

THE ADVENTUROUS ROAD.

It was a joyful meeting, indeed, and you may not be surprised to hear that mother joined it, after all, for she found it so hard to wait alone at the gate that presently she decided to follow father instead. For after all, thought she, two are better than one when it comes to looking for anyone.

The wind was blowing a gale by now; branches cracking, twigs falling—such a noise all around them that it was no wonder they never heard her come up or knew she was there till she had the children in her arms.

“Don’t forget Mammy!” cried Audrey when the excitement began to subside, “or Peg Leg, because he found Paul!”

Then Mr. and Mrs. Debby both thanked the old negro woman heartily for her kindness to the children, and mother stroked Peg Leg and said he was the handsomest cat she had ever seen.

In the midst of it all there was a report like the crack of a pistol, but louder, much louder.

Everyone was startled except Mammy, who only remarked, carelessly:

“You all don’ need to be skeered; dat ain’t nuffin’ but de ol’ Rotten Tree. He always creak he’s ol’ bones on a windy night, like he want to make some noise, too, once in a while!”

“The old tree will fall one of these days,” said father, looking up to where they could still see it dimly, pointing like a white finger up to the stormy sky.

“So come dat ol’ tree fall down, my ol’ shanty goes too,” said Mammy; “but I reckon he don’ mean nuffin’ when he make dose queer noises. It’s jes’ his way ob talkin’, an’ I ain’t afeerd.”

But the Rotten Tree was racked from top to root, for