

flung her head up ; and the wooing and the love of the bushland went on about them, unheeding the man and the maid.

But Jim was feeling all the fullness of life to the soul of him. He understood the cry of the little yellowtail when the bronze cuckoo balanced, bright-eyed, on the rim of the new nest, seeking where to lay its egg. He heard the joy in the twitter of the mistletoe-wrens, and the shy robins, and in the lovely rippling song of the thickhead with his vivid red breast showing behind the young gum-leaves like a blood-gout. And he felt the vigour in each great gum and mess nate and blackbutt as they pulsed with the ascending sap of life. For life was quick everywhere—in the earth, on it, above it, spread over the sky of golden sunset glory. He drew a long, slow breath, and his eyes darkened with the keen, wild understanding of it all. For he was Jim of the Ranges still, although a better thing had come to him.

Then he lifted Betty down from the rails, and pulled Miladi out of her grass-patch.

" Let us come home, Betty o' mine," he said.

And Betty linked her arm in his, and fell into step, and they went forward through the sunshine and between the mighty tree-boles together.