ion

LTD.,

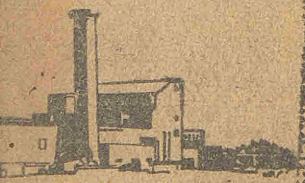
DHNA, SURAT

steps into the
acture—backed up

and a
stry.

ed shortly by daily

families with modern
ents.
ool to all the employees.

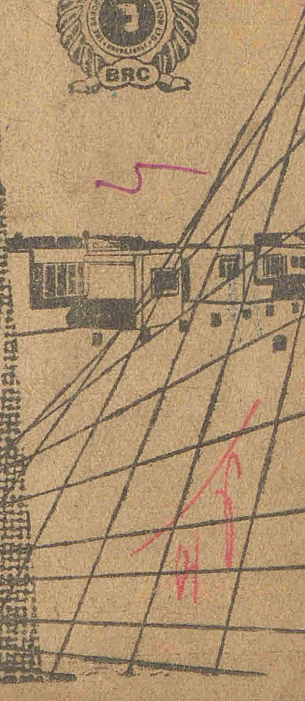


inai & Co. Private Ltd.

White Socks

2135







2435

WHITE-SOCKS

1954

GRACE HUXTABLE

Pictures by the Author

E/37

THOMAS NELSON AND SONS LTD
LONDON EDINBURGH PARIS MELBOURNE
TORONTO AND NEW YORK

WHITE-SOCKS

CHAPTER I

THE NEW HOUSE

'Oh, look!' shouted Jill, and she leaned so far out of the window of the old and rattling taxi-cab that Tony had to grab her frock to stop her from falling. Then *he* craned his neck out.

'Where?' he cried. 'Oh, isn't it a pretty village, Mummy?'

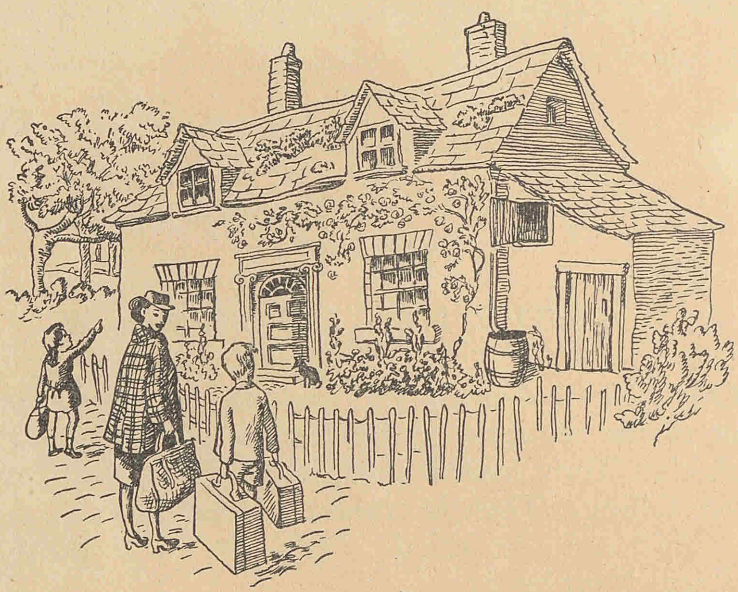
Mother smiled and looked out happily upon the big square village green as the car turned the corner of the road and came to a noisy stop before a small white-washed house.

'You said it was a cottage you had bought,' said Tony accusingly.

'It used to be a small, very small, farm-house,' explained Mother as they all tumbled out.

'It's simply lovely,' sighed Jill, as she hopped on one leg in front of the little white wooden gate. 'It's got just the right number of windows, and look at the golden moss on the roof.'

'Lichen, dear,' said Mother absently, as she took the smaller bag from the cab. The driver



had already carried the trunk up the little cobbled path and bumped it down on the doorstep.

'It's got iron dogs on each side of the door,' cried Jill, and she stroked them lovingly, while Tony—who was ten, and a year older than Jill—carried a suitcase for his mother and thought for the hundredth time that girls were sometimes rather silly.

