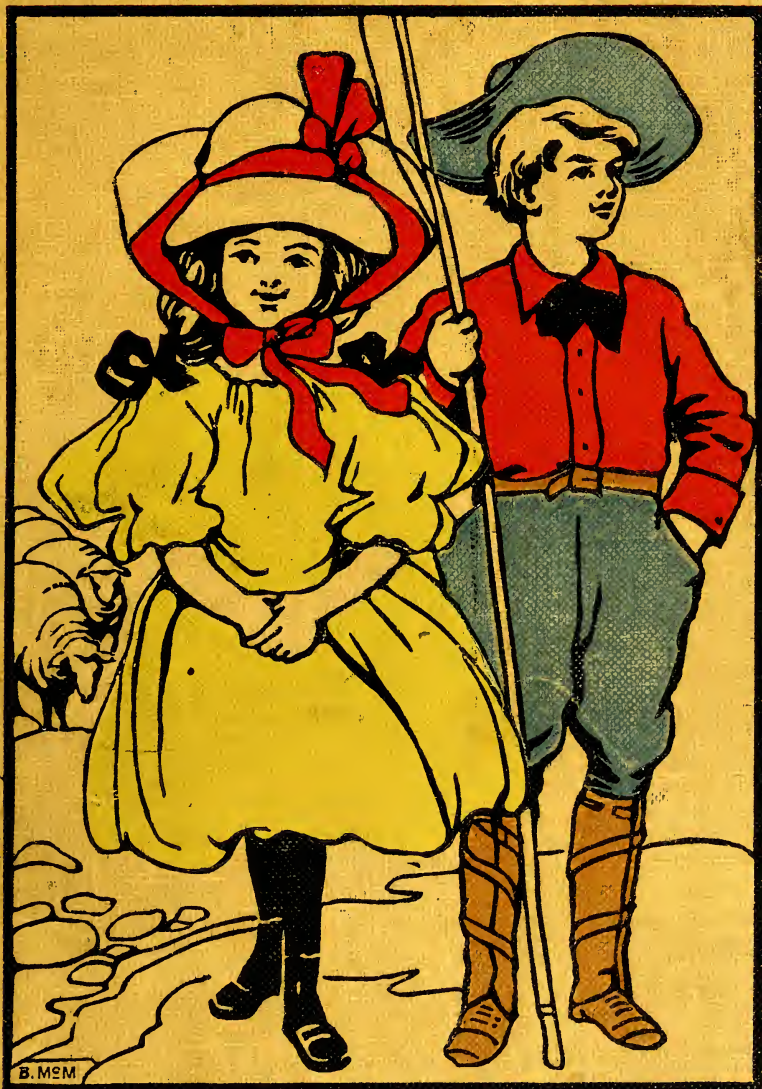


JEAN, OUR LITTLE AUSTRALIAN COUSIN



B. MEM

MARY·F·NIXON - ROULET

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BY MARY HAZELTON WADE


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JEAN

Our Little Australian Cousin

By

Mary F. Nixon-Roulet

Author of "God, the King, My Brother," "Our Little Spanish Cousin," "Our Little Alaskan Cousin," "Our Little Grecian Cousin," "Our Little Brazilian Cousin," etc.

Illustrated by

Diantha W. Horne

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TO
Kirby McDonough
A Little Texas Friend

Preface



Australia, though a continent, is a part of the Empire of Great Britain. A few years ago it was a wild country, where no white people lived, filled with Blacks, who were man-eating savages. These are fast dying out, but in this story you will learn something about them, and of the lives of your Australian Cousins.



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Our Little Australian Cousin

CHAPTER I

“LAND”

FERGUS and Jean were very tired of the long voyage. They stood at the taffrail looking over the dancing waves, longing for the sight of land.

“It seems as if we would never get there, Father,” said Fergus. “How long it is since we left home!”

“And how far away Scotland seems,” sighed his mother, as she took little Jean on her lap and stroked her fair hair.

“But Australia is to be our home now,” said Mr. Hume cheerfully. “See, there is the very first glimpse of it,” and he pointed across the

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water to a dim line, as the look-out called "Land!"

"We are passing Port Phillip's Head," he said presently. "See the lighthouse! Soon we shall land and you will see a beautiful city."

"Beautiful!" Fergus said in surprise. "Why, I thought Melbourne was a wild sort of a place. You have told us about the time you were here long ago, before you married my mother, and you had floods in the streets and had to climb up on top of some one's porch for fear of being drowned."

"That was fifteen years ago, my son," said Mr. Hume with a smile. "Melbourne is very different now from what it was then, and then it was not at all like it was when its first settlers saw it."

"It was in 1836 that Robert Russell came here to survey the shore near Port Phillip and find out whether boats could go up the River Yana. He felt this to be just the place for a

city, planned Melbourne and laid out the streets. It seems strange to think that then the blacks owned all this land and the Wawoorong, Boonoorong, and Wautourong tribes roamed these shores, and that when Russell laid out his city there were native huts standing. The place was called Bear Grass, and in 1837 there were thirteen buildings, eight of which were turf huts. Now Melbourne is seven miles square and the principal street is a mile long. You will soon see how handsome the buildings are, for we are now making ready to land after our long journey.”

Fergus and Jean Hume had come from Scotland to live in Australia. Their father had been a farmer, but he had lost all his little fortune through the rascality of a friend, and had determined to try again in the colony.

Australia is a colony of Great Britain just as Canada is, and though it is at the other side of the world, still it is British.

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Mrs. Hume had a sister in Sydney and they were to visit her before going to the Gold Country, where Mr. Hume intended to try his fortune.

Fergus was a fine boy of twelve and Jean was eight, and both were much excited at the trip, while Mrs. Hume's sadness at leaving her old home was mixed with joy at the idea of seeing again the sister from whom she had been separated for years.

The landing on the Melbourne quay proved interesting for the children, and they were very much impressed with their first glimpse of the city.

"Why, Father," exclaimed Fergus, as they drove in a cab up Flinders Street, "Melbourne streets seem as busy as those of Glasgow!"

"Indeed they are, my son," said his father, smiling. "Perhaps they are busier. You see Victoria is the busiest part of this country, although the people of New South Wales will tell

you that their district is far superior and Sydney a much handsomer city than Melbourne.”

“If the wares one sees in the streets are any sign, Victoria must have a great variety of products,” said Mrs. Hume. “The shops have all manner of things in the windows, and besides there are great drays of wood, coal and timber.”

“Victoria is called the Garden of Australia,” said Mr. Hume. “You will see considerable of it if we go up to Sydney by rail instead of by sea.”

“Oh, Father!” cried Fergus, who loved the water, “are we going to do that?”

“I haven’t decided yet which would be the better plan,” Mr. Hume answered. “I had thought of going by steamer and stopping at Hobart in Tasmania, but it will take a great deal longer and you will miss the trip through Victoria, which is said to be the prettiest part of this great continent.”

“I think the sooner we reach Aunt Mildred

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the better for all of us," said Mrs. Hume. "The children are tired with the long voyage and winter will soon be here."

"Winter!" exclaimed Jean.

"Winter, why, Mother!" cried Fergus. "This is June!"

"Yes, I know that," said his mother. "But don't you know that in the Southern Hemisphere, winter and summer change places? In Victoria, midwinter comes in July."

"Will it be cold?" asked Jean.

"No, dear, winter here is not like our nipping Scotch frost. It is not very cold here, and it rains in winter instead of snowing."

"I don't think that is nice at all," said Fergus. "We'll have no sleighing."

"There are many things we will miss here," said his mother sadly, but his father said cheerfully,

"There are many things here we can't have at home, also. When I get to the Gold Fields

you shall have all the gold you want, and that is something you never had in Scotland. Now, our fine drive is over and here we are at the hotel, where we shall have some luncheon. How have you enjoyed your first drive in an Australian city? ”

“ Very much, ” cried both of the children.

“ It will be some time before you take another one, for I believe after all that we shall go by boat to Sydney. I understand that the sea trip is very pleasant and it is less expensive. ”

“ I am glad, ” said Fergus.

“ A boat sails this afternoon and there is nothing for us to do but have our luggage transferred from one boat to the other, ” said Mr. Hume, as they all went in to luncheon.

CHAPTER II

SAILING TO SYDNEY

THE travellers set sail for Sydney in a calm and beautiful afternoon when earth and sea seemed at peace. The sea sparkled in the sunlight as if set in diamonds and the vessel fairly danced over the waters as it sailed out of Bass Strait into the dark waters of the blue Pacific. The afternoon passed quietly and toward evening all gathered on deck to see the sunset, for Australia is noted as the land of wonderful sunsets, and from the sea these can be viewed in all their splendour.

Gold, crimson, yellow, pink, from brilliant to soft, from light to dark, the clouds changed in countless colour schemes, bewilderingly beautiful. The whole sky was a dome of softest rose,

then a flaming crimson, then pearly-tinted heliotrope; the sea, too, shone in varying shades of beauty, until all melted and blended into one exquisitely soft shade of deep-toned purple, and into this the smiling stars stole one by one, the countless stars of the southern night, and above all shone the glory of the Southern Cross.

“Oh, Father,” whispered Jean, “I have never seen anything so beautiful! Is the sunset always like this in Australia?”

“This was a particularly fine one, daughter, but whenever the sun sets it is a thing worth looking at.”

“How quickly it has grown dark after all that splendour,” said Mrs. Hume, looking at the sky over which the clouds were passing.

“I don’t like the look of the sky,” said Mr. Hume. “I’m afraid there is a squall coming.”

“Worse than a squall, sir,” said a sailor, hurrying by. “It looks to me like a hurricane.”

The air had grown suddenly warm and the

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sky was overhung with heavy clouds, while flashes of lightning blazed across the sky. Suddenly a great waterspout seemed to rise up like an inky-black pillar from sea to sky. The ship tossed about and pitched so badly that it was impossible to keep one's feet and Mr. Hume led his little party to the cabin.

"Oh, Father! what shall we do?" cried Jean, frightened.

"Go to sleep is the best thing to do if you can," he said, and the children were put to bed in their berths, in which they could hardly stay, so violent was the pitching of the ship.

The wind howled and roared and, as the storm kept up all night, there was little sleep in the cabin. When the morning came it was little better. Sea and sky were dull gray, save where the foam-crested waves broke in sheets of spray against the sides of the vessel, sending the foam high into the air.

"It is a cross sea," said the sailor on the look-



“‘ I THOUGHT PACIFIC MEANT PEACEFUL,’ SAID FERGUS.”

out and the captain shook his head. "It's a bad outlook," he said. "I don't like the gray water."

"I thought Pacific meant peaceful," said Fergus, who stood clinging to his father on deck, looking at the wonderful scene. "It doesn't seem peaceful to me," as a great wave broke over the deck and drenched him to the skin.

"Like most peaceful things, it is terrible when it is roused," said Mr. Hume. "There is a strong current running up and down this eastern shore of Australia and it often sets vessels quite out of their course. Sometimes they are washed miles out of their way, and occasionally, in the darkness, run upon one of the little islands which dot this sea."

"Is Tasmania one of them?" asked Fergus.

"We have long since passed Tasmania," said his father. "But there are many little islands between here and Sydney. There! What is

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that?" he exclaimed. Suddenly it seemed as if land sprang at them through the fog and they were almost upon a rocky shore. So near to it was their steamer that there was barely time to put about and it was only by the quickest action that they escaped the rocks. The steamer lurched and rolled, pitched and tossed in the gale, but she passed the rocks in safety, and as afternoon waned and night drew on, the storm grew less, until by midnight the sea was quiet. The morning of the third day broke in a golden splendour, the air was fresh and cool, the sky and the sea were as blue as a sapphire, the children glad to be out of the stuffy cabin and up on deck.

"If the weather continues like this we shall not be long in reaching Sydney," said Mr. Hume. "And I am sure we shall all be glad to get there."

"What kind of a place is Sydney?" asked Fergus.

“ It is a fine city, my boy, and very different from what it was when Botany Bay was peopled with felons.”

“ What are felons? ” asked Jean.

