

THE CRICKET

CHAPTER ONE

I WON'T have it! I won't have it! If they come, I'll run away and hide!" shouted the child, wildly.

"That will be very rude. No one acts like that—no one except a barbarian," said Miss Wilder, calmly.

"I want to be a bar—one of those things you said."

"You act like one most of the time."

The child brain caught at a new idea.

"What is that—that what you said?"

"Barbarian? B-a-r-b-a-r-i-a-n," she spelled slowly. "It is a savage creature with no manners, no morals, no clothes even. It lives in a hut or a tree, and eats roots and nuts, and nearly raw meat," Miss Wilder remarked, none too accurately, but slowly, in order to distract Isabelle's attention from the late subject of unpleasantness. The little girl considered her words thoughtfully.

"Do they have children?"

"Yes."

"Where do they live?"

"Oh, strange places; Fiji Islands, for one."

"Are there any near here?"

"Not that I know of."

"I want to go live with the bar-barbarians."