







THE KING OF NO-LAND.

BY H. L. YARBRO.

(Continued.)

DEEP IN THE EARTH LIES THE GOLD HIDDEN IN DARKNESS AND PRECIOUS TREASURES ARE FOUND IN HIDDEN PLACES.

This evening, they arrived at the village, and halted at a snug cottage, which bore signs of decay. The doorway was so low that Coltfoot, who was a six foot man, had to stoop his head upon entering; a little girl, who looked like a wise little woman, and yet was not more than six years of age, was sitting in a low chair, hushing a baby to sleep. The baby may have been three months old, and the nurse might have been her mother, so womanly were her years.

Another little girl, two or three years younger than the nurse, was also in the room, which was clean and very poorly furnished. A few paper pictures, cut from cheap prints, were pasted on the walls, and three violins were hanging in a corner. The children looked at Coltfoot, and smiled a welcome, starting bashfully at his entrance.

"Well, little ones," said Coltfoot, "and how is mother this morning?" "That is good," he said, rubbing his hands cheerily. "I've got some white roses for you."

A thin violin, from an inner room, which was the only other room in the cottage, asked who was there.

"It is I," called Coltfoot; "I will come in presently and see you. Well, put what you've got to say? This to the second little girl, who was climbing on to his lap. The baby was asleep at the time, and was lying in cradle. The oldest child being released from her burden, was arranging the flowers in a broken jug, and admiring them with eyes too dimly bright for one so young.

"We've got a pun-pudding for dinner," said the child on Coltfoot's right.

"All that's a fine thing," responded Coltfoot, kissing her, and setting her down. "Go and get the pudding, with the young gentleman, and tell him your name."

"I am Lucerne," she said, standing by the Prince's side, and gazing at him.

"And baby's name is Daisy," added Coltfoot; "and our little mother here is Iris."

It is really shock hands with Sasfras, and then resumed her duties.

"Our little woman," continued Coltfoot, tenderly, "do everything in the house, and is quite wise. She can scrub and cook and mend, and she can do something cleverer than all these—she can play the fiddle."

"And so can I," put in Lucerne.

"And so can Lucerne," Coltfoot answered; "and I shouldn't wonder, when Daisy gets to be as much of a little woman as her sisters, that she will play the fiddle, and sing, and do anything."

"He went in to the sick woman, and returned with her a few minutes later. Sasfras in the meanwhile making friends with Iris and Lucerne. When Coltfoot and the Prince left the house they left sunshine behind them. On their way Coltfoot related the story of these poor people. It was simple enough, leaving his family destitute.

"That was surely wrong," observed Sasfras. "Undoubtedly; but you must not blame the man. He worked from morning to night, and earned the barest pittance for his bread. He had no extravagance and no vices; he was not even a beer drinker. In this respect, he was unlike the State, and useless to those voracious creatures who dwell here, and whose appetites grow by what they feed on."

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