BLACKIE'S
GRADED·STORY·READERS

1483

GIPSY DAYS

Frances Holden

181

BLACKIE
AND SON
LIMITED

GRADE THREE

AVIRUL ISLAM HIGH SCHOOL
ERNAKULAM.

Blackie's
Graded Story Readers

GRADE THREE

The Story of Hiawatha. Retold by Gladys Davidson.
The Story of Sohrab and Rustum. Retold by Dorothy King.
And When the Pie Was Opened. By Winifred H. Francis.
The Trail of the Blue Diamond. By Eithne and Benin O'Sharkey.
The Secret of the Ruins. By Eithne and Benin O'Sharkey.
Spangler's Circus. By Katherine L. Oldmeadow.
Wolf Cub Stories. By Jane Hales.
Greystones Farm. By Muriel Fyfe.
More About Greystones. By Muriel Fyfe.
Teddy's Adventures. By Mrs. Henry Clarke.
The Pirate Ship. By Neil Munro.
The Runaway Road. By Alice Hall.
Castle Dune. By Katherine L. Oldmeadow.
Stories of Strange Pets. By Edith E. Cuthell.
Hugh's Holiday. By E. L. Haverfield.

BLACKIE AND SON LIMITED

181

KATTOOKAREN
BOOK-STALL
ERNAKULAM.



A TREE-BORDERED FIELD BESIDE THE RIVER

(Page 18)

GIPSY DAYS

BY

FRANCES HOLDEN



BLACKIE & SON LIMITED
LONDON AND GLASGOW
1947

181

BLACKIE & SON LIMITED
66 Chandos Place, London
17 Stanhope Street, Glasgow
BLACKIE & SON (INDIA) LIMITED
103/5 Fort Street, Bombay
BLACKIE & SON (CANADA) LIMITED
Toronto

Contents

CHAP.		Page
I.	A BEGINNING AND AN END	5
II.	AN UNEXPECTED OFFER	9
III.	THE HOME ON WHEELS	13
IV.	"OVER THE HILLS AND FAR AWAY"	16
V.	THE OGRE'S FIELD	21
VI.	GIPSY MEETS A FRIEND	26
VII.	ON THE LINE	30
VIII.	SALLY EXPLAINS	35
IX.	A VISIT FROM THE OGRE	39
X.	THE REAL HOME	43
	EXERCISES	47

Printed in Great Britain by Blackie & Son, Ltd., Glasgow

ERNAKULAM

GIPSY DAYS

CHAPTER I

A Beginning and an End

Gipsy shut the door of the music-room behind her in a hurry, and ran down the long passage towards the hall. "Thank goodness!" she was thinking, "I'll not see Mr. Davies, or play another sonata, for eight whole weeks! Lovely!"

She turned the corner of the passage quickly, and bumped violently into Mr. Davies's next pupil, a tall, freckled schoolboy, who said, "Hallo! Sorry! Have I hurt you?" as soon as he could find breath to speak.

"Not a bit," answered Gipsy, rather breathless herself. "And I ought to say 'Sorry' too, I think, but I was hurrying to get home. The holidays have started for us, you see, and I've just finished my last lesson for a while."

"It's my last lesson too," said the boy. "For once in a way I happened to be early for it to-day.

I heard you tackling that last piece you played. It was jolly good, you know."

" Oh, I didn't think so," said Gipsy earnestly. " I don't like the piano a bit, really, only Mother wants me to, so I try. There's Mr. Davies. I expect he's coming to look for you. Good-bye!" She ran across the hall, and let herself out at the front door.

As she rode homeward in the bus she tried to count on her fingers the number of really important things that she and her mother and Aunt Jack intended to do during the holidays. It was a good thing Aunt Jack, who was the sports mistress at Wetherton High School, had begun her holidays that day also. Most things went well when she took a hand in them. She and Gipsy had decided to paper the dining-room afresh, paint the hall, and colour-wash the kitchen, whilst they were both at home. Gipsy loved what her aunt called " playing about with brushes and washes ", and was really quite a good house decorator in her small way. Then there was the garden to put in order, the garage to whitewash, and several new things to buy for the house before her father came home from the West Indies at the end of the year. In fact, Gipsy thought of so many interesting things

to be done that she had not counted them all by the time the bus stopped at the cross roads and she had run up Trafford Grove to " The Hollies ".

She rushed into the house, and, without putting down her school-bag, burst into the sitting-room.

" Mother! Aunt Jack!" she cried. " Holidays have begun, and I've had my music lesson too — the last for a bit! Now we can — why, what's the matter?" She stopped suddenly, looking at her mother and aunt, and missing their usual cheery greeting. Gipsy glanced from their worried faces to a letter that lay open on the table. " What's the matter?" she asked again.

" Rather disturbing news, Gyp," replied Mrs. Dayes. " We have to move from this house in a month's time."

" Move! Oh, Mother, must we? Why?" Gipsy cried.

" Mr. Caton, the landlord, writes to say that he wants the house for himself and his family, as they are coming back to live in Yorkshire again. So, of course, we shall have to move from here, though where we're to live is going to be a real problem. Houses nowadays are so difficult to find, and four weeks is only a very short time. But we must begin house-hunting the first thing to-morrow."