Mother fitted the key in the door, while the driver touched his cap and drove off, crashing his gears and wheezing the old cab round the corner in a painful way.

'I only wish Daddy was here,' said Jill, and then I am afraid forgot Daddy as the door swung

open invitingly and she and Tony charged into their new home.

Mother had been busy for the last week moving all the furniture from their town house into this new home in the country. Daddy had gone abroad for two years on business, so he and Mother had agreed that the country would be nicer to live in while he was away—which just shows what sensible parents Jill and Tony had. The children were to go to Grammar Schools in the market town near by, but just now it was holiday time, so there was nothing to do but to explore their new home for weeks and weeks. No wonder they were excited !

They ran from room to room, seeing all the usual furniture put into strange places, so that everything looked new and odd and interesting. There was a lovely big living-room, with built-in cupboards beside the fireplace, where china and books and toys all lay just waiting to be used again.

The kitchen had a stone floor, and Mother had put a rag rug in front of the open fireplace like in any country cottage. Outside the kitchen window . . .

'Oh ! It's a real orchard !' shrieked Jill, and she struggled with the old key in the lock of the back door until it turned. She and Tony tumbled helter-skelter out into the green tangle of long grass and overgrown rose bushes ; above

them the branches of the old apple trees bent down with ripening fruit.

'And look at the gooseberry bushes!' shouted Tony as he peered into the prickly bushes to find a few late and juicy berries, sweet and good.

It was a heavenly garden! It had everything anybody could want—a disused well, boarded up for safety, and a rain-butt, large and green and old; and jutting out on one side of the house, of all things, was a little outhouse.

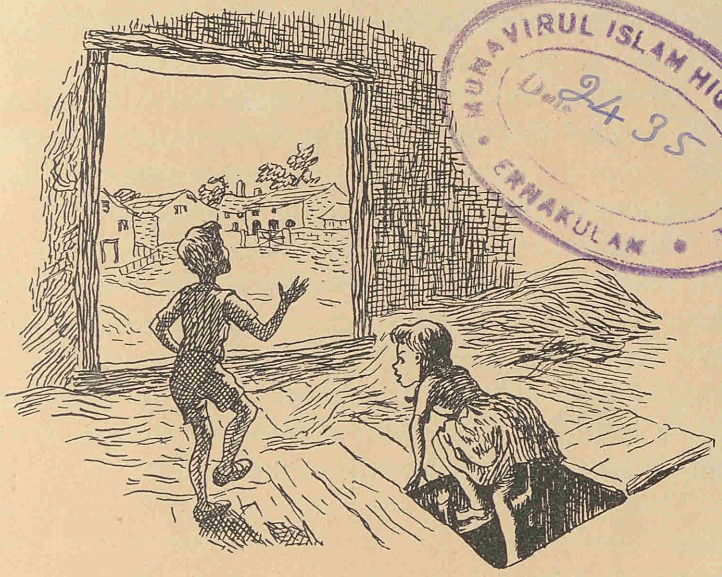
'It's a stable,' said Tony, wrestling with the bolt on the top of the half-door. He flung it open, and then it wasn't a minute before both children were inside, sniffing the smells of straw, old hay and sweetness. A swallow darted out over their heads.

'There's a stone trough,' cried Jill.

'There's a ladder up the wall,' shouted Tony, and he was up it in a second. He pushed back the trap-door at the top, and Jill got a shower of old straw and hay-dust all over her, making her sneeze. Still, that didn't stop her following her brother up the rickety ladder, and there they were in the loft.

'A real loft, all of our own!' they gloated, and danced for joy.

The big window was open, as all good loft windows always are, and they sat in it and dangled their legs looking out over the village green. They could see the neat country houses and cottages



NUMAVIRUL ISLAM HIGH SCHOOL
Dep. 2435
ERNAKULAM

bordering the green, gardens ablaze with roses and all summer flowers, and across the way, directly opposite, a wide gate led into a farmyard where some sleepy hens picked up odd bits of grain in a lazy way and a yellow dog scratched himself in the afternoon sunshine.

