

## BILL'S NINTH BIRTHDAY

### PART II.

Few people were about as Bill passed through the hospital doors toward the lift. Just as the lift came, though, a man came along and stepped in also. Bill had never seen the man face to face before, but he knew him at once. He was John Crane, the football captain. Bill thought him the best of all footballers. He was his hero, whom he usually went to watch on Saturdays. Poor Bill! Here he was in the lift with his hero, and he was carrying a bunch of flowers. He wondered about hiding them behind his back, but, alas, it was too late.

"What beautiful dahlias!" said John Crane. "Did you grow them?"

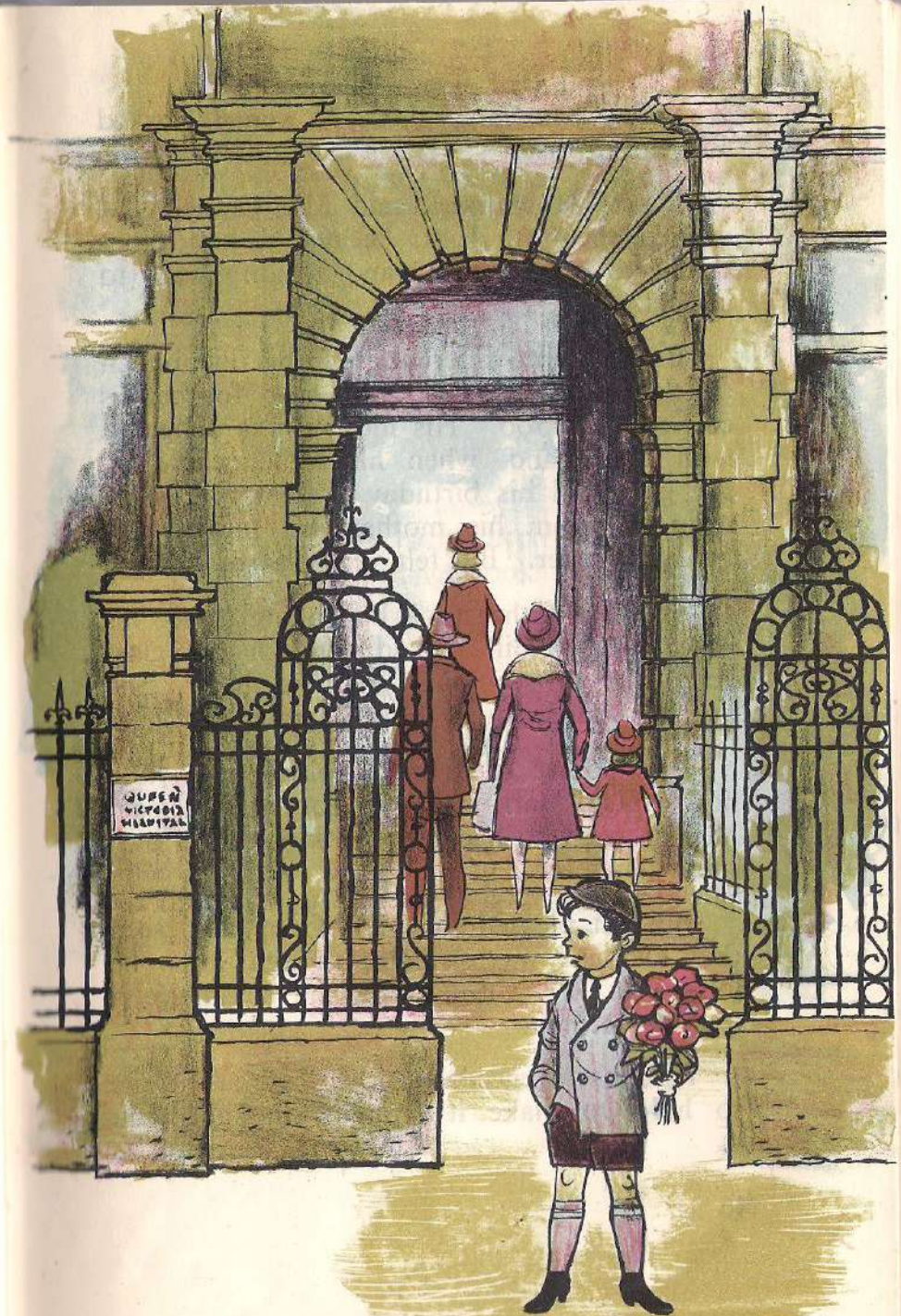
"Yes, Mr. Crane," answered Bill shyly.

"Oh, you know me, do you?" said Mr. Crane.

"Oh yes, Mr. Crane," answered Bill. "I watch you playing football every Saturday."

"Do you now?" said Mr. Crane; and he asked Bill his name, and where he lived.

When they stepped out of the lift, Mr. Crane showed Bill some dahlias which he had left by the lift door.