"Never mind, Mother," said Gipsy, speaking more cheerfully than she felt. "P'raps we shall find something quickly — you never know. And anyhow, it's a good thing Aunt Jack and I will be at home every day now, so that we can help you. Four weeks!" she added rather sadly. "We'd planned to do such a lot here during that time, hadn't we?" She looked round with a little sigh at the pleasant room and out at the sunny garden.

"We had, Gyp," answered Aunt Jack briskly. "But all that's at an end, so we'll just forget those old plans, and hope we may begin to make new ones to-morrow. But now — not another word about this house, or any other house, if you please, ladies, until we've all had tea. I'm simply dying for some, and I'm going this minute to put the kettle on!"

CHAPTER II

An Unexpected Offer

"We've got exactly five days left," said Aunt Jack, handing her visitor a plate of cakes. "We've been house-hunting every day for three weeks, and now I dream about houses every night. We've advertised, and answered advertisements, we've looked at all kinds of flats and houses, big and little, and still we can't find anything suitable. Either the rents are more than we can afford, or else the houses we like are for sale and not to let. But our landlord is going to move in here on Friday, and where we are to pitch our tent then, unless we pitch it in the middle of the Town Hall Square, I really don't know. I suppose, in the end, we shall have to put our furniture in store, and take rooms somewhere."

"Why should you?" asked the visitor in a matter-of-fact voice. Miss Carson, the head-mistress of Wetherton High School, was a matter-of-fact person. She was a friend of Aunt Jack's, and sometimes visited "The Hollies". Gipsy, who

liked her, often wished that she herself was one of the pupils at the High School. But two years earlier, when she was eleven, she had won a scholarship for St. Monica's, a large, girls' school at the other end of the town.

Now Miss Carson took a bite out of her Vienna bun, and looked across the table at Aunt Jack.

"I don't see, Jacqueline," she said, "why you should take rooms anywhere, though you'll most likely have to store your furniture for a week or so."

"What do you mean? We must have some rooms to live in."

"Must you? Well, we'll see. But first of all, I believe I can help you to find a home, so it won't be necessary, after all, to pitch your tent in the Town Hall Square. The top flat of the block where I live, at Queen's Court, will be vacant about the middle of September. It hasn't been re-let, so far, either. I know, because I met the landlord in town this afternoon, and he told me so. The rent is quite reasonable, the flat is small, but big enough for you and Mrs. Dayes and Gipsy, and everything is very convenient."

"Oh, Mary, bless you!" exclaimed Aunt Jack with a deep sigh of relief. Gipsy had to bend down

to pick up an imaginary crumb in order to hide a smile. It seemed so odd to be blessing the large and rather majestic headmistress of Wetherton High. "We'll go and see the flat this very evening, if we may," went on Aunt Jack, "and take it if it suits us, as I'm sure it will. Then we'll see about getting the furniture stored at once, and then——"

"Wait a minute," said Miss Carson. "I believe this is where I can really help. You must know that my cousin and I had planned to set off on Friday on a caravan tour. She has a motor caravan, which she drives herself. I've spent more than one good holiday in that way with her, and I was looking forward very much to another. Well, now the trip is off, for the foolish young woman has managed to catch chicken-pox and mumps both together — as if one at a time wasn't bad enough! Very thoughtless of her, I must say! However, she won't be fit to take a holiday until the school holidays are nearly over, and then she will most likely go to Whitby, or somewhere else by the sea. In the meantime, her caravan will be standing idle unless someone else uses it. I heard from her this morning, and she has given me permission to offer it to anyone I know who would like a caravanning holiday, and will take care of her

'home on wheels', as she calls it. Now, the question is, would the three of you like to spend such a holiday until the flat is at liberty? The caravan is just right for three people, and I know you can drive, Jacqueline, or, of course, I wouldn't have offered it to you."

"Would we like it! We'd love it!" cried Aunt Jack, whilst Mrs. Dayes said, "I never expected anything so delightful. A holiday like that will be splendid, especially as we're having such a fine summer this year." As for Gipsy, she was for once quite speechless with joy. Indeed, even Cinderella's fairy godmother, who suddenly provided a golden coach for the little lady of the glass slipper, could not have given more surprise and pleasure than Miss Carson did by her offer of a home on wheels.

CHAPTER III

The Home on Wheels

Mrs. Dayes and her sister-in-law arranged the very next day to take the flat as soon as it became vacant. It was a small flat, but there was, as Miss Carson had said, room enough for the three people who were to live in it.

"But oh!" said Gipsy with a little sigh, "how I wish it had been The White Cottage instead!"

She had fallen in love with The White Cottage as soon as she saw it upon one of their house-hunting journeys some days before. It was a charming little house, with latticed windows and a garden filled with flowers, and it stood in the pleasant country about two miles out of the town. But alas! the cottage had a tenant in it, so they could only look at and long for it, and, as Gipsy said, pretend it was theirs.

"In the meantime," said Aunt Jack, "it's comforting to think we shall have a home to go to when the holidays are over. And so, having settled that business, we'll begin to think about pleasure now.

