, at the other end of the pasture, so it could not have been they. Then the cry sounded once more.

"I want to get out! I want to get out! Oh! Oh!"

"It's Trouble!" shouted Jan.

"But where?" Ted asked.

Without answering, Jan hurried to the overturned wagon. As she lifted up one side of it there came a cry from underneath.

"I want to go home! I want my mamma!"

"Why, it's Trouble!" gasped Ted. "He was under the wagon!"

And so he was. When Nicknack turned to one side so quickly, and when one of the wheels came off, upsetting the goat cart, Ted and Jan had been tossed out, or else they had jumped, they hardly knew which. But Trouble had stayed in, and consequently the wagon had fallen right over on top of him, hiding him underneath it.

Luckily the sides of the wagon were high, and as there were soft cushions in it and a

piece of carpet, little Trouble was not in the least hurt. His head was not even bumped, but, of course, he was frightened, for he was in the dark, and he thought he was shut in a closet at home, which he never liked. He did not know it was only the overturned goat wagon which held him down.

Trouble stopped crying as soon as Jan and Ted lifted the wagon so he could crawl out, which he did immediately. Then he saw Nicknack eating grass at the side of the lane and he laughed.

"Bossy-goat runned away!" cried Trouble. "Didn't him?"

"That's what he did!" answered Ted. "But he didn't mean to. Only our wagon is busted!"

It was—well, not "busted," but broken. One wheel had come apart. Being an old and a dry one, the spokes had fallen out.

The harness had broken, too, and it was useless to try to hitch Nicknack to the little wagon again. In fact, cart, as well as harness would have fallen in pieces.

"We'll have to mend it," decided Ted. "We'll leave it here and drive Nicknack home without the cart. I wish we could get a new one."

"Let's ask daddy or mother," suggested Jan. "They know now that our goat is good and that we can drive him. Maybe they'll let us have a better cart."

"They wouldn't think we could drive Nicknack if they saw what just happened," laughingly declared Ted. "But we couldn't help it."

Having brushed the grass and dirt off Trouble, the Curlytops, their fuzzy hair rather ruffled by their fall, started home through the lane. Ted mended the broken reins, and carried a cushion under one arm, while Jan took the others and led Trouble.

Baby William wanted to ride the goat home, with a cushion for a saddle, but Ted was afraid the animal, having found what fun it was to upset a cart (though really he did not mean to do so) might take a notion to toss Trouble off his back. So there was no riding for the rest of that day. They were soon at grandpa's house.

"Why, The-o-dore Baradale Mar-tin!" cried his mother, using the little boy's whole name, which usually was too large to be said all at once. "What has happened and where is the goat wagon?"

"Oh, it's smashed! It was too old, anyhow!"

"Nickknack threw us out, but we're not hurt," added Jan.

"An' I was hidin' under de wagon an' dey touldn't found me!" laughed Trouble, for it was all a joke to him now.

"Dear, dear! Is he hurt?" asked the mother of the Curlytops, picking up her "dear bunch of trouble."

"Nope," answered Jan. "He liked it. Didn't you, Trouble?"

"Yes. Only it was dark under de wagon. I's hungry!"

"Bless your little tummy-tummy!" laughed Mother Martin, rolling Trouble up into a ball, and pretending to toss him high in the air. "You shall have some milk. But what happened, Ted?"

Taking turns, with Trouble now and then getting in a word "edgewise," as Nora said, Ted and Jan told the story of their first goat ride.

"And, oh, grandpa! such a lot of cherries as you'll have!" cried Jan, as they spoke of the cherry grove. "There'll be millions an' millions of 'em!"

"Can't you sell them and get rich so you

won't have to lose the farm?" asked Ted, as his grandfather came in to hear the story of the ride and the upset.

"Well, I can sell some of the cherries, yes. But too many of them are almost as bad as not enough."

"Why?" Ted wanted to know. He could not understand that.

"Because if there are too many cherries they don't bring a good price in the market. Maybe, even, I can't sell them all, and they'll spoil," grandpa explained.

"We'll help eat 'em," promised Jan.

"Yes, I guess between you and the birds you'll get rid of some. But don't you Curly-tops worry about the farm. You are here to have vacation fun, and I want you to enjoy every minute, though it's good of you to look after my cherries," and Grandpa Martin caught Trouble up in his arms to kiss him.

"And can we help pick some and bring them in with our goat wagon?" asked Ted. "Oh, I forgot! The wagon is broken. I guess we'll have to get a lot of new wheels and—and—things."

"Or a new wagon," added Jan. "Can't we have one, Daddy?"

"I'll see about it," promised her father.

The Curlytops tried to mend the broken wagon, but it was too badly smashed. Ted bruised his fingers with the hammer, and Jan ran a sliver in her thumb "tinkering" over the broken wheels and things, but they could make nothing that would be safe for Nicknack to pull.

"I know what we can do," said Ted to his sister one day.

"You mean to have fun?"

"I mean to get a goat wagon. Let's go down to the blacksmith shop and see if the blacksmith man hasn't got some old wheels or something."

Ted did not know exactly what he wanted. But he had often passed the blacksmith shop, which was on the road from Cherry Farm to the village, and had seen many parts of wagons inside and outside the place.

"All right, I'll go with you," agreed Janet.

Together the children went down the shady road to the blacksmith shop. On the way they stopped to gather flowers, and Janet's nose was all yellow from the buttercups and dandelions she smelled. The smith was pounding a red-hot horseshoe on

the anvil, his hammer striking out glowing sparks.

"Hello, Curlytop!" he called to Ted, whom he had often seen going past in Grandpa Martin's wagon. And once Ted had been in the shop when one of the farm horses was shod. "Hello, Curlytop! Did you come to help me work? I've got lots to do. Just bring me that big hammer!" and he laughed as he pointed to the heavy sledge that took all a big man's strength to swing.

Ted tried to lift it, but he could not even drag it across the blacksmith shop floor.

"Guess you'll have to eat some more crusts of bread before you are strong enough to lift that!" laughed a man in the shop.

"Do bread crusts make you strong?" asked Jan.

"Well, I've heard say they make your hair curl," went on the man; "and you two tots must have eaten loaves that were all crust, by the looks of you!" and he laughed again.

"I like bread crusts," said Ted. "I'll eat a lot if they'll make me strong."

"They'll help some," said the blacksmith. "But what can I do for you to-day, Curlytop? Did you bring your horse to be shod, or do you want a bit for your goat?"

Then Ted and Jan, by turns, told of wanting something to fix their broken wagon. The blacksmith said he was sorry, but he had nothing, since he mended only big farm wagons or carriages much too large for Nicknack. He had no old wheels or anything that would do, he said.

Ted and Jan stood watching the smith fit a shoe to a horse tied in the shop. Suddenly a fly bit the animal and it gave such a jump that Mr. Decker, the smith, had to let go the leg of the horse and jump back to avoid being stepped on.

"Whoa there!" he called to the frightened horse. "Whoa! Steady!"

Jan and Ted started to run out, but Teddy tripped over a piece of iron on the floor and the next he knew he had sat down backwards in the low tub of water in which the smith cooled the red-hot pieces of iron.

"Oh—oh!" gasped Ted, flinging up his arms and wiggling his feet, trying to save himself from falling all the way in.

"Oh, The-o-dore Martin!" cried Jan, as she sometimes heard her mother say it. "You're all wet!"

"Huh! I guess I know it," Teddy announced, as he got out of the tub with the

help of one of the men in the shop, while the smith quieted the horse.

"Yes, you *are* a bit wet," said Mr. Decker. "But I filled the tub with clean water only last week, so you won't be very dirty. Here, you can stand near the forge fire and dry out. You've got on dark pants and the dirt won't show."

Only the seat of Teddy's knickerbockers were really wet, and though the water ran down his legs he did not much mind. He stood near the warm fire until he was nearly dry, and so hot he could no longer stand it, and then he and Jan went home.

"Well, it's a mercy you weren't burned on the red-hot horseshoe," said Mother Martin, when she heard what had happened. "Why did you go there?"

"We wanted a goat wagon," replied Jan.

"Daddy, I guess you'll have to get them one to keep them out of mischief," said the mother of the Curlytops.

"I'll see what I can do," promised Grandpa Martin.

"Has anyone seen my thimble?" asked Grandma Martin after supper that night, when they were in the sitting-room. "I know I had it on when I was talking to you,

Jan, as you stood near me a little while ago."

"Maybe it's in my hair, Grandma," said the little girl.

"In your hair, child? What do you mean?"

"Why, you patted me on the head you know, and maybe the thimble stuck in. Mother's ring came off her finger in Teddy's hair once, and we couldn't find it for a long time. Look in my hair," and she bent her head down close to grandma's spectacles.

"Why! There it *is!*" cried Grandma Martin with a surprised laugh, as she ran her fingers through Janet's hair and discovered the missing thimble. It was caught in a tangle of curls just as it had been pulled off grandma's finger.

"Ho! Ho!" laughed Grandpa Martin. "That's a good hiding place. I lost a quarter last year. Come over here, Teddy, and let me see if it's in your hair."

"Why, Grandpa! I've washed my hair since then!"

But grandpa insisted on looking, and, lo and behold! when he put in his hand, ruffled up Ted's hair and drew out his fingers again, there, between them, was a shining quarter!

"Oh!" gasped Jan.

"Why — why ——" stammered her brother, in great surprise.

"Oh, Grandpa Martin! you just put your hand in your pocket *now,* took out a quarter and had it in your hand when you ruffled up Ted's hair!" cried Jan, as she guessed how the trick was done. "Didn't you?"

"Well, I *did* lose a quarter last year," said grandpa. "I thought maybe it might be in Ted's hair, and—well, here it is!"

But grandpa had played that little trick, as you would have guessed, too, if you had seen him.

"I wish you could get a goat wagon out of my hair," sighed Jan. "We want one awful bad."

"I'll see what I can do," promised her grandfather, and a few days later the Curlytops were told some joyful news.

Asking among the different farmers he knew, Grandpa Martin heard of one whose little boy, now grown to be a man, had once owned a fine goat wagon. It was stored away in a distant barn, and Daddy Martin said he would buy it for the Curlytops.

So one day Grandpa Martin hitched the horses to a big farm wagon, and away he and

the Curlytops rode, over the hills and far away, to another farm.

There the goat wagon was found, and it was a fine one. The wheels were strong and sound, and, best of all, they were the right size, so that the wagon did not roll along up and down and sidewise like a boat on a stormy mill-pond.

"The wobbly motion of our other wagon was nice," said Jan, as she and Ted tried the new one, "but it made you feel just as if you had swung in a hammock too long."

With the wagon also went a real set of goat harness, and Ted was delighted when he saw it.

"Nicknack can't break away from the wagon in this," he said. "Now we'll have some fun! We can cart a lot of cherries in this wagon for you, Grandpa. You won't be poor when cherries are ripe."

"I hope not," said the old gentleman, and he seemed to have to blow his nose very loudly, though before that he had no cold, as far as the Curlytops could see.

Nicknack seemed to like his new wagon as much as did Jan and Ted, and as for Trouble —well, he just wanted to sleep in it. But, of course, that could not be allowed.

"Though you may ride in it as much as you like," said his mother.

One day the Curlytops, taking Trouble with them, set off for a little ride in the new goat wagon. Grandma Martin stuffed in many, many cushions, so if anyone fell out or the cart overturned no one would be hurt. In spite of the number of pillows, there was still room for at least five small children.

"If we see anybody who wants a ride we can give it to them," explained Ted, as he saw the extra room in the wagon.

"And we've got lots of room to carry our lunch," said Jan, who liked to play tea-party.

This time they rode to a new part of Cherry Farm—or, at least, a part they had not visited for some time. It was near a country road, and was mostly used for grazing horses and cattle.

As the Curlytops drove Nicknack near the fence, on the other side of which was the farm of another man, they saw a boy sitting under a tree. Just then a puff of wind took off Trouble's hat and blew it toward this boy. He looked up as it sailed near him, and with a stick caught it.

"Hello there!" he cried, on seeing the goat

cart with the three children in it. "Is this your hat?"

"It's Trouble's, if you please," answered Jan.

"Trouble? Do you mean it made a lot of trouble blowing off? But it isn't any trouble for me to bring it to you, though I can't come so very fast," and as he came along the Curlytops saw that he was a lame boy, and had to hobble on one foot, dragging the other after him.

"Hold on! Wait a minute! I'll come and get the hat!" cried Ted quickly, as he saw what the matter was. "Don't go to all that trouble."

"It isn't any trouble," was the smiling answer, and, somehow, Jan liked the way that lame boy smiled. It was so happy, she said afterward. "No trouble at all!" he fairly sang the words.

"Dat's Trouble's hat!" piped up Baby William. "Dat's mine!"

"What's that?" asked the lame boy, pausing, and then hopping on again.

"Oh, we call the little chap Trouble, just for a nickname," explained Ted. "It was his hat that blew off. Thank you for bringing it to us."

"You're welcome—heaps!" said the other, as he leaned on the fence, after he had handed over the hat. "Say, that's a dandy wagon and goat you've got there!" he added, his eyes shining.

"Yes, it's pretty good," admitted Ted. "Like to have a ride?" he asked.

"Please come," added Jan, in a low voice, and she tried not to look at his poor, twisted foot, though she could see it plainly through the rails of the fence.

"We's dot lots to eat!" added Trouble, smiling.

"That's so," grinned Ted.

"Then I guess I'll come," laughed the lame boy.

"Do you want me to—I mean—er—that is, can't I help you—over the fence, you know?" asked Ted, speaking rather stammeringly and awkwardly, for he did not like to mention the other's lame foot.

"Oh, *that* doesn't bother me!" exclaimed the boy. "I can climb higher fences than this. Here I come!"

With a spring, a bound, a wiggle and a climb he was up, over and down, standing beside the goat, which he began to pat as though he loved animals.

"Here, sit on this cushion," said Jan, in the same low voice.

She got down from the wagon, taking a cushion with her. Ted followed, helping Baby William to the ground. The lame boy looked at Jan with a warm light in his gray eyes.

CHAPTER VII

THE FEATHER BED

"Do you live around here?" asked Ted, as the new boy made himself comfortable on the cushion which Jan placed on the grass.

"Yes, in that big red place," and he pointed across a valley to where, on the side of a hill, stood a very large house.

"Do you live *there?*" inquired Ted, in some envy. He thought it would be great fun to live in a house that looked large enough to hold five or six houses as big as grandpa's house at Cherry Farm.

"Yes, I live there," he answered, smiling again.

"It must be fine!" cried Jan, with sparkling eyes. "I'd like to live in a place like that. I mean for a little while," she added quickly. "Of course I like our own home best and there is no place nicer than Cherry Farm!"

"I should think not!" cried the lame boy, as he looked over the green fields and at the trees. "I love it here. That's why I come over this way every time I can to sit and look."

"I should think you'd like it over where you live," and Ted pointed to the big red house across the valley.

"Oh, yes, it is nice there. But there are so many of us that sometimes a fellow can't be quiet unless he comes away by himself. It isn't all of 'em who can, worse luck! I can travel better than most of 'em. There's some who can't get away at all."

"Who?" asked Jan curiously.

"The boys and girls."

"Do you mean your brothers and sisters?" inquired Ted. "You must have a large family for such a big house."

"Family!" cried the lame boy. "Well, yes," and he smiled. "I guess you could call it a family, for we all live in one home. But they aren't any of 'em my brothers and sisters."

"They're not?" cried Jan. "And yet they live with you?"

"Oh, yes. You see that's the Crippled Children's Home over there, and I've been

in 'most a year trying to get cured," and he looked at his lame foot. "It's a lot better," he went on. "When I first came I couldn't walk at all. But now I can come farther than any of 'em," and he seemed quite proud.

"It's too bad," said Jan kindly. "Does it—hurt?"

"Not a bit, except when Dr. Wade pulls it and twists it to make it bend easier. That doesn't hurt but a little while," and he smiled bravely. "He's trying to cure me."

"It's too bad," murmured Jan again.

"I—I don't b'lieve I'd like to be lame, and not run and jump and climb," said Teddy, looking off toward the Home, and trying not to glance down at Hal's lame foot.

"Oh, don't feel sorry for *me!*" and the lame boy laughed. "I'm lots better than some. Why, I can even kick a football with my 'bad' foot as I call it, though there are lots of others worse. If I had a football now——"

"There's Trouble's," suggested Jan, looking at Baby William, who was sitting in the shadow of the goat cart trying to tickle Nicknack with blades of grass.

"Who is Trouble?" asked the lame boy curiously.

"He's our little brother," explained Ted, and he told his own name and that of his sister.

"My name's Hal Chester," said the lame boy, in his turn. "I live in New York. I was sent to this place to get cured. It isn't exactly a hospital, and yet it's like one. It's a Home where lame boys and girls are cured."

"Do they cure 'em?" asked Jan softly.

"Oh, yes. Heaps and heaps of 'em. They're going to cure me, they say. And I guess they will, for I'm a lot better than when I came. If I had a football——"

"Oh, yes. I was going to get Trouble's," interrupted Ted. "He has a little rubber one he brings with him. We don't like him to, as it's always falling out of the wagon, and then we've got to stop and pick it up. But he brought it this morning. Hi, Trouble, where's the football?" he called to his little brother.

"I bring it. You play game?" he asked, for he loved to kick the blown-up ball about.

"Well, maybe a little one," promised Jan. "Are you sure it won't hurt you?" she asked

Hal, as Ted caught the ball Trouble rolled over to him.

"Sure it won't. I'm the best kicker in the Home. Course we don't play a regular game, but Dr. Wade said it would be good for my foot to exercise it, and kicking's the best fun I know. I'll show you!"

He placed the football on a little pile of dirt, and then, standing on his "good" foot, he swung the other, which was bent and twisted, straight at the blown-up ball.

"Plunk!" came the sound, and Trouble's ball went sailing through the air.

"Say, that's a fine kick!" cried Ted. "It's great!"

"Ee, dat's great," echoed Trouble.

"And it went awful far!" added Jan, as the ball rolled and bounced away down the hill.

"Oh, I've done better than that with a regular-sized ball," explained Hal Chester. "Wait, maybe I'll be able to send it farther next time," and he started down the slope with a half run and a half jump.

"I'll get it!" cried Ted after him.

"Pooh! Don't think I can't run!" laughed the lame boy over his shoulder. "I have to wiggle like an eel while I'm doing

it," he went on, "but I can get there," and he did, before Ted reached the ball.

Then Hal sent it flying back with another kick and Ted, in his turn, lifted it high in the air and started it rolling about the grass. Trouble, too, joined in the little game, laughing and shouting in glee.