'It's perfect!' sighed Jill.

'I'm getting some tea!' called Mother from the garden, and they scrambled down and hugged her till she begged for mercy.

'Oh, thank you, thank you for our lovely, lovely little house,' they chanted in a chorus.

Mother laughed when she could get her breath, 'Well, have your tea quickly, and then you must

help me unpack,' she said. 'You know Daddy said you were to *help*.'

After the most energetic unpacking, and running to and fro, and sorting clothes into drawers and chests, Jill suddenly yawned and Mother remembered the time.

'Gracious! You must both have a double-quick supper and tumble into bed,' she said firmly. 'Long past your usual time. And there's no bath here, so it will have to be just a wash, and then straight off to sleep.' And for once the children didn't think it was too early; they fell asleep when their heads touched the pillows.

They were wakened early by such a lot of noise—more than all the buses and trams and distant factory whistles! Who said the country was quiet? There were cocks crowing, and sheep baaing, and ducks quacking, and even a turkey gobbled now and then. And above all that there was a mooing of cows while a deep manly voice called, 'Ho! Ho! Ho!'

Jill leaned out of her window and Tony leaned out of his, and they blinked the sleep out of their eyes. A thick-set man with an old hat pushed to the back of his head was driving some cows almost under the windows. Some of the cows had already taken the path across the green towards the farm. As the children popped their heads out he saw them and raised a hand in greeting.

'Morning,' he called in a fat, friendly voice.

'Good-morning,' they called back. 'Are you going to milk? Can we watch?'

The farmer laughed. 'Course ye can,' he said. 'Come over when you're dressed. You can't exactly miss it, nor lose your way!'

The children bobbed their heads in quickly.

'Race you dressing, Jill,' hissed Tony as he disappeared. But he only just managed it, and Jill caught him up as he was opening their little gate. Then across the green they pelted, their feet making marks in the dew-drenched grass.

The farm gate was open, and they ran in just as the last cow was lumbering slowly into the dim



cow-shed. A tall red-headed young man slapped her on the flank and smiled at the children, his face turning a fiery red to match his hair, while the cow turned and glared at them and Jill took a timid step backwards.

The farmer came out of the shed and shook hands heartily.

'Here you are then,' he said. 'I spoke to your Ma when she was busy getting your place ready last week.' He grinned, and added, 'She said you'd both be over here first thing you could, and it seems as if she was right. Ha! Hum! I know your names; you'll be Jill, and you'll be Tony, eh? I'm Farmer Giles, and this is my son Syd.'

Everybody shook hands politely, then Tony remembered to say, 'Are you sure we won't be in your way?'

Farmer Giles laughed.

'Not a bit of it. If you are, we'll soon let you know, eh, Syd?'

'Ah,' said Syd, blushing again. He picked up a bucket lying tilted by the cow-shed door. 'Well, best be getting on,' he muttered, and vanished into the gloom.

The farmer picked up a bucket too, and seizing a three-legged stool he strolled into the shed and banged the nearest cow until she moved over. Then he sat himself down with a grunt.

Tony and Jill leaned in through the doorway



NURAVIRUL ISLAM HIGH SCHOOL

and watched. Jill thought to herself how large cows were when you were close to them, and she did not like the way they kept turning to look at her with their big eyes—glaring, was her word.

Farmer Giles noticed things. 'They're tied up ; they won't hurt you, Jill,' he said. Jill smiled faintly, but just then one of the cows stamped and moved, and poor Jill felt her heart in her mouth.

The cows chewed and chewed contentedly, and the milk flowed, noisily at first into the empty buckets, and made a white froth up the sides. Farmer Giles twisted round to talk to his guests, his head resting easily on the cow's flank.

'You'll enjoy your stay here,' he said. 'Your Dad's away, I hear.'

'I've never been to a farm before,' said Jill, keeping a careful eye on the cow, who swung her tail in a very independent way.

