

"Ronald, I am so afraid that mother will be lost some time and never found. I do wish that I could rid myself of such a terrible foreboding."

"Don't worry. Surely someone will find her and bring her home."

Yes, he ought to do something. He would ride to the Minor's place and have a conveyance sent.

As Montgomery rode away, the old lady looked after him with but mild interest. She had reason to be comfortable, for the cool shade in which she was sitting was preferable to the hot and dusty road. Nearby was a creek, whose waters babbled merrily over the stones, though not far away was a deep pool. To Montgomery, as his horse's hoof beats resounded on a bridge crossing the creek, this pool, so inviting to the small boy, seemed dismal and repulsive. He shuddered at a possibility of—. Well, there were other things more pleasant to think about. A glance back at the old woman still sitting on the log reassured him. Probably she was glad to be left alone.

On arriving at the Minor's farm, Montgomery found no one at home but Tommy, the youngest son.

"Ma and Pa has gone to hunt old lady Smith."

"If they come back without finding her, tell them that I saw her near the bridge over Willard's Creek."

"Are you going back where she is?"

"No," was the hesitating reply, accompanied by a shake of the head which lasted longer than the pronounciation of the word. Then more abruptly, "There's nothing I can do for her. Somebody will find her soon, anyway."

Why did he not return to her? He thought of Clementine's intense anxiety and almost concluded to turn his horse's head in the direction whence he had just come, but it wouldn't do to change his decision after announcing it. He might meet somebody whom he would tell where Mrs. Smith might be found. Then, too, John Ball's opinion might be right.

But Montgomery met no one. With a vague sense of conferring a benefit he entered Clementine's house. Should he tell her, he asked himself. What would she think of his conduct? He found the young lady all but overcome with anxiety. She expected his sympathy, and apparently received it.