

likely at mischief. Always skeerin' hosses, or chasin' cows, or frightenin' chickens. Nice enough father an' mother, too—queer, how young ones do turn out!”

As he spoke, the offending youth came panting beside our carriage, and in a very dirty sailor-suit, and under a broad-brimmed straw hat, with one stocking about his ankle, and two shoes averaging about two buttons each, I recognised my nephew, Budge! About the same time there emerged from the bushes by the roadside a smaller boy, in a green gingham dress, a ruffle which might once have been white, dirty stockings, blue slippers worn through at the toes, and an old-fashioned straw turban. Thrusting into the dust of the road a branch from a bush, and shouting, “Here’s my grass-cutter!” he ran towards us enveloped in a “pillar of cloud,” which might have served the purpose of Israel in Egypt. When we paused, and the dust had somewhat subsided, I beheld the unmistakable lineaments of the child Toddie!

“They’re—my nephews,” I gasped.

“What!” exclaimed the driver. “By gracious! I forgot you were going to Colonel Lawrence’s! I didn’t tell anything but the truth about ’em, though; they’re smart enough, an’ good enough, as boys go; but they’d never die of the complaint that children has in Sunday-school books.”

“Budge,” said I with all the sternness I could command, “do you know me?”

The searching eyes of the embryo prophet and philanthropist scanned me for a moment, then their owner replied:

“Yes; you’re Uncle Harry. Did you bring us anything?”

“Bring us anything?” echoed Toddie.