"Say, you *can* kick!" cried Ted admiringly, as Hal came back to the cushion on which Jan insisted that he take his seat.

"Oh, yes. There's lots worse things than being lame. I'm ever so much stronger in my one good leg than some boys are in their two. I can stand on it all day and not get tired. It comes in good when you're waiting for the circus parade," he added with a laugh.

"I should think you'd want to have two legs alike," said Jan.

"I do, and some day I'm going to have, Dr. Wade says. But I just have to wait, that's all," and he seemed quite cheerful about it. "No use kicking, you know—unless it's a football," and he smiled at Ted, who smiled back.

"I didn't use to have much feeling in my lame foot," he went on. "And that was a good thing, 'cause when anybody stepped on

my toes it didn't hurt. But it does now, and that's a good sign, Dr. Wade says. Well, I've got to be getting back, they're calling me to dinner. I'm glad I saw you," and he got up from the cushion.

"Calling you to dinner?" asked Jan. "I didn't hear any one call."

"It's that flag over there," and Hal pointed to one now waving from a tall pole in front of the Home. It had not been flying before, the Curlytops were sure. At any rate they had not noticed the flag until Hal spoke.

"That's a sort of dinner bell," the lame boy went on. "Some of the boys and girls go off in the woods or fields between meals, or else the nurses take them, and they are so far off they can't hear a bell or a horn. But they can always see the flag, 'cause it's so high up, and so when the banner is hoisted on the pole we know it's meal-time. So I'll be hopping along," and with a wave of his hand he started across the field, having climbed the fence as nimbly as before.

"Will you come here this afternoon?" asked Ted.

"Maybe. Will you be here?"

"Yes, we'll come."

"And may we come to the Home to see you sometimes?" asked Jan.

"Oh, yes, any time you like. 'Visitors always welcome.' That's what it says over the door. We're going to have a big party soon, and maybe you can come to that."

"We'll come," promised Jan.

Then, as soon as Hal was lost to sight down in a little hollow of the green, grassy fields, the Curlytops talked about him.

"Wasn't he nice?" asked Ted.

"Yes," answered his sister. "And he was so jolly about his lame foot, he almost made you think it was fun to have it."

"That's right," agreed Ted. "And how he could kick Trouble's football!"

"Me likes him," said Baby William. "He nice boy!"

"Indeed he is!" laughed Jan. "I wonder what he meant about a party at the Home?"

The Curlytops found out when they got back to Cherry Farm, for they asked Grandma Martin.

"Yes, that is a Home for crippled children that was partly rebuilt and added to last year," she said. "It has cured many lame little ones. I guess what Hal meant about a party is that they are getting up a

sort of fair, or entertainment, to raise money. It needs it since they rebuilt and made an addition to enlarge the place. All the folks around here are going to help."

"Are you going to? Can we help?" asked Jan eagerly.

"Well, father was going to give them a hundred dollars," said Grandma Martin slowly, "but since he had such bad luck and lost so much I'm afraid he can't. But I'm going to bake some cakes so they can sell them at the fair, and that may help some."

"I want some cake!" declared Trouble. "I's hungry!"

"Then you shall have some bread and milk," answered his mother. "You mustn't have cake."

"I wonder how we could help?" asked Jan of her brother later that day. "I'd like to raise some money for the Home. We did once for our Sunday-school by selling lemonade."

"Maybe we could do that here," answered Ted. "We'll ask Hal this afternoon."

But Hal, for some reason, did not come back to the field after dinner, though Jan and Ted went there in the goat cart. Trouble had to have his afternoon sleep,

curling up with his football in his arms, so he did not go with them.

"Well, we'll ask him to-morrow," said Jan, as they drove Nicknack back across the green grass.

The goat was put in his stable when the Curlytops got back to Cherry Farm; and then, as it was egg-gathering time, a chore with which they always helped, they went to get Trouble, for he liked to go with them.

"Trouble! oh, Trouble, where are you?" called Jan, as she came out of her room with her "chore" clothes on. These garments were an old dress, stockings and sunbonnet, for sometimes the hens laid their eggs away under the barn, and to get them one had to crawl on hands and knees. "Come and get the eggs, Trouble!"

"I tan't tum now!" answered Baby William.

"Can't come—why not?" asked Jan. "Where are you?"

"Up de stairs where de softy-softy bed is."

"Oh, he means in the spare bedroom," explained Grandma Martin, who heard what Trouble said.

This room was one seldom used. It had

in it a big feather bed, of the old-fashioned kind, and Baby William always called it the "softy-softy," because he sank away down in it when his mother sometimes, in fun, laid him on it.

"I'll come and get you," offered Jan. "You like to come with brother and me after the chickie eggs, don't you?"

"Yes. Me like chickie eggs—me sit in some!"

"But you mustn't do it again. Come with sister now, Trouble, and to-morrow we'll go to see Hal kick the football some more."

"Tan't tum now—Trouble busy," was the answer.

"Well, I'll come and see what you're busy about," and with a laugh Jan ran up the stairs. As she entered the spare room she gave a gasping cry.

"Oh, Trouble!" she exclaimed.

"What's the matter? Is he hurt?" called Grandma Martin.

"No, but—oh, Trouble! What *have* you done?"

Then Grandma Martin came, and so did Mother Martin and Ted. They saw Trouble on the floor, with an edge of the feather bed pulled down toward him, while he was cut-

ting away at the ticking with the scissors, having made a big hole, while all about were feathers — feathers — feathers everywhere.

There were feathers on the floor, on the chairs, scattered over the carpet, and Trouble himself sat in a heap of them like some big, queer new bird, with feathers even in his hair.

"Oh, Trouble!" cried Grandma Martin. "Why did you cut my nice feather bed?"

"Trouble goin' to make softy-softy cushion for lame boy to sit on," was the baby's answer as he went on snipping away with the scissors, scattering more feathers about the room.

CHAPTER VIII

TOO MANY SHEEP

GRANDMA MARTIN at first did not know what to say. She just stood looking at Trouble and at the feathers. She really could not help seeing the feathers because there were so many of them and they were so scattered about the room. Baby William was almost hidden beneath them.

"Oh, my!" gasped Mother Martin. "I never knew there were so many feathers in one bed!"

"Me make cushion for lame boy!" said Trouble again, and he put his chubby hands in through the hole he had cut in the ticking, and pulled out a lot more feathers.

"Make a cushion! I should say you could make two dozen cushions with the feathers you've pulled out!" said Grandma Martin. "What does he mean by a cushion for the lame boy?"

"Oh, that must be Hal Chester," explained Jan. "I gave him a cushion to sit on this morning, and Trouble saw me. He said he liked poor, lame Hal."

"Me do like him—make Hal two cushions!" declared Trouble, laughing, as he tossed some feathers up in the air so that they fell in a shower on his head.

"Oh, Trouble!" sighed Mother Martin. "Such a mess as you have made! Oh, dear!"

"Never mind," put in Grandma Martin, soothingly. "We can pick up the feathers, and I'll sew them back in the bed. It doesn't matter, as no one wants to sleep on it. Come on, Trouble, we'll go to get the eggs."

"He looks like a chicken himself," laughed Jan. "Oh, what a funny, funny baby!"

Mrs. Martin caught her baby up in her arms, and, as she did so, a cloud of feathers flew all around, and some, getting in Jan's nose, made her sneeze.

"Ker-choo!" she went, and Trouble laughed.

Then he sneezed:

"Ker-choo-choo!"

"Dat's just like a choo-choo train!" he

laughed, and he tried to sneeze again. But this time it was the turn of Grandma Martin, and, as the feathers tickled her nose, and then Mother Martin's, they both gave loud "aker-choos!"

Trouble seemed to think this funnier than cutting open the feather bed, for he laughed and clapped his hands in glee. But at last they got him out of the room and closed the door so the stuffing of the "softy-softy" bed would not be scattered all through the house.

Then Jan, Ted and Baby William went to gather the eggs. They each carried a basket—the two Curlytops did, but Trouble was too little they thought. He might drop his and break the eggs.

"But me *want* a basket!" he cried. "Me go after eggs too!"

He made such a fuss about it, and seemed to be so unhappy because he could not carry something in which to gather eggs, that Grandma Martin said, with a smile:

"I'll make it all right for him."

She got a little basket, and in it put some white china eggs, the kind some farmers leave in hens' nests to make the chickens believe they have laid more eggs than really they have. At least, maybe that is the rea-

son they leave them there, and maybe it is for some other reason.

"There are some eggs for you, Trouble," his grandmother said. "If he falls and spills them, or drops them, they won't break," she whispered to Jan and Ted.

This satisfied Baby William, and with the china eggs in his little basket he set off with his brother and sister to watch them get the real eggs out of the nests. And Trouble was as careful of his china eggs as he could have been of the sort that would break so easily.

That is, he was as careful as Trouble Martin could be. Once he dropped the basket, and the eggs rolled over the ground. Trouble stood still, while Teddy and Janet scrambled around and picked them up. Then, Baby William tipped his basket and the eggs rolled out. But they were again picked up, and very soon the little party was in the chicken yard.

"It will be a little lesson to him," said Grandma Martin, "and before very long he will be big enough to gather real eggs for himself."

Jan and Ted soon had their baskets nearly full. They found most of the eggs in nests in the hen-house, but now and then some

queer old "Biddy" of a chicken would slip out of the chicken yard and go off to lay her eggs in a secret place.

It was the work of Ted and Jan to find these places, and they often found them under the barn. There was one place where part of the barn wall had fallen away, making a hole through which a small boy or girl could crawl. On the ground was hay and straw that had sifted down from the floor of the barn above, and this was a favorite place for hens to make their secret nests.

"I'll crawl under and see how many eggs I can find," said Teddy. "You stay here and hold my basket, Jan."

"All right, Ted."

Under Ted crawled, and pretty soon his sister heard him call:

"Oh, what a lot of eggs!"

"Did you find many?" Jan asked.

"Yes, there's a big nest full. I didn't see it the last time I came here. I'll have to make two or three trips with them."

Ted crawled back and forth under the barn, bringing out each time a few eggs to Jan, who put them in the baskets.

"There's three more I want to get," explained Ted, as he turned to crawl back for

the fourth time. "They're away at the far end."

Pretty soon Jan heard him call:

"Oh, I've found another nest!"

"That's good!" answered his sister. "Bring 'em out!"

Ted said nothing for a few minutes, but Jan heard him grunting.

"Why don't you come out?" she called. "We've got to get dressed for supper. Come on out with the eggs!"

"I—I can't," answered her brother, and his voice was muffled as though he were down in a cellar.

"You tan, too," declared Trouble.

"Why can't you come?" asked Jan.

" 'Cause I'm stuck! I crawled in too far and now I'm caught under the barn. I can't get out!"

For a moment Jan was frightened. She wondered if Ted would have to stay under the barn forever. Or would they have to pull it down to get him out? She remembered that once a cat had gone in a narrow space between two houses, not far from where the Curlytops lived in Cresco, and the firemen had to come with their axes and chop away some boards before the poor

pussy, that howled most sadly, could be gotten out.

"Oh, Teddy!" cried Jan, "what shall I do? Do you want me to crawl in and pull you out?"

"No! Don't you come in!" answered her brother, his voice sounding farther away than before. "You might get stuck, too. Go for grandpa or daddy! Maybe they can get me!"

"All right," gasped the little girl.

Away ran Jan, setting down the baskets of eggs, and telling Trouble not to touch them, which he promised. But Trouble did something else. Knowing Ted was under the barn, and not wanting to be left alone outside, Baby William started to crawl in after his brother.

"Me come to git eggs," he announced, wiggling along on his stomach.

"Go back! Go back!" cried Ted, who was not able to turn around. "You'll be caught, too!"

"Bear in there catch me?" asked Trouble, stopping his crawling.

"No, not any bears, of course," and Ted could not help laughing. "But you'll be caught fast on a nail, or something in your

clothes, the same way I am. I guess that's what's holding me. Go back, Trouble! Oh, do go back!"

"No, I come in!" was the answer. "Trouble goin' be a 'ittle worm, an' crawl under barn. I's comin'!" And go on he did, wiggling on his little stomach like a " 'ittle worm," as he called it.

Ted could do nothing to stop him and Trouble was soon under the barn near his brother. Just ahead of them, and out of reach of Ted's hands, was a nest with half a dozen eggs in it.

"Dis nice place," said Trouble, as he nestled close beside Ted. "We be chickies an' nobody find us here."

"I wish they would find us," said Ted. "This is no fun," for it was hot and stuffy under the barn.

Then he heard voices outside near the hole by which he had crawled in. Grandpa Martin and Jan were there.

"Oh, where has Trouble gone?" Ted heard his sister ask.

"He's in here with me," replied Ted.

Trouble spoke for himself.

"I am a 'ittle worm, an' I crawled in here on my tummy-tummy," he said.

"Well, I must get them out," observed Grandpa Martin.

"Will you have to tear down the barn? Or maybe send for the firemen?" asked Jan, thinking of the poor cat.

"Oh, no. If I were smaller I'd crawl under the barn myself, and pull Ted out by his heels," said Grandpa Martin. "I expect he wiggled under a beam where he is a pretty tight fit. That happened to me when I was a boy.

"I'll go inside the barn, take up a board in the floor, right over where Ted and Trouble are lying, and then they can crawl up that way. Don't worry, Jan. They'll be all right."

And so they were. When the floor board was lifted up, right above where Ted lay stretched on the ground under the barn, he could get out, and so could the little "worm," Trouble.

As Grandpa Martin had said, Ted had tried to crawl under a place where a beam, or a big piece of wood, made such a narrow place that even a cat would have had hard work to get under. But Ted was not hurt, nor was Trouble, and when they had reached down and lifted out the eggs, and the hay

and straw had been brushed from Ted and his little brother, they only laughed.

The rest of the eggs were soon gathered, and then came a fine supper with plenty of rich milk for the Curlytops, to give them rosy cheeks as well as curling hair.

The next day Jan and Ted went off in the goat wagon again. They rode to the field where they had seen the lame boy, and there he was once more, waiting for them with smiling face.

"I couldn't come back that afternoon," Hal said. "The doctor had to do something to this foot of mine."

"Is it getting better?" asked Jan softly.

"Oh, heaps better! Why, I believe I could kick a football over the moon!" and he laughed. "You see," he went on, "they've put an extra heavy shoe on this lame foot to make it straight. That's why I can kick so well with it. And it's a fine shoe for not wearing out. It's got iron in the sole. Why, that shoe will last longer than three of the kind I have on my other foot. It isn't everybody who can have a shoe like that—one that hardly ever wears out!" and he held up the big boot-like shoe and brace he had to wear.

"I'm thinking of joining some football team that wants a good kicker," he laughingly continued. "If you know of any one send them my address," and he smiled at Ted.

"I will," promised the Curlytop lad. "But tell us about the Home and the party you're going to have."

"Our grandma is going to bake a cake," observed Jan.

"That's nice!" exclaimed Hal. "I like cakes," and he told about the affair that would take place in about a month—an affair in which it was hoped all the people in the country round about would take part—to raise money for the Home, where cripples were cured and made well and strong.

"Well, I must be getting back," said Hal, after a while. "There goes the supper flag," and he pointed to one fluttering on the pole in front of the Home.

"We'll drive you over in the goat wagon," offered Ted. "Nicknack hasn't done much pulling to-day."

"Why do you call your goat Nicknack?" asked Hal.

"Oh, he nicks and nacks at so many funny things when he eats," explained Jan.

They made room for Hal in the wagon, which had plenty of soft cushions in it. These were needed, for the cart had no springs and the road was rough. On the way to the Home, Ted and Jan told how Trouble had cut up the feather bed.

"Well, I'm glad he thought of me," laughed Hal, "but I'm sorry he made so much work."

"He was awful funny to see!" giggled Ted. "All feathers!"

When they were a little way from the Home, Hal said:

"You'd better stop now, and let me walk the rest of the way."

"Oh, no," objected Ted.

"Yes, it will be better. I'm used to it, and if some of the others saw me having a ride they'd want one, too."

"We'll give them all a ride some day," agreed Jan, who saw that Hal's idea was a good one.

"Will you? That will be fine!" cried the lame boy. "Let me know when you're ready to do it, and I'll tell the Superintendent. It will be great! Some of the boys and girls can't walk. A goat ride would be fine for them!"

Ted and Jan promised to come the next day in the morning, and give as many rides as they could. But the next day it rained and also the next, so they had to wait about giving a treat to the cripples.

"Before you do it you had better see Hal," said Mother Martin, when, on the third day, in the morning, the sun shining brightly, the Curlytops said they thought they would go to the Home with Nicknack. "Meet him in the field where you saw him before, and plan to give the rides to the lame children to-morrow."

So Ted and Jan, taking Baby William, once more set off for the little hill, from the top of which they had such a fine view of the Home.

But Hal was not there in his usual place. Nor could he be seen as the Curlytops looked for him.

"Maybe he's on his way," suggested Jan. "We can leave Nicknack here, eating grass, and walk down to meet him. Our goat will be all right."

"Yes," agreed Ted.

Off they started, leading Trouble between them. They went into the next field, across which Hal always came and went on his

trips from and to the Home, and as they came to the top of a little hill, and looked down they saw what they had not seen before, a big flock of sheep feeding. They came upon the animals very suddenly, and before Jan, Ted and Trouble could go back some of the sheep walked toward them, and formed in a ring around them.

"Oh! I wonder if they'll hurt us?" asked Jan, her voice trembling a little.

"No," answered Ted quickly, but he was not sure. Some of the sheep were coming very near, and one or two of them pushed their heads close against the children.

"I don't like 'em!" cried Trouble, trying to hide behind Jan. "Dey's too many ob de sheeps!"

There were a large number in the flock, and those that had been feeding at the far end of the pasture now came to join the others, standing about the Curlytops, penning them in.

CHAPTER IX

THE CURLYTOPS GO FISHING

"OH, Ted! what shall we do?" asked Jan, as she looked at the sheep all around them. "They may knock us down and walk on us!"

"Oh, I guess they won't do that. They don't seem like bad sheep."

So far the animals had been rather gentle, though they did crowd too closely around the children. They poked at them with their heads, and some, that had horns, seemed to want to try their sharp points on Trouble's fat, chubby, bare legs.

"Go 'way—bad sheeps!" he called to them. But the sheep only went "Baa-a-a-a!"

"Oh, here comes an old ram!" called Jan.

"Yes, and he's a big one," announced Ted, and he looked about for a stick, a stone, or something he could throw at the ram if it should try to butt him, his sister or Trouble.