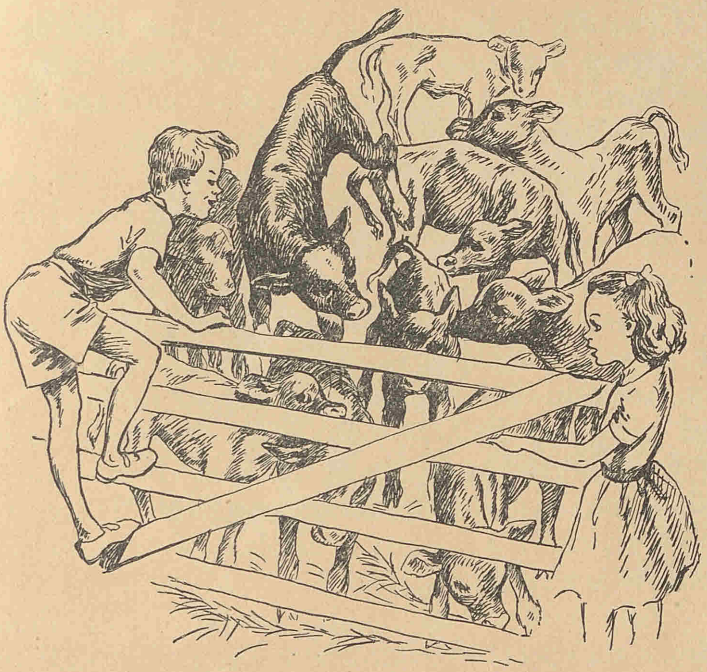
'Look around, look around,' said the kind farmer. 'We're used to children. I like 'em about the place—always sorry my own are grown up. So long as you remember to shut gates behind you *always*, and not to frighten the poultry there's little harm you can do, even if you wanted, which you don't!'

'We'll be very careful,' Tony assured him. 'What's that noise?'

'That? Oh, that's the calves, waiting for their breakfasts. We feed them after we've separated—that's separating the milk from the cream,' he added, seeing Jill's look of bewilderment. 'We have our own breakfasts, then Syd does the separating and the calves are fed. But they keep mooing and setting up a row right till they get it,' and he laughed. 'You can come over and help feed them if you like, after breakfast. Mrs Giles will be pleased for your company.'

The children watched and chatted, while Syd and the farmer milked all the cows. Then it was breakfast-time, and they couldn't finish the meal fast enough. When they got back to the farm the big courtyard was empty.

'The calves are still making a noise though,'



said Tony, though the remark was unnecessary, and he led the way round the back of the buildings.

A gate led into a small field, and pressing up against it were about ten small and bellowing calves. They looked at the children with their large and beautiful eyes, silent for a minute. Then as they saw they came empty-handed the noise broke out again. Moo ! Moo ! Moo ! Tony climbed up on the gate and stroked their curly coats, and even let one or two of the hungry little creatures suck his fingers. But Jill stood back.

Creating a big disturbance in the middle of the group was one particularly naughty calf. It was butting at its neighbours with its hard little head, and kicking out with its hind legs.

'Look, Tony, look at that naughty little one. There—that one with the white socks,' said Jill.

At her voice the little calf looked up. It had a pretty white blaze on its forehead, and the rest of it was shiny, curly brown, except, as Jill said, for its white socks. It looked straight at Jill for a minute, and then it reared up on its hind legs and playfully kicked everybody all round with its forelegs. Then down went its head and it lashed out with its hind legs. Even Tony was a bit shocked at such a display of temper—all because breakfast was late!

'Ah,' said a comfortable voice behind them. 'She's naughty all right, that one. We call her White-socks. A regular little demon she is!'

Mrs Giles stood behind them, carrying two buckets full of a brown milky liquid.

'Is that cocoa?' asked Jill, when they had said good-morning.

Mrs Giles laughed. 'Nay, that's calf-meal mixed with milk. They love it.'