"Did you carry those flowers?" asked Bill in surprise.

"Yes, of course," said Mr. Crane. "I carried them up first, because I had other things to bring in too, and I didn't want to spoil them."

Bill felt quite different about his own bunch of dahlias when he knew that footballers carried them too. His mother was delighted with them, and, when his father came in, she gave Bill his birthday present. It was a train set from his mother, his father, and his baby sister. Bill felt very pleased with it.

Then his father took him along to see his baby sister. Bill looked through the glass and tried to see what she was like. She opened one eye and looked straight at him.

"Of course she'll have golden curls, and not straight dark hair like yours, Bill," said Mr. Crane, who had been looking at his own small daughter.

Bill felt pleased that Mr. Crane had seen that his hair was straight, though when he looked at Mr. Crane's hair he could see a few waves in it.

Perhaps he needn't brush his hair quite so hard to make it straight, thought Bill.

Then he looked again at his little sister, and had a warm, pleased feeling about her.

When visiting time was over, Bill saw Mr. Crane again. It was then he had his great idea. He took an old photograph from his pocket. One look at the photograph showed it to be a picture of Mr. Crane himself.

"Please, Mr. Crane," said Bill, "would you put your name on this photograph?"

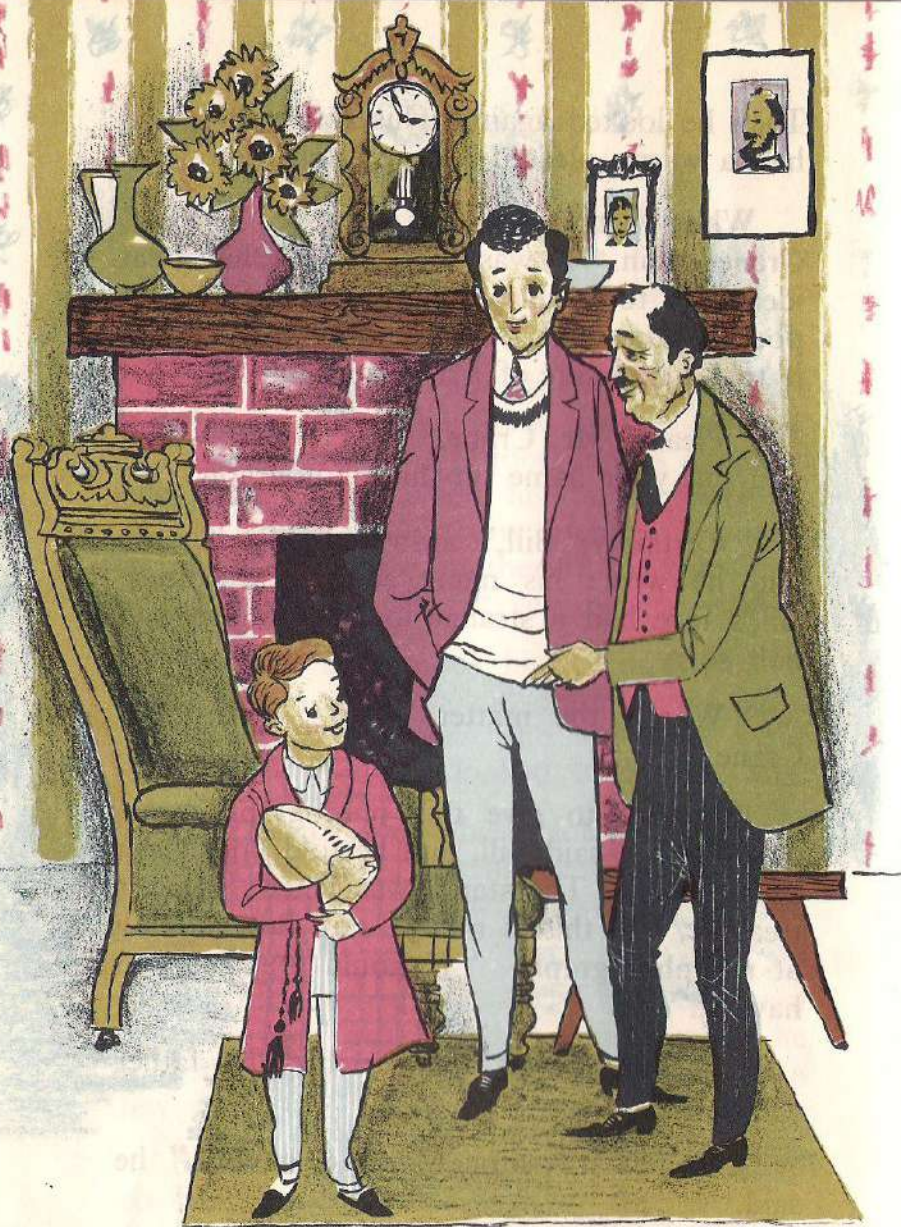
"Certainly, Bill," answered Mr. Crane, and he wrote his name across the corner. Bill's face had a strange look, half glad and half sorry.