Who's coming with me to look at the caravan this afternoon?"

Of course they all went, and Miss Carson, who met them on their way to the big garage where it was kept, went with them. The owner of the garage took off the dust-sheets that covered the caravan, in order that they might see and examine it properly. What they saw delighted them all.

It was painted green, and it had a cab like a motor coach's, and four windows, one at either end and one at each side. It was not at all clumsy, but it looked strong and business-like. Every inch of space inside it had been planned to hold something useful. There were three good-sized sleeping-bunks, a folding table, three folding chairs, a cupboard that held china, pots and pans, a cooker, a built-in chest of drawers, a small shelf for books, a wash-basin, and even electric light!

"Mother! Aunt Jack! Isn't it lovely?" Gipsy exclaimed, darting excitedly from one "gadget" to another. "O-o-h! I'd like to live in this little house for ever and ever!"

"Even if you had the chance of living in The White Cottage?" asked her mother, smiling.

Aunt Jack, Miss Carson, and the garage man were busily discussing mileage, roads, and petrol.

"I know she goes well," said Miss Carson, speaking of the caravan, "and I think she is easy to drive. You haven't said exactly where you mean to go, but my cousin has sent me a plan of the trip we had meant to take. She thought perhaps it might be useful to you. We were to visit Westmorland and the Lake District, explore the country round all the lakes in turn, and then come home by way of the Yorkshire dales—some of the loveliest places I know. But, of course, there are so many lovely places to visit in England, and you have almost three weeks in which to go just where you please."

"I think we should all like the lakes and the dales best," said Aunt Jack. "I want Gipsy to see them, and whenever we take a fancy to a particular place we can camp there, and stay for a day or two."

"Ay, carry your house along with you, stay where you like, and move when you like," put in the owner of the garage. "That's the best kind of holiday — a real gipsy one — to my way of thinking."

CHAPTER IV

"Over the Hills and Far Away"

The last few days at the old home passed all too slowly for Gipsy, who was looking forward very keenly to " taking the road ". At last, however, everything was packed up and sent away to be stored. The keys of the empty house were handed over to the landlord, and at ten o'clock on a bright summer's morning Gipsy, her mother, and Aunt Jack walked over to the garage to begin their holiday with " Dinah ", as the caravan was called.

They found the home on wheels quite ready for them, spick and span within and without. They quickly put away in drawers and cupboards the things they had brought with them, saw that everything was in order, and very soon were being driven away by Aunt Jack. The friendly owner of the garage, who had given her one or two last useful hints, came out into the yard to see them go. He wished them a good holiday, and waved them good-bye.

Dinah's owner had said that she was one of the

lightest caravans on the road, and one of the easiest to drive, and the Dayes family soon found that this was true. It was not long before they had left the farthest outskirts of the town behind, and were running smoothly north-westwards through pleasant open country towards the moors and hills. With a little squeezing there was room for all three of them in the cab at the front, and Aunt Jack would not drive fast.

"Where is the use?" she said. "We're taking the road to enjoy ourselves, and we want time to see everything there is to see. We're not running a race."

"I don't want to miss a single thing!" declared Gipsy, looking about her in delight at the broad green hills with their limestone crags, and the grey stone-built farms set amidst their harvest fields and pastures. "How soon shall we get to the Pennine Chain, Aunt Jack?"

"We've just about reached it now," was her aunt's reply. "Do you see that mountain shaped like a sugar-loaf over there? That's Penyghent, and away to the west is Ingleborough, and, farther east, Whernside. We shall soon be at Sedbergh, where we might spend the rest of the day, and find a camping site where we could stay for the

night, before we take Dinah over Shap Fell to-morrow morning."

It was delightful to park Dinah in the afternoon sunshine in a corner of a tree-bordered field beside the river Rawthey. The field belonged to a farmer who had given them permission to camp there. He had also said that if Gipsy liked to come up to the farm there would be fresh milk "and maybe an egg or two" to be bought for the campers' tea.

How good the ham and eggs tasted, cooked on Dinah's well-behaved little cooker and eaten under the trees near the river that rippled by them over its stony bed! "I suppose," said Gipsy, rather regretfully, "if we'd done as real gipsies do, we should have gathered sticks, made a fire, and boiled water for tea and fried the ham and eggs over it."

"And most likely," put in her mother, "the ham would have tasted of smoke, and the eggs too. Out-of-doors cooking is all very well if one is a real gipsy, or a Scout or a Guide, but people who are none of the three manage better with a stove."

Gipsy found it great fun going to bed in a bunk that night, but she was soon asleep, and did not waken until she was aroused by Aunt Jack at seven o'clock the next morning. Bright sunshine

was slanting through the caravan windows as the two stole out for an early dip in the river. Bathing in the clear, cold water made Gipsy feel brisk and fresh and ravenously hungry. When they returned she cooked the breakfast porridge and made coffee, whilst her mother fried more eggs. The three caravanners ate so hearty a meal that Mrs. Dayes declared she would have to buy a double quantity of everything, if appetites continued to be as large throughout the holiday.

