

CHAPTER XXIII

HOME AGAIN

ONCE more Sandy and Barney were trudging along the dusty road which dipped down to the stone bridge over the creek, where they had met old Bill, the tramp, a number of weeks before. The fields were brown and yellow now, and the creek was very low. The birds still sang in the trees, whose leaves hung limp, from the heat and dust of summer, and the same squirrel challenged their approach from the tree near the bridge.

With curious feelings they noted that a new barn was in course of erection in place of the one which was destroyed by fire. Instead of the bedraggied pair who had fought and begged their way that day, however, they were coming this time like conquering generals bearing home the spoils of war.

They were bringing Donald MacMillan home, and their hearts beat high with the importance of their commission. He had been considered too weak and ill to take the journey alone, and Hugh Griswold, in consultation with the Chief over the telephone at the nearest station, had arranged that they should be his companions.

Their clothes had been brought to the train at the Orillia station, and there, in a flurry of greeting