"Make sheeps go away!" begged Baby William, ready to cry.

"Shoo! Scat!" called Jan, shaking her skirts at the animals.

"That's the way to drive chickens or a cat, but not sheep," Ted told her.

"Then you drive 'em off!" begged Jan. "I don't like it here! I wish we hadn't come! Oh, they'll knock us down if they're not careful!"

The sheep were crowding more closely than ever about the children. Perhaps the woolly animals meant no harm, and were only wondering what the Curlytops were doing in the pasture. But the sheep certainly did crowd too much, and Jan and Ted had all they could do to save themselves from being pushed over. They tried to keep Trouble between them, for Baby William was much frightened.

"Whose sheep are they?" asked Jan, as she tried to walk out from the flock toward the fence. "They weren't here the other day."

"I guess they belong to the man who owns the farm next to Grandpa Martin's," said Teddy. "They weren't here before, or Hal wouldn't have crossed this field. Go on

away! Get back there!" Ted suddenly cried, as he saw the big ram pushing aside the sheep in the outer ring, as though he wanted to get in himself closer to the children.

Ted found a stone on the ground near his feet, and, picking it up, threw at the ram. The stone struck the animal on his big, curved horns, and bounced off, not hurting him any, and not scaring him, which was what Ted wanted to do.

"Do sheep ever bite?" whispered Jan, as she got closer to her brother.

"No!" he said, more to make his sister feel less afraid, than because he was sure they did not. "Anyhow, they don't bite very hard."

"Well, I don't like even little bites," returned Janet.

"I won't let 'em bite you at all," promised Ted, though how he was going to stop the sheep from doing this, especially the ram with his big horns, the Curlytop boy did not quite know. And, as he looked at those horns, he was sure a blow from them would be worse than a bite.

"They're bigger than Nicknack's," thought Ted.

"Where's our goat?" asked Trouble, peer-

ing out from where he had tried to hide himself behind Jan. "Where's Nicknack?"

"Back in the field where we left him," answered Ted. "Do you want him, Trouble?"

"Maybe him could make sheeps go 'way," answered Baby William. "Nicknack could hit 'em wif his horns."

"Maybe he could and maybe he couldn't," answered Ted. "Anyhow," he said to himself, "I wish we were back in the goat wagon. If I'd 've known these sheep was here I wouldn't have come in this field!"

Meanwhile the sheep were pressing closer and closer about the Curlytops and Trouble. The woolly animals perhaps meant no harm, and might not have hurt the children. But the old ram was anxious to get very close to the two little boys and their sister. Maybe he wanted to make sure they would not bother the sheep, for the ram of a flock of sheep is a sort of guard, or policeman, you know.

And the ram, pushing his way in through the flock from the outside, kept edging the sheep nearer the three children.

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Janet. "I don't like this a bit!"

"It isn't much fun," agreed her brother

"Maybe we can get out. Come on, we'll try."

He started to push his way through the flock, but the big ram gave a loud "Baa-a-a-a!" and lowered his head and horns as if to tell Ted that this was no time for going away.

Suddenly, when Janet felt that she must cry, and tears were already in the eyes of Baby William, a voice called to the children:

"Hi there! Don't be afraid! I'll make the sheep go away!"

They looked up, expecting to see Grandpa Martin, or perhaps their father. Instead, they saw lame Hal Chester climbing the fence to get into the field where the ram and others of the flock had penned in the Curlytops.

"Go back! Go back!" yelled Ted. "The sheep are bad!"

"I'm not afraid!" called out Hal. "I've got something to make them be good!"

"Oh, he has got something!" exclaimed Jan. "It's in his cap. I wonder what it is?"

Hal was carrying something in his cap, which he held upside down in one hand. He scrambled over the fence in his funny way,

and then came on toward the sheep and the children, swinging his lame foot along after him.

"I'm coming!" he called. "I'll soon make those sheep go away!"

"Do you—do you s'pose he's got a gun?" asked Jan. "Will he shoot the sheep?"

"No! Course not!" answered Ted. "He couldn't carry a gun in his cap that way."

"Then what is it?"

"I don't know."

Hal came a little nearer. He was at the outer rim of the flock of sheep now, and the Curlytops saw him take something from his cap and throw it on the ground. Instantly the sheep nearest him scattered and began licking up what had come from the lame boy's cap.

He came forward a little farther and scattered some more of the stuff which, Jan and Ted could see, was white. More sheep spread out and away from the Curlytops and began licking up with their tongues what Hal had spread on the ground for them.

"Here, old ram, this is for you!" and Hal laid some of the white stuff in a little pile right in front of the big-horned animal. The ram gave a loud "Baa-a-a-a!" and began

eagerly licking up what Hal had given him.

"Oh, it's sugar!" exclaimed Jan.

"No, it's salt," explained the lame boy with a laugh. "Sheep love salt better than sugar, though they may eat that, too, for all I know. But they'll do almost anything for salt, and so will cows and horses, at times. So when I scattered this salt about the sheep just broke away from you to eat it. Now you can get away and they'll never notice you."

"Where did you get the salt?" asked Ted.

"Oh, I found some over in that other field," and he pointed behind him. "You see the farmers around here have wooden troughs in some of the pastures where they salt their cattle. When I came from the Home, and saw the sheep in my field, I thought they might make trouble, as I hadn't seen any around here before. I call this *my* field," he went on, motioning to the one where the Curlytops had first seen him. "Though, of course, I don't own it. But it's just as nice as if I did. For I can hop along in it, and see the daisies and buttercups and dandelions in the green grass.

"They're just like the jewels the Princess Blue Eyes wears around her neck," he went

on. "The flowers are, I mean. And they're much nicer than real diamonds, for nobody wants to take them. I can leave 'em out in the fields all night, and they're safe here in the morning, or whenever the Princess Blue Eyes wants to come and get them."

"Who is the Princess Blue Eyes?" asked Jan.

"Oh, she—she's just a make-believe," said Hal softly, and his cheeks turned red. "I make up stories about her you know," he went on. "I pretend that she likes me, and I like her and—and some day maybe she is going to change my crooked foot into a straight one. Anyhow, if she doesn't maybe Dr. Wade will. But I'll tell you more about Princess Blue Eyes some day."

"I wish you would," half whispered Jan. "I love fairy stories."

"But what made you think of the salt?" asked Ted.

"Oh, when I started across my field and saw the sheep eating some of the crown jewels of the Princess Blue Eyes," answered Hal with a laugh, "I thought of the salt I'd seen in that other field, so I went back for some. Then I saw you all penned in by the sheep, and I was glad I had it."

"So are we!" laughed Jan.

She could laugh now, for the sheep were so busy licking up the salt Hal had scattered that they paid no more attention to the Curlytops. Trouble was lifted over to the other side of the fence, where Nicknack was still eating grass. Jan, Ted and Hal followed, and then the three children and Baby William sat down in the shade of a big elm tree and talked.

It was two or three days after this, and Hal had been given several rides in the goat wagon, that, one afternoon when he was about to go back to the Home to supper, he said:

"Don't you ever go fishing?"

"Fishing? Where?" asked Ted.

"In Clover Lake. There are some boats on it that belong to the Home. Sometimes the nurses or the doctors take the boys and girls out for a row. I can row myself, and they let me once in a while. But they never let me go fishing, and I'd just love to! I was thinking maybe if you went fishing I could go with you."

"We *will* go!" cried Ted, who was used to at least starting to do whatever he thought would be fun. He did not always finish,

though, for his father or mother often stopped him.

"It will be great to go fishing!" went on Ted. "Grandpa Martin has a boat on the lake. I'll ask him if we can't go and take you."

"Oh, will you?" cried Hal, with eager, sparkling eyes. "It will be the best fun ever. I wonder if they'll let me go?" and he looked wistfully over toward the big, red brick building—the Home.

"I'll get my father to ask them," said Jan. "I'll tell them how you scared the sheep away from us with salt, and everything like that."

"I didn't scare the sheep," said Hal. "I wouldn't want to do that. I like 'em. But I knew salt would scatter them better than by throwing stones. Oh, I do hope we can go fishing."

He and the Curlytops did. Grandpa Martin spoke to the superintendent of the Home, and as Hal was quite well and strong except for his lame foot and as Daddy Martin promised to go along in the boat to see that all was well, the little party started off on Clover Lake one morning.

CHAPTER X

NICKNACK RUNS AWAY

CLOVER LAKE was not far from the farmhouse where the Curlytops were spending their happy vacation days in the country. Nor was it far from the Home where Hal Chester and other crippled boys and girls were staying until they were made well and strong. The Curlytops and Daddy Martin drove over to the Home in Grandpa Martin's big wagon and there found Hal, all ready and eagerly waiting. He had been sitting on the steps with his little packet of lunch ever since sunrise, one of the nurses said.

"Oh, we've got some lunch, too!" cried Janet. "We've got sandwiches, and a bottle of milk and——"

"We've got enough so we can be shipwrecked if we want to," interrupted Teddy eagerly.

"That will be heaps of fun," agreed Hal.

"I never was really shipwrecked, though I've often pretended to be with the Princess. On a desert island, too."

Some of the other lame boys and girls wished they, too, might go off in a boat for a day's picnic, and Daddy Martin promised to take them some other time.

Hal climbed up into the wagon, and off they started, driving through a shady lane down toward the lake. A big, safe rowboat was waiting for them, and in this the children took their places.

"Please may I help row?" asked Hal of Daddy Martin.

"Do you think you can?"

"Oh, yes! My arms are strong. It's only one leg that I'm weak in, and I'm glad of that, for I don't row with my legs," and he laughed in a very jolly way.

"You'd never know he was crippled to hear him," whispered Ted to his sister.

"He's such a nice boy," said Janet. "I like him."

"Well, you may row a bit," agreed Daddy Martin, when he noticed that Hal knew just how to get into a boat, not stepping on the edges and almost tipping the boat over the way some people do, but putting his foot ex-

actly in the middle to balance it properly.

Then they started out on the lake. The sun shone, the waters sparkled, there was just a little wind—not a bit too much—and all along the shore were green trees, leaning over, some with their branches in the water as though they were whispering to the little waves that reached up to kiss the green leaves.

"Now we'll see who'll get the first bite," said Daddy Martin, when the hooks were baited and tossed over the side of the boat. "We must all sit quietly so as not to scare the fish."

"Trouble would like it here," said Jan, in a low voice, when she had waited patiently for some time for a bite. "He loves the water and lots of times he fishes with a bent pin in our brook at home."

"Yes, and he falls in, too," added Teddy. "But we mustn't talk and scare the fish. Must we, Daddy?"

"Well, perhaps it would be better to keep quiet, though I hardly imagine a fish can hear a whisper. Still it's just as well Trouble stayed at home with his mother. He'd be wiggling about and maybe he'd fall out of the boat."

In silence they all watched their lines, each one hoping for a bite. Suddenly Ted gave his pole an upward jerk. So unexpectedly did he do it that he fell over backward off the seat, and he might have toppled into the lake, only that his father quickly put out his arm and caught the little boy.

"Why, The-o-dore!" exclaimed Mr. Martin, in the way Ted's mother sometimes spoke to him. "What *are* you trying to do?"

"I—I had a fish on my hook, and I pulled up quick so he wouldn't get off. But he did. Oh, he was a big one!"

"But you nearly went overboard," returned his father, "and then you would have been shipwrecked, whether you wanted to or not. Besides, it wasn't a fish you caught."

"It wasn't?" cried Ted. "What was it? It pulled like a fish."

"It was that big bunch of weeds," went on Mr. Martin, laughing and pointing to some green ones slowly floating away from the boat. "Your hook caught in them, Teddy, and the motion of the water, down near the bottom of the lake, made it feel, I suppose, as though a fish were nibbling. But never pull your line up so suddenly as

you did, even if you think you have a fish."

"I won't," promised Ted. "I don't want to fall into the water."

When his hook caught in the weeds the bait had been torn off, but when some fresh had been put on the little boy once more tossed his line into the water and again waited.

Pretty soon Jan moved slowly in her seat and whispered:

"Daddy! Daddy! I'm not sure, but I *think* I've got a bite!"

Mr. Martin looked at the cork float on Jan's line. It was pulled down under the water a little way, and then bobbed up again. It did this several times, and then, finally, it went all the way under and Jan's pole bent.

"Oh, I have got a fish!" she cried, not whispering this time.

"Yes, you have!" exclaimed Daddy Martin. "Pull in, Jan! Pull in, but not too suddenly!"

Jan raised the tip of her pole in the air. This brought the line closer to the side of the boat, and, reaching over, Mr. Martin caught the string and pulled on it. Out of the water he lifted a good-sized fish, wiggling and trying to get off Janet's hook.

"That's the first," said Daddy Martin, as he put the fish in a little water-box under one of the seats. "Now let's see who'll get the next."

To Hal's delight he was the lucky one, and then they each caught a fish, Janet landing a very large one, which her father had to help pull in. In about an hour there were enough fish caught for two large meals.

"We'll go ashore and have lunch now," said Daddy Martin. "There is no use in catching more fish than we really need."

"Are you going to cook some of them?" asked Hal. "I'd like to do that. It would be just like camping out, and, oh! I would like to camp out. Sometimes at night when I can't sleep, I pretend I'm camping on an island with Princess Blue Eyes."

"Well, that would be nice," said Daddy Martin. "But I didn't bring along anything with which to cook the fish, and, though I might manage to start a fire and broil some fish over it with a sharp stick for a fork, we don't need to. We have a nice lunch all ready put up for us."

"Maybe we can go camping some day," suggested Ted.

"Maybe," his father agreed.

"I know a fine place!" exclaimed Hal. "It's on Star Island."

"Where's that?" Ted asked.

"Over there in the middle of the lake. You can just see it—that patch of green in the blue water," and Hal pointed.

"Let's go there now!" proposed Janet.

"It's too far," her father said. "Some other time we may go."

"Let's eat," suggested Ted. "I'm hungry."

"Well, then we'll get out the lunch," decided his father, and they were soon having a little picnic on the shore.

"It would be great to go camping on that island," said Ted to Hal a little later, as they sat down near the edge of Clover Lake to finish the last of their sandwiches. "Were you ever there?"

"Never camping. But I've been on Star Island. It's a queer place. Some folks say it isn't a good place."

"Not good? What do you mean?"

"Well," and Hal dropped his voice to a whisper. "Some folks say there's ghosts on the island."

"Pooh! Ghosts! There aren't any! My mother and daddy wouldn't let us believe in

such silly things as ghosts!" and Ted laughed.

"Oh, I don't *believe* in 'em myself —though I do pretend lots of fairy stories with Princess Blue Eyes," said Hal quickly. "But I've heard fishermen who come to the Home tell about seeing queer blue lights on Star Island at night."

"Fireflies, maybe."

"Fireflies don't make a blue light," Hal said. "But don't tell anybody, and maybe some day you and I'll go there and find out what it is."

"Maybe! That would be great!" cried Ted.

After the lunch, the little picnic party walked about in the woods, had a drink at a cool spring and then started to row back toward home with the fish they had caught. Hal was allowed to pull the oars part of the way. Ted tried it, but he was not as strong in his arms as was the lame boy, who was older than Ted and who showed that he did know something about handling a boat.

Some of the fish were given to Hal to have cooked at the Home, the superintendent promising that this would be done, and the rest were taken to Cherry Farm.

"Let's go over and see how fast the cherries are getting ripe," said Ted to Janet one day, about a week after the fishing party. "We can tell grandpa then, and he can get ready to sell 'em so he won't lose his farm."

"Is grandpa really going to lose the farm?" asked Janet of her mother.

"Well, we're not sure yet," was the answer. "He is working hard to get money to pay what he owes, and we are all helping him. But don't you little tots worry about that."

"Oh, we want to help, too!" declared Ted. "We're going to help bring in the cherries when they're ripe enough to sell. That's where we're going now—to look at them."

"Well, be careful," cautioned his mother. "Are you going in the goat wagon?"

"Yes. It's such fun driving Nicknack," replied Jan. "I can make him go as good as Ted, and even Trouble holds the reins sometimes."

"Yes, he is a good goat," said Mother Martin. "Well, drive along with you, if you're going, but don't eat any green cherries."

The Curlytops promised they would not, and they were soon on their way down the

road toward the part of the farm where the most of the cherry trees were ripening their red and black fruit.

"There's Hal!" cried Jan, as she saw the lame boy sitting under a tree beside the road. "Let's take him with us—there's lots of room."

"An' I dot two-ten tookies!" added Trouble, as if eating was all they ever went out to do.

"That's enough for a fine meal!" laughed Hal, who heard what Baby William said.

"Want to come?" cried Ted.

"I should say I did! I came out here to meet Princess Blue Eyes, but I guess she must have a party at her castle, or else she has to hide away from the Mosquito Dwarf, so she won't be here to-day."

"Who is the Mosquito Dwarf?" asked Jan, as Hal took his place in the goat wagon, and Nicknack, with a little "Baa-a-a!" started off again.

"Oh, he's a bad chap who's always buzzing around Princess Blue Eyes," answered the lame boy. "He bothers her terribly, and sometimes she has to call in the Chinese Giant to drive away the Mosquito Dwarf. Then he has to go and hide in the swamp."

"Dat's a nice story—me like—go on!" ordered Trouble, who had nestled in Hal's arms, and seemed to think the lame boy was telling a fairy tale as Mother Martin often did.

"That's all to the story this time," laughed Hal. "There'll be more later. Where are you Curlytops going?" for he, too, as had nearly everyone around Cherry Farm, had learned to call Jan and Ted that.

"Just going over to see if the cherries are ripe," explained Ted.

"An' we dassen't eat no dreen ones," said Trouble, " 'cause if we does we dets de tummy-tummy ache."

"I'll be careful," promised Hal with a laugh.

Up little hills and down little green dales went Nicknack, drawing the wagon load of little children, until, after a while, he came to a stop in the farthest end of the cherry grove, more than a mile from grandpa's farmhouse.

"Yes, the cherries are getting ripe," said Hal, as he and Ted walked under the trees. "In another week or so they ought to be ready to pick. My! what a lot there's going to be!"

"Yes, grandpa will have piles of cherries," said Teddy. "And I guess he'll need 'em, too—or the money he can get when he sells 'em."

"I thought your grandpa didn't need money because he was rich," said Hal.

"He used to be," explained Jan. "But he lost a lot of money when the floods came this spring, and now maybe he'll lose the farm."

"Oh, I hope not!" cried Hal. "I wish I could help," he said softly, as he looked back over the rolling fields of green. "But a lame boy can't do much."

