

CHAPTER XII.

AFTER his interview with the deaf book-agent at the Wolf Inn, Fritz rode into the city, where he had business to transact. Late afternoon was beginning to pass into evening when he returned, and it was almost twilight when he got near to his home. Seeing two figures coming along the road towards him, he wondered at first who they could be, for his wits were in that wool-gathering state incident to young men in love.

Then he remembered that the two boys had been at work that day bagging up onions, for the dry weather had been favorable for getting them into a marketable state. But Fritz's wonder was increased when he saw the two suddenly vanish into a small hovel that stood by the roadside. He rode up quietly, dismounted and entered.

There, cowering in a corner, were the two boys. He saw at once that they had with them a full bag of something, and he recognized the bag as one of his own. The boys were dumb-founded at being thus caught.

"What have you got there, and why do you hide from me?—you were not expecting me to come back so early?" said Fritz.