"What's the matter, Bill?" asked Mr. Crane.

"I want to give this photograph away, Mr. Crane," said Bill, and he told him about the stamp. "The stamp was Peter's greatest treasure, and this is mine," said Bill, looking at the photograph. "I should like Peter to have it."

Later, as he was going to bed, his father called him.

"There's a visitor to see you, Bill," he said.



Bill put on his dressing-gown and went into the room. There again was Mr. Crane.

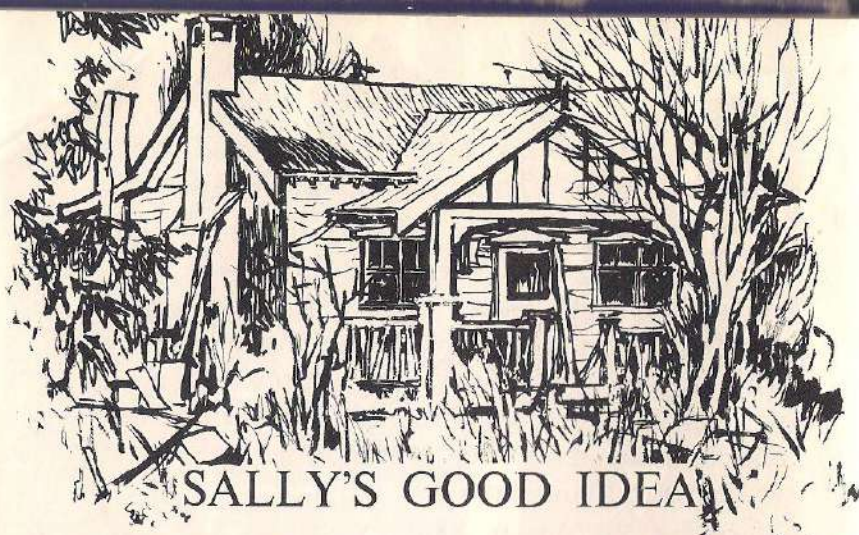
“I have a present for you, Bill,” he said. “It’s the first full-sized football I ever had, and I’ve always treasured it. But to-night I decided I should like you and Peter to play with it. My three little daughters won’t need it. Perhaps you wouldn’t mind if your father and I had a kick with it sometimes. I’ll just write your name on it.”

On the football Mr. Crane wrote very clearly,

“To Bill, on his ninth birthday, from John Crane.”

Bill could hardly speak a word as he thanked Mr. Crane.

It was a long time before he went to sleep. The stamp, his baby sister, his bunch of dahlias, his train, and his football were all running through his mind together. He felt that, even if he lived, to be a very old man, no other birthday could be so happy as his ninth one had been.



### SALLY'S GOOD IDEA

"Mrs. Green is moving to the old house over the road," said Sally's mother one morning.

"Is that Ian Green's wife?" asked Sally's father.

"Yes," answered her mother. "I'm really sorry for her and her three children, coming to such an untidy old place. It will take a long time for her to make the place look tidy and clean again."

Sally listened as she ate her breakfast. She knew about Mr. Green, who had gone to the war with Daddy, and who, when he returned from the war, had never been quite well again. Then, a year ago, Mr. Green had died. Sally also felt very sorry for Mrs. Green, when she thought of the old, untidy house.

Now, Sally was not really a clever little girl. She worked carefully and tried very hard at school, but she was never at the top of her grade. She was usually somewhere about the middle. She was a shy, but very kind-hearted and thoughtful, little girl.

Suddenly she said, "I could do some of the work in the garden. I could clear away the weeds, and dig the ground a little, and plant some seeds. Do you think Mrs. Green would like that, Mum?"

"I'm sure she would," said her mother. "It's a very good idea, and now you've given me an idea too. I'll bottle some jam and put it on the shelf ready for use."

Sally's father looked very thoughtful. "I wonder now," he said at last, "whether perhaps the fellows at the club might help to tidy the place a little. Ian Green was not in our club, of course, but he did belong to the club where he lived. I think I'll speak to them about Sally's idea, and see what they think of it."

So Sally's father had a few words with the men at the club about Mrs. Green and the children. He asked whether any would care to help him tidy the old place.

The men liked the idea, and many promised to help. From there the idea just spread and spread. The wives of the men belonging to the club decided to brush down the walls and scrub the floors of the house. They also decided to make jam to put on the shelf, and to bring afternoon tea for the busy people who came to the working bee.

Sally's brother, Peter, and his friend, Bill, did the job that boys do better than anyone else. They tidied the back-yard. They even got down on their hands and knees and took broken glass and bottles from under the shed.

