

"We can walk by the narrow trail, and that will save time for you," said Pam; but Don would not hear of it, and he drove them back to Ripple. Scarcely a word was spoken by any of them. What Mrs. Walsh was thinking of was the last time she had seen her father, before she ran away to get married. The thoughts of the three who had been in the cellar were busy with the huddled heap of garments resting in the old hide-covered chair.

It was Reggie Furness who had last seen the old man alive, and he identified the remains by the hat and the coat, which had a green patch on one shoulder. The cause of death was not clear, but was supposed to be heart trouble. Wrack Peveril had more than once complained to his neighbours of pain in his side, which might easily have been disease of the heart. Someone suggested that he had shot himself either by accident or intention, but this theory was at once set aside by the fact of the gun being found loaded in every chamber. It was Pam who testified to the fact of the old man having been there at any rate ever since the first snow of the previous fall, as the yellow rag which Mose Paget had tied on the door had never been removed until the day when Don discovered the cellar. This was proof enough that Cassidy O'Brien was either mistaken in stating that he had seen the old man working at the lumber camp, or else he had made the story up to suit his own ends.

From the evidence before them it was fairly easy to understand that the old man, warned by Reggie of the coming of the surprise party, had gone across the