"We're going to help gather the cherries and bring them in with Nicknack's cart," explained Janet.

"Oh, couldn't I do some of that?" begged Hal, his eyes shining.

"Course you can!" declared Ted.

They got out of the little wagon, leaving the goat to nibble grass under the trees, and walked along through the grove. Trouble, who was toddling along, his hand in one of Jan's, was eating a molasses cookie, getting almost as much on the outside of his mouth as he did on the inside. But he was happy.

"Oh, 'ook at de funny bug on my tookie!" suddenly called the little fellow, speaking in

a mumbled voice, for his mouth was half full. "I dess he wants a bite, too."

"That's not a bug! It's a big bumble bee and he might sting you," said Hal.

"There's a lot of bees around here!" called Ted. "I guess they come to get honey from the flowers."

"Well, I hope they don't sting us," and Jan brushed her handkerchief around her head, for a bee was buzzing near her.

"Oh, look at your goat!" suddenly cried Hal. "I guess a bee must have stung him!"

Nicknack was acting in a queer manner. He was running around in a circle, dragging the wagon after him, almost turning it over at times, and, all the while he was crying:

"Baa! Baa-a-a! Baa-a-a-a-a-a-a!"

"Whoa there! Whoa!" called Ted.

But the goat did not mind. With a kick of his heels, and a last "Baa-a-a-a!" Nicknack ran away, down through the cherry grove and out toward the road.

CHAPTER XI

TED AND THE HAY RAKE

"STOP, Nicknack! Whoa, there! Whoa!" cried Ted, running after the goat that was now leaping along, his little, short, stubby tail bobbing up and down the way the corks did on the fishing lines.

"Oh, Ted! Do stop him!" begged Jan.

"That's what I'm trying to do," answered her brother. He ran as fast as he could, and his sister started to follow, but she felt the drag of Trouble, whose hand she still held, and she knew she could never catch the goat.

Ted could not do it either, and he knew this before he had run far, for Nicknack was going very fast.

"He is really running away!" cried Hal. "It's too bad. If it wasn't for my foot——"

"Oh, don't worry about catching him," said Ted, coming to a stop and laughing. "I guess it won't hurt him to run, and the

wagon is pretty strong. He's going in a straight line now, and won't tip it over."

"But he's our goat—and he's gone!" wailed Janet. "Oh, dear!"

"He won't go farther than to Cherry Farm," was Ted's next remark. "He knows there aren't any bees there. Some one will take care of him. But we'll have to walk back. That's the worst of it."

"That isn't so bad," came from Hal cheerfully. Ted had been worried about the lame boy for fear he could not take the mile-long walk back to the Home. "I can manage all right."

"Are you sure you can?" asked Jan.

"Oh, sure. It will be fun. We'll go slow on account of your baby brother."

"Yes, we'll have to. Trouble isn't very fond of walking, though he is pretty good sometimes. My, but Nicknack did run!"

"Guess you would, too, if you were a goat and a bee bit you," put in Ted.

"Mother will wonder what's become of us when she sees him," murmured Jan, trying to look for their horned pet. But he was out of sight down the tree-shaded road by this time.

"That's right," agreed Ted. "We'd bet-

ter go right on back to Cherry Farm to let her see we're all right."

"Me want more tookies first!" exclaimed Trouble.

"Yes, we might as well eat a little," agreed Ted.

Nora, as she often did, had put up a little lunch for the children. So they sat under the cherry trees and ate, getting water from a little spring not far away. Ted thought they might find some ripe cherries on the trees, but they were all still so green that they did not taste good.

"And now let's start for home," proposed Janet. "Come on."

"All right," agreed Ted.

But they had walked only a little way when Trouble lived up to his name and suddenly sat down on the grass.

"What's the matter?" asked Jan. "Get up and walk along. I'd carry you, only I'm not big enough. Come on!" and she pulled him by the hand.

"I'se tired," Trouble declared. "Don't want to walk—want ride. Go bring Nicknack an' give Trouble ride in wagon."

"But we can't get Nicknack. He's gone home!" Jan explained.

"Well, den you go git him an' me wait here," and Baby William squirmed around in the grass until he had made a sort of little nest where he sat.

"No, no! You must come on!" ordered his sister.

"Trouble tan't tum. Trouble goin' s'eep!" and he closed his eyes and made believe he was taking a nap.

"Oh, what shall I do?" asked Jan of the two boys. "Oh, dear!"

"Let me see what I can do," said Ted, and going up to his baby brother he whispered in his ear:

"Trouble, if you walk home I'll ask daddy to buy you a lollypop when we go to the village."

"When will we goes to village?"

"This afternoon."

"Want to go now!" declared Baby William closing his eyes again, to show that he was going to sleep and stay where he was unless he could have his own way.

"But we have to walk to get to the village," said Teddy. "And you must walk with us."

"Don't want walk—want ride!"

"Oh, see the pretty flowers down there!"

called Jan, pointing to some yellow buttercups a little farther along. "If I can get him started to picking flowers he'll walk on without knowing it," she whispered to her brother and Hal. "Come and get the flowers," she begged.

"Don't want f'owers," murmured Trouble, and his voice sounded as though he were really going to sleep now.

"Oh, if he does go to sleep," said Janet, "we'll never get him home until he wakes up; and then what will mother say?"

"Maybe I can make something so we can get him home," said Hal.

"Do you mean without making him walk?" asked Ted.

"Yes. Wait and I'll see what I can do," and the lame boy started for a patch of woods near the cherry grove.

"What are you going to do?" called Ted. "Can't I help?"

"Well, yes—maybe. I'm going to cut down two long branches first."

"Well, I've got a knife and I'll help cut," offered Ted, and he hurried on after Hal, leaving Jan, rather worried and anxious, beside Baby William, who was still curled up in the little grass nest he had made.

"Here, you cut this branch, and I'll take the one over there," and Hal pointed to the two he meant.

"How are you going to make a wagon out of 'em, and where will you get the wheels?" Ted questioned.

"I didn't say I was going to make a wagon," replied the lame boy with a laugh. "At least it isn't a wagon with wheels. It's the kind the Indians used to make—two long poles with a seat between——"

"Oh, I know what you mean!" exclaimed Ted. "I saw 'em once when the Wild West show came to our town. The Indians fastened two poles, one on each side of a pony and he dragged them along, the other ends dragging on the ground."

"That's it!" said Hal. "I thought we could drag Trouble home that way."

"We can! It'll be great!" exclaimed Ted, as he began to cut at the branch Hal had pointed out while the lame boy hacked off another for himself.

When Hal had done this he went over and helped Teddy with his branch. Then the two boys fastened the poles together with pieces of wild grapevine, and made a sort of seat with a blanket and a cushion that had fallen

out of the goat wagon when Nicknack nearly upset it.

"Now you can ride home, Trouble!" cried Jan, when she saw what her brother and his friend had made. "See the lovely wagon!"

"Dat's nice!" said Trouble, after looking at it from all sides. "Me 'ike it. Me ride!" and he climbed onto the seat.

"Now giddap, hosses!" he cried.

Hal and Ted turned themselves into "horses," and each one took an end of a pole over his shoulder. The other ends dragged on the ground, just as the Indians let their funny carts drag. Jan walked beside her little brother, to see that he did not fall off.

"It's almost as good as the goat wagon," she said. "But isn't it hard to pull, Ted?"

"Oh, no. Not very. Anyhow it's mostly down hill home, and we'll soon be there."

"Can you stand it, Hal?" Jan asked the lame boy.

"Course. I'm strong!"

In a way he was stronger than Ted, for he was several years older. Between them they managed to drag Baby William down to the road and along that toward the farmhouse. Before they reached it they saw Grandpa

Martin driving rapidly to meet them in the big wagon. Mother Martin was with him.

"Oh, children!" she cried. "What happened? We were so frightened when we saw the goat wagon come back without you! What happened?"

"Bee stung Nicknack and he runned away," explained Ted. "But we're all right now. Had to make this new kind of baby carriage for Trouble. He wouldn't walk. Hal thought of making it."

"Oh, what a time you must have had! It was very good of you, Hal, to think of it," said Mrs. Martin. "Trouble, you can't go with your brother and sister again if you are such a bother."

"Oh, he was all right. We didn't mind riding him home," laughed Hal. "It was fun."

"Is our goat all right?" Ted asked.

"Yes. But he came in pretty well tired out from his run," explained Grandpa Martin. "When I saw him I was afraid he had upset the wagon and hurt you, so we started out to pick you up."

But everybody was happy now, and no one was hurt, and soon, riding in grandpa's wagon, they were all safe at the farmhouse,

telling the rest of the family all that had happened.

At first the Curlytops were afraid their goat might be made ill from having been stung by a bee.

"Maybe we'd better get a doctor for him," said Jan.

"Oh, no!" laughed her father. "Nicknack will be all right."

And so he was, being as kind and gentle as ever when the children went out to see him. They wanted to hitch him up again and drive Hal over to the Home, but Grandpa Martin said he would take the lame boy back in the big wagon. This was done, the children going along for the sake of the drive.

Haying time came a few days later, and Grandpa Martin and his men were busy drawing in the sweet-smelling loads, and storing in the big barn the dried grass that the horses would eat when winter came to cover the green fields with white snow.

"Can't we go out to the field and ride in on a load of hay?" asked Jan.

"Yes! Come along!" cried her grandfather, so she and Ted got in the big rick wagon that went to the field empty to be

hauled back with such a big, towering load on it.

The Curlytops played about in the field while the hired men were piling the wagon high with hay. The horse-rake, with which the dried grass was pulled into long rows, to be made into cocks, or little hills, later, made a nice place for Ted and Jan to play. They took turns sitting on the high iron seat and making believe they were driving a horse.

"Guess you'll have to get down off that hay-rake now, Curlytop," called Grandpa Martin to Ted after a while.

"Why?" the little boy asked.

"Because, The-o-dore," and Grandpa Martin's eyes twinkled as he used the long name which Ted's mother called him only on very special occasions, "we're going to hitch the horse to it and rake up the loose hay about the field. You see a lot gets scattered when we're loading the wagon," he explained, "and we must rake it up to save it. It isn't right to waste hay, or anything else that is food for real folks or animals. So hop down."

Ted jumped down to go over where his sister was sitting in the shade of the big

rick wagon, she having become tired of being out in the sun with Ted.

One of the men hitched a horse to the rake and drove about the field, collecting the loose hay. The rake had two big wheels to it, with a high seat in the middle. Behind the seat were some curved prongs of iron, like the teeth of your garden rake, only more than fifty times larger. They were made large to pile up a lot of hay at once.

When there was a big bunch of hay, held in a lump by the curved teeth of the rake, the man driving pulled a handle, the teeth rose up in the air over the pile of hay and left it to be gathered up and pitched on the wagon. Then the man dropped the teeth and they gathered up more wisps of the dried grass.

"I wish I could do that," said Ted, as, sitting beside Jan, he watched the hay rake moving about the field.

"The-o-dore Martin! Don't you dare!" cried Jan.

"Dare what?"

"Get on that hay-rake."

"Well, maybe I won't. But, just the same, I wish you wouldn't call me The-o-dore. It sounds as if I'd done something."

"All right, I won't," laughed Jan. "I'll call you Curlytop."

"All right," and Teddy was satisfied.

But he kept on looking at the funny way the big curved teeth of the hay-rake tilted themselves up every time the man driving it pulled the handle, and more than once Ted said to himself:

"I wish I could do that."

And finally, when the man got down off the seat to go to the brook to get a drink of water, and while Jan was trying to make a doll by wadding up a wisp of hay and dressing it in a green leaf, Teddy walked quietly off by himself and did what he ought not to have done. He climbed up on the seat of the hay-rake, and took the reins of the horse in his hands.

"I just want to see how it feels," thought Teddy.

And then, to his surprise, something happened. The horse began walking quickly down the field, pulling the rake after him, and with it a big pile of hay caught in the curved teeth.

"Oh! Whoa! Whoa there! Whoa!" cried the frightened Teddy.

But the horse kept on going with the rake.

CHAPTER XII

THE LOST DOLL

GRANDPA MARTIN, pausing in his work of tossing hay up on the wagon to fan himself with his big straw hat, looked across the field. What he saw made him cry out:

"Look at that boy!"

He pointed toward Teddy on the hay-rake, and one of the farm hands exclaimed:

"He'll be hurt, sure! Does he know how to drive a horse?"

"He can drive a goat a little," said Jan. "Oh, get him, Grandpa, 'fore he's hurt!" she cried.

"He oughtn't to have got up there!" said Grandpa Martin as he dropped his pitchfork and ran after the hay-rake. One of the hired men ran with him.

"Ted! Teddy! Stop the horse!" cried grandpa, running faster.

"I'm trying to," answered Ted, but his

voice sounded faint and far off. "Whoa!" he called, but instead of pulling back on the reins as he ought to have done, he flapped them up and down on the back of the horse. And, as this was what other drivers did when they wanted him to go faster, the horse did not know what to do.

With his voice Teddy was telling the horse to stop, but with the reins he was urging him on. So the horse kept going.

"I've got to stop! I've got to stop!" said the frightened boy to himself. "Maybe if I pull on the handle, like the man did, and raise up the rake, the horse will stop long enough for me to jump down. I'll try it."

Then, before Grandpa Martin or the hired man could reach Ted, he leaned forward. But he did not pull the handle. His hand just missed it and the next moment the little boy fell from the high iron seat, right behind the horse's legs.

"Oh! Oh!" screamed Jan.

"Good land!" cried Grandpa Martin. "The boy will be hurt!"

But Teddy was a lucky little boy. Instead of falling on the iron-shod feet of the horse, he just missed them and rolled into a little pile of hay. But the horse kept on going,

and the next Ted knew, he was being rolled along, over and over in a bundle of the dried grass.

For the curved teeth of the big rake were pulling him along, together with a bundle of the hay, and he was so wrapped up in it, like a Christmas doll in a package of straw or excelsior, that Teddy was not even scratched, though the ends of the hay did tickle him and make him sneeze.

"Whoa, there! Whoa!" cried the hired man in a loud voice. At the same time he ran forward and caught hold of the reins. This stopped the horse, and when the man and Grandpa Martin raised the teeth of the rake, and pulled apart the bundle of hay, there was Ted inside it. He looked frightened.

"Oh, Ted! Teddy!" gasped Jan, running up to him.

"Are you hurt?" asked one of the men.

"I guess not," Ted slowly answered, as he stood up. "I didn't mean to do it," he added, looking at his grandfather.

"I should hope you didn't! But don't dare get up on that rake again!"

"Not even when there isn't a horse hitched to it?" asked Ted.

"No, even when there is no horse. That's

for not being careful. You mustn't do such things, Theodore."

Teddy looked a little ashamed of himself.

"I—I won't do it any more," he faltered. "But it was awful funny being rolled along over and over inside the rake."

"It's a wonder you weren't hurt," said Grandpa Martin. "It's a good thing the teeth of the rake are so big and curved, and not sharp. Now go back and sit down until we load the wagon."

Grandpa and his men finished gathering up the hay, and when the big wagon was loaded he called:

"Come now, Curlytops! Up with you!"

Jan and Ted were tossed up on the very top of the load. And such fun as it was to ride along the road on the way back to the barn! No matter how rough the journey was the children never felt it, for the load of hay was like a feather bed, and much nicer than the Curlytops had thought. In the barn they had fun, too, sliding down one side of the big mow where the hay was stored.

Back they rode to the hay field again, and this time Ted kept far away from the big rake. He and Jan had a good time trying to catch the grasshoppers which flew and

hopped from one pile of the dried grass to another.

Then came a final ride back to the barn on the last load, and Ted and Jan were so tired out and so drowsy from the sweet smell and the heat that they fell asleep and had to be lifted down.

"Oh, we had such dandy fun!" cried Jan that night.

"And I had an adventure!" added Ted. Then he told about being rolled along in the big rake.

"Teddy! Teddy!" exclaimed his grandmother when she heard the story, "what will you do next?"

"Something one would never imagine a child would think of—that is all you can be certain of, Grandma," put in the Curlytops' mother, with a sigh.

"Well, I wonder what we'll do to-day?" asked Ted of his sister the next morning after breakfast, when they went out on the porch to find the sun shining brightly after a shower in the night.

"Can't we go for a ride with Nicknack? That would be fun."

"No. One of the wheels of the goat wagon needs fixing and grandpa is going to take it

to the blacksmith shop. If we go anywhere we'll have to walk, Jan."

"Then we can't take Trouble," declared Jan, "for he doesn't like to walk."

"And Hal isn't here to make a pole Indian wagon like the one we made before. What'll we do?" added Ted.

Before Jan could answer she heard her name called, and, looking toward the front gate, she saw Mary Seaton, a little girl with whom she sometimes played.

"Oh, Jan!" called Mary, "can you come over to my house and bring your doll?"

"Yes, I guess so. I'll ask my mother."

Mrs. Martin was willing, and soon, with flaxen-haired Flo, her prettiest doll, in her arms, Jan was ready to go with her little playmate.

"Oh, Jan!" called her mother, as the two girls were skipping out of the yard. "As long as you are only going over to Mary's, can't you take Trouble with you?"

"Oh, yes, let's!" cried Mary.

"All right, we'll take him," said Jan, and she sighed a little. "But tell him, please, Mother, that he mustn't pull my doll's hair."

"No, he mustn't do anything like that," said Mother Martin. "If you do, William, I

shall punish you when Jan brings you home."

"Me be dood!" promised Trouble.

"Well, if Jan's going over to Mary's, I guess I'll go and find Jimmie Dell or Hal Chester and have some fun," remarked Ted, as, with hands in his pockets, he walked slowly down the road.

The two little girls, with Baby William, found a nice place to play on the shady porch of the Seaton farmhouse, which was not far from that of Grandpa Martin's.

"We'll have a little tea party," said Mary.

Her mother gave her some cookies and some bread and butter, and with her toy set of dishes Mary soon had a table set on a box on the porch, and the two dolls were propped up in front of it, while Jan and Mary fed them—make-believe, of course.

"Me's hungry, too," said Trouble, as he saw the things to eat.

"Well, you can't have any now, because you're not a doll," said Jan. "After the dolls eat then you can, Trouble dear."

Baby William seemed to be thinking about this. It did not seem just fair that a real flesh-and-blood chap should have to wait until some dolls, who didn't have any teeth,

got through with their make-believe eating. Then, while Jan and Mary were busy pretending their dolls were eating and talking like grown-up people, Trouble toddled out into the kitchen.

His sister and her playmate did not pay much attention to him, and a little later the two girls thought they would play another game—that of "dress up like ladies." To do this Mary had to get some old, long skirts from the attic, and Jan went with her to help pick them out.