Long before ten o'clock Dinah's " house-room " was put into apple-pie order for the day, the breakfast dishes were washed and put away, the bunks made tidy, and the caravan was on the road again, climbing the steep slope of Shap Fell. By noon they had reached the Lake District, and Gipsy had her first glimpse of a real lake, the beautiful Ullswater.

That evening they camped beside Bassenthwaite Lake, with the mountain of Skiddaw behind them, and for the next ten delightful, leisurely days they were hardly ever out of sight of water. They drove all the way round Derwentwater, and lingered for three days by the quiet Crummock Water and by Buttermere, where, long ago, a little company of Saxon chiefs made a last stand against

the Norman soldiers of William the Conqueror, and kept them long at bay.

They saw the lonely Wast Water, Scawfell Pikes, Great Gable, and the twin peaks of Langdale. They camped for some time in the Langdale Valley, and then went on to Coniston Lake. They visited the lovely lakes of Grasmere and Rydal, where the poet Wordsworth lived so long and happily, and they came at last to Windermere, the largest of them all. Here, again, they stayed for some days. They camped upon the shores of the lake and spent nearly all the hours of daylight on the water, sometimes in a rowing boat, or, when they wanted longer trips, on the steamer.

"Kendal to-morrow," said Aunt Jack one evening, when the caravan had been their home for almost a fortnight. "We'll put Dinah in a garage when we get there, and look round the place, and do a little shopping. Then it's good-bye to Lakeland, for after that we go on to Sedbergh again, and set our faces towards Yorkshire once more."

"Oh dear!" sighed Gipsy. "I *am* going to miss the mountains and the lakes."

"Never mind. You'll have the dales instead," said Aunt Jack.

CHAPTER V

The Ogre's Field

"I never thought," said Gipsy, "that camping in the dales would be so lovely."

Dinah and the trio she carried had come to a halt once more. It was now some days since she had travelled from Sedbergh to Hawes, and from thence over the shoulders of the broad green hills, across the famous Buttertubs Pass, into the wild Swaledale. A few miles down the dale they had come upon a farm beside the river. They had halted, and arranged with the farmer to park the caravan in a field. There they had been ever since.

It was such a pleasant camping site that they were all unwilling to move on. The weather was warm and sunny, and day after day they roamed over the great fells on either side of the narrow valley. They would set out in the morning, carrying their food with them in rucksacks. They would remain on the hills all day and return to the caravan only at dusk. Or, if they decided to have what

Gipsy called a " stay-at-home day ", they bathed in the river, and helped the kindly farmer's wife to gather her early apples and plums. The faces of all three had become tanned and rosy with this pleasant out-of-doors life, and Gipsy, with her brown skin and mop of black hair, grew, Aunt Jack declared, more like a real gipsy every day.

" But," said Mrs. Dayes, " I really think we ought to be moving to-morrow." So the next day they set forth again, stopping at Richmond to visit the old castle with its tall Norman keep. Before tea-time they were in Wensleydale, within sight of Castle Bolton.

" Doesn't it look romantic?" said Gipsy, gazing at the high grey walls admiringly. " Like a castle in a history book."

" Well," said Aunt Jack, " if the old stories are true, it played its part in history in the days of Mary Queen of Scots. She was a prisoner there, and escaped from it, and was caught again, poor lady, near Leyburn. We'll go over the castle, and you shall see the window from which she's supposed to have escaped."

They had planned to camp near Hawes, and to remain a few days there. At first no camping ground was to be had, however. Every farmer

they asked refused them permission to stay in his field, and they learnt later that the reason was because during the summer several camping parties had done much damage to the crops in that part of the country.

Twilight was falling, and they began to think they would have to travel farther on. But at last a rather shifty-looking countryman, at whose small farm they called, told them that they might park the caravan in a distant field, at the same time charging them a very high price for doing so.

"Draw it well up within yon belt of trees," he advised them, "so that it can't be seen so easily. There's many queer folk about these days."

Aunt Jack did as he said, and all went well until the next morning, when Gipsy, having decided to have a washing-day, was hanging out handkerchiefs and towels on a line strung between two trees. Suddenly she heard an angry "Ha!", and turning, saw a red-faced old gentleman standing close to the caravan.

He glared from Gipsy and her clothes-line to the house on wheels and back again. Then, lifting his walking-stick, he rattled it against Dinah's green-painted side.

"Gipsies!" he said harshly. "You have no

business in this field, and you must be off. D'you hear?"

Just then Aunt Jack appeared round the corner of the caravan.

"I beg your pardon," she said, looking at the angry old gentleman calmly, "we are not gipsies, but merely campers. We carry a proper licence, and we are paying the farmer who has allowed us to stay in this field."

"Paying the farmer——!" The old gentleman's mouth fell open in surprise. "Who gave you permission to park that caravan here?" he asked.

"The man at the farm over there, the owner of the field," answered Aunt Jack patiently.

The stranger's face grew redder than ever.

"So!" he cried, "that's Rowlandson's game, is it? The rascal lets my field to gipsies or campers — I see little difference between the two — and takes pay for it, and thinks that because I live some distance from my farm, I shall be no wiser. You must know that the man is my bailiff, and has no right to act as he has done. But go you must, for I'll have neither gipsies nor campers upon any field of mine."

