

shivered in spite of themselves, because his face was so full of malevolence, and his reputation matched his appearance.

They watched until a bend in the road hid him from sight, then, with a little start of recollection, Fred began to scramble down from his perch among the branches. "Come along, boys, we must run for it now, for we've wasted quite ten minutes, and I promised mother I'd be home early to do the milking, because Dolty Simpson has to go to the mill this afternoon."

Away raced the three boys like the wind, Johnny's short legs twinkling along in the rear of the other two, as he made plucky efforts to keep up.

It was fairly easy going as they pelted down Golden Grove, but part of the way across Joe Armstrong's lot was very rough and heavy, so that Sam and Johnny speedily dropped behind, though Fred raced on, taking the short way across the potato-patch when their own land was reached, jumping the rows in a series of quick bobbing leaps like a kangaroo.

The Crawford homestead was only a small square house, standing in an enclosure, around which were built other houses and sheds, all of the same rough unpainted wood. A belt of spruce firs and hardy larches on the north broke the worst violence of the wind from that quarter, sheltering the young apple and pear trees planted there. It was a bare dreary-looking spot, but the Crawfords loved it because it was home, and a pang shot through Fred's heart as he neared it, knowing as he did that in all probability this time next year would see the old place in the hands of strangers, whilst they would be settled further away in the wilds, where land could be had for next to nothing.

Just as he reached the fence, over which he was preparing to take a flying leap to save time, instead