She put the buckets down, and picked up a thick stick which she handed to Tony. 'Maybe you'll keep them away with this,' she said, 'if you will, while I feed them two at a time.'

She opened the gate just a little, and two



eager calves stuck their heads through the opening.

'Beat away the others,' called Mrs Giles. 'Only two at a time can I feed!'

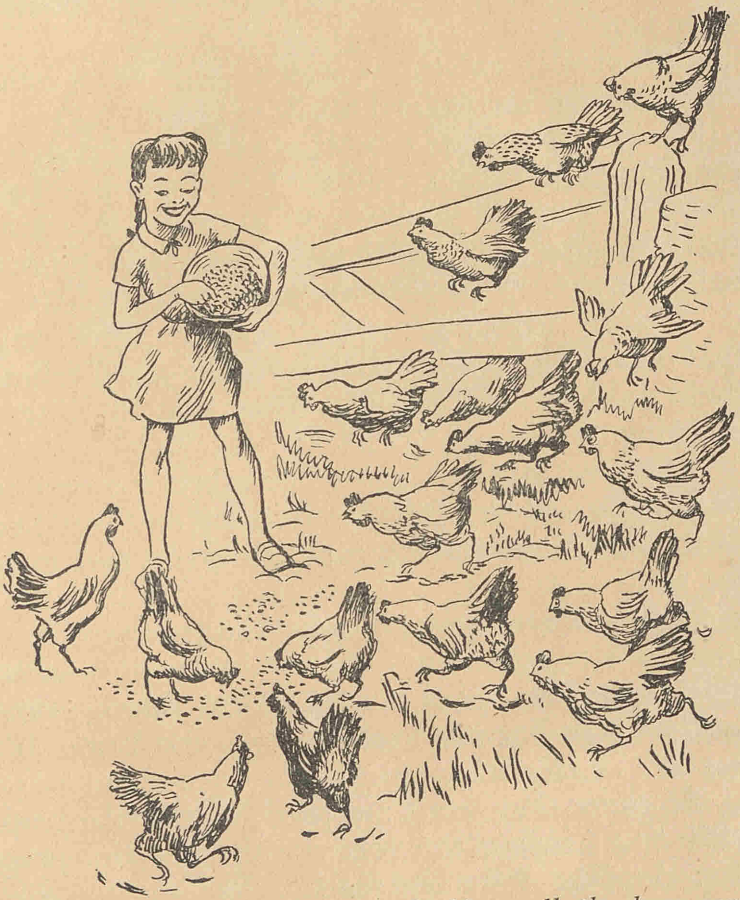
She bent down and put her two hands in the buckets for the first two little calves. They pushed the gate open a little wider, and were just butting their hot little heads to suck from Mrs Giles's kind fingers when with a jump and a rush, a leap and a scramble naughty White-socks charged the buckets, pushing aside her two weaker brothers, and planting her two front feet firmly in the full buckets of meal! What a splashing and confusion! The two little calves stumbled over, the buckets tilted and slopped most of their

contents over Mrs Giles's lap, and it wasn't until she had seized the stick from Tony and beaten White-socks hard over her saucy nose that the calf acknowledged defeat and scrambled back to wait her proper turn.

'My!' said Mrs Giles, setting to work again to feed the first two calves out of the half-empty buckets, with the gate firmly held and Tony standing guard with a vigilant stick. 'That White-socks, she's nothing but trouble! A fine strong little calf, too.'

Jill, who had been keeping well in the background, ventured forwards again. And when White-socks, who was fed next, was feeling a little fuller and gentler, she went so far as to climb up on the bars of the gate and watch more closely. Tony was older, and had once visited a farm before, and so knew what to expect, but for Jill all these animals were new, and as she saw White-socks wicked eye roll in her direction, she said to herself that nothing would make her venture into the calves' field alone.

Mrs Giles was talking. 'Yes,' she said. 'There's nothing we can do with that calf; she'll have to go to market soon, I'm thinking. She's out over the fence several times a day. We can't keep her in—always roaming she is—and she leads the others astray too. Mischievous; but she's a fine little calf for all that, and I'd be sorry if we found her too much trouble to rear. Still,



With a great squawking and clucking, all the hens came half-running, half-flying.

the market it will have to be if she doesn't stop being troublesome. It's one man's work looking after her.'