"Certainly we shall go — and at once," replied Aunt Jack with dignity. "I very much regret the

whole affair." But the old gentleman was not to be calmed down. He waited until their various belongings were stowed away, and grimly watched the caravan being driven out on to the high road.

Aunt Jack did not speak for some time as she drove along. Then suddenly she began to laugh.

"He was in a rage, wasn't he?" she said. "I suppose the man Rowlandson will get turned out of the farm for this, though he'd certainly no right to do as he did. But the old gentleman seemed to think we were quite as much to blame."

"What a dreadful old ogre!" said Gipsy, who looked quite scared.

ARUL ISLAM HIGH SCHOOL
ERNAKULAM

CHAPTER VI

Gipsy Meets a Friend

Before noon that day the travellers had found another camping site a mile or so from Hawes. It was in a field beside a stream, not far from the waterfall called Hardrow Scaur, and here the field's good-natured owner invited them to stay as long as they liked. So they settled down and soon made themselves at home.

One bright afternoon two days later, Aunt Jack and Mrs. Dayes set off for Hawes to buy groceries. They invited Gipsy to go with them, but she said, " I'd rather do a spot of scrambling down by the fall, if you don't mind."

" Don't slip into the pool, then," warned her mother.

Hardrow Scaur had become one of Gipsy's favourite haunts. She was never tired of watching the long stream of white water pouring down from the limestone edge ninety feet above the pool. This afternoon she scrambled happily for an hour among the rocks below the fall. She was climbing

not far from the pool when suddenly her foot slipped on a wet, polished rock. She lurched forward, grasped hastily at another rock, slipped farther, and fell on one knee on a sharp piece of limestone.

"Hallo!" said a voice that sounded somehow familiar. "That was a nasty slip. You nearly went into the pool. Here, hang on to the end of this stick, and I'll pull you up."

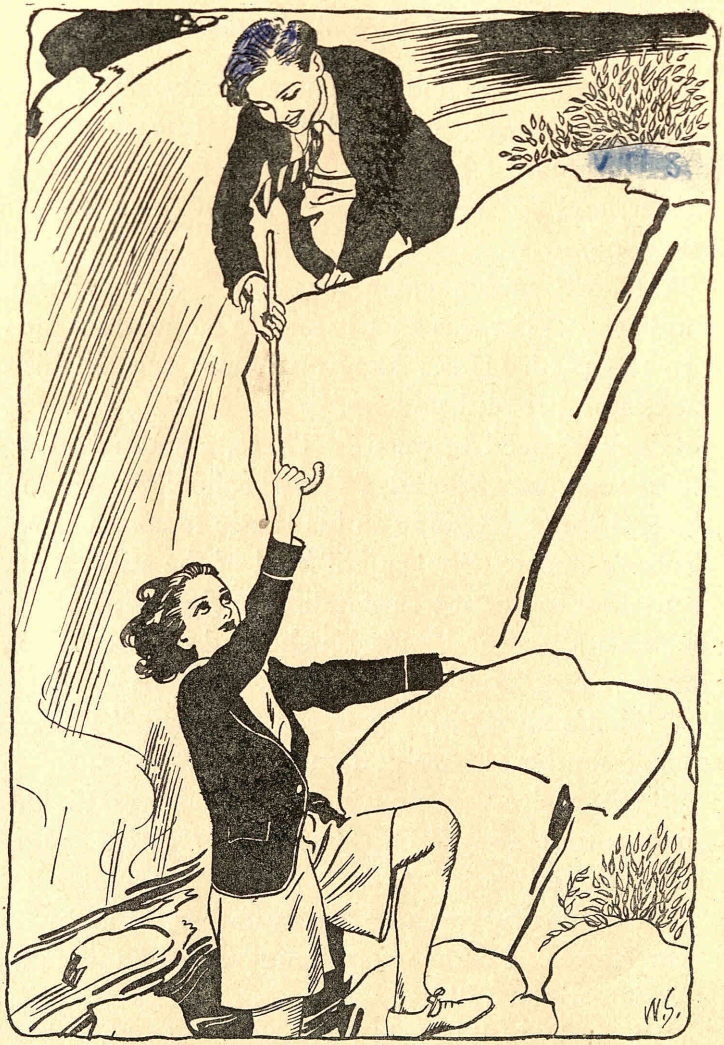
Gipsy glanced upwards. There, standing on a broad rock, was the tall, freckled schoolboy whom she had last seen going to his music lesson at Mr. Davies's house. She caught hold of the stick, and in another moment was standing safely beside him. Between shock and surprise she had no breath to say anything more than "Thank you!"

"That's all right," answered the boy. "Fancy seeing you here! Are you on holiday?"

"Yes, we're camping in the Five Riggs Field, about a mile away," Gipsy replied. "Are you on holiday too?"

"I'm staying with my grandfather, who lives near Hawes. I come every holiday, so I know this district pretty well."

"I wish I did," said Gipsy. "I think it's lovely." Then she laughed. "Do you know," she



SHE CAUGHT HOLD OF THE STICK

went on, "I don't even know what your name is?"

