

CHAPTER XIX

"LET US COME HOME"

"To love, honour, and obey," quoted Jim solemnly.

Betty sat on the top step of the slip-rails in the bush-paddock and drummed her heels. Her head was bare, and spring was in her face and in the warm blowing wind. Jim was booted and breeched and spurred, and he stood before her with Miladi's rein hooked over his arm and laughter in his eyes.

But Betty did not look at him.

"I said that last week," she answered. "It's your turn now."

"A man never has to say it."

"That doesn't matter. He has to do it."

"This man doesn't," suggested Jim daringly.

Betty cocked her eyebrows, set her red lips to a whistle, and stared away through the scattered coolibah scrub where the big trees made landmarks. All the world was full of spring, full of gladness, and of beauty, and of merry bird-calls, and rustles in the leaves, and broken twitters of delight. Just opposite a brown hawk's nest hung in a red tuft of mistletoe, and beneath it a pair of yellowtails were building with much fuss and eagerness. The primrose patch between their wings showed like an autumn leaf in the middle of spring. And this, the first disagreement, was to Betty