When the house, the garden, and the back-yard were all tidy, everything looked different. But the house was sadly in need of painting. It quite spoilt the look of things.



"Why not paint it?" said one of the wives. "We could have some parties at the club and make some money for the paint, and you men could do the painting."

So the different painting jobs began.

When the house was nearly ready, Sally felt very excited. What a great surprise was in store for Mrs. Green! Sally wondered whether Mrs. Green would like the colours that had been chosen for the different rooms. The wives of the men at the club had been very careful to buy the colours that most of them thought were the best. Sally and Mrs. Green's sister, who was in the secret, thought they were beautiful colours.

Then, one morning, Mrs. Green's sister wrote a note to Sally's mother. It said that Mrs. Green hoped to move into the house one day in the next week.

On the Saturday all the men and their wives came to do different last-minute jobs.

A few days later Mrs. Green and her children came to the house. Mrs. Green stepped from the car and stood quite still. She looked at her house, with its little garden; then she looked past it to the other houses

in the street, and back to her own again. She could not understand it.

"It must be our house," she said; "but, oh, how fresh and different it looks! Why, it's a picture!"

Mrs. Green felt that the world was a much better place than she had thought in the past. She knew in her heart that she and the children would be happy there.

"How could we help but be happy in a place where people have been so kind to us, and made us feel so welcome?" she said. "Why, we feel we belong here already!"

Next morning the head master of Sally's school saw her in the school-ground.

"Sally," he said, "I understand that it was your idea in the first place to help Mrs. Green. I think you, of all the girls in the school, have the kindest heart and the very nicest thoughts."

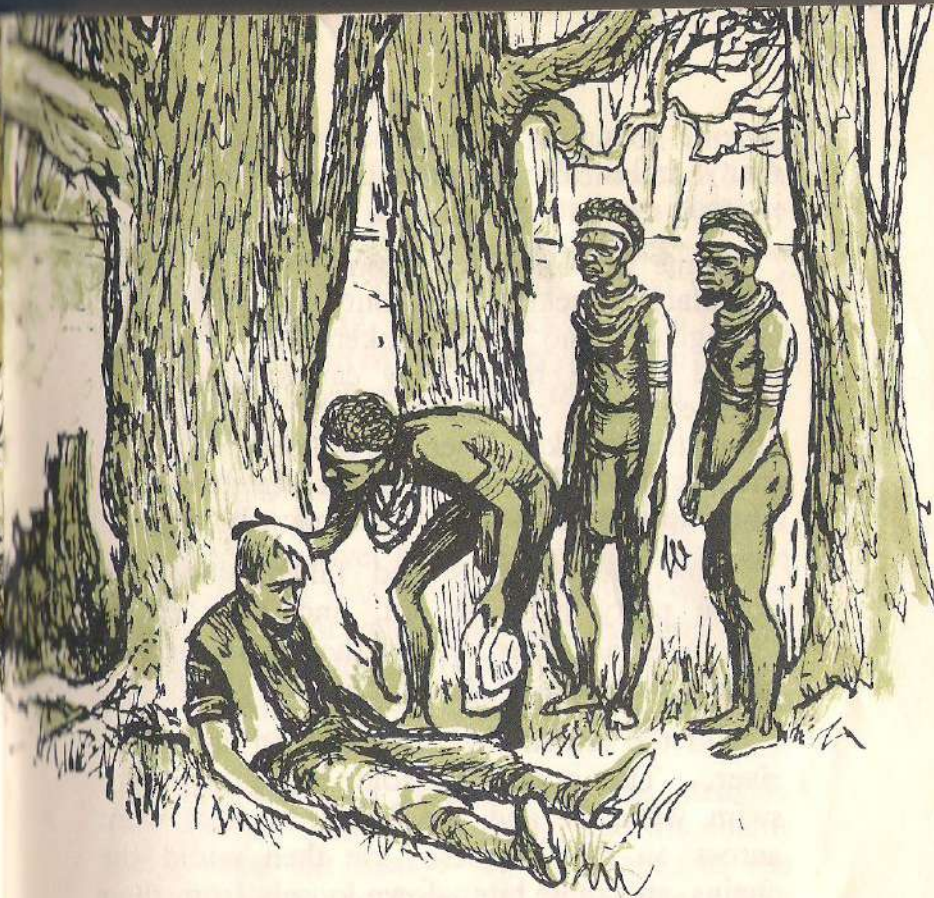


## NABOR, THE ABORIGINAL

Many true stories are told about the help that aborigines have given to white people. The story of Nabor is one of these.

When the white man first came to our land, the aborigines did not understand his ways. They had their own laws, which they kept with great care; but the white man's laws were new and strange to them.

When the white people took over the land, many of the past hunting-grounds of the



aborigines were lost to them. Since they could no longer hunt in them for kangaroos and other animals, they, being hungry, took the white man's animals instead.