"Henry Tudor," answered the boy, grinning. "I know it sounds like somebody in English history. But everyone calls me Hal. And I don't know your name either."

"Priscilla Dayes. But everyone calls me Gipsy," she replied, and they both laughed again.

"I say!" said the boy suddenly. "That knee of yours is looking pretty bad. You must have come down heavily on it just now."

Gipsy glanced down at her bare knees below her grey flannel shorts. The right knee was cut and badly bruised, and had already begun to swell.

"It does hurt, rather," she said. "I think perhaps I'll get back to our caravan — it's nearly tea-time, anyhow — and bathe it."

"I should," advised the boy. "I'd walk part of the way with you, but I have to meet one of my grandfather's men at four o'clock. I want to see your caravan some time, though. May I?"

"Of course," replied Gipsy. "Mother and Aunt Jack would like you to, I know. Come to-morrow afternoon, if you can."

"Right!" promised the boy, as they said good-bye.

CHAPTER VII

On the Line

Part of the way Gipsy took back to the Five Riggs Field led along a narrow footpath beside the railway line. She was walking, or rather limping, forward — for by this time the hurt knee was throbbing badly — when suddenly she heard the deep, excited bark of a dog. The next moment a big Airedale, still barking, had leaped off the line towards her. He sprang up, caught her blazer in his teeth, and tugged hard.

Startled, she staggered a little and said " Down!" But an instant later she knew that he had not meant to attack her. He dashed back to the line, and picking up a small object, began to shake it violently. She followed him, and then saw that the thing he was shaking was a baby's sandal.

She looked up the line hastily, and saw, about forty yards away, two tiny figures between the rails. Beyond them the track was hidden by clouds of smoke, and even as Gipsy and the dog started to run, she heard the whistle of a train.

In a moment she had reached the children — two little girls, the elder only about three years old, the other still younger. Seizing the smaller child, she stumbled over the track with her, and almost flung her down in the grass beside it. The train was coming on fast: Gipsy could hear it thundering down upon them, though it was quite hidden by smoke. Would she be in time?

She dashed on to the line again, caught the elder child, and, half dragging, half carrying her, but how she never knew, she got her across the line to safety. Not an instant too soon, for the train was almost on top of them, and she and the children, with the dog beside them, crouched panting in the grass as it rushed by just above them.

When the last van had rattled by, Gipsy was surprised to find herself trembling. She looked at the children. They were little curly-headed creatures, plainly sisters, and the younger one was barefooted. The elder one gazed at her rescuer with big brown eyes, and remarked:

"Deb lost her shoes."

"Where?" asked Gipsy.

"There." Brown-Eyes pointed a finger at the track. Gipsy got up and went to the spot, where



ACROSS THE LINE TO SAFETY

she found a tiny red sandal wedged between one of the plates and a bolt that secured the line. She freed the sandal, went back to the children, and fitted it on, along with its fellow, which the dog had put quietly down beside her.

"What were you doing on the line?" was Gipsy's next question, but the little ones seemed unable to answer her, so she asked another. "Where do you live?" she said.

"There," answered the elder child again. But this time she pointed over her shoulder. Then Gipsy saw that beyond the grass bordering the track was a high stone wall, in one corner of which was a small door, partly open.

"Come along, then," she said. "Hadn't you better go and find Mummy now?"

As she spoke she led the children towards the door, and, as she pushed it open wider to admit them, she had a glimpse of smooth lawns, trim flower-beds, and a large, low grey house.

The dog shepherded his charges through the doorway as if they had been two stray lambs. The elder child paused as she went in. Then looking up into Gipsy's face, she said in answer to her last remark:

"Mummy's gone in a ship, and Daddy too."

Then she added: "O-o-h! What a big bump you have got on your knee! Good-bye, girl."

"Good-bye," said Gipsy, smiling a little. She closed the door, latched it, crossed the line again, and continued on her way.

CHAPTER VIII

Sally Explains

Sir Harry Tudor sat on the terrace of his house, enjoying his after-dinner smoke, with his two small grand-daughters busily climbing all over him. His wife, a white-haired lady, was knitting a shawl not far from him, and Hal, their grandson, sat on the terrace steps just below them, mending a fishing-rod.

"You two plagues get worse and worse!" Sir Harry remarked to the children. He plucked Deborah, the younger one, off his shoulder as easily as if she had been a clinging kitten, and set her down on the pavement. "And heavier every day!" he added, pretending to feel his arm as if it ached. "It must be all that porridge you eat at breakfast. No, Sally," to the elder child, who was searching his pockets, "there's no more chocolate there. You both shared the last piece this afternoon."

"By the way," struck in his wife, "where were they, this afternoon, whilst Nannie went to the

village to get this wool for me? I suppose you took charge of them, Harry?"

"Not I," answered the old gentleman. "They were with me in the kitchen-garden for part of the time, and the dog too. Then Jansen came, and we went to have a look at the car, and I'm afraid I forgot about them. However, when Rips is with them they can't come to much harm, though they may get into mischief."