"Now you'll be Mrs. Martin and I'll be Mrs. Seaton," Mary explained, when they were down on the porch again, ready for the new game. "And we'll take our dolls—they'll be our children you know——"

"But where is my doll?" cried Jan suddenly, as she looked around. "She's gone! Oh, my lovely Flo doll is lost!"

There was only one doll at the play-party table on the porch, and that was Mary's. Jan's doll was gone, and so were some of the cookies that had been on the toy plate in front of her.

CHAPTER XIII

TED AND HIS KITE

THE two little girls stood and looked and looked and looked. Then they looked once more to make sure that the missing doll was not somewhere on the porch—in a corner perhaps. But Flo was nowhere in sight.

"Where can she be?" asked Mary.

"That's what I want to know," wailed Jan. "Oh, if anybody has taken her away——"

"Maybe they has," suggested Mary. "That is, unless maybe she walked away. Was your doll a walking doll, Jan?"

"Nope! Dolls can't walk!"

"I know mine can't," went on the other little girl; "but my mamma read to me about a little girl who had a doll that could walk. She walked and talked when you wound up a spring in the back of her dress."

"Oh, my doll wasn't that kind," said Jan,

and as she talked she looked all around the porch, even lifting up the cloth that was on the box which was used for the play party table.

"I thought maybe she had eaten so much she might have gone to sleep, and then she would fall under the table," said Jan to Mary.

But Flo was not there.

"Why don't you call her, the same way our mammas call us when we go away?" asked Mary.

"I could do that," agreed Jan, and then she called:

"Oh, Flo! I want you, dollie! Where are you?"

But no answer came, and then Jan, with a little laugh, said:

"Oh, it's silly to call! A doll can't hear, of course. We only make-believe they can. And this is real—it isn't make-believe. Flo is really gone!" and tears came into her eyes.

"I'll help you look for her," offered Mary. "We won't play party any more. It won't be any fun. Come on, we'll have a doll hunt."

"You'd better put your doll in the house,"

advised Jan. "Somebody may take her, too."

"I guess I will," agreed Mary.

Then, when she came out after putting her Anna Belle, as her doll was named, safely in her little bed, the two girls began once more to search for Flo.

They had looked in all the places they could think of around the house and porch, and were beginning on the bushes, which were down along both sides of the path, when Jan happened to think of her little brother.

"Oh, where is Trouble?" she suddenly cried.

"Here I is," came the quick answer, and the little fellow, his face and hands very dirty, came out from behind a snowball bush. He had been picking the white balls that looked like little drops of snow.

"Oh, Trouble! where have you been?" asked Jan.

"And did you see anything of Jan's doll?" asked Mary.

"Yes, I sawed her," answered Trouble, and his sister noticed that Baby William looked a little frightened, as if something queer had happened.

"Where is she? Where is my Flo?"

asked Trouble's sister quickly. "Tell me!" she begged.

"Dog took her," was the answer.

"A dog took my doll?" asked Jan. "Whose dog? When?"

" 'Ittle while ago. It was Mary's dog," and Trouble threw a snowball at a fluttering butterfly without hitting it.

"Mary's dog took my doll?" cried Jan. "Tell me all about it."

"Do you mean our Rover?" asked Mary.

"Yes—big dog Rover. He take Jan's doll."

"But why did he do it?" Jan demanded. "A doll isn't good for a doggie to eat, and Rover wouldn't want to play with Flo. Why did he take her?"

"I dess he wanted the ham bone," was Trouble's answer.

"A ham bone? In my doll!" cried Jan. "Flo hasn't any ham bone!"

"She did have one," explained Trouble, and he never even smiled. "I gived her my ham bone."

"Your ham bone?" repeated Mary. "Where did you get a ham bone, Trouble Martin?"

"Offen your mamma's table when she

wasn't in de titchen. I tooked de ham bone to suck 'cause I was hungry."

"Yes, he does do that, sometimes," explained Jan, as Mary looked at her in surprise. "Mother often gives him one that's been boiled and's had most of the meat cut off. He likes to gnaw the bone and pretend he's a little dog."

"And there was a ham bone out in our kitchen," said Mary. "I saw it there when I went in to get some cookies. I'll see if it's gone."

"Oh, if Trouble says he took it he did," replied Jan, and when Mary went to look, surely enough the ham bone was gone. Mrs. Seaton was not in the kitchen, having gone to the cellar to get some molasses to make a cake.

"But what did you do with the bone, Trouble?" asked Jan. "And how did the dog take my doll?"

"I did eat the ham bone," said Baby William, speaking very slowly and trying to use the best words he knew, for he saw his sister was very anxious. "I did eat the ham bone and then big-dog-Rover he did come and want some. So I did hide the ham bone under your dollie's dress so Rover not have

it. I did not eat all de meat—I mean the meat," and Trouble corrected himself.

"You hid your ham bone under Flo's dress?" asked Jan.

"Yes, I did."

"And then what happened?"

"Then big-dog-Rover he take the dollie in his mouth and he runned off with her, he did! Now may I have a cookie?"

"Oh, I see what happened," said Jan. "Trouble wanted to keep the ham bone away from Rover, so he hid it under Flo's clothes. Then your dog smelled it there and carried away the doll and the bone, too."

"I guess he did," agreed Mary. "He thought your doll was all one big ham bone I guess. But where did Rover take it, Trouble?" she asked Baby William.

"Don't know. Big-dog-Rover runned off."

"Oh, dear!" cried Jan. "If he's buried my doll, as dogs bury the bones they find, she'll be spoiled!"

"Maybe he hasn't had time to bury it yet," said Mary. "Come on. I know where Rover buries most of his bones. It's in a soft place near his kennel. Let's run!"

And run Jan and Mary did, leaving

Trouble on the stoop. The little boy at once began to eat some of the cookies left on the play-party table.

"There he is!" cried Mary, as she saw the dog lying down in the grass near his kennel, or house.

"And he's eating something!" added Jan, for Rover was certainly gnawing something he held between his paws. "Oh, I hope it isn't my doll!"

"Rover wouldn't eat a sawdust doll when he could get a bone," returned Mary.

And so it proved. As the little girls ran up Rover wagged his tail as if saying he was glad to see them, and he kept on gnawing. Then Mary cried:

"Oh, there's your doll, Jan!"

"Where?"

"Over in the grass behind Rover."

And there was the missing Flo, not in the least hurt, though there were some stains on her dress, made by the grass and the greasy ham bone.

"But we can play it's Monday and have a wash day," said Mary. "We'll wash her clothes!"

Jan thought this would be fun.

"I guess the ham bone must have dropped

out when Rover carried my doll as far as this," said Jan. "Then he let go of Flo and began to gnaw Trouble's bone. Oh, I wonder what Trouble will do next!"

"He's awful cute," laughed Mary. "How nicely he told us what he had done."

"Yes, Trouble is good that way. He never tries to get out of anything he does. Well, I'm glad Flo isn't hurt. Now let's wash her dress," and the two little girls had as much fun at this as they had had playing party.

So, after all, it was a good thing that Rover carried off the doll with the ham bone hidden under her dress. For if he had not Trouble might have eaten too much. And Mrs. Seaton said it made no difference to her —they had other hams in the smoke-house.

Everyone at Cherry Farm laughed that night when Jan came home and told what had happened to her doll.

"I had a lovely time over at Mary's," she said to her brother. "What did you do at Jimmie Dell's?"

"Oh, we made a big kite and we're going to fly it to-morrow."

"May I come and see you?"

"Course you can! But don't bring Trouble."

"Why not?"

" 'Cause he might get tangled in the tail and sail up in the air."

So Baby William was left with his mother when Jan and Ted went over to Jimmie Dell's house the next day to fly the big kite. It was quite a large one—almost as tall as Ted himself—but as there was a good wind the boys thought it would go up all right. They tied the string to it, made the tail, and then while Jimmie held it up off the ground Ted ran, holding the ball of cord in his hand.

The kite went up a little distance in the air, and then gave a sudden downward dive.

"What's the matter?" asked Jan. "What made it do that?"

"Not enough tail on," answered Jimmie. "Wait a minute, I'll fix it."

Not wanting to wait to get more string and pieces of cloth from which the tail was made, Jimmie fastened on a bunch of weeds he pulled up from the spot where he was standing.

"That will make it heavier, and then the kite won't dip and dive," he said. "All ready now!" he called to Ted. "Start and run!"

Ted ran, letting out string from the ball

he carried in his hand. The kite went up a little way and then gave another sudden dive, right down near a place where some chickens and an old rooster were picking bugs and worms from the grass. The chickens gave frightened squawks and ran away with fluttering wings.

"Oh, dear!" cried Jan, who was watching the boys. "It's going to come down again!"

But the kite did not. That one dive seemed to be enough for it, as it at once began to soar up in the air.

"Oh, it's going up! It's going up!" cried Jimmie.

"Run, Teddy, run!" called Jan.

And her brother did run.

The kite rose in the air until the long tail was almost clear from the ground and then the Curlytop girl saw a queer sight.

For, tangled in the weed which Jimmie had tied on the end of the tail, was the rooster. He was being raised up with the big kite and his frightened crows and the flapping of his wings showed that he did not like it at all.

Up and up went the kite, and up and up went the rooster!

CHAPTER XIV

A QUEER RIDE

TED, running as he was with the ball of string, and with his back to the kite, did not see what had happened. But he wondered why Jan and Jimmie were shouting so loudly.

"Look! Look! Look at the rooster!" yelled Jimmie, jumping up and down, he was so excited.

"Oh, he'll fall and be killed!" exclaimed Janet.

"Cock-a-doodle-do!" crowed the rooster himself, while below him, running about on the ground, the hens clacked and clucked, wondering what it was all about, and thinking, perhaps, that a big hawk had carried off their friend.

"Stop, Ted! Stop!" Jimmie finally cried. "That's my father's best rooster and he wouldn't want him hurt. Stop!"

Not until then did the Curlytop boy turn around to see what was the matter. Then he saw the rooster dangling in the air from the weed that was on the end of the kite tail.

"Oh, my!" cried Ted. "How did it happen?"

Without waiting for anyone to answer him he stopped running. The kite, no longer being pulled against the wind, began to fall, especially as the rooster was heavy. If it had not been such a big kite it never would have gone up with its long tail and the rooster also.

But kites, in a strong wind, can lift heavy weights. Ted had been told this by his father, and that is why he and Jimmie made such a large flier. But they never expected it to lift a rooster.

"The string and the weed on the end of the tail got tangled around Mr. Rooster's legs," said Jimmie, when he and Ted went to where the kite had fallen to look at it. "He couldn't get loose."

And that is exactly what happened. The rooster had been quietly feeding with the hens when the weed, which Jimmie had pulled up, roots and all, had flopped down on him as the kite made a dive through the air,

and then had come the sail upward, the rooster getting a free ride.

With many a crow, and other queer noises, the ruffled fowl ran away as soon as Jimmie had untangled him. And such a cawing and cackling as there was among the hens! If chickens talk, as some people think they do, they must have had lots of questions to ask old Mr. Rooster about what had happened to him when he was ballooning.

"Well, I guess we'll get this kite up in the air after a while," said Jimmie, when they were once more ready. "Jan, you'd better keep watch and see if we get tangled up with any more things."

"I will," promised the little girl.

But nothing else happened, and this time the kite went away up in the air, darting here and there like some big bird. Ted and Jimmie took turns holding the string, and then they let Jan feel how strongly the kite pulled.

Then they sent up "messengers"—bits of paper, pierced with a hole so they could slide up the slanting string, all the way to the kite high in the air. The wind blew up the "messengers," and the two boys pretended they were at war, and were generals sending word

to their soldiers about the "enemy," hidden in the tall weeds.

Ted and Jimmie were sitting down in the grass, watching the kite floating in the air far above them, when Jan, who was tying some leaves together to make a sort of baby doll, called:

"Here comes Hal!"

The two boys looked up to see the lame chap hopping toward them, a smile on his face.

"I came over to see your kite," he explained. "I saw it from the field where I was sitting, and I wondered who had it up so high. It's a dandy!"

"It's higher than it was a while ago, when it tried to take up our old rooster," laughed Jimmie.

"Take up a rooster? Oh, I'd like to see that!" cried Hal.

"We give only one show like that a day," returned Ted, grinning. "You can hold the kite awhile if you want to."

"Thanks!" exclaimed the lame boy. "I like kites. I can make 'em, only they don't have the right things over at the Home. I can make a dandy one that goes up without a tail."

"Can you?" cried Jimmie. "That's great! Make one, will you? I've got lots of paper and sticks."

So after Hal had held the kite with the tail for a while, feeling how hard it pulled, the children all went to the Dell home, and there made a kite without a tail, Hal teaching his new chums how to do it. There are only two sticks used in a tailless kite, instead of three, and the cross-stick is bent like a bow, and held that way with a string before the paper is pasted on.

It took the rest of that day to make the kite without a tail, and then it was time for Hal to go back to the Home. But he promised to come the following day and see the others fly it.

"I can hold it, while one of you runs with the string," explained the lame boy. "Sometimes, if the wind is just right, you don't have to run with these kites at all. They're easier to fly than the others. You'll like 'em."

"We're glad you came over," said Jimmie, and he and Ted felt that, after all, it was not so bad to be lame when one could make such fine kites.

"Say, you'd better tell your grandmother

to get her chocolate cake ready," Hal called to Ted just before starting away.

"Why?"

"Because that party, or entertainment, or whatever you want to call it, that they're going to have to raise money for the Home will be given in two weeks. I thought I'd tell you in plenty of time, so your grandmother wouldn't have to hurry," he added with a laugh.

"I'll tell her," promised Ted. "Is there anything I can do?"

"And me, too!" added Jan quickly. "I'd like to help."

"Well, I don't know that there is," answered Hal slowly. "They're trying to raise money for the Home, that's about all I know."

"We might sell lemonade," said Jan, thoughtfully.

"I guess they're going to sell lemonade over at the Home," explained Hal. "If I hear of anything you can do I'll let you know."

Jimmie and Ted, as well as Jan, were eagerly waiting for Hal to come the next day and show them how to fly the tailless kite. He had promised to come right after break-

fast, but it was nearly noon when he reached Jimmie's house, and he hopped along slowly, his face showing that he was in pain.

"What's the matter?" asked Jan quickly.

"Oh, nothing much," and he tried to smile. "Dr. Wade played a sort of game of tag with my bad foot this morning, and it—it—um—it sort of—tickles," he went on. "I don't mind, though, for it's the only way to make it straight and better, so I won't have to limp. There's lots worse than me. Some of 'em can't get out of bed after the nurses or doctors give 'em what they call 'treatment.' That is they rub or twist the crooked bones. But I'm lucky. I could get over here."

It must have been painful for him, though he said nothing about it. Hal was a brave little chap.

"Now for the kite!" he cried gaily. "There's a good wind and it ought to sail up fine!"

And so it did, going up much better and easier than the one with the tail. And it flew higher, too, and pulled much harder.

"I wish I had a kite of my own," said Janet wistfully, after she had been given a few turns at holding the string of the boys' kite.

"I'll make you one," promised Hal. "It'll be bigger than this, if I can get longer sticks."

"I'll get 'em," offered Jimmie, and this, a few days later, he did. So Jan had her kite, and it was a good flier, too.

"It's more fun to play with this than with a doll," said the little Curlytop girl after she and Ted had gone back to Cherry Farm. "A kite does something, and a doll can't unless you do it for her."

"If you hide a ham bone under her dress a dog will carry her off," said Grandpa Martin, and the children laughed.

The Curlytops and their friends had fun flying kites and doing many other things during the vacation days at Cherry Farm. One morning Ted called to his sister:

"I say, Jan, come on down to the brook-pasture," and he pointed toward a large field, through which ran a little brook.

"What are you going to do down there?" asked Jan.

"You'll see," answered her brother, and Jan saw that he had a piece of clothesline coiled under his blouse. "Come on, you'll see. I'm going to learn to be a Wild West cowboy!"

"Oh, Ted! If mother heard you——"

"She won't, if you don't tell her. It's no harm. Come on!"

Eager to see what her brother would do, Jan followed him. When she saw him climbing the fence to get into the pasture, and as she noticed some little calves eating in the grass, she asked:

"Are you going to catch one?"

"I'm going to lasso it," answered Ted. "Wild West cowboys lasso."

"Won't it hurt the little cow?"

"Nope. I'll do it easy. It won't hurt."

And I don't believe it really did. Ted climbed over the fence and, making a slip-noose in the clothesline, he went up softly behind one of the calves. But the animal heard Teddy coming and, kicking up his heels, ran away.

"But I'll get another," declared the little Curlytop chap, and after two or three attempts he did manage to throw the noose over the neck of a small calf. The little animal tried to pull away, but Ted was quite strong and at last led the animal along by the rope.

"Now I'm a cowboy!" boasted Ted. "Didn't I tell you I could catch one?"

"Yes," agreed Jan, "you did. Is that all you're going to do?"

It really was not much fun for her to sit on the fence and watch her brother lead a calf around by a rope. The calf seemed quite tame after it was once caught, and did not try to get away.

"Maybe I could teach it to do tricks," said her brother. "If I could we might have a circus and earn money for the Crippled Home. Say, Jan——"

"Oh, here comes grandpa!" suddenly called Janet, looking back across the field from her seat on the fence. "You'd better let that calf go!"

Ted thought so himself, and tried to get the rope off the little animal's neck. But it was pulled tight, and as the calf kept jerking its head Ted did not find it easy to loosen the noose.

"Here, you help, Jan!" he begged. "I'll lead the calf up to you while you sit on the fence, and you can hold him while I untie the rope."

Jan was willing, and they both worked quickly, for they did not want Grandpa Martin to see that they had caught a calf. He might not like it, though really the little

animal was not hurt, and hardly even scared —at least so the Curlytops thought.

"I can't reach the rope if he keeps lifting his head up that way," said Ted, after a bit. "Here, Jan, you hold the loose end, and I'll climb up on the fence. Then I can reach down."

Jan took the end of the rope and her brother scrambled up on the rail fence. He worked away at the knot around the calf's neck, and Jan looked back to see how near Grandpa Martin was. The old gentleman had turned to one side, however, and did not seem to be coming to the pasture.

"There!" cried Ted. "I almost had it!"

And just then something happened. Ted slipped from the fence, and, as he fell, he stretched out his arms toward the calf in front of him and down below him. Then Ted fell astraddle right on the calf's back, just as if he intended to take a bareback gallop.