“ Felons are people who have done wrong and must be kept in prison for punishment in the hope that they will learn to do right,” answered Mr. Hume. “ Botany Bay was named by the botanist Joseph Banks who was with Cook when he made his first voyage in 1770. It is an inlet near Sydney and the English sent their criminals there until 1840. Such men as behaved well when they reached the colony were allowed to leave the penal settlement upon tickets, and were called ‘ ticket of leave men.’ They could be followed up and brought back if they misbehaved in any way. Many of them were good men who had been led into wrongdoing and were glad to have a chance to be good again. They went out into the ‘ bush,’ cleared farms or sheep stations, and many of them

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grew rich. Quite a number of the good citizens of Australia to-day, could, if they would, trace their descent back to 'ticket of leave' men."

"I shouldn't think they would like to do that," said Fergus. "I wouldn't like any one to know that my people had done wrong."

"Everybody does wrong," said Jean sagely.

"Yes, but every one isn't found out," her brother answered. "When they are, it hurts."

"But if it's found out that they're sorry and are going to do good for ever and ever," the little girl looked puzzled, "then does it matter?"

"Dear little childish point of view," said her mother, with a smile, and her father added,

"It would be a good thing if older people felt so."

Sydney looked beautiful enough as their ship steamed into the bay to pay them for their troublesome voyage. The harbour is one of the handsomest in the world. The city is pic-

turesquely situated upon the bold and rocky slopes which rise from the water's edge and is defended from any possible attack by bristling forts and batteries.

“This narrow entrance to the harbour is called ‘the Heads,’” said Mr. Hume to the children, who were dancing about asking a thousand questions, of which their father answered the most important. “The lighthouse is a guide to all storm-driven sailors, and also a good lookout, should any enemies of England hope to steal upon Australia unawares. I think Sydney one of the most delightfully situated cities I have ever visited. It is surrounded by parks and groves where grow bananas, orange trees, palms and all manner of tropical plants. Its climate is healthful and life here easy and pleasant.”

“The buildings seem very handsome,” said Mrs. Hume, as the city came into view, gleaming white and beautiful in the morning sun.

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“The sandstone upon which the town is built gives fine building material,” said her husband, “and while, in the older part of the city, streets are narrow and houses old-fashioned, the newer portion compares favourably with almost any of the modern European cities.

“We are just about in now; the sailors are making ready to cast the hawser.”

“Oh, Fergus! There is Mildred!” cried Mrs. Hume to her husband, pointing to a sweet-faced little woman who stood beside a large, burly-looking man upon the wharf. “It is worth almost the long journey from home just to see her again!” and she stretched out her hands to the sister whom she had not seen for ten years.

Soon they were landed and the two sisters greeted each other joyfully.

“Elsie! How glad I am to welcome you to Australia,” cried Mrs. McDonald, while her sister said,

“ Mildred, you don't look a day older than when you left Scotland! ”

“ Life is easy out here,” said Mr. McDonald genially. “ Come, all of you. The carriage is waiting. We are glad to have a visit from you and want it to be as long a visit as possible. We have planned all manner of things to do during your stay.”

As they drove through the handsome streets, Mrs. McDonald said,

“ It is nearly time we went into the country, and after you are well rested and have seen Sydney, Angus is going to take us up to the station so you can see just what life is on an Australian ‘ run.’ ”¹

“ I am sure we shall enjoy it,” said Mrs. Hume. “ But just now I can think of nothing to do but getting rested. The sea motion is still in my head, and I believe that if I could go to bed and think that Jean could sleep without

¹ Run is the name given to a ranch in Australia.

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danger of falling out of bed, I could sleep for two or three days without waking up.”

“We’ll take care of the wee lassie and of this big boy, too,” said Mr. McDonald kindly, laying an arm about Fergus’ shoulder. “Sandy is up at the run and you will have fine times with him there, and your mother shall rest as long as she wants to.

“But you are not seeing the sights as we pass. We think Sydney about the finest thing on this side of the world. These buildings are a part of the University. The College of St. Paul’s there belongs to the Church of England, and St. John’s is Roman Catholic.”

“It is all very handsome,” said Mrs. Hume.

“How Sydney has changed since I was here,” said Mr. Hume. “It is not like the same place.”

“Its growth is simply wonderful,” said Mr. McDonald. “We have now all manner of manufactories. Wagons are made here and sold

all over Australia and New Zealand. There are fine glass and pottery works, boot and shoe factories, besides stove foundries and carriage works. Tobacco and fine liquors are manufactured here and Sydney is really the center of the British colonies in the South."

"Here we are at home," said his wife. "So your interesting lecture must cease. I am sure Elsie would rather see a good cup of tea and a comfortable bed than hear your discourse on the beauties of Sydney when she's homesick for dear little Glasgow."

"Tea and bed will do much to do away with homesickness, and the sight of you will do more," said her sister as they alighted from the carriage and went up the steps of a handsome house surrounded by fine trees and a garden radiant with flowers.

CHAPTER III

A DRIVE

A FEW days' rest made the travellers as good as new and Fergus and Jean were ready for any kind of an adventure. They went about the city interested in each and everything they saw, for they were bright little children, full of spirits to the brim.

“We are to take a drive this afternoon,” said Mrs. McDonald one morning. “Your Uncle Angus is going to show you Wuurna-wee-weetch, which means ‘home of the swallow.’ It is the largest squatter station anywhere about here, and it is as handsome as any noble estate at home.”

“That will be jolly, Aunt Mildred,” said Fergus, who loved driving.

When luncheon was over they all seated themselves in Mr. McDonald's comfortable road-cart, and his fine span of horses pranced along the Sydney streets.

"We are passing St. Andrew's Cathedral now," said Mrs. McDonald. "And there is St. Mary's Cathedral, which is equally fine. There is the Governor's Mansion, the Museum, the Art Gallery, and now we are entering Hyde Park. Isn't it beautiful? The water works of Sydney are excellent and the water supply never fails. It comes sixty-three miles from the Nepean River and is stored in a huge reservoir. Even in the hottest weather there is enough water to keep our parks green and beautiful."

"You are very enthusiastic over your adopted country," said her sister, teasingly.

"Indeed I am. I have learned to love Australia, the rural life better than the urban. You wait until we go up to the 'run' and see if the charm of the Bush country life doesn't hold

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you." Mrs. McDonald smiled. "Now we are entering the grounds of Wuurna-wee-weetch. Tell me, is the Duke of Argyle's place finer?"

They drove over the estate, which was surpassingly beautiful.

"I have heard so much of the Australian Bush and how wild and bare it is," said Fergus, "that I had no idea that there was anything here so fine as this."

"What magnificent trees," said his mother.

"Those are the eucalyptus, the gum trees for which Australia is famous," said Mr. McDonald. "The eucalyptus grows to an enormous height, many of the trees are 150 feet high and eleven feet around the trunk. In some places they grow to be twenty feet in diameter. They are not good shade trees because the leaves, which are shaped like little lances, grow straight up and down, that is, with one edge toward the sun. But in spite of that, the tree is one of the most useful in the world. There are nearly 150

varieties of eucalyptus, and most of these are found in Australia. The lumber is used for all kinds of building purposes. Many of the trees contain a hard substance, 'manna,' from which we get a kind of sugar called *melitose*. Others give us *kino*, a resin used in medicine. The bark yields tannin, and from one variety with 'stringy bark' we get a fibre used for making rope, the manufacture of paper and for thatching roofs. From the leaves an oil is distilled which is much used in medicine, being particularly good to dress wounds and for the treatment of fevers."

"It seems to me that these trees furnish almost everything you need," said Mr. Hume.

"If you include the birds who nest in them and the animals who climb in the branches," replied his brother-in-law, "I fancy the Blacks did not need to look beyond the eucalyptus for a living. The wood built their huts, and the bark thatched them. From the fibre they made mats for their floors and hats to keep off the sun,

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and clothes, which consisted of waist cloth and sandals. The leaves gave them medicine for the fever and salve for their wounds. The cockatoos nesting in the branches furnished them delicious food, while of the feathers the gins¹ made boas for their necks and wonderful Easter bonnets. It really would seem as if the gum trees were all they really needed. They have another use not to be slighted, for they take up the moisture rapidly and dry the soil in rainy seasons, thus reducing the malaria always found in such climates as these."

"They are certainly useful," said Mrs. Hume. "Is this the station to which we are going?" as they drove through a fine gateway.

"Yes," said Mrs. McDonald. "Wuurna-wee-weetch is quite up to date in every way. The house cost £30,000 to build and the ranch has every modern improvement. The grazing land hereabouts is perfectly adapted to sheep

¹ Black women.

raising. It is so rich that you may dig ten feet down and still find rich black dirt. The owner of this ranch has been most successful. He has recently put in new wool sheds, sheep pens, washing ponds, and the like, and you may, if you wish, see the whole process of sheep raising, shearing, pressing, packing and transporting the wool. You will see it at our station on a smaller scale." They drove for an hour about the magnificent place, and over all the estate was an air of wealth and prosperity.

The gardens were blooming with gay, tropical flowers, and the songs of the birds were in the air, as they flitted hither and yon through the branches of the magnificent trees.

"What is that noise, Aunt Mildred?" asked Jean as they drove through a beautiful grove of pines which scented the air deliciously. "It sounds like a far away church bell."

"It is the bell bird, dear, one of the curiosities of Australia," replied her Aunt. "Long,

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long before there was a church bell of any kind in Australia, this little, lonely bird made its curious bell-like note. There are some pretty verses by one of our poets about it."

"Can you say them to us, Aunty?"

"I will try, — they are really beautiful," she said.

"'Tis the bell bird sweetly singing,
The sad, strange, small-voiced bird,
His low sweet carol ringing,
While scarce a sound is heard,
Save topmost sprays aflutter,
And withered leaflets fall,
And the wistful oaks that utter
Their eerie, drearie, call.

"What may be the bell bird saying,
In that silvery, tuneful note?
Like a holy hermit's praying
His devotions seem to float
From a cavern dark and lonely,
Where, apart from worldly men,
He repeats one dear word only,
Fondly o'er and o'er again."

"Is not that pretty?" said Mrs. Hume, as her sister's musical voice ceased. "I did not know you had such poets in Australia."

“Indeed we have a literature of our own,” said Mrs. McDonald, “and very beautiful things are written by Australians. You have much to learn about this great island continent of ours.”

“Now we must turn toward home,” said Mr. McDonald, and his wife said, “Drive back past Tarnpin, it is so beautiful about there. Tarnpin, or Flowing Water, is a favourite spot hereabouts. The Blacks have a quaint story about its origin, and I will tell it to you as old Tepal, a black chief, told it to me.

“It was the day time, and all the animals died of thirst. So many died that the Magpie, the Lark, and the Crane talked together, and tried to find water to drink.

“‘It is very strange,’ said the Magpie, ‘that the Turkey Buzzard is never hungry.’

“‘He must, then, have water to drink,’ said the wise Crane.

“‘He flies away every morning, very early,’ said the Lark.

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“ ‘ Let us rise before the sun and watch him,’ said the Magpie, and they agreed.

“ Next morning the Turkey Buzzard rose early and crept from his wuurie.¹ He looked this way and that and saw no one. Then he flew away. He knew not that two bright eyes peeped at him through the leaves of the great gum tree. He did not hear the ‘ peep, peep ’ with which the Lark awoke his friends. The Lark, the Magpie and the Crane flew high to the sky. They flew so high that they looked as specks on the sun. The Turkey Buzzard saw them but thought they were small, dark clouds. He flew to a flat stone and lifted it up. And the water gushed from a spring in the rock and he drank and was satisfied. Then he put back the stone and flew away.

“ The three friends laughed and were glad. Quickly they flew to the stone, singing, ‘ We have caught him!’ and drank of the fresh

¹ Hut.

water. They bathed in the pool and flapped their wings until the waters rose and became a lake of clear water. Then they spread their wings and flew over the earth, and the waters dropped from their wings and fell to the thirsty earth. They made there water holes, and ever since there have been drinking places all over the land."

"My but that's a jolly story," said Fergus, the irrepressible. "Did you really know the Blacks, Aunt Mildred? Are there any around here?"