"I was rather worried," went on Lady Tudor, "because when I looked out of the store-room window I saw that the little door in the south wall was ajar — the one that leads on to the line, you know. Nannie must have gone out that way, taking a short cut to the village, but we must tell her to keep it locked in future. However, when I looked out again the children were on the lawn with Rips, and the door was shut, so I thought you were somewhere near."

"I never knew the door was open——" began Sir Harry, when Sally, who had been listening to the talk, struck in:

"Rips got Deb's shoe — it came off. And the other shoe got fast. Then a girl came, and ran with us — ooh! she ran ever so quick. Then a train came, and we stayed down in the grass. The girl

found Deb's shoe, and after that we went back through the door. She was a nice girl. She had a big bump on her knee."

"What!" exclaimed Hal, speaking for the first time. His grand-parents were looking at each other in alarmed surprise. Lady Tudor murmured, "'A train came'. They were on the line, then!" and put down her knitting.

Sir Harry sat up. "It sounds," he said quietly, "as if we were in very great debt to somebody. What girl——"

"Here, young one!" Hal suddenly made a dive for his small cousin, who was getting herself down the terrace steps in a series of sliding bumps. He caught her, and, setting her on his knee, held her fast.

"Now, Sally," he said, "listen. That girl who came to you this afternoon — was she a big girl? A grown-up one?"

"No — a little big one," answered Sally. It was the way she usually described a schoolgirl. "She had long hair an' a red jacket. She picked Deb up, and ran with her to the grass, and then she came for me and took me too. Then the train came — very fast. It made a noise like this——" Sally's imitation of a train made Hal stop his ears

— "an' there was lots of puff-puff" (she meant smoke) — "and the wheels were big and near. The train made a wind that blew on us."

Hal put Sally off his knee and stood up. "Gran," he said, "there seems to have been a pretty close shave out there on the line this afternoon. And I believe I know the girl we've to thank for it. She comes from Wetherton — she's one of Mr. Davies's piano pupils. I came across her at Hardrow this afternoon. She's on a caravan holiday with her people, and they're camping in the Five Riggs Field. Her name is Gipsy Dayes."

CHAPTER IX

A Visit from the Ogre

"Since a visitor is expected this afternoon," said Aunt Jack, spreading a clean tablecloth on the grass as she spoke, "you'd better open another pot of honey, Gipsy. And we'll have the tea-cakes Mother made this morning."

It was almost half-past four, and the afternoon sun was hot, but under the trees by the stream it was shady and cool, and the tea laid out on the grass looked very tempting. Gipsy had told her mother and Aunt Jack all about her meeting with Hal, and how he had asked to see the caravan, and had promised to come that afternoon. She had not said a word, however, about the children on the line. Indeed, she had almost forgotten them, for upon her return to the caravan it was plain that the hurt knee must have first aid at once. So her mother doctored it with hot water, iodine, and bandages, at the same time giving the patient a mild scolding for being so careless as to climb too near the dangerous pool. So, for the time being at

least, her second adventure that afternoon passed out of Gipsy's mind.

"I wish he'd come, if he means to," she said now, eyeing the sandwiches hungrily. "It seems a long time since we had lunch." Then she looked across the field to a distant gate. "Oh, there he is!" she cried gaily. "He's got a dog with him. It's — why, it's——" She stopped short.

An Airedale dog was racing across from the gate, and in another moment had bounded up to Gipsy, trying to lick her face. But she was staring beyond him, towards Hal and an old gentleman who came over the grass together. Soon they were near enough for those who awaited them to recognize the boy's companion, and as she did so Gipsy gave a gasp of dismay.

"Oh dear, Aunt Jack! Here's the Ogre again!" she murmured.

When the visitors reached them, she managed to introduce Hal to her mother and aunt, but she was almost speechless when the boy said, "This is my grandfather, Sir Harry Tudor."

The old gentleman bowed to the two ladies, then strode over to Gipsy, and held out his hand.

"I owe you more than I can say, young lady," he said in his short way, "for carrying my two

grand-daughters into safety yesterday afternoon. That is why I have come here with my grandson to-day — to say ' Thank you ' most sincerely."

He did not look nearly so much like an ogre, Gipsy thought, as he said these words, and, rosy with surprise and confusion, she took the offered hand.

" I didn't do anything much — really, I didn't," she stammered. " But — how did you know?" She looked from Sir Harry to Hal.

" My small cousin told us what happened — as well as she could," Hal said. " I'd no idea it was you who saved the youngsters, though, until she talked about a girl with a bump on her knee. Then I guessed."

" But," said Mrs. Dayes, looking puzzled, " I don't understand what you are talking about." And Aunt Jack added, " Yes, what *is* all this?"

" Your daughter, Mrs. Dayes, yesterday saved the lives of two little girls, who happen to be my grand-daughters, by her promptitude and courage," said Sir Harry. " And if she hasn't told you about it before, I think she'd better begin now. I want to hear all the facts myself."

So Gipsy, in spite of her protests, had to tell the whole story. " But," she ended, " I don't think I

should have noticed the little girls at all — at least not in time — if it hadn't been for the dog who tugged at my coat. I'm sure he understood there was danger, and wanted to make somebody else understand too." She patted Rips, as he stood beside her.