Sometimes, too, they would raid an outback hut, and steal the store of food. This, of course, had to be stopped, because

anyone living in such a hut would be very many miles away from food. He might, indeed, even starve.

Some years ago, a policeman and his party of black trackers set out to catch four aborigines who had broken the law and raided such a hut. They caught them and fastened them one to the other with chains about their necks. Then the policeman and the trackers, with their captives, set out for home. The captives walked by the police horses.

Now, heavy rains had fallen since the police party had set out, and they found that a small river which they had crossed before was already in full flood.

On the return the party had to cross this river. The policeman told the captives to swim while he and the black trackers went across on their horses. He then undid the chains, and these hung down loosely from their necks. Each of the captives then wound the loose chain about his neck and under his arms.

Then they dived into the water. The captives were all strong swimmers, and all swam the flooded river quite safely. So, also, did the black trackers. The policeman, however, seemed to have disappeared.

Then they saw that he had been thrown from his horse. He and the horse had both been caught in the strong current. They watched the policeman struggle back to his horse, but, alas, the terrified animal kicked him, and, fainting, he fell back into the flood. Already the current was carrying him away. It seemed almost certain that the flood would cost him his life.

Suddenly Nabor, one of the captives, wound his loose chain about himself and ran along the river bank in the same direction as the current was going. He noted the spot where the policeman was, and, running past it, dived into the flooded river. He swam and struggled against the current, until he managed to draw nearer to the policeman.

Even when he reached him the struggle wasn't over. Nabor was tiring, and the chains about him felt heavy. It was hard, in the strong current, to keep the policeman afloat and struggle toward the bank with him.

The other aborigines had run to the nearest spot, and, as Nabor struggled toward the bank, they took the policeman from his arms and put him carefully on the ground. He lay quite still.

The rest of the party stood and looked down at the one white man among them.



He was so pale and still that even then they thought he might die. What they said to one another none of us will ever know ; but suddenly, once again, Nabor wound his loose chain around him and disappeared.

He ran straight into the bush ; not to escape, but to get help for the white man. For three miles he ran, until he came to the nearest other white men. With them he hurried back again. These men were able to help the policeman, and soon he looked less pale and began to speak to them. Later, he was able to go on his way. When the party reached the police station, the policeman told the story of Nabor's bravery and of how the aboriginal had saved his life.

This true story was told in the newspapers, and white people sent gifts of food and clothes to the aboriginal hero. When the story reached England, the King was delighted to hear of such bravery. He decided that Nabor deserved a medal, and ordered that one should be sent to him.

So Nabor, the aboriginal hero, who had broken the white man's laws because he did not understand them, was given a medal for bravery, by order of the King. He had shown that an aboriginal may be quite as fine and brave as any white man.



## The Baker Boys and the Beehives

### PART I.

Many years ago, one city often went to war with another, so all big cities had great stone walls to keep out any people who might be unfriendly toward them. One such city was Andernach, and it had only one gateway, with strong, heavy gates. Behind the gates was a small house where the gate-keeper lived.

It was his job to open and close the gates, and to see that none but friends passed in or out.

It was not a hard job, for sometimes, indeed, the gates were closed all day. The gate-keeper felt that he really was not busy enough and wondered what else he could do to pass the time.

Now, he loved honey for his breakfast and ate so much of it that he always seemed to need a fresh bottle.

"Why shouldn't I have beehives?" he said to himself. "I could keep them right on top of the wall. It would be wonderful to have plenty of fresh honey for breakfast. Yes, I think I'll order some beehives."

So the beehives were ordered and later set on top of the wall.

Not many miles from Andernach was another walled city called Lintz. The people of Lintz were sly, greedy, and warlike, and had a powerful army. They hated the people of Andernach and were jealous of them. They thought them lazy because they did not like going to war. Often the people of Lintz crept over and raided the city of Andernach, stealing the treasures belonging to its people. Because of this the people of Andernach began to hate them in return.

Sometimes, however, quite a time would pass when the two cities were not at war. After one such time, the people of Lintz planned to make a fresh attack on Andernach, and to try to take the whole city captive. To decide on the best plan they called their cleverest men together. One of these said: "We all know what lazy fellows the men of Andernach are. Our best plan will be to attack the city early, while the people are still asleep. We can put a ladder against the wall, and some of you fellows can climb over, run down the steps, push open the gates, and let the rest in. Then we can take the whole city captive."

The others, listening to this boasting, also thought it a good plan and decided to carry it out. So, one dark evening, the army of Lintz crept over toward Andernach and began to steal toward the city gate.

While everyone else in Andernach slept, however, the bakers and the young baker boys who watched the ovens were wide awake. They were busy getting the orders for fresh bread ready before breakfast. The bakers made the bread and then left orders for the boys to watch the ovens and see that the bread did not spoil. Then the bakers, too, went away and slept.