"None very near," said his aunt. "Indeed, they are mostly dying out. People who have lived here a long time used to know them and say they were a kindly people. They were very fond of children and I do not think they were cruel or quarrelsome unless roused to anger. They have nearly all buried themselves in the Bush, but you will be likely to see some of them at our station. There used to be a number around the 'run,' and when we first came out

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we had some rather curious experiences with them. We do not see many now, their experiences with white people were not always pleasant, I am sorry to say."

"I hope we shall see some of them," said Fergus.

"I like black people," said little Jean.

"What does she know of Blacks?" asked her aunt, smiling, and her mother replied,

"Some people from the States came to our farm one fall for the shooting and they had a black nurse for the baby. Jean took a great fancy to her, and we simply couldn't keep her from toddling after Dinah. She was a faithful soul, so good and kind."

"Those who have lived here for many years say that if you once make a friend of a Black he will do anything for you," said Mr. McDonald.

"I never had any trouble with them around my station, though other squatters did."

"I think it's all in the way you treat them,"

said his wife. "Of course the Blacks near the 'run' are not the wild Blacks from the interior, the man-eating kind, but a gentler race."

"Well, I hope we shall see some of them," said Fergus. "But I shouldn't care for cannibals."

CHAPTER IV

ON THE WAY TO THE "RUN"

IT was a bright morning when they left Sydney to go to the station, taking the train early in the day, for there was a railway ride of several hours before them, as well as a long drive.

"Now you are going to see something of Australian life," said Mr. McDonald. "Life in Sydney or Melbourne is very little different from that in Liverpool or Glasgow. On the big stations it is much the same as on the country places at home, but my station is typical of Australia."

"Is it in the Bush, Uncle?" asked Fergus.

"Hear the laddie talking like an old squatter," laughed Mr. McDonald. "Yes and no. You see the Australians who live in the cities consider all the rest of the continent the Bush,

but to those who live in the grazing and farming districts the country inland is the Bush or the 'Back Country.' Our run is beautifully situated just on the edge of the Dividing Range, and we are lucky enough to have a river running through one side, so that the run is seldom dry."

"What is the Dividing Range?" asked Fergus, who was determined to understand everything he heard. If he did not, it was not because he did not ask questions enough about it.

"The Dividing Range is the high land which separates the east and west of the continent and runs from north to south along the coast. It is sometimes called the Australian Alps, and some of the peaks are 7,000 feet high. The eastern part of Australia runs in a long strip of fertile ground along the coast. West of this are the mountains and beyond them is a high plateau which slopes down to the plains of Central Australia. This central portion is an al-

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most unknown country. There are no great rivers and little rain. The land is terribly dry and very hot. Many who have gone to explore it have never returned and no one knows their fate. Perhaps they have died of thirst, perhaps they have been killed by the Blacks. This part of the country is called 'Never, Never Land.' ”

“Uncle Angus,” asked Fergus, as his uncle paused. “When you came to your station were you a squatter?”

His uncle's hearty laugh rang out. “No, my boy, but I bought my run from a squatter,” he answered. “The days of squatters were about over when I came out. What do you know about squatters?”

“I don't know anything,” answered Fergus. “Only I have heard the name and thought maybe you would tell us about them.”

“In the old times, before Australia had started in the trade, the wool from the sheep on the runs was very important to her,” said Mr.

McDonald. "Men would come out to the country, and, not having very much money, they could perhaps buy a small homestead and stock it, but little more. They would have to have large tracts of land to pasture their sheep, but had not money enough to buy the land. They therefore settled down and took what they needed without permission, and so were called 'squatters.' The Government did not interfere with them, because the wool from their sheep was needed and because the country was so big there seemed land enough for everyone. In time the matter was arranged by the Government's dividing the back country into grazing districts, which all the squatters might use by paying a yearly rent."

"How did the squatters keep their sheep from other people?" Fergus inquired.

"Every flock had its shepherd, who led it wherever food and water were to be found," was the answer. "The life of a shepherd was

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a lonely one. He had to watch the sheep and lambs and see that the dingoes¹ did not get at them. The shepherd never saw any other people except the man who brought his supplies from the station. His dogs were his only friends, and often these shepherd dogs are marvels of intelligence and loyalty. For a time the squatters prospered and some of them grew immensely wealthy. These were called 'Wool Kings' and lived on their stations extravagantly, building houses such as you saw at Wuurna-wee-weetch.

"But sheep raising is not all plain sailing in Australia. Rabbits were brought into the country, and these proved to be a regular plague, destroying the grass, so that the Government passed a law that squatters must help to exterminate them, which put them to a great expense.

"When I came here twenty years ago, I got my station from a squatter who had worked it for years and had made enough to sell out and

¹ Wild dogs.

go to Sydney, where it had always been his ambition to live. I have worked hard and been successful. When you see our station I think you will want to stay in this country instead of trying to find gold in 'Never, Never Land,' " he said to his brother-in-law.

"Perhaps I shall, but I have no money to buy a station and I can't be a squatter now," said Mr. Hume.

Their way lay through a beautiful semi-tropical country. The train moved through fertile valleys, fine woodland and green vales, and bridged cool mountain streams. When their stopping place was reached and they alighted from the train to find a comfortable cart and good horses awaiting them, Fergus exclaimed, "It doesn't seem to me that travelling in Australia is very hard work."

"Wait till you get to the Bush," said his uncle. "And have to tramp it with your swag¹

¹ Name given to the pack carried on the back.

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upon your back, make your own supper over a twig fire, stir your tea in a billy¹ with a eucalyptus twig, and roll up in a blanket to sleep, waking up to find a dukite snake taking a nap on your breast, — that's real Australia for you."

"I like your kind better," said Jean with a shudder, but Fergus said boastingly,

"Well, I'm not afraid of the Bush."

"Wait and see," said his father as they drove through the gate which led into Mr. McDonald's run.

It was a beautiful station and well suited for the sheep farming from which the owner had made his money. The land lay in a triangle, on two sides of which was a considerable stream while the main road formed the third boundary. The land was fenced with stout rail fences while the paddocks were fenced with wire.

The house was built of stone, of one story, with a broad veranda running around all four

¹ Bucket for water, carried by Australians.

On the Way to the "Run" 39

sides, shaded in vines and looking on a garden in which gorgeous-hued flowers bloomed in brilliant beauty. There was an air of great comfort about the place. Hammocks were slung in the porches and easy chairs were placed invitingly about.

Long windows clear to the floor opened into the living rooms and a wide hallway ran through the middle of the house. On one side was a drawing room, at the other, dining room and living room. The guests caught glimpses of books and music as they were ushered into their cool bedrooms. These opened on to the veranda and were cool and pleasant, with gay chintz and white hangings. What a delightful visit the children had at the run! It was perhaps pleasanter for them than for the grown folk, for Sandy, Mr. and Mrs. McDonald's only child, a boy of ten, was a perfect imp of mischief, and he led his two cousins into everything that he could think of. Fergus was not far

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behind, and Jean trudged after the boys, growing strong and rosy in the Australian sunshine.

“Australia is making the greatest change in Jean,” said her mother to Mrs. McDonald one day, as they sat upon the veranda. “At home she was so shy she would scarcely look at any one. She seemed delicate and I was worried for fear she would never learn to take care of herself in this world.”

“She will grow up into the most self-reliant kind of a girl in the Bush,” said her sister. “She is a dear little girl and I think there is plenty of strength of character under her shy little ways.”

“I wonder what the three are doing now,” said Jean’s mother. “It has been some time since we heard a shriek of any kind — oh — what is that?” for as she spoke there came a scream so loud and piercing from the shrubbery that both women sprang to their feet and rushed across the lawn.

Midway between the house and the garden they met the three children, both boys holding Jean's hands and helping her to run to the house, while the little girl, her face covered with blood and tears, was trying not to cry.

"Jean's hurt," cried Sandy.

"So I should judge," said his mother, trying to keep calm, while both boys began to talk at once, so that no one could understand a word they said.

Mrs. Hume gathered Jean in her arms and carried her quickly to the house, where she washed the little, tear-stained face. The child's lip was terribly cut and she was badly frightened, but not seriously hurt, and as she cuddled down in her mother's arms she sighed,

"Nice mother! I don't mind being hurt when you are here to fix me up."

"Tell me what happened, dear," said her mother, as she stroked the fair hair.

"We were playing," Jean said. "The boys

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had sticks and we heard a queer rustle in the bushes. Sandy said it was a snake and beat the bushes to drive him out. It ran out just in front of Fergus and I thought it would bite him, and I didn't want anything to happen to my brother so I ran up behind him just as he swung his stick over his shoulder to hit the snake. He hit me in the mouth, but of course he didn't mean to, Mother. I screamed because it hurt me so, and then I tried not to cry because I knew it would worry you. It doesn't hurt so badly now, Mother."

"I'm sorry it hurts at all, darling," her mother held her close. "You were a good child and brave not to cry. Crawl up in the hammock now and take a nap, and you will feel better when you wake up."

"I hope Fergus and Sandy won't do anything very interesting while I am asleep," the little girl murmured drowsily, as she dropped off to sleep.

Fergus and Sandy undoubtedly would. They were very kind to Jean, but there was no doubt that they found the little girl a clog upon their movements. Fergus was used to taking care of her, but Sandy had no sisters and he sometimes wished the little cousin would not tag quite so much.

"You can't really do anything much when a girl is tagging around," he said to his mother, but that long-suffering woman proved strangely unsympathetic.

"I think I shall keep Jean always if her being here keeps you out of mischief," she said with a smile, and Sandy answered,

"Well, keep Fergus too, then."

No sooner was Jean asleep than the boys decided the time had come for them to carry out a plan long since formed, but laid aside for a convenient season. At one side of the run was a little lake, formed where one of the boundary streams was dammed. A windmill carried water

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from this to a platform and upon this were iron tanks from which pipes carried water through the house. The boys had decided to climb to the top of the reservoir and slide down the pipes, which seemed to them would be an exciting performance. The climbing up was not difficult and Sandy took the first slide.

“It’s great fun,” he shouted. “Let me have another!” as he clambered up again.

“It’s my turn,” cried Fergus, astride of the pipe.

“Let me. You wait,” said Sandy, who was used to playing alone and not to having any-one dispute with him.

“I tell you it’s my turn!” Fergus’ temper rose. “You don’t play fair.”

There was a scramble and a cry, both boys lost their balance and fell, and the sound of breaking glass crashed through the air.

Both mothers rushed to the scene to find two pairs of arms and legs waving wildly from the

hot-bed, while broken glass was scattered hither and yon.

"You dreadful boys, you have fallen right into the flower beds and broken the glass! Are you badly hurt?" cried Mrs. McDonald, as each mother dragged out a son.

Very crestfallen were the boys as they stood up, their faces covered with scratches and Sandy's hand badly cut.

"What were you doing?" asked both mothers sternly.

"Sliding down the water pipe," said Sandy.

"Quarrelling," said Fergus.

"Nice way to spend the morning," said Mr. McDonald, who appeared at that moment from the stables. "Go and get washed up and we'll see if you have any broken glass in your cuts."

When the damages were repaired neither boy was found to be much hurt, but Jean begged so hard that they should not be punished, that the two were let off for that time.

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“The next piece of mischief you get into you’ll be sent to bed for a day to rest up and think it over,” said Sandy’s father, and the boys assured him that they would never, never do anything again as long as they lived.

CHAPTER V

LIFE AT DJERINALLUM

WHILE the children played happily together the grown folk had many an anxious consultation as to ways and means.

“I wish I could persuade you to stay with us, Elsie,” said her sister. “Let your husband go by himself, on his wild goose chase after gold.”

“Oh, I can’t do that,” said Mrs. Hume. “I can rough it, and it will do Fergus good, but I am afraid of it for Jeanie.”

“Let me keep her,” said Mrs. McDonald eagerly. “Oh, do, Elsie! I have always wanted a little girl to pet and take care of and Jean will be ever so much safer with me than travelling through the wild country you are going into on your way to the Gold Fields.”

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“It might be best,” Mrs. Hume said thoughtfully. “I will talk it over with Fergus and leave Jean in your care, going with him, if he agrees.”

Mr. Hume, however, had very decided ideas as to what was best to be done.