The next minute he was having a queer ride, for Janet, with a cry of surprise, had let go her end of the rope, and the calf, with Ted on his back, was running across the field.

CHAPTER XV

GRANDPA IS WORRIED

"OH! Oh! Oh!" cried Janet, and she was so surprised that she almost fell off the fence. "Oh, The-o-dore Martin, what are you doing?"

Janet did not really mean to ask that question, for she could see plainly what her brother was doing. He was riding a very much frightened calf around the pasture, though Ted, himself, did not want to do that at all. And though the calf had not been very much frightened when Ted lassoed it by tossing the rope around its neck, the animal was frightened now. Never before, in all its short life, had anyone ridden on its back.

"Jan! Jan!" cried Ted. "Go and get grandpa and——"

That was all Ted's sister heard, for, just then, the calf turned and ran the other way

and the wind carried Ted's voice away from Jan.

"I wonder what he wants grandpa to do?" thought Janet. "I guess Ted wants him to stop the calf from running away. For it *is* running away!"

The calf certainly was! Of course it was not running out of the field, for the pasture was a large one with a fence all around it, and the calf could not climb over the fence nor break it down. But it was running here and there—all about—and poor Ted was on its back, clinging with both arms around the calf's neck so he would not fall off.

Excited as she was, Jan managed to hold on to the fence, and look across Cherry Farm to where she had last seen her grandfather coming toward the pasture. But he had turned aside and was now going toward the cherry grove. He did not appear to have seen Jan and Ted, nor anything of what had happened.

"Oh, Grandpa! Grandpa! Grandpa!" called Janet, as loudly as she could. "Teddy's running away with the calf—I mean the calf is running away with Teddy! Oh, do something! What shall I do? Oh, dear!"

But Grandpa Martin did not hear the lit-

tle Curlytop girl. He was too far away. Teddy, too, was shouting, but his sister could not hear what he said, as he was too far off. And, as he was farther away from his grandfather than was Jan, of course the farmer could not hear the little boy either.

"Oh, what shall I do?" Janet asked again, and she was almost ready to cry for fear her brother would be hurt. Though he was older than was she, still she felt she must look after him almost as much as she took care of Trouble—when Trouble let her.

"What's the matter?" asked a voice behind Janet, and, turning, she saw Hal Chester, who had come up so quietly she had not heard him.

"Oh, Hal!" cried Janet, "Ted's on the calf's back and he can't get off, and I don't know how to stop him and I can't make grandpa hear and—and—— Oh, dear!"

"My! that's a lot of trouble!" said Hal. "I'll see if I can help. Where's the calf and where's your grandfather?"

"There's the calf," and Janet pointed to where it was racing around, its tail held high in the air. "And grandpa is going to the cherry grove, I guess."

"Well, I think maybe I can stop the calf

without going after him, especially as it's so far, and my foot doesn't feel very well today," said the lame boy. "Here he comes now," he went on, as he saw the calf with Ted on its back swing around a corner of the pasture and head toward Janet where she still stood on the fence.

"What are you going to do?" she asked.

"When he comes near enough I'll stand in front of him, jump up and down and swing my hat. I saw a man do that once to stop a runaway horse and it worked fine. I guess it'll be the same with a runaway calf."

"Did the horse have anybody on its back?" Janet demanded.

"I don't believe so. But that doesn't make any difference. Here he comes now. I'll see what I can do."

Hal climbed over the fence, and stood ready to do as he had said he would. The calf, with Ted still clinging to its neck, came nearer and nearer.

"Oh, Hal! Jan! Stop him! Stop him!" cried the small Curlytop boy. "Get grandpa or somebody and stop him. I'm all—all—shaken up—to—to jel-ly!" and the words seemed jarred out of poor Ted as you shake corn out of a popper.

"Hal's going to stop him! Hal will stop him!" shouted Jan.

The racing calf was now quite close to the lame boy, who did not seem to be at all afraid. He took off his cap and began waving it around—up and down—every way. At the same time he hopped up and down, flapping his arms and shouting as loudly as he could.

"Whoa there! Stop! Whoa!" yelled Hal.

The calf still came on, but not quite so fast. Of course it might have turned to either side and gone past Hal, but maybe the little animal did not think of this. It slowed up, and did not seem to know what to do.

"Jan, you jump down and hold out your arms, too," called Hal, and Jan did so. She waved her hands and her sunbonnet, but she forgot to jump up and down.

But this did not seem to be needed, for now the calf, seeing the fence on one side of him, and a very much excited boy and girl directly in its path, came to a sudden stop. It was going to turn and run back the other way—any way at all to get rid of that strange two-legged creature on its back.

But the sudden stop did just what Jan and Hal and what Ted himself and the calf wanted—it took the Curlytop boy off the little animal's back.

Ted slid off and fell to the ground. But as the grass was soft and long he was not a bit hurt, seeming to bounce up as though he had ridden on a load of hay or had fallen in the feather bed which Trouble had cut with the scissors.

"Oh, I'm so glad!" cried Jan, as she ran to her brother. "Are you hurt?"

"I—I guess not. Nope!" he answered, as he felt of his arms and legs. "I'm much obliged to you for stopping him, Hal."

"Oh, well, it was easy. How'd you come to get on his back?"

"I was playing cowboy."

"Cowboys don't ride calves," declared Hal.

"Well, then I was a calf-boy, I guess," and Ted laughed.

He was telling Hal how he had lassoed the calf, which, by this time, had managed to get the rope off its neck, when a voice called to the children:

"What have you been doing?"

"Oh!" they exclaimed, like the chorus of

a song; and, looking up, they saw Grandpa Martin smiling at them from the other side of the fence.

"Did anything happen?" asked the farmer.

"I—I rode one of your calves," answered Ted. "But I—I didn't mean to."

"Hum!" said grandpa, and there was a twinkle in his eyes. "Calves aren't made to ride. You might get hurt. Don't do it again."

Of course Ted promised that he would not and then, having picked up the piece of clothesline, which he had used as a lasso, the Curlytop boy, with his sister and the lame boy, started back for the Cherry Farm house with grandpa.

"I came over to ask Mrs. Martin to bake a cake for the fair we're going to have," said Hal to Ted's grandfather. "Jan said she's made 'em before for the Home."

"Yes, and I guess she'll make one this time," said Grandpa Martin slowly. "I'd like to help some myself—giving money—but this year I'm too poor, I'm sorry to say."

"Oh, well, I guess somebody else will give money," said Hal cheerfully. "The chocolate cake will be great."

"Will you get any of it to eat?" asked Jan.

"Well, no, not exactly. You see folks bake pies, cookies, cakes and so on, and they're sold to the visitors who come to the fair.

"The last fair they had the folks most generally took the cakes they bought home with 'em, so we didn't get any. But maybe it's better so," he added, though he could not help sighing a little. "We're not supposed to have much cake. The doctors and nurses say it isn't good for us."

"I should think you could have a little!" exclaimed Jan. "I know what I'm going to do. I'm going to ask my mother to bake a chocolate cake special for you, Hal Chester."

"That'll be fine!" laughed the lame boy. "What I can't eat I'll give to some of the other boys and girls."

They walked on to the farmhouse, and the Curlytops noticed that their grandfather looked worried. They could tell this, as Jan said afterward, because his face was just like her father's the time his store burned down.

"I guess he's worried 'cause he's poor," whispered Ted.

"Or maybe the cherries aren't getting ripe

fast enough," said Janet. So she asked: "Grandpa, will the cherries soon be ready to pick?"

"Oh, yes—yes—there'll be plenty of cherries."

"Then can't you sell them for a bushel of money?"

"Well, my dear, I'm afraid I have too many cherries. I never saw the trees so full of them. I never had such a crop! The only trouble will be to sell them before they all spoil. I'm afraid I have too many—the price will be very low. I won't get much for them. But don't you little Curlytops bother about me. I guess I'll be all right, even if I can't give money to the Home as I've done before. Don't worry about me."

But Ted and Jan did worry, even when Grandma Martin not only promised to make a big chocolate cake for the Home but also one for Hal. Still the Curlytops did not see what they could do to help.

"But when cherry-picking time comes we can help cart 'em from the grove in the goat wagon," said Ted.

"Yes," agreed his sister. "Let's go for a ride over there now, and see how long it will be before they're ripe."

This was a day or so after Ted had ridden the calf.

"Me come!" cried Trouble, as he saw his brother and sister getting Nicknack ready for their drive.

"Oh, yes, I s'pose you'll have to come, Trouble!" replied Jan. "Come along!"

They rode down the shady highway in the goat wagon, listening to the birds, watching the bees and butterflies flutter from flower to flower, and thinking how lovely it was to spend a vacation at Cherry Farm. The Curlytops had forgotten, for the time, about the troubles and worries of Grandpa Martin.

All at once, as they drove the goat wagon around a turn in the road, the children saw, just in front of them, a funny wagon, painted red, and drawn by a white horse. On the back step of the wagon, which looked a little like those driven by gypsies, stood a very fat man. He was so fat that it is a wonder the wagon did not tip up, horse and all, from his weight on the back step. But perhaps it had extra heavy front wheels to hold that end down to the ground.

"Oh, ho! Oh, ho!" cried the fat man in a jolly voice. "Oh, ho! What have we here?

Gay travelers like myself! Oh, lollypops and ice-cream sandwiches! That's the rig for me! I love a goat! I must have a goat! I will buy yours. I'll give you a thousand gumdrops for him. Oh, ho! Sell me your goat!"

And while the surprised Curlytop children, with Jan holding Trouble in her lap, stopped their goat, and looked at the funny fat man in his funny red wagon, he looked at them and laughed until his face was as wrinkled as a toy circus balloon when the wind hisses out of it. And then the fat man cried again:

"Oh, ho! I love a goat! I will give you my white horse and red wagon for your goat and a million gumdrops besides. Come, let us trade. Are you simple Simons with a penny, or, indeed, have you any? Oh, ho! I will sing!"

And then he began to sing:

"Tum tum tum, oh, Tiddle I oh!
I am quite happy in the snow.
Or if it rains I do not care,
For I've a rubber hat to wear.
And if you'll give to me your goat,
I'll give to you my nice white coat!"

CHAPTER XVI

TRYING TO EARN MONEY

THE Curlytops were so surprised they did not know what to do. Even Trouble just sat in Jan's lap and stared at the funny fat man, who, after he had finished the song, reached somewhere inside his wagon, and pulled out a freshly-ironed white coat, like those worn by men in a barber shop.

This coat the fat man put on, taking off the one he had been wearing, which, Ted saw, had some black streaks on it, so that it was not entirely clean.

"Oh, ho!" cried the fat man. "Now I am ready for waffles! So you won't sell me your goat, nor trade him for my coat? Well, maybe it is better so, and I need my clean coat to wear as I bake the waffles. Oh, ho!"

"Do you s'pose he really wants our goat?" asked Jan in a whisper of her brother.

"He can't have him, if he does," answered

the Curlytop boy. "We won't sell Nicknack."

"And we won't trade him for a horse, either," went on Jan. "A horse is too big for us. A goat is just right."

But the jolly fat man did not seem to want to take Nicknack away from the Curlytops. He smiled at them, now that he had on his clean coat, and then, going inside his wagon, he took the reins and turned his horse around so that the children could see the side of the red and little house-like wagon. They saw what seemed to be a tiny kitchen, with shelves of dishes, and on a white oilcloth-covered table stood a little gasolene stove.

The fat man mixed some batter in a pan, lighted a fire in the small stove and then began to cook something. As smoke arose and a delicious, sweet, brownish smell filled the air, the queer man began ringing a bell.

"Oh, ho!" he cried, laughing. "Do you know what that means?"

"I knows! I knows!" cried Trouble before his brother or sister could speak. "Dat's din'-don' bell, Pussy's in de well!"

"Almost right, little chap!" laughed the man. "It is a ding-dong bell, but it sings another song. Here it is," and he sang:

"Ding dong bell,
Listen while I tell,
Down in the dingle-dell,
Hot waffles do I sell!"

And with that the man did something to the little stove on the white table in front of him and, like the magician doing tricks, such as taking a rabbit out of a hat, the man clapped out on a plate some hot waffles, over which he sprinkled powdered sugar.

"Here you are!" he cried. "Hot waffles for a penny. Simple Simon's pie! Oh, my eye! Hot waffles high and dry! Want to buy?" and he leaned down over the table in the side of the red wagon and looked smilingly at the children in the goat cart as the store-keeper leans over his counter to hear what the little girl says when her mother sends her to the grocer's for a yeast cake and she buys a pound of sugar instead.

"Want to buy some waffles?" asked the fat man.

"Are they really a penny?" asked Ted.

"That's all—no more, no less. A penny apiece, ten cents a dozen."

"We couldn't eat a *dozen,*" said Jan,

wide-eyed. "Anyhow mother wouldn't like us to. But we could buy one apiece."

"Then please do," begged the fat man. "I haven't sold any since I left the last town, and I'd like to make a start. Come, I'll give you each two for a penny, seeing you are my first customers. Here you are," and as nimble as a cat when she's jumping over a fence to get away from the dog, the fat man ran from his wagon, coming out of the little door in the back, and stood bowing before the children with the plate of hot waffles in his hand.

"Here you are," he cried. "Two for a penny."

"Let's see," said Ted slowly. "There's three of us. Trouble can eat two, I guess. Three times two is seven——"

"No, *six*," corrected Jan, for she was better in number-work than was her brother.

"Oh yes, six," agreed Teddy. "Six waffles is three cents," and from his pocket he took three pennies which he gave to the fat man, who put six waffles down on a piece of paper in Jan's lap.

"There you are!" he cried. "You're the little housekeeper, I guess. Now I'll have good luck—I've made my first sale!" and he

laughed so that he shook all over as if he were a jelly lollypop.

"Do you go around selling hot waffles like the man in our town?" asked Jan, as she gave Trouble and Ted each one of the sugar-covered cakes.

"Well, I don't know the man in your town, but I do go about selling them here—also lollypops, popcorn balls, candy and other things. Sometimes ice-cream when I'm in a city where I can sell it before it melts. But in the country like this I sell mostly waffles."

"And did you really want to take our goat?" asked Jan anxiously.

"No, my dear. I was only joking. I do love a goat, and I had one when I was a boy. But I soon grew so fat that I had to pull him around in the cart instead of his pulling me. That was too hard work for me, so I waited until I could buy a horse."

"Could you ride your horse in your wagon?" asked Ted.

"No, I'm afraid not. I've too much in my cart. I sleep in it. Come and look."

Tying Nicknack near a fence, where he could nibble the sweet grass, Jan and Ted, taking Trouble by the hands, went to look

at the fat man's wagon. They finished eating the waffles as they looked at it. The wagon within was like a little house. There was a bed built on one side, and a table with books and papers on it. Then there was a little kitchen, where the fat man cooked waffles, and other things that he ate himself.

"You see I'd get sort of tired of waffles, seeing so many of them," he explained. "I only eat 'em when I can't sell 'em."

Then he told the Curlytops how he drove about from town to town in the country, sometimes going to cities, where he sold waffles and other things. His name, he said, was Sam Sander, and he had been selling waffles and candy about the country for seven years.

"Well, I must be traveling on," he said after a while, when the Curlytops had finished looking at his wagon, inside and outside. "I'm going to town to sell waffles. Here's a little waffle for your goat," and he tossed a broken one to Nicknack, who ate it and cried: "Baa-a-a-a!" as if in thanks.

"Isn't he nice!" exclaimed Jan when smiling Sam Sander had driven away with his white horse and red wagon. "I like him!"

"So do I," agreed Ted.

"More cake?" asked Trouble, looking up with his face quite smeared with the waffles he had eaten.

"No more cakes now," answered Jan with a laugh. "But those were good," she said to her brother. "I'd like some more myself."

"We'll buy some to-morrow if we can find him," returned Ted. "If he's going to be in town we may see him. We can ride over in our goat wagon."

"Yes," agreed Jan. "I'm glad Mr. Sander didn't take Nicknack even in fun, though."

"Huh, I wouldn't let him!" cried Ted. "Say!" he went on, "don't you wish we could ride around like that and sell things?"

"It would be nice," agreed his sister. 'And, oh say, Ted! we could earn money that way for the Home, where Hal lives."

Her eyes sparkled and she clapped her hands. Janet thought of more things than Ted could keep track of sometimes.

"Wouldn't that be lovely?" she cried, her eyes sparkling.

"It would be. But we'd have to have a big wagon, and Nicknack couldn't pull it," said Ted.

"I wish there was some way we could earn money and give it to the Home," went on Janet. "Baking chocolate cakes doesn't seem much."

"Grandpa'd give 'em money if he had it," went on Ted.

"Yes; but he hasn't it. He could give 'em cherries, 'cause he has more than he can sell," said Janet. "But I guess cherries wouldn't be much good for the Home. Oh dear, if we were only grown-up we could help."

Ted did not answer right away. He was thinking very hard as he drove the goat down the shady road. Then, all at once, he cried:

"Janet, I know what we can do!"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean to earn money. I know how we can do it!"

"How?"

"Give goat rides. Don't you know how once, when we went to New York, in Central Park we saw boys giving rides in goat wagons for five cents apiece—I mean the rides five cents apiece, not the wagons."

"Yes, I remember."

"Well, we could give rides to the boys and

girls here, charge 'em money and give all we got to the Home. Maybe it wouldn't be much, but it would be some."

"Oh, Ted! that's just lovely!" cried Janet. "We'll do it! Oh, how nice it will be! Let's make a sign and put it on Nicknack."

"How're you going to put a sign on the goat—paint him?"

"No. We'll get mother to make one on cloth, and we can pin the cloth to his harness, and let it hang over his side like a blanket."

"Say, that's great!" cried Ted. "We'll do it!"

When the Curlytops told their mother and father what they wanted to do—give goat rides to earn money—everyone said it was all right.

Mother Martin made a muslin sign, and with some black paint found in grandpa's barn Daddy Martin painted the words. They read:

GOAT RIDES
UP AND DOWN THE ROAD
5 CENTS
MONEY FOR THE CRIPPLED HOME

"There!" cried Ted, as he looked at the

sign hanging on either side of Nicknack, "that ought to earn some money. Come on now, Jan, we'll go out and see what we can do."

"Oh but *we* can't ride if we're going to take passengers!"

"No. But we can ride until some one wants to get in, and then we can get out. I'll walk alongside the wagon and drive Nicknack, and you can be the conductor and collect the money."

"All right. And if only one or two want to ride at once we can get in too, for there's room."

"All right! But come on! Now we can earn money for Hal's home!"