# The Baker Boys and the Beehives

## PART II.

Now, two of these boys were great friends, and, in between watching over their masters' ovens, they would meet for a few minutes.

One early morning one of the boys said: "I'm simply starving. Let's go up and raid the beehives and see whether we can get any honey for ourselves. The gate-keeper won't mind. There's nothing tastes better for breakfast than fresh honey and a piece of bread straight from the oven. We've nothing else to do just now."



“Right!” agreed his friend. “That’s a very good plan. Just wait till I see whether my ovens are all right. I won’t be a minute.” In a minute or two he had returned. “I enjoy the taste of honey and fresh bread too,” he said. “I do hope we get that honey. Like you, I’m starving.”

They began to steal up the steps, and crept quietly along the top of the wall.

“Sh! Did you hear that noise?” asked one of the boys.

“What noise?” asked the other boy sharply.

“Listen!” answered the first one.

“That’s strange,” said his friend. “That noise is coming from outside the wall. Let’s look over the edge and see if there is anything there.”

The boys crept over and looked down on a great crowd of men. It was the army of Lintz. Already the men had pushed a ladder against the edge of the wall, and some of them had begun to climb. The boys felt simply terrified. In a few minutes the men would be right in the city. There was no time, alas, to waken the people. What could they do—two young boys against a powerful army?

Then suddenly one said: “The hives! Let’s pull them to the edge and push them over, so that they will drop among those men. It’s worth trying!”

So, very carefully, they pulled and pushed the hives right to the edge. Then they lifted them up and pushed them over one by one. The hives slid down the wall and dropped straight among the men below. If the people of Andernach really were lazy, certainly none of the bees were. The pushing about had excited them, and when they were let loose they went straight to the attack. There was great uproar as the terrified men tried to escape from the crowds of attacking bees.

While the bees were busy, the boys had run down the steps.

“Ring the bell!” they shouted to the bell-ringer. “Lintz is attacking us.”

As the bell rang out, men and women ran from everywhere.

“What’s the matter? What’s the matter?” they shouted.

Apart from the baker boys no-one seemed to know what was happening. “Lintz is attacking us!” they shouted. “Tell the men to get their arms. Hurry! Hurry!”

Everyone grew more excited. The women pushed the children inside the houses for safety. The young baker boys ran to the gateway. But the bees had indeed done their work well. Already the army of Lintz had almost disappeared. The men, running in the direction of home, were still trying to escape the bees.

"Perhaps that might teach them not to attack us again," chuckled one of the boys, as the noise died away. "We've tricked them this time."

The people of Andernach crowded around the gate and up by the edge of the wall, to watch the army disappearing. The women let the children watch too.

"Indeed," they agreed, "it's wonderful what two young boys and a few hives of angry bees can do against a powerful army." They shouted with laughter at the trick the baker boys had played.

The two young heroes were not forgotten by the people of Andernach. They had two baker boys cut in stone and placed on the edge of the wall over the great gateway. As the people passed in and out, they remembered the two young heroes who, by their quick thinking, had kept their city in happiness and in safety.



## Roundson, Squareson, and Tallson

### PART I.

There was once a king who had three sons. The first prince, Roundson, was middle-sized and round, and lived in a round castle on the edge of the sea-shore. The second prince, Squareson, was short and square, and lived in a square castle right in the middle of the country. The third prince, Tallson, was tall and thin, and lived in a tall castle on the top

of the one and only mountain. The king, of course, lived in a fine palace in the biggest city.

The laws of the peaceful little country were just, and the king and his sons were all greatly loved. The more powerful countries round about were jealous of the peaceful little country and wondered at the secret of its happiness. The king knew that any day his peaceful little country might be at war whether it wished for it or not.

So he sent for his three sons, and said : " My sons, we wish to remain at peace, but if we are not careful one of the warlike countries about us will take us captive. Only on the west side, where the sea is, can we really look for safety. I wish each of you to visit one of these countries and tell the rulers that we wish to be friendly and to remain at peace and in safety. Whether it will be worth while I don't know. We can but try and see."

So the three brothers left home to visit the other countries.

Now, Prince Roundson loved music. He used to move among the people taking note of their songs, and these he later wrote down. When he visited the country south of his

own he took his pieces of music with him and invited the ruler of this south country to come to a concert. Thinking that he might manage to find out something of Prince Roundson's country from him, the ruler decided to go to the concert.

He didn't enjoy music really, and when Roundson brought out his music he closed his eyes and sat back. The music was wild and strange, and he didn't like or understand it. He wished he could close his ears as well as his eyes.

" What ever is all this noise about ? " he asked rudely.

" These are the songs belonging to my country," answered Roundson. " We love music, and we sing songs like this day and night."

" Day and night ? " asked the ruler of the south country.