“Since your sister and her husband are so anxious to keep you, my dear, I am sure it will be best for you and Jean to stay here at the run. My trip to the Gold Fields is only an experiment. It will be a long, hard journey and an expensive one, and I may not find anything worth doing when I get there, and in that case will return and take up stock farming. McDonald offers me a chance now, but I feel as though I ought to make the trial before accepting help.

“I will take Fergus with me. The trip will not hurt him and he would drive you distracted if left here with Sandy. I shall do better work feeling that you and the lassie are safe and well cared for here.”

“ I hate to have you go without me, but I must do as you think best,” said his wife. So it was arranged, and with a heavy heart Jean saw her father and brother drive away from the run, starting on their long trip to the Gold Fields.

“ Why does father have to go away? ” she asked her uncle, who had taken her before him for a ride on his big, black horse, “ The Bruce.”

“ He has gone to hunt for gold, lassie, so you can have fine clothes to wear,” he answered.

“ I’d rather have father here and not have fine clothes,” she said, her lip quivering. “ How do they get gold in fields, Uncle? I didn’t know it grew like flowers and grass.”

“ It doesn’t, lassie,” he answered. “ They just call the place they find it the Gold Fields. It is dug out of the earth, where it is found mixed with sand and stone.”

“ Well, where are the Gold Fields and who found there was gold there? ” asked Jean. She liked her burly uncle, who was always ready to

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talk to her and who explained everything about the run so pleasantly.

“The Gold Fields extend all over Western Australia,” said Mr. McDonald. “Gold was first discovered here in 1823 and people have gone mad with gold fever ever since. The precious metal has been found in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, but recently it has been discovered in Western Australia. The miners often strike a good lead and grow very rich, but it is a hard life and especially so in the districts where there is little water. In the old days men often died of thirst, but now they have ways of storing the rain which falls in the wet season so that they do not suffer much.

“There are many interesting things about the gold regions if the life there is hard. Teams of camels carry the swag of the miners across the sandy deserts. These beasts were imported especially for this work, since they can go longer without water than any other animals, and often

it is a long ways from one good water hole to another. The miners 'peg out' their claims in the new places and set to work sifting the sands in which are found the grains of gold, sometimes as large as nuts. Soon there is a camp started. Little canvas huts dot the country. Then if the camp proves successful, houses are built and finally a city will grow up, almost as if by magic. One city, that of Ballarat, has grown in twenty-five years to be one of the handsomest in Australia. It has broad streets, fine houses, and a beautiful park. The swamp land near by has been made into a lake surrounded by velvet-turfed pleasure grounds, planted with wonderful trees and flowers. Kalgoorlie, in only ten years, is almost a golden city, to which water is brought two hundred miles in pipes, to drive the engines which extract the gold from the quartz."

"Thank you, Uncle, for telling me all about it," said Jeanie. "I hope father will find a good

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mine and then sell it out quickly and come back to buy a run near you. That is what I should like best of anything."

"So should I, child," her uncle smiled at her. "Here we are at the stables. Jump down and run and call Sandy for me and I'll take you both with me while I go over the sheds."

"I've always wanted to know about these queer looking sheds," said Jean as she and Sandy trudged after her uncle.

"This long building is the wool shed," he said. "Now it is empty and quiet, but when it is shearing time there is noise enough. At this end is the wool press, and the shearing board runs along the sides of the shed. Sheep used to be sheared by hand, but Lord Wesley's brother invented a machine for shearing which is a wonderful thing. Would you two youngsters like to ride around the run with me? I have to go over to the paddocks to-day."

"Oh, Uncle, may I ride?" exclaimed Jean.

“I had a little Shetland pony at home and I have missed him so much.”

“You may ride Sandy’s pony, and he will take Wallace, while I will ride ‘The Bruce,’” said Mr. McDonald, and both the children fairly jumped with delight. They rode around the run, the master looking everything over carefully.

“Every paddock has its own flock,” he explained to Jean. “In one the ewes are kept, in another the wethers, and then there is a paddock for the horses and another for the cows.”

“How do you get so many animals fed,” asked Jean.

“They graze on the grass, and those great fields of alfalfa over there are grown to use as food. It has to be irrigated and is quite a little trouble, but it pays in the end. That house is where the manager lives, with his family and the jackaroos.”

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“What is a jackaroo? Some kind of a bird?” asked Jean. Sandy shouted with laughter and his uncle smiled as he answered,

“No, child, jackaroo is the name given to the young fellows who are new at the station and just learning Australian customs. All kinds of jokes are played on them by the old hands and they have a hard time at first. A story is told of some Englishmen who had just come out and were going hunting. They hadn't found any game and so they asked some station hands if they had seen any. ‘There's a jackaroo down near the water hole,’ said the cook, wickedly, so the two men hurried away to shoot the strange animal, and lo! it was a young man like themselves.”

“What do jackaroos do, Uncle?” asked Jean.

“Well, they have to learn to do all the work there is to do at a station, so that some day they may get to be managers or even run stations of

their own. They have to ride the boundary every day to see that there are not holes in the fences, and that the water holes are full. Only one man is needed to look after 7,500 sheep, so he is kept pretty busy."

"There are so many buildings somebody must have to look after them. Do the jackaroos do that?" asked Jean.

"No, all the repair work on the station is given to a set of men who dig water holes, build fences, and do any necessary carpenter work. These draw their groceries, meat, and so forth from the stores, but do not eat at our tables. I don't believe Wu Ling would stand it if he had to cook for them."

"Isn't he funny?" said Jean, laughing. "He lets me come in the kitchen and watch him bake brownie, but he won't allow Fergus or Sandy there at all. Do all stations have Chinese cooks?"

"Not all, but a great many do. The Chinese

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are the best cooks we can get. A great many people hate the yellow-skinned Celestials and raise a hue and cry about a 'White Australia,' but I don't know what we of the far stations would do without them."

"Wu Ling cooks very good things," said Sandy. "But he got very angry when Fergus called him 'pig tail.'"

"That wasn't nice of Fergus," said Jean. "What beautiful thistles and sweet briar, Uncle."

"Not beautiful in our eyes," said her uncle, as they rode by a magnificent clump of sweet briar, the pink blossoms making a lovely spot of colour against the purple of the thistles. "Some patriotic Scot brought the first thistles to Australia, and an English family the roses, and many's the day I have wished they never came. The soil here is so rich that everything grows fast, and the thorny plants have spread all over the land, in some places growing so

thick that they have ruined whole tracts of grazing land. They are nearly as bad as the foxes. These were brought to destroy the rabbits which ate up the crops, but Mr. Reynard likes chicken far better than hare, and he has increased so rapidly that it is almost impossible to get rid of him, though rewards are offered for his scalp and in one year over thirty thousand skins were brought in."

"Do they scalp rabbits, too?" asked Jean.

"Trapping rabbits is a regular Australian business," said her uncle. "A good trapper can make £4 a week catching them, and the fur is used to make felt hats."

"There are lots and lots of interesting things in your country," said Jean brightly.

"But shearing time will be the fun," said Sandy.

"Oh, I'd like to see them shear. May I, Uncle?" cried Jean.

"Yes, indeed, you may see anything you like.

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We'll make a regular station-hand of you before you are done," he laughed.

"I'm only a little jackaroo now," she said. "What is that queer noise? It seemed to come from under those trees."

"That is the lyre bird, isn't he a handsome fellow? See, there he is beneath that bottle tree. We have a pair of them and never allow them to be touched, as they are quite rare in this part of the country, though found quite frequently in the scrub.

"The tail of the male is just like an old-fashioned lyre, and it is one of the most interesting of our birds."

"Did you say that was a bottle tree?" asked Jean.

"Yes. Don't you see it is shaped just like a huge bottle, the branches growing out of the mouth? The stems have water in them, and if you are ever lost in the Bush and thirsty, find a bottle tree and get a drink. The Blacks



“ ‘ THAT IS THE LYRE BIRD, ISN'T HE A HANDSOME
FELLOW ? ’ ”

eat the roots, which are full of a kind of gum."

"I never heard of such a place as this," said Jean. "It seems as if everything in Australia was useful. Everything but little girls," she added.

"Little girls are very useful in making other people happy," said her uncle kindly.

"But I'd like to be really useful and learn to do something," said Jean.

"You will when you are bigger," he answered. "You must get well and strong before you can do very much, lassie. But you will be useful enough as you grow older."

"I don't see why you are in such a hurry to go to work," said Sandy. "I think you have a pretty fine time!"

CHAPTER VI

“ LOST ! ”

LIFE at the run proved pleasant to Jean and full of interesting happenings. She missed her father and Fergus, but she and Sandy soon grew to be great friends, and many were the thrilling bits of mischief into which he dragged her, sure that he would escape punishment if Jean were only to say, “ Don’t punish Sandy, Uncle Angus, I did it too.”

The little girl loved her Aunt Mildred, but more than any one at the station her uncle had won her heart. She grew to be his little shadow, driving and riding with him, sun-tanned and rosy, growing strong and healthy in the free Australian life.

“ You are getting as fat as a Chinaman’s

horse, lassie,” said her uncle as they rode to the river one day.

“Why do you say that?” she asked.

“The Chinese are always very kind to their horses and keep them fat and slick, so that has grown to be a proverb, though some people say as ‘fat as a larrikin’s dog,’ instead.”

“What is a larrikin?” Jean was growing as full of questions as Fergus.

“Larrikin is a slang term applied to the idlers who lounge about the cities, a dog at their heels, like the ‘Enery ‘Awkins of London or Glasgow. There are many of them in Australia and they have formed a kind of secret society among themselves, which is not a very good thing. Here is a fine bit for a canter, Jeanie. I’ll beat you to the big eucalyptus.”

“No, you won’t.” Jean chirruped to her pony and was off like a shot through the open paddock, jumping a fence as if on wings. She loved to gallop when the air was filled with the

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fragrance of the wattle and the gum, and she had grown to ride like a little centaur.

“Well done,” cried her uncle as she drew up at the gate, laughing and breathless, her horse half a head in advance of his. “We are so near to ‘Mason’s run,’ I think we’ll have time to stop there. I want to see him about several things, so we’ll ride on.”

“Very well, Uncle. Is it a sheep run?”

“No, cattle. You have not seen one yet, so keep your eyes open and learn all you can. Mason breeds the long horns, sullen beasts, but good stock.”

“I shall be glad to see them,” she said, and they cantered up to the homestead, which was very unlike her uncle’s station.

Built of wood, with a galvanized-iron roof, the house stood on piles, but between each pile and the house was a tin plate to keep the white ants from climbing into the rooms. Several gins¹ came out to see who the strangers were,

¹ Black women.

the first that Jean had seen, and she looked at them curiously. Not more so, however, than they looked at her, for they stared at her and whispered together.

“They don’t know what to make of you, ‘Lassie with the lint white locks,’” her uncle laughed. “The young gin wants to know if you are Great Baiame’s golden child. It’s your fair hair, I suppose.”

Jean’s hair was light golden and floated all about her face like a halo.

“Great Baiame is their god, good spirit, and they think you are a goddess. That gin wants to touch your hair. Better let her, she won’t hurt you.”

Jean smilingly bent her head and let the black woman run her fingers over her shining tresses. The gin smiled and, seized by a sudden impulse, Jean said,

“She may have a curl if she wants it, Uncle. I have plenty and mother won’t care.” He

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handed her his knife and she snipped off a silken strand, which the gin took with many expressions of delight.

“ You have certainly made a hit among the Blacks,” said her uncle teasingly. “ She will wear that as a charm and be the envy of all the tribe. Your hair is pretty.

“ ‘ The world to me knows no fairer sight
Than your long hair veiling your shoulders white,
As I tangle my hand in your hair my pet.’ ”

he quoted as he stroked the shining mane.

“ Uncle, I don't think cattle runs are as nice as sheep runs. There aren't any wool sheds, but just open yards.”

“ These are the stock and branding yards. You see the cattle roam the hills, some of the runs being as large as five thousand square miles, on which the cattle find their own food and water.”

“ If they wander over all that distance, how do the owners ever tell their own cattle? ” asked Jean.

