

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE JOURNEY

THE letter came about a week after my last writing. "I think I am ready for the journey, Alan, if you can take me on pillows, very slowly, in a wagon. I want to see the Golden-Winged Woods before the snow falls."

So it was that I set off with the only spring-wagon in the neighborhood, Tom Thomson's.

Indeed the whole Settlement was aroused over my going and everyone wanted to contribute something. Tom provided, besides the wagon and a horse to go with Billy, a little tent that has often stood him in good stead in the forest. My mother had fixed up a feather bed to go under it, and at the last moment Mistress Jones bustled along with stone jugs "fer her feet," to be filled with hot water in case it should turn cold.—And so I set off very fully equipped.

... But when we were about ready to leave the Settlement Uncle Joe arrived with his family coach, and came more than half of the way home with us, insisting that I ride in the coach with Barry while he followed behind in the wagon.

"It'll be a change for her to move from the one place to the other," he explained. "She'll not be so tired."

Thus it was that we traveled off in fine style, with a private physician, and often enough he looked back over his wave a hand to him or call to him, as he followed, sitting very erectly on the seat, with his hat off and the sun shining on his bald head, happy as a robin in April, and smiling at us as he touched Billy and Nell along to keep up with our own more spirited bays in our coach.

"Tear an' ages!" he would exclaim, rattling up