" Day and night," said Roundson. " The people sing as they work, and in the evenings after work. They would rather sing than anything else. We usually have concerts among ourselves in the warm summer evenings. I understand that we're the most musical people in the world."



“Then, if that’s what you call music, I won’t ever set foot in your country,” said the ruler of the south country rudely. “Think of that noise night and day! I simply couldn’t stand it. Never! Never!”

As the ruler disappeared out of the room, Roundson chuckled with laughter. “Dear

me, I'm glad he won't be setting foot in our country. Our little concert was well worth while, even if it was only for one rude, bad-mannered person," he said.

Then Prince Roundson packed up his music, ready to return home.

While this was happening, Squareson had gone to the country east of his own. Squareson was rather a merry little man. He was not musical like Roundson, but he had a very pleasant speaking voice and very good manners.

Now, the ruler of the country to the east was not really a warlike or a rude person. He was one of the few kings left, and he rather liked the idea of owning a pleasant, peaceful holiday place where he could do a little quiet fishing. He thought Squareson's country might be just such a place. When he knew that Squareson was visiting his country he invited him to dinner. When he asked the prince to tell him about his country, Squareson, who rather liked the sound of his own voice, was only too pleased to agree.

His pleasant voice went on and on, and the king began to blink sleepily. He had almost dropped off to sleep when he heard Squareson say, "My brother Tallson lives on top of our one and only mountain."

"How many mountains?" asked the king, blinking with surprise.

"Only one mountain," said Squareson.

"Any rivers?" asked the king of the east country.

"Only one small river," said Squareson.

"Any fishing?" asked the king.

"No fishing," answered Squareson in his pleasant voice.

"Only one mountain, one small river, and no fishing," murmured the king. "What a place! Oh, well, my little dream is spoilt. Please never expect to see me in such a country!"

"Of course we should never expect the king of such a great country as yours to visit one the size of ours," said Squareson, and, after shaking hands, he and the king parted quite good friends.

"Our little talk was well worth while," murmured Squareson, chuckling with laughter, as he got ready to leave the east country and return home.



## Roundson, Squareson, and Tallson

### PART II.

While Roundson was going south and Squareson was going east, Tallson, of course, had been going north. Now, the ruler of this north country was a rude, wicked person. He had not been chosen by the people, but had simply taken the country from its rightful owners. He wished to become master of the whole world. He had already raided different countries, stealing their treasures and making them terrified. No wonder many people hated him.

Now, Prince Tallson, the third son, was not a musical person like Roundson, nor did he have such a pleasant voice as Squareson. However, he simply loved to do cooking. Like Roundson, he moved among the people, but it was not music he wrote down, but recipes. All the recipes for feast days, and indeed, any special recipes, he wrote in his little pocket note-book. When he visited the country to the north he took his special recipe book with him. When he arrived he invited the ruler of this north country to dinner. The ruler, being a very greedy person and expecting a wonderful feast, agreed to come. Very

foolishly he ate nothing from breakfast-time on, so he felt very hungry when dinner-time arrived.

Tallson, in the mean time, had been very busy. There were strange smells in the air from the special food he had made ready.

“Surely,” said the ruler of the north country, putting his handkerchief to his nose, “the food won’t taste as bad as it smells!” When they sat down to dinner, he, being both greedy and hungry, foolishly took a great mouthful, but he simply couldn’t swallow it.

Tallson ordered his servants to take away that dish and that another should be brought instead. This was no better. Not one



mouthful could the ruler swallow. He became angry as each fresh course arrived for him to taste, and was cleared away because he couldn't swallow it.

"That's strange!" said Tallson. "I've chosen our very special recipes, and made each dish myself, but you won't swallow one mouthful."

"I shouldn't think I would swallow it!" shouted the ruler angrily. "Do you call that food? Why, the smell is enough to put anyone off, to say nothing of the taste! When I'm master of your country I'll certainly bring my own cooks."

"Alas," said Tallson, "then I expect you will starve!"

"Why?" shouted the ruler.

"We have so little power, and so little wood for the ovens," answered Tallson. "We simply cannot cook in the usual way."

"How else do you cook?" asked the ruler angrily.

"That's a secret known only to ourselves," said Tallson.

"I'll force you to tell me. You'll soon find out who's master. I'll stop this nonsense

about secrets. Just you wait!" said the angry ruler.

"Alas," said Tallson, really rather enjoying himself, "if you do that, I'm afraid you will certainly starve. It's quite simple. This secret remains with our people only as long as they're happy. The minute any other country forces them to do things against their own good the secret dies."

"Nonsense! Nonsense!" shouted the ruler angrily. "Who would want to set foot in your pocket-handkerchief of a country anyway? You're quite welcome to keep it. Only fools could live in such a place!" Then he stamped past Tallson and out of the room.

"Quite, quite worth while!" murmured Tallson to himself, getting ready to return home.

