

stoppage of a fire-engine by unexpected narrows or an irregular coal-cart.

"Couldn't say, I'm sure. They're a nifty lot in these parts." So said Uncle Moses, and walked slowly up the Court, stopping for breath half-way.

CHAPTER III

WHY THAT ENGINE STOPPED. BUT THE WHEELS HAD NOT COME OVER DAVE. HOW PETER JACKSON CARRIED HIM AWAY TO THE HOSPITAL. OF DOLLY'S DESPAIR AT THE COLLAPSE OF THE BARRAGE, AND OF AN OLD COCK, NAMED SAM. MRS. TAPPINO'S EXPERIENCES, AND HER DAUGHTER, ALETHEA. OF THE VICISSITUDES OF THE PUBLIC, AND ITS AMAZING RECUPERATIVE POWERS. HOW UNCLE MOSES AND MR. ALIBONE WENT TO THE HOSPITAL

So few seconds would have made the whole difference. But so engrossing had Dave found the contemplation of Michael Ragstroar and his yellow jug, so exciting particularly was its disappearance into the swing-door of the Wheatsheaf, that he forgot even the new mud that the men had spaded up with their spades. And these seconds slipped by never to return. Then when Michael had vanished, the little man stooped to secure his cargo. It was slippery and yet tenacious; had been detachable with difficulty from the spade that wrenched it from the virgin soil of its immemorial home, and was now difficult to carry. But Dave grappled bravely with it and turned to go back across the bridge.

A coming whirlwind, surely, in the distance of the street—somewhere now where all the gas-lamps' cold green stars are merged in one—now nearer, nearer still; and with it, bringing folk to doors and windows to see them pass, the war-cry of the men that fight the flames. Charioteers behind blood-horses bathed in foam; heads helmeted in flashing splendour; eyes all intent upon the track ahead, keen to anticipate the risks of headlong speed and warn the dilatory straggler from its path. Nearer and nearer—in a moment it will pass and take some road unknown to us, to say to fires that even now are climbing up through roof and floor, clasping each timber in a sly embrace

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