“Every beast is branded, that is, he has his owner’s mark burnt into his hide,” said her uncle. “So it is easy to draft out of the mobs the cattle which belong to other ranchmen. The young oxen are sent to the coast to be fattened for market, while the old cattle are sent to the rendering works, where they are made into tallow and beef extract. The stockman’s life is harder than that of the shepherd, and dangerous because of the bullocks’ stampedes, when they break loose and often run down horses and men in their frantic rush for freedom.”

“I like the sheep run much better,” said Jean. “See that flying squirrel, Uncle! I think they are the cunningest little things. Who do you suppose is hiding behind that tree? I heard some one laughing.”

“Look and see,” her uncle smiled. Jean jumped down from her horse and peered behind the tree. There she saw a little bird perched on one leg which sang a pretty little song, al-

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ways breaking off with "H-ah-ha! Hoo-hoo-hoo!"

"That's a laughing jackass, Jeanie," said her uncle. "He's a funny little fellow, isn't he?"

"He isn't a bit pretty," said Jean.

"No, but he's very useful, for he eats snakes and lizards and all kinds of things, and there is a law forbidding any one to kill him."

"You have so many queer things in Australia," said Jean. "Down by the river Sandy and I found the queerest thing. It looked part animal and part bird. It had a big flat bill like a duck and fur on its body like a rat, and it had webbed feet and a long bushy tail. Sandy said it was a beastie and was called a water mole, but we found its nest in a kind of tunnel running from the water's edge under ground, and in the nest were eggs."

"That was a platypus, or water mole," said Mr. McDonald. "He is an animal but lays eggs like the birds. There is another animal in



““ THAT WAS A PLATYPUS, OR WATER MOLE,” SAID MR.
MCDONALD.

Australia which does too, the spiny ant-eater. He looks like a hedgehog but has a queer, long bill with a long tongue covered with sticky stuff with which he licks up the ants off the ground. He hasn't a nest, but carries his eggs around in a kind of a pocket until they are hatched.”

“It certainly is a queer place, with trees that shed their bark every year, pears that have hard wooden rinds, cherries with the stones outside, trees with flowers and seeds growing in the leaves and animals that lay eggs,” said Jean.

“And little girls that chatter and ride like monkeys,” cried Sandy's teasing voice, as he rode up behind them. “I can pass you!”

“No, you can't!” cried Jean, and she galloped off, her cousin after her, though he did not catch up with her till she rode up to the veranda and jumped off her pony, laughing heartily.

Some weeks later all was hurry and bustle at the station. Shearing was to begin the next day

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and there was a great deal to be done to make ready for the great event. Shearers were coming in, some riding, some trudging along on foot, carrying their swags. There were huts for them to sleep in, and tents were being spread in the open. Mr. McDonald left all the details of this work to his manager, a young Australian who had been born and raised on a sheep run.

At first Jean was much interested in seeing the shearing and stood in the shed watching, as the engine whistled to begin. The pens were full of sheep who did not at all know what they were there for, but who did know that they did not like it. They baa-ed and bawled, and with the noise of the machinery it was deafening in the sheds. As the machine starts every shearer grabs a sheep from the pen, choosing the one that looks the easiest to shear, he throws it with his knee and rapidly guides the little knife-like cutters of the machine over the fleece, which falls from the animal in one huge piece. The

sheep is then released to run, pink and shivering, to the yard again. The “picker up” catches up the fleece and takes it to the wool bin, while the shearer turns to the pen to catch another victim. He has to be quick because the sharp eye of the overseer is upon him. He walks up and down, watching every one. The “penners-up” must not let a single pen be empty, “the pickers-up” must keep the floor clean, the shearers must shear evenly as well as closely. If they cut a ragged fleece the wool will grow badly the next year and some of it will be wasted.

The shearers are paid by the number of sheep they shear, and they work very fast, every man trying to see if he cannot be the “ringer,” as they call the man who has sheared the greatest number of sheep at the close of the shearing.

The shearers earn five dollars for every hundred sheep sheared, and an ordinarily good

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workman will shear a hundred sheep in a day, while extra good ones have sheared three hundred in a day. As the shearers have no expenses, their food and lodging being given them, they can make a good deal of money during the season.

The picker-up takes the fleece to the wool roller, who trims it and rolls it up to be inspected by the classer. He decides as to its quality and puts it in the proper bin. It is then baled, marked with the quality and the owner's brand, and taken by wagon to the nearest shipping station.

The sheep are counted, branded and dipped to prevent their being covered with wood ticks, which bite so fiercely, and then are returned to their paddocks. There is no more attractive sight in the world than an immense flock of the long-wooled Australian sheep, and none more forlorn than the shivering droves of freshly-sheared animals.

Jean watched until she was tired. The smell of the wool, the noise, the heat, the cries of the tormented sheep, all turned her sick, and she fled to the house. There things were little better. Everybody was busy. Aunt Mildred had no time to notice a little girl. Sandy was away, no one knew where, and, worst of all, her mother was laid low with one of her terrible headaches. Jean knew these of old, and that it was no use to expect to even speak to her mother before night. She felt forlorn and lonely and decided to take a ride.

No one was at the stable to saddle Dandy, but she had learned to ride as well without a saddle as with, so she got on the pony's back and rode toward the river.

Away from the noise of the shearing shed, how quiet and lovely it all seemed. The wind swayed gently the branches of the great she-oaks as a mopoke's mournful note came from the gum trees. Flying foxes flapped their wings and

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she came upon the playground of a satin-bower¹ bird, the first she had ever seen, although her uncle had told her about them. She rode farther into the wood than she intended and, feeling tired, she got off Dandy and, throwing the reins over a bush, sat down under a tree to rest.

“I’m so tired,” she said to herself, “I think I will take a little nap. This looks just the place for a fairy ring and perhaps the elves will come to dance while I am asleep.”

She lay down under the huge tree about which ferns grew so thickly as to form a green curtain. Dandy browsed in the grass near by, every now and then pricking up his dainty ears and working his velvety nose as if something he did not like was near. Then his reins pulled loose from the bush and he wandered away to nibble at a tempting bit of turf a little distance away.

¹ This bird makes a play-ground before the tree in which it builds its nest. It has a floor of sticks, and over this is built a little bower into which are woven bright feathers, white shells, etc.

Another tempted him and he was soon out of sight, hidden by the great ferns which grew up above his pretty head.

As he disappeared there was a little rustle in the bushes and two eyes peered at the sleeping child. Then a hand reached out and warily touched a fold of her little blue gingham frock. Jean stirred in her sleep and smiled. She was dreaming that her father had come back and that he took her in his strong arms and carried her away, away, and she never wanted him to put her down. The scent of the wild blooms was in her nostrils, and she did not wake when two arms cautiously raised her from the ground and holding her lightly yet carefully, so that no branch might brush against her, carried her far into the deep and lonely wood. It was perhaps an hour that the man carried her and she did not wake. Then she opened her eyes to find herself in the arms of a big Black. She screamed in fright, but he spoke gently to her.

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“Missa not 'fraid. Me not bad Black. Take Missa home.”

“Where is my pony. I would rather ride him,” she cried, struggling, and the Black put her down.

“Pony all gone,” he said. “Missa very tired, me show Missa my gin. She very sick, want to see white baby, with gold for hair. Hear all about her from other gin. Then carry home. Black very much like Missa.” He smiled again and his face looked kind. “Let me carry Missa or we not get there soon,” he said coaxingly, and not knowing what else to do Jean allowed him to pick her up and carry her again. He walked fast, but she did not see the river or the house and she began to grow frightened. It grew dark and the air was full of flying things, so large as to seem like birds and so small as to seem like baby mice with wings. The bird songs were stilled; only the soft chirping of the tree insects were heard. Then those

ceased and all was still and dark, and the silent forest so terrified the child that she began to cry.

“No good for Missa to cry, Missa must go see gin,” said the Black, and as he spoke they came in sight of a little group of native huts, bark-thatched and dimly seen through the darkness. Into the smallest of these the Black stumbled and set his burden before a couch on which lay a black woman wasted with fever.

“Brought you white child,” he said. The hut was full of Blacks, but Jean was too frightened and tired to think of any of them, and she covered her face with her hands and sobbed as if her heart would break.

CHAPTER VII

JEAN FINDS A FRIEND

JEAN stopped crying, for she found that it did no good. She curled up in the corner of the dark hut and waited to see what would happen. The Blacks talked and jabbered around her, but she could not at all understand what they said, and she was too little to understand that she was in any danger. She only wished with all her heart that she might see her mother. The Blacks talked together, and Jean at last was so tired that she curled up on the floor and went to sleep. When she awoke and opened her eyes she was surprised to find that the sun was shining.

She was lying on the ground under a huge gum tree. A fire of the dry twigs of the gum tree burned brightly, as a young black boy whom

she had seen the night before fanned it with a huge fern leaf.

“Little Missa hungry,” he said, smiling kindly down at her. “Kadok make eat. Be good little girl and lie still.”

He took a hatchet which hung on the belt around his waist and quickly cut off a piece of bark from the gum tree, then took some flour from a bag and piled it on the bark. Water from the water-hole he dipped up with a leaf cup and mixed with the flour, baking it on the bark over the fire. Kadok then dipped fresh water from the water-hole, around which ferns grew as high as Jean’s head, and turned over the ashes of the fire to roast in them a turkey’s egg which he had found in the bracken.

“Now Missa eat,” he said, giving Jean a piece of damper¹ and the egg, with a cup of water. “Little Missa not be afraid. Kadok take her to see Mother.”

¹ Kind of native bread made of flour and water.

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The boy's face was kind and Jean tried to smile at him in return, finding courage to say,

"Are you Kadok? How did I get here?"

"I am Kadok, *yoia*.¹ Black man found little Missa asleep by the corral. Want to show her to his woman who had no girl, all die. He take little Missa and mean to bring her back. Then white police ride and hunt. Black man scared, hide Missa, hide selves. Some black men say kill little Missa. Kadok say 'No.' His father chief, and chief say, 'Take back white Missa to mother.' So Kadok will take."

"Thank you, Kadok," said Jean simply, accepting all that he said. "How soon will I see my mother?"

"Don't know. Missa come long way on man's back. Must go back on two feet. Take days and nights. Not cry," he said as her face clouded. "Kadok take one good care of little Missa. Eat plenty meal, then we start walk."

¹ Yes.

Jean was a quiet child. Fergus had always been the talker and she had been content to listen to the big brother whom she thought the most wonderful boy in the world. So she did not say much in reply to Kadok, but obediently ate her queer breakfast, which tasted very good to the hungry little girl. When she had finished she said timidly to Kadok,

“May I wash my hands and face at the water-hole?”

“Come with me. I go see,” said Kadok. She followed him to the water, always a precious thing in Australia, where the dry season makes it scarce. “Step right behind Kadok, maybe snakes,” said the black boy, and she followed him close.

Trees had been cut down and many lay about in the scrub, which grew thick and higher than Jean’s head, so that Kadok had to hold it aside in many places for her to pass. The water-hole was clogged with weeds and leaves, but Kadok

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dug about under the ferns until he found a clean pool, then filled his flask with water, saying,

“Little Missa wash quick.” Jean dipped up the cool water in her hands, splashing it on her face. As she dried herself as best she could with her handkerchief, Kadok cried,

“Jump back, Missa, quick! into the scrub!” She obeyed without stopping to ask why and stood trembling, as Kadok came hurriedly after her.

“Missa one good little girl,” he said. “Mind what Kadok say always so quick, then Missa get safe home. See there!” pointing as he spoke to something on the other side of the water-hole where Jean had just been washing. “What Missa see?”

“I see a big black log,” answered Jean.

“What Missa see now,” said Kadok, throwing a stick at the log. To the child’s astonishment and horror the log rolled on its side, turned over and opened a huge pair of jaws, closing them again with a cruel snap.

"*Yamin*,"¹ said Kadok briefly. He seldom wasted words. "Eat little Missa if she not jumped. Now we start take you home. Little Missa mind Kadok and she go long home all right. You not afraid?"

"I will mind," said Jean, "and I am not very much afraid."