CHAPTER XVII

JIMMIE HAS A TUMBLE

Down the road trotted Nicknack, while Ted and Jan sat on the front seat of the wagon and looked eagerly ahead for the first sight of some boy or girl to whom they might offer a ride, and so earn money for the Crippled Children's Home where Hal Chester hoped to have his lame foot cured.

"See anybody, Jan?" asked Ted, after a bit.

"Nope! Do you?"

"Nope; but I hear some one calling. It's behind us. Maybe somebody wants a ride. Listen!"

Somebody did. But when Jan and Ted looked around they both laughed and cried out:

"Trouble!"

And Trouble it was, toddling along after the goat wagon, and calling as he hurried on:

"Waits a minute! Waits a minute! I wants a wide!"

"What'll we do?" asked Ted.

"Oh, we've got to take him with us, I s'pose," replied Janet. "But if he rides there'll be that much less room for someone else, and then we can't earn as much money."

Ted thought this over for a minute.

"I'll tell you what we could do," he said, as he stopped Nicknack and let the goat eat the sweet grass that grew beside the road.

"What?" asked Janet.

"We could let whoever wanted to ride hold Trouble on his lap. Then he wouldn't take up any room."

"That's so. But maybe they wouldn't want to hold him. Trouble is awful heavy sometimes, and he does wiggle and squirm a lot!"

"Well, if some of 'em didn't want to hold him they could pay a penny more and Trouble could sit in a seat by himself."

"That's so!" cried Jan. "Then we'd make a little extra money out of Trouble."

"That's it!" agreed her brother. "And if they wanted to hear him, Trouble could sing his funny little song for them."

Janet laughed at this. Mother Martin

had taught the little baby a queer mixture of Mother Goose verses, and Trouble sang these in a funny, squeaky voice—that is, he sang when he wanted to.

"But it would be just like him not to sing if someone asked him to," sighed Janet. "Then we'd have to let them ride free if they didn't want to hold the baby."

"If Trouble won't sing he can't ride," decided Ted. "Here, Trouble!" he called to his little brother. "Will you sing the Crumpled-Cow-Jack-Horner-Pie-song if I let you ride?"

"I will sing it two times," said Trouble earnestly. "I do want a wide. I runned after you to hab a wide."

"All right—hop in," returned Ted; and with their baby brother on the seat between them Ted and Jan drove off again.

They had not ridden far before they came to where Jimmie Dell lived. Jimmie was swinging on his front gate, and as he saw the goat wagon coming up with his three little friends in it, he called:

"Where you goin'? Give us a ride, will you?"

"We will for a penny," answered Ted.

"A penny!" cried Jimmie, who had al-

ways before ridden for nothing behind Nicknack.

"You see," explained Janet, "we're trying to make money for the Home where Hal lives. We'll ride you down the road and up again for five cents, or give you a little ride for a penny."

"And you'll be in the wagon all by yourself," went on Ted. "I'll get out and walk, and Jan will be conductor and collect the fare. Come on!"

"You'll have to hold Trouble on your lap, though," said Janet; "but he'll sing for you, so you won't mind holding him."

"I'll sing now!" decided Trouble, and he began to croon:

" 'Once a crumpled bossy-cow,
Was eatin' some gween cheese!
Dack Horner dropped his Twistmas pie
An' made Bo Peep to sneeze!' "

"There's a lot more verses like that," explained Ted, as Trouble stopped singing to catch his breath. "You'll like it. Won't he, Jan?"

"Oh, yes!"

"I'd like a ride, too," said Jimmie, "only

I haven't got five cents, or even a penny."

Janet and Ted looked thoughtful on hearing this. Then Janet said:

"Say, Ted, I think we ought to let Jimmie have the first ride for nothing."

"Why?"

"Well, 'cause it will give us a start. You see if some other boys and girls see him riding they'll want to ride too, and it will be a sort of advertisement for us."

"Maybe it would. Come on, Jimmie. You get in and I'll walk along 'side the wagon and drive Nicknack. Janet will be conductor and make believe she's collected your fare. Then it will look as if we had made a start."

"Do I have to hold Trouble?" asked Jimmie.

"Course," decided Ted. "He can't walk. But you don't have to hear him sing if you don't want to, or he can sit beside you if you don't want to hold him. Only don't let him fall."

"I's goin' to sing," declared Baby William, and he began on the tenth or maybe the fifteenth verse. Sometimes he put the first and last verses together and made an entirely new one, so one never could tell when

the song ended except when Trouble stopped singing.

"Oh, well, you can sing, and you can sit on the seat next to me," said Jimmie. "I'm much obliged for the ride."

"You're an advertisement like a newspaper," explained Janet.

"And I think he ought to sort of holler out like, and say what a fine ride he was havin' so's more would come," went on Ted. "We've got to make money somehow."

"I'll holler," promised Jimmie.

So, as he rode in the goat wagon, with Trouble on the seat beside him, while Teddy drove and Janet tried to look as if she had collected her first fare, Jimmie called out:

"Come on and ride, everybody! It's great! A penny for a little ride, a nickel for a bigger! Come on! Come on! Come on and ride!"

His shouts, the painted sign on Nicknack, the voice of Trouble singing his queer song now and then, and Jan and Ted walking beside the goat wagon drew the attention of the few people they passed on the country road.

But none of them seemed to want a ride, and at the few houses they passed, though some children came to the gates and looked

very much as though they would like to ride, they shook their heads, for they had no money—not even a penny.

"Well, I'm havin' lots of fun," said Jimmie, after a while. "But maybe I'd better——"

Just then Nicknack saw a bunch of green grass beside the road he thought he would like to chew. He made a sudden jump for it, and so quickly that Jimmie toppled off the seat backward and fell with a "ker-thump" on the grass beside the road.

"Whoa!" called Ted.

"Look out for Trouble!" exclaimed Jan.

Baby William, too, had tumbled off the seat when Jimmie had fallen, but Trouble only rolled to the bottom of the wagon, and there he stayed, on his back, his eyes wide open looking up at the sky.

"Are you hurt, Baby?" asked Jan, anxiously.

"Nope," answered Trouble. "Did de goat runned away?"

"No, he only gave a jump and Jimmie fell out," answered Ted. "Are you hurt, Jimmie?" he asked the other boy.

"Nope! Not a bit, Teddy! I'm used to tumbles like that. The grass is as soft as a

haystack. But I guess I've had enough ride. I've got to go to the store for my mother. Good-bye!" and he ran off down the road. "Thanks!" he called back, over his shoulder, almost forgetting this part of it. "I had a dandy ride, and I wish I had some money to give you."

"Oh, that's all right," answered Ted, putting Trouble up on the seat again.

And he and Jan walked on beside Nicknack, hoping some one with even a penny would hail them and ask for a ride.

When the wagon came to the house in which Mary Seaton lived, she was out in the front yard.

"Oh, Mary!" cried Jan, "don't you want a ride?"

"Indeed I do!" answered the little girl. And out she ran and got in the seat.

"Does I hab to sing for her?" asked Trouble.

"What does he mean by singin'?" asked Mary.

"Like dis," explained Trouble. "I likes you, Mary, so I sings." And he started all over again at the first verse. Mary liked the song so much that she had Trouble sing it all the way through. By this time she had been

given a ride quite a way down the road, and then as Ted turned the goat around Mary seemed to notice, for the first time, that Jan and Ted were walking.

"Why don't you ride?" she asked. "There's room."

"Oh, we have had lots of rides," explained Jan. "Besides you're our first regular passenger. You can give me your five cents now if you want to."

"My five cents?"

"Yes."

"What for?"

"Your fare. Didn't you see the sign?" and Jan pointed to the one on Nicknack's side.

"Oh! Why, I haven't any money!" cried Mary. "I'll have to get right out! I thought you were *asking* me to ride as you often do."

"We're trying to make money for the Crippled Home," explained Janet. "But I guess we won't take in much, Ted."

"No. I guess not," and her brother sadly shook his head.

"I'm goin' to sing again!" announced Trouble. "You mus' all lis-ten!"

CHAPTER XVIII

LOST IN THE WOODS

JANET and the others laughed when Baby William finished his funny little song, Mary joining in, though she looked a bit ashamed when she thought of having taken a ride without paying for it.

"But really I didn't mean to," she said. "I never read the sign on your goat. I thought it was a new kind of summer blanket to keep off the flies."

"Oh well, it's all right," replied Janet kindly. "I guess maybe we can get somebody else to ride and pay pennies."

"I'll ask my mother for some," offered Mary.

"Oh, no! Don't!" begged Janet. "It's all right! We gave you the ride for nothing, and it would be Indian-giving to take money now."

"My mother's going to do something for

the Home when it has the fair," announced Mary.

"That'll be nice," remarked Ted slowly, but he was thinking of something else. "I guess we'll have to go away far off, where nobody knows us, and give rides for five cents and a penny," he added more briskly.

"Go away off?" asked Janet wonderingly.

"Yes, off on some other road. Here we know everybody, and course we were glad to give Mary and Jimmie rides, but that isn't makin' money," went on Ted earnestly. "You see if we came to somebody we didn't know we wouldn't mind askin' 'em to pay, like the waffle and lollypop man did us."

"Oh, did you meet him?" asked Mary. "Isn't he nice? He comes every year, and he's always the same. I like him!"

"We liked his waffles!" laughed Ted. "But what'll we do, Jan?"

"I guess we'll have to go a little farther from here to get money for the Home," agreed his sister. "And maybe folks what haven't heard Trouble's song so often would give pennies to hear him sing."

"Maybe," said Teddy. He was not quite sure about it.

"Well, I'm much obliged for my ride," put in Mary. "And I'll give you for the Home the first penny I get."

"Thanks," answered Jan. "Now we'll ride ourselves;" and she got in the seat when Mary got out, while Ted took his place in front and then, Jan holding Trouble, away started the Curlytops once more to see what they could do to help Hal and the other little lame boys and girls by making the Home, where they spent so many sad months, a little happier place.

Janet and Teddy were so deeply interested in getting to some stretch of road where they were not known, so that they might ask strange children to have goat rides, and charge for them, that they never thought of sending word back to Cherry Farm that they were going off farther than they usually did. They just drove Nicknack on and on, away from the little village of Elmsburg near which Grandpa Martin lived, out past Clover Lake and on to a strange country road that led through the woods.

"There's a house and some children playing in the yard," said Janet as they came within sight of a large white farmhouse. "Let's ask if they don't want a ride."

The way in which two boys and three girls crowded to the fence as the goat wagon drove up seemed to show that the children did want a ride very much.

"Down the road and back for five cents," explained Ted, as he pointed to the sign on Nicknack's side, while the goat ate grass. "Or you can have a short ride for a penny."

"I'll go and ask my mother," said the oldest girl. "Now don't any of you dare go outside the fence!" she warned the others—her smaller brothers and sisters it seemed. "If you do a gobile might hit you."

"What's a gobile?" asked Janet.

"It's what he calls an automobile," explained the older girl, and she pointed to a small boy about the size of Trouble.

She hurried into the house, the others, meanwhile, looking eagerly through the fence palings at the goat and wagon. Jan and Ted had gotten out, ready for business in case this family of boys and girls wanted a ride.

"Maw gimme a quarter," explained the girl when she came hurrying back, "and she says will you give us all a ride down the road and back and keep us out half an hour so she can git some rest."

"All right," said Janet. "We'll give you a nice ride for twenty-five cents. But will you let my little brother stay in the wagon with you? He's too small to walk and we can't leave him."

"Sure he can come," said the girl, whose hair was almost red. "I'll hold him on my lap. I'm used to children."

"If you hold him maybe he won't sing," Ted told her.

"Sing? Oh, I don't mind singin'. I like it!" said the almost red-haired girl with a laugh. "Our Babs sings lots, though we never can tell what he's sayin'," and she pointed to the smallest child.

"I will not sing!" decided Trouble, with a little stamp of his foot. "I will *not* sing 'less I wide on Nicknack's back!"

"Well, you can't do that," stated Ted. "Get in now, everybody," he went on, "and we'll give you a good ride."

"Here's your quarter," said the girl, who was taller than Jan. "Better take it 'fore I lose it. I'm always losin' somethin'. Maw says I'd lose my head if it wasn't fast. Shouldn't much mind though. I hate red hair. Don't you?" she asked Janet fiercely.

"Not when it's the color yours is," an-

swered Ted's sister. "I think it's lovely!"

"Oh, do you?" and the other girl, whose name was Maude, smiled and seemed pleased. "I like curls best, like yours."

"They're too tangly," announced Janet, shaking her head.

"Well, this is a start!" exclaimed Ted as his sister put in her pocket the twenty-five cent piece—the first money they had earned for the Home.

The Curlytops gave the Pratt children—that was the name of the family—a good long ride down the road and back. They kept them out over an hour, for when Ted would have driven back to the yard to let off his passengers Jan whispered to him to keep on so Mrs. Pratt could have her half-hour rest. It was very hard to tell whether a half-hour or fifteen minutes or an hour had gone by.

Trouble, too, got over his fit of sulks and sang his funny song, much to the delight of Maude and her brothers and sisters. Babs, the Pratt baby, also sang and he and Trouble gave a sort of duet which sounded very strange, as each one tried to sing louder than the other, and no one could tell what either said.

"I wish you'd come over to-morrow," said

Maude, when, at last, the goat ride was over. "I think maw'll give another quarter to be quiet."

"We'll see," half promised Jan. "We want to make all the money we can as Grandpa Martin is poor, and he can't give as much as he has before to the Crippled Home. His crops failed."

"All but cherries," explained Ted. "He's got bushels of them!"

"I wish we had," said Maude. "I love cherries."

Once more the Curlytops drove on down the road. It was not late yet, and Ted wanted to see if he could not earn more money. They passed several houses, some where there were children, but none of them had any money to pay for rides. At one place, though, where a little boy was playing with a nurse maid in the front yard they were called to by the boy's mother, who engaged Ted to drive the little fellow up and down, with the nurse to hold him, and when the ride was over, at which the little boy cried, the lady gave Janet fifty cents.

"Oh, but it isn't worth that much—not such a short ride," Janet said.

"I'm giving the money to the Home," said

the lady softly. "I had another little boy—once. I haven't him now," and she took up the small lad whom the nurse was holding and pressed him closely in her arms.

"Whew! what a lot of money we have!" cried Ted, as he turned Nicknack toward Cherry Farm a little later. "Seventy-five cents! You'd better tie it in your handkerchief, Jan, and then tie the handkerchief on your neck so you won't lose it."

"Can't tie my handkerchief on my neck. It's too little. But I'll put it in my pocket—it'll be all right there;" and this she did.

They were now on the road that led through the woods, and they were talking so earnestly about how surprised those at home would be over the seventy-five cents, and Trouble was singing his Mother Goose song so loudly, that none of them—especially Jan and Ted—noticed when Nicknack left the main road and turned into a side path that led beneath the trees.

It was not until the wagon got clear off even the side path and nearly upset, because the goat pulled it over a big tree root, that Ted called: "Whoa!" and looked about him.

"Why! Why!" he exclaimed. "Where are we?"

"In the woods," answered Janet calmly.

"I know—yes. But *what* woods? We didn't come here before."

"Maybe it's a short cut to Cherry Farm," said his sister.

Ted looked all about him. He could see nothing in the woods that he had ever seen before, not a house or a barn was in sight.

"Janet," he said, and he spoke in a whisper, half afraid Trouble would hear and be frightened, "Jan, we—we're lost!"

"Lost? In these woods?"

"Yep! We're lost!" and Ted got down out of the wagon and tied Nicknack to a tree.

CHAPTER XIX

THE LOLLYPOP MAN

"WHAT you doin' that for?" asked Jan, as she saw her brother knotting the rope that was fast to the goat's horns: "What you making it so tight for?"

"So Nicknack won't walk off. I don't want him to be any more lost than he is.

"Really are we lost, Ted?"

"Don't you guess so?"

Jan looked about among the trees. It did seem as though they were a great way from Cherry Farm. They could see no houses or barns. There was no sign of a regular road, such as the one on which carriages and automobiles were wont to pass. And it was very still and quiet in the woods. It was getting dark, too!

"What—what are we goin' to do?" asked Janet.

Though she was used to looking after her

brother, and doing things for him, even if he was a year older than herself, still now she turned to him for comfort. She wanted to know what he was going to do.

"Don't you know the way back home?" asked Janet, anxiously.

Ted shook his head slowly.

"Nope," he answered. "Do you?"

Janet shook her head, sadly this time.

"You playin' a game?" asked Trouble. "I want to play, too. I's twired ob singin'!"

"I should think you would be!" exclaimed Janet, putting her arms around him as he sat in the goat wagon. "Oh, Trouble! If we shouldn't ever get back home again!"

"I want to be home *now!* I's hungry!" cried Baby William.

Ted and Jan looked at one another. This was one bad thing about being lost—the getting hungry part. Of course there were other bad parts, too—such as being out alone in the dark, not having a nice bed in which to cover up to go to sleep.

"Course, leaves are all right to sleep in when you're camping," said Teddy. "But we're not camping *now.*"

This was after he and Jan had looked about in the woods hoping to find a path

that would take them back to the main road that led to Cherry Farm.

But they had not found the path. Nicknack had wandered far into the woods just as it pleased him to go, and he had not kept track of the way he had come. Before Jan or Ted had noticed him he had strayed very far from the path. Now he could not find it again. Nicknack was not like a dog or a cat which could find its way home again, sometimes when it had gone miles and miles away.

"I's hungry!" announced Trouble again. "I want some tookies!"

"What'll we do?" asked Janet. "We haven't any to give him."

"'Dat's in my Muvver Hubbard song, about her dog an' ze bone!" wailed Trouble. "But I don't want ze bones—I want ze tookies!"

"I wish I had one for you, Trouble, dear," said Jan. "But there isn't a one left." She looked in a little box under the seat, a box Grandpa Martin had made for the children to use as a sort of lunch basket. They often put pieces of cake or some cookies in it, or even sandwiches which their mother or Grandma Martin made for them, if they

were to go on a long ride. But now only a few cookie crumbs in a paper bag were all Janet found.

"I wants more!" cried Trouble, when he had hungrily eaten these. "I wants more!"

"Ted, we'll just *have* to find the way home," said his sister.

"I wish I could," he answered slowly. "It wouldn't be so bad if we were campin' out, for then we'd have *somethin'* to eat. We are goin' campin' with grandpa some day," he went on. "He said so—on Star Island, maybe. But then we'll have lots to eat, and we won't mind if we're lost."

"Well, I mind it *now,* and so does Trouble!" declared Jan. "Let's look again for the way home."