Mrs. Dayes put her hand over her daughter's for a minute, and Aunt Jack looked across at her niece with an understanding grin. " So now," she said, " since all's well that ends well, suppose we all have some tea. That is," she added, turning to the old gentleman with a twinkle in her eye, but speaking quite gravely, " if you don't object to campers who are pretending to be gipsies."

Sir Harry gave an odd chuckle, but spoke gravely too.

" I begin to understand," he said, " that there is sometimes quite a lot of difference between the two."

CHAPTER X

The Real Home

The tea-party turned out to be a very pleasant one indeed. Hal made himself at home at once, and Sir Harry talked, and told funny stories, as if he had never in his life behaved like a gruff ogre who hated the sight of campers. That meeting was the first of many, for before he left them the old gentleman invited Gipsy, her mother, and Aunt Jack to go the following day to visit Harkerside — his house — to meet his wife and to see his small grand-daughters.

After that visit the two families saw a good deal of each other during the Dayes's stay at Hawes. Gipsy and Hal had many rambles in the dale, whilst Lady Tudor and Sir Harry entertained Mrs. Dayes and her sister-in-law. The house and grounds of Harkerside were delightful, and Sir Harry took a great pride in both.

"You are very lucky," said Aunt Jack one evening, as the grown-ups sat on the terrace waiting for the return of Gipsy and Hal, who had

gone for a cycle ride — " you are very lucky, you know, to have such a beautiful home. We shall have to make a fresh one — in a little flat — when our holiday comes to an end."

Then she told her host and hostess of their house-hunting adventures at Wetherton some weeks before. Some of the adventures had been really amusing, and Aunt Jack told them in an amusing way, for she generally saw the funny side of most things.

" It's odd," said Sir Harry, " that you should live in Wetherton, for we ourselves lived near there years ago. My son, Hal's father, lives in the town now. Our house was a mile or two out — The White Cottage, it is called — a pretty little place. It is our house still, though it has been let for some time. But the tenant is leaving at the end of this month, and the place isn't let again — not yet, at any rate. Have you quite settled matters about your flat? For I believe The White Cottage would have been the very thing for you."

Aunt Jack and Mrs. Dayes looked at one another.

" I think some other tenants could easily be found for the flat," said Mrs. Dayes eagerly, whilst Aunt Jack added: " Gipsy has been in love with your cottage ever since she first saw it. If

she knew we had the chance to live there, and didn't seize the chance with both hands, I don't know what she would say to us. But if we all agree upon this plan, we won't tell her until everything is settled, because it will be such a delightful surprise."

. . . . . .

Everything *was* settled in a wonderfully short time, and when Gipsy knew at last that in future The White Cottage was to be her home, her delight knew no bounds.

"It looks like a home, doesn't it? More like a home than a flat could ever be," she said one day a few weeks later. By this time they had "moved in". The cottage was bright with fresh wallpapers and paint, carpets and furniture were in their places and looked charming in the little low rooms with their beamed ceilings and quaint fireplaces. Gipsy kept running from room to room, unable to make up her mind which she admired the most, but her own bedroom was one of her chief delights. She had been allowed to plan everything in it herself, from the pretty bed with its rose-coloured quilt to the gay chintz curtains and the bookshelves.

"So, on the whole, it's better than Dinah, is it?" teased Aunt Jack.

"Dinah was lovely to go gipsying in, for a summer holiday. But this — this is a real home. The kind of home one would always want to come back to," answered Gipsy.

EXERCISES

Unexpected Happenings

CHAPTERS I–II

1. Why was Gipsy so pleased and excited when she left the music-room of Mr. Davies?

2. During the time she spent in the bus on the way home from her music lesson, how did Gipsy occupy her mind?

3. When Gipsy arrived home she found that her mother and her aunt were rather sad. What caused this unusual gloom?

4. In the story the headmistress of Wetherton High School is described as *a matter-of-fact person.* What do you think is meant by this expression?

5. What is a " home on wheels " usually called?

Off to the Lake District

CHAPTERS III–IV

1. Upon entering the large garage to inspect the special car which was to be used for the holiday, the visitors found the vehicle covered over. What name is given to such protective covers?

2. Suppose you visited the long stretch of mountains called the Pennine Chain, what kind of stone would you find being taken from the quarries in the district?

3. Having found a camping site, a meal of ham and eggs was cooked. Did the campers cook the meal in real gipsy style? If not, how was the meal prepared?

4. What name is given to the special kind of bed which is provided in caravans, ships, and railway carriages?

5. Which is the largest of the lakes to be found in the Lake District of England?

6. What is the name of the famous poet whose name is always connected with the Lake District because he lived there?

The Homeward Journey

CHAPTERS V–X

1. What happened at Hardrow Scaur when Gipsy visited this beautiful waterfall?

2. A thrilling moment occurred as Gipsy was limping homewards along a narrow footpath beside the railway. In a few words say what happened.

3. In describing the train which had caused so much alarm, the little girl Sally said, "There was lots of puff-puff." What did she mean?

4. After the very enjoyable holiday in a caravan, who became the new tenants of The White Cottage?



V.M.S

VIMALAGIRI ISLAM HIGH SCHOOL
ERNAKULAM.