"We go," said the boy, and he flung over his shoulder a bag in which he had put his water bottle and provisions and started through the scrub. "Come after me and tell Kadok when you too tired to walk," he said to the child, and she followed him obediently.

She did not know why, but she was not at all afraid of Kadok. She felt he was telling her the truth when he said he would take her home if she was a good girl, and she put her whole mind upon following the difficult trail. The way at first led through a tangle of tropical vegetation, then the two struck into a forest of huge gum

¹ Crocodile.

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trees. Overhead the limbs made a lattice-work of interlacing boughs which gave no shade, as the leaves were vertical instead of horizontal.

The sun grew hot and beat down upon Jean's bare head, for she had lost her hat. Her fair hair caught on the long festoons of gray moss which hung from the trees, the flying golden fleece stuck to the rough bark, which was red with gum and very sticky. Her tangled matted curls, which had been her mother's joy, hung about her face and into her eyes so that she could scarcely see where she was going. The spinifex prickles stuck her ankles and legs, and at last she stumbled over a hidden tree root and fell in a heap upon the ground. At her cry Kadok turned quickly,

"Missa hurt," he said, coming back and helping her to her feet. "Not cry."

"I won't," she said, choking back her sobs.

"Please let me rest awhile."

"Must go fast to get to water-hole for din-

ner," said Kadok. "Missa rest a little and then try go again."

She lay down on the grass and shut her eyes. Some parrots chattered and screamed in the trees above her, but the sun was hot and most of the forest birds were still, except for little twitterings among the branches. Kadok sat silent beside her. Much was passing in the black boy's mind. He knew too well the need for haste. The trip was dangerous for him as well as for his little white friend; he understood the danger and she did not. She felt only the danger of the forest, reptiles, hunger, cold and thirst. But Kadok had to fear both Blacks and Whites. Should the two fugitives run into unfriendly Blacks they would be captured, and if the little girl was not killed by them she would be taken far inland, where as yet white people did not rule, and all hope of restoring her to her people would be at an end. On the other hand, were they to fall in with any of the mounted police

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or squatters, Kadok knew that his story would never be believed, and that he would be punished for stealing a white child. All this he knew, that Jean could not understand, but he felt that he must make her see the need for hurrying if possible.

“Kadok,” she spoke first. “How many miles is it to my mother?”

“It is many hours,” answered Kadok. “We must go fast.”

“I will go now,” she said, getting up. “I can walk.”

“Why you hurry?” asked Kadok, surprised.

“I want my mother,” she answered. “She will be afraid for me. My father has gone away to find gold and she will be frightened for me.” She spoke like a little old woman and the black boy’s eyes shone. He saw that he had the way to manage her without frightening her with the dangers he dreaded.

“We must go fast so little Missa’s mother

not get sick without her," he said, and the two started on again.

By noon, slow as the little steps were, they had covered considerable ground, and they sat down near a tiny water-hole to eat and rest.

"Missa wash feet and rest while I make eat," said Kadok, and Jean bathed her bruised feet, wrapping them in wet leaves, which Kadok told her would take out the pain. "Little Missa sit very still while I find eat," he said. "I not go away." She was terribly frightened when he disappeared between the trees, but in a few minutes she heard the sound of chopping near by, and in a few moments more, Kadok returned carrying a dead bandicoot.

"Me chop him out of hole in foot of tree," he said, grinning broadly. "Him make fine eat."

He quickly made a fire, and cutting up the meat in pieces, put some of them on sharpened twigs, and held them over the fire to roast.

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“Eat plenty much,” he said to Jean as he handed her several pieces. “We not know when we find another.”

She ate and found the meat very good. Some of it Kadok had rubbed with a little salt which he took from his provision bag, and a few bits he held over the smoke to dry. All this he wrapped in green leaves and put carefully with his provisions, getting Jean water in a leaf cup and making ready to start again.

“You good little *wirawi*,”¹ he said approvingly. “We soon bring to Mother her good luck.”

The afternoon’s walk was not quite so bad as the morning’s had been. Kadok struck into a track which led through the Bush to the main road. Walking here was not so troublesome and Jean managed fairly well, though her feet hurt her cruelly and toward the last Kadok had to help her along.

¹ Woman.

“ Little more walk, Missa,” he said encouragingly. “ We find good camp for night. Tomorrow we get long way to home.”

But Jean was almost past thinking of the morrow, almost past thinking of home. Her poor little body ached in every muscle, her face and hands were scratched and bleeding, and she was faint with hunger and fatigue. She stumbled on, Kadok holding her arm, until at last she could go no longer and would have fallen, had not the black boy picked her up and carried her. Laden as he was with his heavy swag, it was no easy task to carry a heavy child of eight, but he was a strong, muscular fellow, used to Bush life, and not tired as was his white charge. He carried her along the track some twenty rods, then paused and looked closely into the forest. It seemed a great wall to shut them off, but the keen eye of the Black caught an almost imperceptible opening amongst the leaves and he left the path once more to tread the mazes

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of the wood. Only a little distance and he came to a ruined hut overgrown with moss and creeping plants. It had once been a shepherd's hut and was a poor place, but at any rate it would serve as a shelter from the night and Kadok carried Jean within and laid her down on the floor.

“Little Missa tired out,” he said, pitying the child's white face, which looked unearthly in the light of the sunset which streamed through the open doorway. Jean was too tired to speak. She looked at him wearily for a moment and then closed her eyes. “Missa must eat. Not good to sleep too quick,” he said.

He made a fire at the door of the hut, partly for warmth, for with the sun's going down came the cool night dews, and partly to drive away mosquitoes, as well as to cook their supper. He then brought water from the trough, and made damper and forced bits of it between the child's teeth and gave her a drink of water. Little

pieces of roasted meat he added to her meal, and at last she sat up and smiled her thanks at him.

“ Good Kadok,” she said, “ eat some yourself. You are tired too.”

“ Not tired like little Missa,” he said, showing his even white teeth in a smile. “ Now must rub feet with wet leaves so they not be sore tomorrow.”

Jean bathed her feet and bound them up in cool green leaves, tying them on with long grasses which Kadok brought her. Then she wrapped herself in the blanket the black boy took from the swag and, lying down, was soon sound asleep. Kadok sat for some time at the door of the hut, feeding the fire, then he too rolled up in a blanket, and lying across the doorway, so that no one could come in without his knowledge, he too fell asleep.

CHAPTER VIII

IN THE BUSH

THE sun was high in the heavens when Jean awoke and at first she did not know where she was. Then she sat and looked about her, calling "Kadok!" but there was no answer. She went to the door of the hut and looked about. The fire was still burning, but there was no sign of the black boy. Before she had time to be frightened, however, Kadok's black face peered from between the trees, across the little clearing which lay in front of the hut. He smiled when he caught sight of her.

"Little Missa sleep good, feel good this morning," he said. "*Bujeri*,¹ Kadok make breakfast."

¹ Expression of satisfaction.

“What have you for breakfast,” she asked, hungry as she had never been at home.

“Fine fruit, got it top of tree,” he said, handing her a large purple, plum-like fruit which she ate and thought delicious. Kadok then roasted in the ashes some scrub turkey eggs he had found, and these too tasted good, and there was damper and cool water.

“Missa must hurry start now,” said Kadok. “We long way to go to-day to get to Mother.”

“First I must try to fix my hair,” she said. “It catches in the branches so that it hurts.”

“Kadok help,” he said briefly. He caught the golden mass in his hand and screwed it up in bunches on either side of her head, pinning it tight with some long thorns. Then he tied about her head a bright handkerchief which he had worn knotted around the open neck of his shirt, and rolling up the blankets and packing up the ration bag, he shouldered his swag, gave her a hand, and they were off for the day.

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As they walked Jean noticed that Kadok looked always to the right and left and that whenever they came near a hill or a hummock, he would go ahead before telling her to follow him.

“Why do you always look around, Kadok,” she asked curiously.

“’Fraid Debil-debil get little Missa or *Buba* or maybe *Yo-wi* or *Ya-wi*,” he answered briefly.

“Who are they?” she asked.

“Debil-debil bad god, enemy of *Baiame*,”¹ he said. “*Buba* big kangaroo, very bad father of kangaroos, *Yo-wi* is fever god, and *Ya-wi* is snake god. All very bad for little Missa,” and he shook his black head. He did not tell her there were others more to be feared than these monsters of the Blacks’ demonology, but he was worried by tracks he saw in the sand, tracks of both Blacks and Whites. “Mounted police, been here,” he muttered to himself. “Look

¹ *Baiame* is the chief god of the Blacks.

for little Missa. See horse's tracks plain. Here black man's tracks. Think bad Blacks," and he knit his brows.

Kadok was at a loss to know what to do. He did not want to take Jean into the Bush again, fearing that hard walking such as they had had the day before would make her too sick to go on, yet he was afraid to keep on the beaten track. They kept on till noon, however, and he drew her aside into the woods to rest and eat her dinner.

He gave her damper, of which she began to be tired, bits of smoked meat, and some of the white larvae to be found in quantities on the tree roots, and which she thought delicious. She was hungry, but Kadok gave her some roots to chew as they walked, saying, "We eat 'gain before long, must walk some now. 'Fraid we have big storm," and he looked anxiously at the sky, over which heavy clouds were passing.

Obediently she followed him again, and he

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walked quickly, peering through the bushes as if looking for something. The wind was so fierce that they made slow progress. It blew so that Jean was terribly frightened and at last Kadok stopped in his quick walk and took her hand.

“Missa 'fraid Storm debil,” he said. “I find place to hide from him. Come!” and he pulled her into the bushes which covered a high hill. Skirting round the hill, he pushed through a thicket which seemed almost like a wall, dragging Jean along as the storm broke with a sudden crash of thunder which frightened the child terribly.

“Quick!” Kadok cried to her, “We find cave now!” and he pushed aside some close growing tree branches and showed her the entrance of a little cave hollowed out of the rock. “Here we be safe till storm go over,” he said, and Jean gladly crouched in the shelter, watching with frightened eyes the play of the light-

ning. Kadok gave her more roots to chew and talked kindly to her to soothe her fears.

“ This not much storm,” he said. “ See many worse than this. Soon over and we go on. Think Missa see Mother to-morrow. Not many hours far now.”

“ Kadok,” said Jean, “ why are you so good to me? ”

“ What you mean? ” asked Kadok.

“ Why do you take me home? ” she asked.

“ Black boy not forget friend,” he said. “ Not forget enemy. Do mean to Kadok, Kadok do mean to you, if he has to wait five, ten years. Do Kadok good, he do good to you when he make chance.”

“ But I never did you any good,” said Jean, puzzled.

“ No, little Missa not. Missa McDonald do me heap good.¹ There was bad man at Station.

¹ This story of the poisoning of nearly a whole tribe of Blacks at a Christmas feast is vouched for on good authority.

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He no like Blacks near his cattle camp. Blacks not bad, not hurt white man. White man very bad. He make feast and tell Blacks to eat. Black men all eat. Next day all black men dead, all but Kadok and his father, great Chief. They very sick, but they not had eat much of white man's pudding. Chief tell Missa McDonald they very sick here," — putting his hand on his stomach — "She look very sorry and give them hot drink. It make them very sick and all white man's pudding come up. Think very strange that Kadok and Chief only ones not die, but like Missa McDonald very well for hot drink. Chief father say to me, 'Some day do kind to Missa McDonald,' and I say 'Yes.' When little Missa taken by bad Blacks, Chief say to me, 'Now time to pay Missa McDonald, take little Missa home!' I go take," and the boy nodded his head.

Jean did not understand all of his story, but she could take in enough to know that her Aunt

Mildred had saved the life of Kadok and his father, and she felt that the boy would do all he could for her.

The storm had ceased and the rain lay in sparkling drops upon bush and leaf.

“Very wet,” said Kadok as he peered out. “Missa sit here very still while Kadok go and see. Maybe we go on, maybe not.” Jean did not want to stay alone in the cave. “Let me go with you,” she said pleadingly, but Kadok shook his head.

“Not good for Missa. Big snakes come out of holes. Too many. Kadok not go far away. Missa not come out of cave till Kadok come back. Missa 'fraid, say prayers to white people's *Baiame*.”