They left Nicknack tied, and, holding the hands of Trouble, the two Curlytops wandered about in the woods. They took care not to go too far away from the goat wagon, for they did not want to lose sight of that. Such a thing must never happen. The goat did not seem worried. He nibbled bits of grass, leaves and ferns and then knelt down and stretched out on his side and seemed to go to sleep.

"It must be gettin' night," said Jan in a

whisper, as they came back, not having found anything that looked like a path.

"It isn't very dark," answered Ted hopefully.

"No. But see, Nicknack's going to bed."

"Oh, well he often sleeps in the daytime," went on her brother. "Anyhow it's dark because there's so many trees in the woods. If we could get out on the road it would be light."

"But we can't find our way out," said Janet, and her voice shook a little. "If we go too far we'll get more lost than ever. Oh dear! I wish we hadn't come! I want mother and daddy and grandma and grandpa. I want to go home!"

"Maybe they'll come looking for us," said Ted eagerly.

"They won't know where to find us."

"We can holler! Come on! Let's do that!"

Jan and Ted made their voices sound as loudly as they could in calls that echoed through the woods. Trouble, too, joined in, sometimes singing his funny song.

"Here we are! Here we are!" cried Jan and Ted.

But, though they called and shouted no

one seemed to hear them. Every once in a while they would stop and listen, but they heard no answer. The only noises were the country sounds—the fluttering of the birds through the trees, with now and then a song from one of the feathered creatures. The leaves blew in the wind, making a rustling, and sometimes, when the bushes moved, Trouble would hide behind Jan, for he was afraid.

"Oh, what shall we do?" asked Jan, half ready to cry, while it seemed to grow darker in the woods. "We are truly lost, Ted, and what *shall* we do? Look, Nicknack is fast asleep!"

The goat's eyes were closed. He had eaten his supper and gone to sleep. He was not worried about being lost. Any place was home to him if his friends, the Curlytops, were there. But it was different with the children.

"I'll tell you what we'll do," said Ted, at length.

"What?" asked his sister.

"We'll holler a little more, and then, if no one answers us, we'll start and go."

"Where will we go to?"

"I don't know. We'll go any way at all.

We'll be sure to get somewhere, and maybe somebody will find us and take us home. Come on now, let's all holler real loud."

They got no answer, however; so presently Teddy awakened the goat, the children got into the wagon and let Nicknack draw them along through the wood. It was an uncomfortable, rough ride, however, over tree roots and ruts, and after a while the children stopped the goat and got out once more.

"Now, let's holler again," suggested Teddy.

"And you sing, Trouble," begged Jan. "Sing real loud!"

"Don't want to. I'se twired of singing!"

"Then cry. Maybe you'll make more noise that way."

And cry Trouble did, loudly wailing, while Jan and Ted shouted at the tops of their voices and the bottoms too, as Ted said afterward.

"Hello! Hello! Hello!" they cried. "Hello!"

Hark! What was that? Some one answering? Surely yes!

Through the woods came a voice:

"Oh, ho! Oh, ho! I love a goat! Some day I will get me a goat! I will feed him on

lollypops and soap! Oh, ho for a goat! Oh, ho!"

Ted and Jan looked at one another. Then they both cried joyfully:

"The lollypop man! It's the lollypop man!"

And so it was. Through the trees they saw his red wagon and white horse going along what must have been a woodland road.

"Here we are! Here we are!" cried Jan.

"Over here!" added Ted. "We're not lost any more! The lollypop man has found **us!**"

CHAPTER XX

CHEWING CHERRY CANDY

"WELL, well! What have we here?" asked Mr. Sam Sander, the hot waffle and lollypop man, as he saw the rather tumbled-about and frightened Curlytop children running toward him. "What's it all about?"

"We're lost!" explained Jan.

"We were," added her brother. "Not any more."

"And I singed, I did," put in Trouble. "Only I's twired an' I wants dubby-dubby now."

"He means he's tired and hungry," explained Jan.

"Well, well! This is too bad!" said the kind lollypop man. "How did it happen?"

"Nicknack, our goat, lost us," declared Ted. "He's over there under the trees. But we heard you singing and came to you."

"And I'm glad you did," said Mr. Sander.

"I was singing because I've sold most of my lollypops. But I have a few waffles left and you hungry ones shall eat them. Oh, ho! I don't love a goat if he loses little children!" he sang. "I don't love bad goats!"

"Oh, it wasn't Nicknack's fault," said Jan earnestly. "We had him out, giving rides to make money for the Home, and we got seventy-five cents!"

Then as they ate the waffles, hot off the griddle, they told Mr. Sander what had happened. He went back with them to get Nicknack and led the goat to the waffle wagon. He was tied fast to the rear end, and then the children, getting into the little house on wheels, were soon driven back to Cherry Farm.

"Oh, where *have* you Curlytops been?" asked Mother Martin. "We have all been *so* worried about you! And grandpa is just starting to get some men to help find you."

"The lollypop man found us," said Jan. "We're sorry, but we didn't mean to get lost. Oh, we had ever so many adventures!"

And she and Ted told them all, while Trouble fell asleep in his mother's arms as grandpa came back, glad he did not have to hunt for the lost children. The lollypop man

told how he happened to be taking a short cut through the woods, or he never would have passed the place where the Curlytops were lost in the woods. By a mere chance he found them.

So everything came out all right you see, and when a few days later, Jan and Ted gave the seventy-five cents to Hal to take to the Home, the lame boy brought back a letter of thanks from the manager.

"We're going to have the fair next week," Hal said. "And right after that Dr. Wade is going to make my foot all better."

"Will you walk—different then?" asked Ted.

"Yes, I'll walk just like you, I guess. But of course not at first. It's got to get well after the doctor does something to it. Will you come to the fair?"

The Curlytops said they would, and Mother Martin promised to take them. There were busy times at Cherry Farm, for the cakes were to be baked as Grandma Martin had promised. Mother Martin made some also. And what a crowd of people came to see the lame boys and girls. They also came to buy the candy, cakes and other things the people gave for the helpless ones.

"Are you making a lot of money?" asked Mother Martin of Mrs. Burr, the woman who had charge of the fair.

"Not as much as we would like to," she answered. "We hoped to make enough to pay for having made the Home larger, but I fear we shall not. We will need about a hundred dollars more, and I do not see where we are to get it. Everyone has given all he can."

"Grandpa Martin would give the hundred dollars if he could," said Jan who, with her mother, heard what was said. "But he lost lots of his money."

"I know, my dear," replied Mrs. Burr with a smile. "Your grandfather has always been kind and good to us. Perhaps next year he will be able to help us more."

There was a good time at the Home fair, even if not as much money was made as was hoped for. The crippled children, many of whom were given rides in the Curlytops' goat wagon, were glad to see so many visitors, and Hal took great pride in showing Jan and Ted around the place, and explaining everything.

"I know lots about it," he said, " 'cause I've been here longest. But if I get well I'll

have to go away and I'll miss being here."

"But you'll be well," said Jan. "Won't that be fine!"

"Yes. But I wish everybody here would be well," said Hal softly. "Maybe they will when they get some new machines for making crooked legs and feet straight."

At one end of the long hall where the fair was being held, a booth, or curtained-off place, had been set up for a Punch and Judy show. This was to amuse the children who came with their parents, and the little tots, as well as some of the older boys and girls, had laughed at the funny way Mr. Punch whacked everyone with his stick, and then cried, in his squeaky voice:

"That's the way to do it! That's the way I do it!"

The man giving the Punch and Judy show had gone through several performances, as different crowds came and went, and now it was time for another.

"Let's go down again and listen to him," said Janet to Hal and Ted, as they stood talking together at the other end of the room. "I like to hear the funny, squeaky voice of Mr. Punch."

"So do I," said Teddy.

"It's like some of the fairy stories I like to read," said Hal in a low voice. "It comes out that way, lots of times."

"How do you mean?" asked Janet.

"Oh, everybody gets whacked so much, and pounded and yelled at, and then, after a while, they have it easy and the one that hits them is sorry. That's the way it is with Mr. Punch. He gets sorry after a while."

"He gets sorry after he's scared a whole lot," said Janet, who had watched the little show twice. "Anybody can be good when they're scared."

"Grandpa's hired man was scared when Nicknack, our goat, got loose the first day after we got him," remarked Teddy.

"Was he afraid the goat would butt him?" asked Hal.

"No, I guess he was afraid Nicknack would get away and not come back," Teddy answered. "But come on! That Punch and Judy show is going to start."

Boys and girls, and some of the grown folks, were gathering at the lower end of the hall, and behind the curtains could be seen something moving. Down underneath was hidden the man who made the queer little doll images go through their funny

capers, moving about and seeming to speak. Though really, of course, it was the man himself, hidden behind the curtain, doing the talking.

"Hello, everybody!" squeaked Mr. Punch, as he paraded across on the tiny stage, and he shook his hands at the children (or at least he seemed to be doing that) and all the children laughed while the grown-ups smiled.

"I'm not afraid of anybody!" cried Mr. Punch, as he shook his stick. "I'm not afraid even of Nicknack the goat!"

"Ha! Ha!" laughed Teddy and Janet, while Hal and some others joined in. Everyone looked at the Curlytops.

"I'd like to have a ride on Nicknack," went on Mr. Punch. "Oh, I'm not afraid of him! I'll show him how to do it!" and he banged his stick down with a loud whack that made the children jump.

"How'd he know about our goat?" asked Janet in surprise.

"Oh, I guess somebody must have told him," Hal said. "Once, when I lived at home, they took me to a Punch and Judy show, and the man who worked it made a lot of jokes about the boys and girls. I

guess their fathers and mothers told him to. It was lots of fun."

Mr. Punch kept on talking and acting in a most funny and jolly way and soon the roomful of children was laughing.

"Where's Trouble?" suddenly asked Ted, looking at his sister, while they were waiting for the next scene in the Punch and Judy show.

"He was here a minute ago," she answered. "I guess he went back to mother," for Mrs. Martin was in the rear of the hall with some other ladies.

Ted and Janet were wondering whether they had better not go and look for their little brother when the curtain of the little Punch and Judy theater opened and a real man, and not one of the doll-images, looked out and said:

"Some one has taken the funny little bear I use in the next part of the show. Has any little boy or girl been playing around my booth and taken the bear?"

There was silence a moment, and then from the back of the hall up piped the voice of Trouble, saying:

"I'se got it! I was goin' to show him to my goat!"

Everybody laughed when Baby William came walking up with the toy bear which had a part in the show. The little boy, wandering around behind the curtain when no show was going on, had opened the draperies and taken out the little bear. He gave it back to the man.

"Ah, now the show can go on," said the man, as he pulled the curtain over the stage. And when the laughter had stopped, and everything was ready, the curtain was thrust aside once more and Mr. Punch cried:

"That's the way to do it! That's the way I do it!"

And so the entertainment went on until the fair came to an end, and the children went home, talking about what they had seen and heard.

"It's too bad they didn't make all the money they wanted," said Grandpa Martin at Cherry Farm the following day. "I wish I had lots of dollars, so I could give as much as I'd like. But with poor crops, and the farm not paying well, I can't—that's all," and he shook his head sadly.

"When are you going to pick the cherries?" asked Ted. "They must be ripe now."

"They are, and ready to pick. I never saw so many! Why, I'll have to give them away I guess, to get rid of them. I never had such a crop. There are bushels and bushels of them!"

"What—goats?" asked a voice behind the Curlytops, and, turning, they saw the jolly lollypop man.

"What have you so much of?" he asked. He had left his red wagon and white horse in the road, and had come up to the porch on which the Curlytops were seated talking to grandpa.

"It's cherries I have so many of, not goats," was Mr. Martin's answer. "I have the biggest crop in years, and I don't know where to sell them."

"Then I can tell you where, and you will get a good price for them," replied the lollypop man. "That's what I came to see you about."

"Do you come to buy my cherries?" asked Grandpa Martin.

"That's what I do," was the reply. "I don't want them for myself though, but for a man from whom I buy my lollypops. This man has a big candy factory, and he is going to make a new kind of sweets called 'Chew-

ing Cherry Candy.' He has made a little for samples, and it sells better, even, than my lollypops and waffles. I know, for I have tried it."

Ted and Jan were growing excited.

"To make this candy lots of cherries are needed. The manufacturer is in the market for bushels and bushels of 'em, and so far hasn't been able to get half of what he wants. I told one of his men about the big crop up here and especially about this grove on Cherry Farm, and I've come now to buy up all I can. He'll pay big and he'll give me a good commission and he'll get plenty of the finest cherries in the world, so everything is all right for everybody and the world is a fine place."

"Well, that certainly is good news!" cried Grandpa Martin. "Why, if I can sell all my cherries I'll have some money, no matter if the flood did spoil most of my crops."

"Oh, won't that be great!" cried Ted in delight.

"And if you sell enough cherries you can give some money to the Crippled Home, can't you?" asked Janet, softly.

"I can and will, my dear," said Grandpa Martin.

"Let's go and look at the cherries," said the lollypop man. "Hurray!"

Oh, what a lot of cherries there were! No wonder Grandpa Martin's place was called Cherry Farm! The trees in the grove bent down their branches which were laden with red cherries and black. Some were purple, and when the Curlytops ate them their faces and hands were all stained.

" 'Ist like we tipped over de ink bottle!" laughed Trouble, who was given one or two cherries, not enough to make him ill, but enough to color him.

Then there were some big white cherries, with red cheeks, and Grandpa Martin called them "ox-hearts." And when the Curlytops asked him why, not seeing anything about them like an ox, they were told the cherries had that name because of their large size.

"You have the finest crop of cherries of anyone around here!" said the lollypop man when he had gone through the grove. "My friend, the candy man, will buy all you want to sell, and pay you well. Then you will have plenty of money."

"I'll sell all my wife doesn't want to can, and all these little Curlytops don't want to eat," laughed Grandpa Martin.

"Oh, how glad I am!" cried Jan. "Now grandpa can give some money to Hal's Crippled Home!"

And so Grandpa Martin could. His cherries sold for much more money than ever before, being sent to the factory where the Chewing Cherry Candy was made. And, a little later, the lollypop man drove past the house with his red wagon and white horse and called:

"Oh, ho! Oh, ho! I love a goat. Come see my white coat, and get some cherry candy! Oh, ho! Oh, ho! Come get cherry candy!"

This the Curlytops did, and they said the new cherry chewing candy was the best they had ever eaten. Perhaps it was because it had in it some of Grandpa Martin's cherries.

At any rate Grandpa Martin was given quite a sum of money for his cherry crop, and he could afford to give the hundred dollars to the Home for Crippled Children.

"Is Hal going to be cured?" asked Ted one day, after he, with Jan and Trouble, had been for a ride with Nicknack.

"The doctor is going to try to cure him to-morrow," said Mother Martin. "We are

to go over the day following and see how he is."

And when they went, they found Hal sitting in an easy chair, his feet and legs covered with blankets. He was very pale, but he smiled.

"Oh!" exclaimed Jan a bit sadly, "can't you—walk?"

"He will soon walk better than ever," said the nurse softly.

"And then you'll see me chase after the Mosquito Dwarf and drive him away from Princess Blue Eyes!" laughed Hal. "Just wait! I'll run a race with Nicknack soon."

"But don't get our goat too tired," said Jan. "For we may want to give the Princess Blue Eyes a ride."

"That's so!" laughed Hal. "We'll ride her to her golden throne, down by the ocean waves where the green palms grow, and then——"

He stopped and seemed to be looking away, past the white clouds that were scudding across the blue sky.

"Then what?" asked Jan, for she thought it sounded like a story in which one has stopped after telling halfway through.

"Then," said Hal softly, "maybe the

Princess Blue Eyes won't need me any more."

"Oh, yes she will!" put in Ted. "There's lots of mosquitoes left yet. I feel 'em biting me!"

And a few weeks later Hal could walk as straight as any one, though he had to go slowly until his leg and foot fully healed. But he was very happy, and so were many other boys and girls in the Home who were cured and made more comfortable, because of the money Grandpa Martin gave when he sold so many cherries.

Then followed many fine vacation days at Cherry Farm. I could not begin to tell you all the Curlytops did if I had a book twice the size of this one. But I can tell you about some of the things in another book to be called "The Curlytops on Star Island; Or, Camping Out with Grandpa." In that you may read how Ted and Jan, to say nothing of Trouble, went to the island in Clover Lake, and had many adventures.

"Well, what shall we do to-day?" asked Ted of Jan, as they went out on the porch one morning, about a week after Hal had been cured and the chewing cherry candy made.

"Let's go for a ride with Nicknack," said Jan.

As they were going back to the stable where they kept their goat, they heard some one calling:

"Stop it now! You stop it!"

"What's that?" asked Janet.

"Sounds like Trouble," answered Ted.

It was Trouble. Baby William had taken Nicknack's rope, by which the goat was tied to a stake just outside the barn, and this rope the little fellow had made fast to a wheelbarrow. Trouble wanted to have Nicknack pull him, but every time the goat straightened out the rope the wheelbarrow would upset, and Trouble, who had climbed in to get a ride, would be spilled out. But he fell on the soft grass and was not hurt.

"Oh, Trouble! What *are* you doing?" cried Jan, as her little brother tipped over for perhaps the fifth time, though of course Nicknack did not mean to do it.

"Me goin' to gib rides an' make money to buy cherries—'cause grandpa's all goned," was the answer. "Giddap, ole Nicknack!"

Nicknack, reaching for a choice bit of grass, overturned the wheelbarrow again, and out popped the little boy.

"Oh, you dear bunch of Trouble!" cried Mother Martin, as she laughingly ran to pick him up. "You are always doing something!"

And so he was. But, for that matter, so were the Curlytops. And, leaving them to have more fun on Cherry Farm, we will say good-bye.

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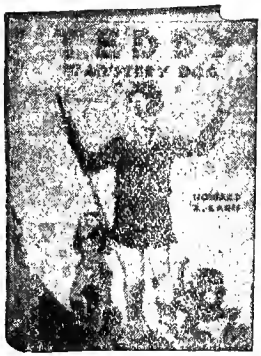

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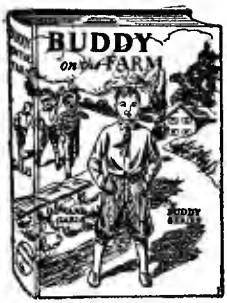

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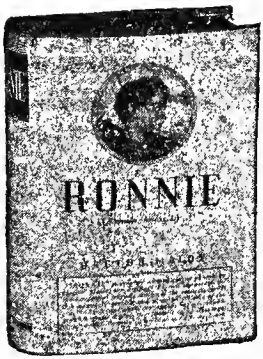

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