

CHAPTER VIII

THE MYSTERY GROWS

"ARE you better?" asked the man, in a rough but not unkindly tone, and not waiting for a reply, he lifted Elgar's head, and gave him something to drink, something by the way which was incredibly nasty, and which ran through the boy with a hot, scorching glow, making his head swim, and his eyes run, and causing an overpowering drowsiness.

He must have slept for some hours after that, for when he awoke again, the sun was getting low, and a horrified wonder as to how they were getting on at home, took hold of Elgar.

Under the influence of it, he struggled to a sitting posture, and was relieved to find that his limbs seemed able to fulfil their usual functions, though his head felt stupid, and he was sore all over from the bruises and scratches, resulting from his double fall.

"Oh, be careful, or you will hurt yourself, please, please take care," said a sweet and winning voice at his elbow, and Elgar turned round in amazement to find a girl standing at his elbow. A girl whose frock was of poor materials, and much too scanty