Jean thought his advice good and said her prayers, sitting quietly for a time, looking through the cave door, though she could see but little, the screen of vines and bushes was so thick. She grew tired of sitting still, and moved

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about the little cave, finding little to interest her, however. It was hollowed out like a tunnel deep into the cliff, but was so dark, except right at the mouth, that she was afraid to explore it. She took off her shoes, washed her aching feet, and reaching to the bushes around the cave, pulled leaves to bind on them as Kadok had taught her to do. Then she took off the handkerchief he had tied about her head, let down her long hair and tried to smooth out the tangles with her fingers. It was no easy task, for the hair was long, fine and curly, and it was terribly matted down and snarled. She took a long thorn and tried to use it for a comb, and after working a long time had the locks smoothed out into a fluffy mass of gold on either side her face. She had been so interested in her work that she had not noticed how late it was getting until suddenly it seemed to be growing dark. She looked out of the cave and saw the gleams of the golden sunset through the leaves. She



“THE LEAVES PARTED AND A BLACK FACE PEERED
THROUGH THE BUSHES.”

felt hungry. "Where can Kadok be?" she thought to herself. "He has been gone a long, long time. Oh, supposing something has happened to him! What shall I do?" But there was nothing for her to do but wait, and she sat at the door of the cave, too frightened to cry, fearing a thousand dangers the worse because they were imaginary. Then she heard a crackling of the branches near the cave and sprang to her feet joyfully, expecting to see Kadok's black face through the bushes.

"Kadok!" she cried eagerly. The leaves parted and a black face peered through the bushes, fierce black eyes gazed at the child, as she stood speechless with astonishment, gazing at a perfectly strange Black. She did not speak, she was too frightened to scream, and the Black too was silent. With her floating, golden hair, her wide blue eyes, her fair cheek turned to gold by the rays of the setting sun, which shone full upon her, the rest of her body concealed by the

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branches with which Kadok had filled the mouth of the cave, she looked like a creature of air rather than earth, and so the Black thought her. With a wild cry of "*Kurru! Kurru!*"¹ he let go his hold of the branches, and Jean could hear him crashing through the bushes in mad haste to get away.

¹ Kurru-kurru is the Dew Dropper or Mist Gatherer, Goddess of the Blacks and wife of Munuala, the water god.

CHAPTER IX

HOUSEKEEPING IN A CAVE

SHE heard Kadok's voice and called to him excitedly, "Oh, Kadok, come quick! I am so frightened!"

"What matter, little Missa?" asked Kadok as he parted the bushes and looked at her with anxious face.

"Oh, a strange Black looked at me and ran away!" she said, bursting into tears.

"Little Missa not cry," said Kadok. "Brought little Missa meat for supper. What did black man say?"

"A strange word something like curry curry," she said. "He looked frightened too."

"That good," said Kadok. "He think little Missa not real child. Golden child. Think him

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not come again. Kadok glad, for we must stay here one, two days.”

“ Oh, Kadok, why? Can't we go to Mother to-morrow? ” her voice was full of tears and the boy's face clouded.

“ Kadok very sorry for little Missa, ” he said. “ But no can help. Kadok got bad hurt on foot. No can walk one, two days. Little Missa help Kadok get well? ”

“ Oh, Kadok, how did you hurt yourself? ” she asked, as she saw that his foot was covered with blood.

“ Hurt in the scrub, ” said Kadok, who did not want to tell her the truth, that he had met a Black who had thrown his *nulla-nulla*¹ and struck him on the foot, though the boy had managed to get away from him.

“ Let me tie it up for you, ” said Jean. “ I've often seen mother dress Fergus' wounds, for he was always doing things to himself. He always had at least one finger tied up in a rag. ”

¹ Big stick, like a shillalah.

“Little Missa good,” said Kadok as he sat wearily down beside her. He was worn out and even his brave spirit sank at this new trouble. It would be several days before he could walk well, he knew, and if the Black who had wounded him had discovered Jean he would certainly come back. Would they be safe even for a few hours, he wondered? His chief hope lay in the fact that if the Black had thought her a vision, he would fear to return.

Jean scooped up water which stood in a pool at the door of the cave, washed her pocket-handkerchief and tore it into strips, then bathed Kadok's foot and tied it up as she had seen her mother do.

“Thank little Missa,” said Kadok. “Feel better, make eat now.”

“No, I shall make supper to-night,” said Jean. “It is time I tried to do something for you.”

She gathered up sticks and bits of bark and

laid the fire, which Kadok carefully lighted, taking one from a box of matches which he had in his swag, and which he kept tied up in the skin of an animal to keep them from getting damp. He had brought back a *yopolo*¹ from his hunt in the forest, and wild bee's honey, and he said to Jean,

“Better not make damper to-night. Save meal for some day we have not meat.”

“I am tired of damper anyway,” said Jean. “How shall I cook the meat?”

“Put leaves over hot stones, set *yopolo* on, all in his skin, cover him over with earth and he cook very tender,” said Kadok, and she followed his receipt. There was only a little water left in the water-hole, and that not fresh.

“Where do you get water, Kadok?” asked Jean.

“From the spring,” he answered. “Not far, just ten steps in the bushes, straight ahead from cave, but not safe for little *Missa go*.”

¹ Small animal.

“Why not? We are both so thirsty,” she pleaded.

“Little Missa’s shoes make tracks. Bad Black come long, see tracks, know white child here, steal little Missa away.”

“Oh, if that’s the trouble I can take my shoes off,” she said, laughing, as she pulled off shoes and stockings. “I will be right back. I can find it, for you said it was only ten steps away,” and she picked up the billy and hurried out of the cave in spite of Kadok’s “Little Missa not go. Debil-debil get her!”

She was back before Kadok thought she could have found the spring, saying brightly,

“Now we have fresh water for our supper, afterwards I can tie up your foot again.”

“Kadok found cup for little Missa,” he said, pulling from his belt a battered tin cup. “Think white man drop it, little Missa can have honey-water to drink.” He cut a piece of the honeycomb and put it in the cup of water. Jean

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drank the sweet drink and almost smacked her lips.

“It is ever so nice, Kadok,” she said. “It tastes like the sugar-water the American children’s black mammy used to give us.”

“Who was that?” he asked curiously.

“There were three children of America came to stay at my uncle’s place, oh, a long time ago before we came to Australia. They had a nurse, a black woman. She was ever so black, not brown like you, Kadok, and so good and nice. I used to like her very much. That was the reason I was not afraid, when the black man told me to come and see the gin who was sick. I thought he would be good like Dinah and bring me right back.”

“Black people very much like white people,” said Kadok. “Some black face white heart, some black all way through. Some white face very black heart,” and the boy shook his head.

“Think yopolo cooked. Him smell fine,” he

said, sniffing the scent which came from the fire.

The yopolo was indeed done and delicious. It was very tender and tasted like spring chicken. It was a queer supper for the little Scotch girl, seated cross-legged on the floor of the cave, as she drank honey-water and cut off bits of meat for herself and Kadok.

The little housekeeper enjoyed her supper thoroughly. Having finished, she put fresh green wood on the fire that the smoke might keep off the mosquitos, and wrapped the rest of the meat in leaves to keep for breakfast. She bathed Kadok's foot, which was swollen and painful, and tied it up, and then, under the boy's directions, cut down some leafy branches and moss to make herself a bed, and wrapped herself in her blanket to sleep.

When morning came it seemed as if the mother's desire that the little girl should have experiences to make her less childish was to be

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fulfilled, for Kadok's foot was so painful that he could not even drag himself about the cave and Jean had to wait on him as well as to care for herself. She made breakfast and gathered fresh leaves and branches and brought water enough to last all day. Then she made fresh damper and cut strips of the yopolo meat, drying it in the sun and smoke under Kadok's directions. There were provisions enough to last a day or two and she tried not to worry about things, but she wished she had something else to do.

Kadok saw she was growing restless and tried to talk to her, afraid that she would cry. "Little Missa not see cave before, not have at home. Tell about home."

"Oh, it's not at all like this," she said. "It's very cold, and the mountains are high and beautiful and there are no snakes nor wild things. It's all farms and sheep and not wild like Australia. And in the winter the snow is lovely."

"What is snow?" asked Kadok.

“Don’t you know what snow is?” she laughed. “I hardly know how to tell you. It looks like soft, white feathers and it floats down from the sky when it’s very cold and covers up the ground like a white blanket. Then it is lovely, but when the sun comes out and melts it, it’s not nice. Didn’t you ever see snow?”

“Never did,” said Kadok.

“Oh, Kadok, what’s that?” exclaimed Jean, as a mournful sound came through the forest.

“That messenger of Muuruup, *Debill-debill*,” said Kadok with a frown. “Muuruup lives under the ground. He make evil. He makes lightning and spoils trees and kills people. No like hear owl bird. Bring bad storm or bad luck.”

“Oh, I hope he won’t bring a storm,” said Jean. “We had storm enough yesterday to last for awhile. How does *Debil-debil* make lightning?”

“Don’t know,” said Kadok. “Old chief say

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he not make. Say Great Baiame make. He want to smoke big pipe up in sky, strike match to light pipe, throw match down to earth, while smoke — match make lightning.”

“ If we are going to have another storm I am going to bring water from the spring while I can go out of the cave.” She was getting very tired of sitting still.

“ Kadok not like little Missa to run round by herself,” said Kadok, but Jean said wilfully,

“ I must go by myself if there is no one to go with me, mustn't I? We've got to have water,” and she picked up the billy and started for the spring.

It was cool and pleasant in the woods. She filled her billy and stopped to gather a handful of leaves which grew near-by and looked shiny and pretty, then went back to Kadok.

“ You see nothing happens to me,” she said.

“ You go once too often. You not good little Missa. You not mind Kadok,” he grumbled.

"I will be good, but really I can't sit still all day," she said. "See what pretty leaves."

"Very good leaves," said Kadok. "When little Missa have no water, chew these, not be thirsty. White men call them hibiscus."

"I'll remember that," said Jean. "Kadok, tell me a story about when you were a little boy. What did you used to do at home?"

"Not do very much in wuuries,"¹ he said with a broad grin. "Blacks not have much home like white people. Like woods better than wuuries. Like hunt. Make many fine hunt, sometimes hunt animals, sometimes hunt other Blacks. Very good eat, before white man comes," he hastened to add as he saw Jean's expression of terror. "Not eat people now."

"I should hope not," cried the child.

"Little Missa keep quiet," said Kadok, raising himself on his elbow, grasping a stick he had and peering through the bushes. "Some-

¹ Huts.

thing coming. Think not black man. Don't move!" They sat so quiet it seemed to Jean that she could hear her heart beat, but heard nothing more. Just as she was about to speak, Kadok raised his stick quickly and brought it down with great force and Jean saw something black whirl and twist at the opening of the cave.

"Missa help quick. This hard to hold," cried Kadok. "Take stick, hold very tight here," and he gave her the handle of the forked stick which, to her horror, she saw held down by its neck a large snake. She shut her eyes tight, but held the stick bearing down with all her might while Kadok struck the snake over and over with his stick.

"Good Missa, let go stick, snake very dead now," and she looked with a shudder at the dead body of the serpent.

"Him tree-python," said Kadok, calmly. "Him make very good supper for Missa."

“ Oh, I couldn't eat snake, really, I couldn't,” she said, but Kadok laughed.

“ Make very good eat for black boy, save yopolo for Missa,” he said. “ Think dinner time now, Missa eat meat, Kadok eat snake.”

It made Jean feel very queer to see him cut off a piece of the tail, roast it and eat with great enjoyment, but before night she was to look upon the snake as her greatest friend.

She dropped asleep after eating and did not waken until almost time for supper, when she found that Kadok had been sleeping too.

“ Foot very much better, think we go find Mother to-morrow,” he said, as she sat up and rubbed her eyes. “ Little Missa not cry, be good Missa. We be all right. Time to eat again.”

“ I'm not very hungry,” she said, “ but I want some fresh water to drink.”

“ Little Missa not go to the spring. Kadok not like,” he said so earnestly that she said,

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“Well, never mind, I can drink the old water and chew some hibiscus leaves.”

“Think I can go for Missa,” said Kadok as he rose and tried his foot. “Not very bad.”

