

'Sorry! It's all right,' said Una, rubbing her nose. 'How many rabbits did you get to-day?'

'That's tellin's' the old man grinned as he re-hoisted his faggot. 'I reckon Mus' Ridley he've got rheumatism along o' lyin' in the dik to see I didn't snap up any. Think o' that now!'

They laughed a good deal while he told them the tale.

'An' just as he crawled away I heard some one hollerin' to the hounds in our woods,' said he. 'Didn't you hear? You must ha' been asleep sure-ly.'

'Oh, what about the sleeper you promised to show us?' Dan cried.

'Ere he be—house an' all!' Hobden dived into the prickly heart of the faggot and took out a dormouse's wonderfully woven nest of grass and leaves. His blunt fingers parted it as if it had been precious lace, and tilting it toward the last of the light he showed the little, red, furry chap curled up inside, his tail between his eyes that were shut for their winter sleep.

'Let's take him home. Don't breathe on him,' said Una. 'It'll make him warm and he'll wake up and die straight off. Won't he, Hobby?'

'That's a heap better by my reckonin' than wakin' up and findin' himself in a cage for life. No! We'll lay him into the bottom o' this hedge. Dat's jus' right! No more trouble for him till come Spring. An' now we'll go home.'