The King was delighted when his three sons arrived home and told him that all could remain at peace and in safety. He ordered a much bigger feast than usual for their welcome home party. Because of their great happiness the food tasted specially good. Their songs were very light-hearted and gay. But if you would like to know what else happened, I'm sure Prince Squareson would enjoy telling you.

# FRIEND JOHN

## PART I.

His real name was not John, but very like it. He came to Australia some years ago, from the other side of the world. In these days we should call him a New Australian, but there was no such name for people like John when he arrived here. The children called him Friend John, and Friend John he remained.

As a child and as a young man he had been very ill. He and his friends then agreed that a warmer country would be better for him. So he chose Australia.

Among the few belongings he brought with him was his violin. It was a very good violin, though very old, and Friend John treasured it greatly. He kept it wrapped in a very big linen handkerchief. As a young man he had been very shy and gentle, and he remained shy and gentle as he grew older. Only with children did he feel quite at home.

He became much better after he arrived in Australia, and he took a job playing dinner music in a café in the evenings. In the late afternoons, he usually brought his violin with him into the gardens near the café. Then he



unwrapped it and played for the children. When it was wet or cold, however, the children knew that they should not expect him.

The fairies and the goblins who lived in the flowers and the ferns of the gardens welcomed his visits too. They loved to dance to his music. When the music was soft and light, the fairies danced, but when it was louder and gayer the goblins had their turn.

“Off you go!” they would say to the fairies. “It’s our turn now. This is somersault music;” and they slid down from the bushes, the ferns, and the flowers and dropped to the smooth grass below. Then they carried on with the gayest nonsense. They spun around on their toes, turned somersaults, jumped over one another’s backs, and enjoyed themselves greatly. They tried to remain hidden among the ferns and the flowers, but Friend John and the children sometimes heard a little murmur and a soft chuckle of laughter. Sometimes they saw a quick flash of colour—just a flash and no more. The children would look among the flowers and the ferns, their sharp eyes trying to see more of them.

Now, after this had been happening for some years, the owner of the café died. The new owner decided to make the café quite different.

“I’m going to make the music light and bright,” he said to Friend John. “I’ve decided to bring in a band. They’ll make things lively. I’m sorry, Friend John. I’ll pay you until the end of next week, but I’m afraid you’ll have to go.”

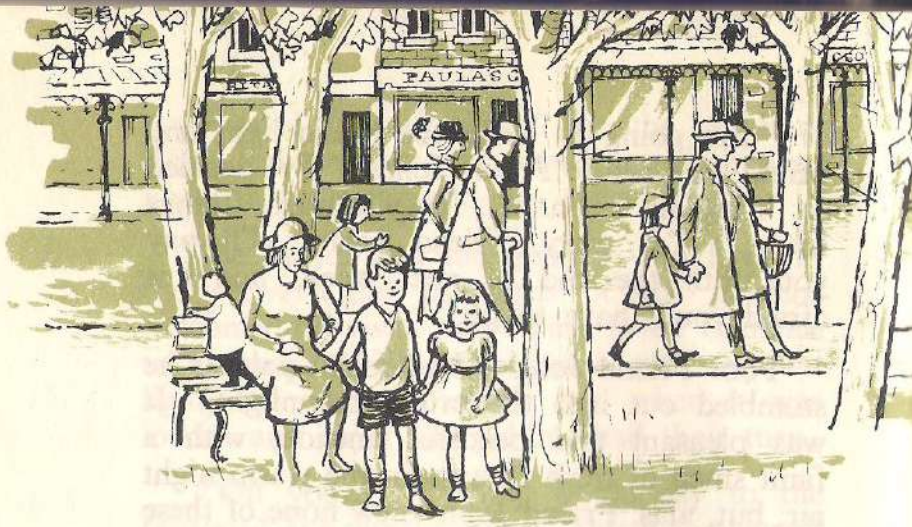
Poor Friend John! He looked pale as he stumbled out into the bright moonlight. It was pleasant and peaceful outside, with a faint smell of fresh flowers in the warm night air, but, alas, Friend John knew none of these things. His heart was heavy, and his knees were shaking, as with stumbling steps he made his way over to his usual seat in the gardens.



## FRIEND JOHN

### PART II.

Slowly he unwrapped his beloved violin. He tried to play, but his fingers felt stiff and cold. He hated to think of the life ahead—no music for the children, no playing in the café!



In the gardens the fairies wondered what had happened to Friend John.

“What’s the matter?” they asked one another, when they heard his stumbling steps. “Friend John never comes here at night. Something must have happened to upset him. He has unwrapped his beloved violin, but he’s not even playing it, and he looks so pale!”

“It’s not fair,” said the very smallest fairy. “Friend John has made music for us all these years, and we’ve never made any for him. Let’s do it now!”

“Yes, let’s!” agreed the goblins. “Go on, fairies. Quick and lively! Your turn first!”