“Oh, never mind,” she said, but he took the billy and his stick and limped through the bushes. He was gone only a moment or two when she felt a strange feeling as of some one looking at her, and she raised her head to see, staring through the bushes, the same savage eyes which had frightened her the day before.

“Kadok!” she screamed, but the Black reached forth a long arm and tried to catch her. She drew back into the cave and screamed again. She had no weapon, but she grasped the dead snake by the tail and with all the strength she could muster threw it straight into the Black’s face. The man gave a loud “Wouf!” as the reptile struck his face, and darted back just as Kadok came up behind and struck him on the

head with his waddy. Attacked before and behind, the black man thought his enemies were many and he fled through the bushes as fast as he could go. Fear lent him wings and he did not stop until far from the scene of his terror. Kadok limped into the cave.

“Little Missa hurt?” he asked anxiously.

“No, but I was dreadfully frightened. It was the same Black I saw yesterday.”

“What little Missa do?” asked the boy.

“I hadn’t anything else, so I hit him with your snake and he ran away,” she said simply. The boy looked at her in astonishment and then laughed loud and long.

“Baime teach little Missa to be good Bush girl,” he said. “One thing very much scare Black is snake in the face. Missa do just right thing.”

“I didn’t know just what to do, but I had to do something,” she said. “What shall we do now, Kadok?”

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“Not know,” he said, frowning. “Think best eat, rest to-night. Go long early in morning before Black come back. Missa make eat, then sleep. Not be afraid. Kadok watch.”

CHAPTER X

DANDY SAVES THE DAY

IT was early in the morning when the two set out and the stars were still shining.

“I never saw so many stars in all my life,” said Jean. “It seems to me there are more in Australia than I ever saw in Scotland.”

“Think great plenty, maybe eighty-eight,”¹ said Kadok.

Their way lay through a less beautiful part of the country than any Jean had seen before. It was a wild and lonely land, close to the edge of the scrub, beyond them only sand and spini-fex. A fire had swept over the wood and left the trees gaunt and bare. They waved and tossed

¹ The Blacks can count only as high as their ten fingers. Anything above this they call always “eighty-eight,” though no one knows why.

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their gray branches like demons, and Jean shuddered, as on every side the ghostly trees seemed to hem her in.

They came to a clearing where the trees had been cut down, and these, bleached and white, lay on the ground in a thousand gnarled and twisted shapes, their interlacing branches seeming like writhing serpents. Many of the gum trees had been killed, for the cuts in the bark had been made too deep, and the bark hung down in long strips.

No friendly animals or piping forest songsters chirruped a cheerful welcome to this scene of desolation. Only the solitary "widow bird" hopped about hunting for insects and piping her mournful little note. Then the sound of a curlew, like the gasp of a dying child, came to them through the dawn, as the sun rose, red and pitiless, over the sands. Beyond these were the mountains, rising straight up against the sky. Huge gray boulders made a wall at the base

of the ridge and the whole place seemed so strange and eerie that Jean cried out,

“ Oh, Kadok, we don't have to cross these sands, do we? I'm afraid.”

“ No, Missa,” said Kadok wearily. His foot was hurting him cruelly and he felt discouraged. “ We go another way, all through the wood. Missa not feel 'fraid. Where Missa's Baiame? Take care of black boy, not take care of white child? ”

“ Yes, indeed He will,” said Jean, feeling ashamed that the black boy should preach to her. “ But I can't help being afraid. It seems as if we would never get to mother.”

“ Little Missa get there some day, but Kadok not know how soon. Think best way now to hunt for road and Missa go long quick for herself. Kadok foot not let him go very fast.”

“ Well, I think I won't,” said Jean indignantly. “ Do you suppose I'd do that when you have been so good to me? We'll go as slowly

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as you have to and I'll take care of your foot. I'm terribly hungry, Kadok, can we eat now?"

"Not eat here," said Kadok, who liked the place as little as she did. "Walk little more round edge of sand, there find water-hole in the woods and eat."

So they trudged on in silence for another hour, gradually leaving behind them the sandy scrub and coming to a pleasant wood where a carpet of maiden-hair and coral fern reached knee-deep in tenderest green. Velvet-brown tree ferns rose in the air, wearing a feathery coronet of fronds, and above them grew the sassafras and the myrtle. A thousand sweet scents were wafted through the air and a bubbling stream surprised them by gushing forth from a clump of bushes.

"Little Missa rest and eat here," said Kadok. "Plenty water," as he explored the banks.

"Oh, Kadok, how lovely it looks," she cried. "I'd like to bathe in that water, it's so clear and nice."

“Very good thing,” said the boy. “Kadok make eat, Little Missa go to the bushes let water run all over self. Keep her from being thirsty all day while we walk.”

So Jean splashed in the cool water and enjoyed her bath like a little nymph behind the thick screen of bushes. She smoothed up her hair and came forth refreshed and rested to find Kadok had made fresh damper and toasted some bits of meat, gathering also some of the sassafras leaves, making a kind of tea which was very good. She ate and rested while Kadok bathed his foot and filled his water bottle, and then they started off again, tramping this time over a hilly country. They had to take a long rest in the middle of the day while the sun was hot and both were very tired. There was nothing to eat but damper and some roots Kadok had found, and the delay and the scanty meal did not make Jean feel any more cheerful. The day seemed the longest she had ever spent and when twi-

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light fell and they found no shelter, no friendly cave nor deserted hut, the little girl felt more forlorn than she had ever felt in her life. She tried hard not to show Kadok for she saw that the boy was suffering far worse than he would admit.

“What are we going to have for supper?” she asked.

“Not much eat,” said he. “Damper all gone, no more flour. No meat.”

“There’s plenty of water, anyway,” said Jean, for they had followed the course of the stream all day and now camped beside its silvery ripples. As she spoke, a stir in the water caught her eye.

“Oh, Kadok,” she exclaimed, “why can’t we have fish?”

“No can catch,” said the boy wearily. “Too bad foot to go hunt.”

“Watch me catch a fish,” said Jean sturdily. “I used to catch trout at home. Let me see,

what can I use for a line?" She thought a minute, then clapped her hands. "I know, you just rest, Kadok, and see what a good fisherman I am!"

She took a pin from her belt, bent it and tied to it a strip of cotton torn from her skirt. This line she tied to a branch from which she stripped the leaves; on them she found some fuzzy caterpillars, one of which she used for bait. Then she threw her line and sat down where the stream turned at right angles and made a deep, quiet pool. She waited a long time. Three or four times she had a bite and failed to land her fish, but just as she was growing discouraged there was a jerk, then a long, steady pull at her line.

"Come help me land him," she called to Kadok, and the boy hastened to her aid. Between them they pulled in their fish, a fine, speckled fellow which Kadok cleaned and roasted on a flat stone heated red hot. The fish was deli-

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cious, and there was plenty for both of them, so that they felt far more cheerful as they rolled up their blankets to sleep.

It was Jean's first trial of sleeping in the open, and it was long before she could rest. She lay and watched the stars, of only a few of which she knew the names, though Orion seemed like an old friend and the cloudy path of the Milky Way a broad road to Heaven.

"Little Missa not sleep," said Kadok. "Her 'fraid Debill-debill?"

"No, Kadok, I'm not afraid," she answered.

"Peruna heeal very good spirit, he big man spirit, lives 'bove clouds. He not let Debil-debil loose to-night. Too many twinkle lights. Debil-debil likes darkness. Missa try sleep."

Toward morning Jean was awakened by a crackling in the bushes. "Kadok," she whispered. "Wake up."

"Kadok not asleep, little Missa," he whispered in return.

“ I hear something in the bushes,” she said.
“ Is it one of those bad Blacks like I saw at the cave? ”

“ Too far away for bad Black, think ghost, maybe,” said the black boy, who, with all his courage, had the Black’s fear of ghosts.

“ I don’t think there are such things as ghosts,” said Jean steadily.

“ Plenty ghosts,” said Kadok. “ One man of my tribe go to near tribe and he saw wuurie left alone with no life in it. Over door was crooked stick pointing to where family had gone. On ground were pieces of bark covered with white clay, so he knew some one dead. He follow tracks and found dead body in tree. It was bound with knees to chest, tied with cord made from acacia bark and was wrapped in rug of opossum skins. He turn back rug and saw face of friend. Then he wept and went away. He walked from place of death and heard a great chattering of magpies. He turned to see what

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made magpies make so much noise — saw ghost of dead friend. It had followed him from the tree. So I know there are ghosts, little Missa.”

“This ghost sounds to me as if it went on four feet,” said Jean. “And as I don’t hear it any more I’m going to sleep.”

She listened for awhile, but heard no more.

In the early morning she was awakened by feeling something cool on her face. She sprang up with a cry of terror which promptly turned to one of delight.

“Dandy, my own Dandy!” she cried, throwing her arms around the pony’s neck.

“Oh, Kadok, here is my pony. He has wandered away and we must be not far from Djer-inallum!”

The little pony seemed as pleased as she, and Kadok’s face lighted up,

“Little Missa take road with pony and ride safe now. Say good-bye to Kadok and run ’long home.”

Jean stamped her foot she was so angry.

“You make me angry, Kadok,” she cried. “Here you’ve taken care of me all these days and now you want me to run off and leave you! I don’t think you’re nice at all. You shall come with me to the run. You can ride when your foot is tired and I’ll ride part of the time. It can’t be far now. You go catch a fish and we’ll have breakfast, then we’ll start.”

Kadok looked astonished as the little fury scolded, but he obeyed, and soon a fine fish sizzled on the fire stone.

They started off for the main road, which Kadok said was not far away through the bushes, Jean riding her pony and feeling bright and cheerful. When they reached the road after several hours riding, she saw that Kadok was limping painfully. She jumped off the pony and said,

“You must ride now. I know your foot hurts and I’m tired of riding and want to walk

awhile. Get on and I will walk along and hold Dandy's rein."

"Little Missa get very boss. Time Missa get back to white folks," he grumbled, as he climbed slowly on the horse's back. "Gin never say 'do' to Kadok," but Jean only laughed at him and trudged along.

It was an odd picture on which the Australian sun shone, the black boy on a pony led by a white child in tattered gingham, and two travellers scanned the couple curiously as they urged their horses along. Catching up with the children they would have passed, but Jean suddenly cried,

"Father! Fergus!"

"Jeanie! What on earth!" but the rest of her father's sentence was lost as he clasped the child in his arms and Jean knew that her troubles were over.

"There was a terrible hue and cry, lassie, when it was discovered that Dandy and you were



"THE BLACK BOY ON A PONY LED BY A WHITE CHILD."

lost," said her uncle that night as she lay, tired but happy, her mother beside her, in a corner of the big couch in the morning room at Djerinallum. "Scouts were sent everywhere, but you seemed to have dropped off the earth. Parties have been searching ever since, but no one has been successful in finding even a trail. We traced you to the place in the woods where you got off your pony, but beyond that there were no tracks. Kadok says that the Black who took you did not mean any harm. His gin was nearly crazy over the death of her child, a little girl younger than you, and he wanted to take you to her to see. They had heard of you from the gin to whom you gave a curl. The Blacks think that when a Black dies he returns to the earth as a white, and he wanted his gin to see you, thinking that you might be his own child come back."

"Poor child, you have had a dreadful time," said her Aunt Mildred.

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“Oh, no, except that I was worried about Mother, because I knew she’d think I was killed,” she said. Her mother held her close. “I would have been if it hadn’t been for Kadok.”

“Good Kadok,” said Mr. Hume. “His foot is being taken care of now and he shall have a good home for the rest of his life on our run —”

“Oh Father, are you going to have a sheep run! I’m so glad!” cried Jean.

“Yes, we got back from the Gold Country just in time to meet you. I made some money, but I am never going back there. Fergus has no end of adventures to tell you, but it is no place to take you and your mother, and I don’t want to leave you again.”

“Oh, I’m so glad, we’ll be near Uncle and Aunt Mildred,” said Jean.

“Not me?” asked Sandy mischievously.

“Oh, you, of course,” said Jean. “We are

going to be Australians ourselves, now, and of course we won't forget our Little Australian Cousin."

THE END.

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