When the calves were fed Mrs Giles said, 'Would you like to feed the hens, Jill?'

So Jill was given a bowl of corn and, copying the farmer's wife, she called, 'Coop, co-op, coop.' They all laughed when, with a great squawking and clucking, all the hens came half-running, half-flying over the walls and hedges to be fed.

'Farms are fun,' said Tony at lunch-time that day. He and Jill had never stopped telling their mother all the things they had done that morning.

'Can we go back now?' he asked the minute the meal was over. Mother laughed and watched them as they scampered over the green and in at the white gate.

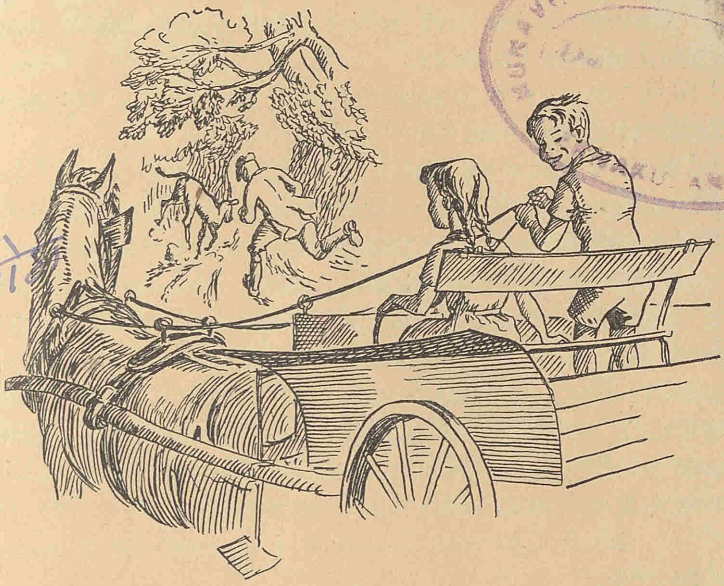
Syd was harnessing the pony to the trap.

'Care to come for a ride?' he asked, and he didn't need to speak twice. 'I'm taking some meal over to Farmer Webb's along the lane. It's not far. Jump in.'

So there they were, perched high in the trap, with Syd holding the reins easily and the pony clop-clopping down the road.

'This is *much* better than a car,' said Jill, beaming.

'Ah,' said Syd, and he took a straw from his cap and sucked it peacefully, while the pony flew



along round a bend in the lane. 'Whoa!' he called, and drew the reins up smartly.

For who should they see racing towards them but naughty White-socks, tail in the air, chasing a chicken. 'Squawk, squawk,' screamed the chicken, fluttering and scrambling, while White-socks snorted at it, nose down, heels up. When the calf saw the pony and trap she turned and raced away down the lane. Without a word Syd whipped up and chased her. The trap swayed from side to side, Tony whooped with glee, and Jill held on tight. Soon the pony caught up on the little calf, and Syd jumped down and threw the reins to Tony to hold. How proud he felt! But

Jill almost screamed when the pony blew and snorted down his nose.

Syd shut White-socks in a field near by and clambered up into the trap again.

'She'll have to do there till I come back,' he said, taking over the reins again and starting off. 'That White-socks, a proper nuisance she is.'

'She's very—fierce, isn't she?' whispered Jill.

'Syd laughed. 'Ah!' he said. 'You won't mind the animals when you know them a bit more. They sometimes seem rough and wild perhaps, but you should see them when they're ill, or when it's snowing, and they need care. Like babies they are, and that grateful for a bit of help. Ah! Gee-up, Charlie!' And he flicked the whip.

Jill hadn't thought of it like that.

The ride to Farmer Webb's and back was all too short, but Syd promised to take them out again in the trap as soon as he had the chance. White-socks was caught and firmly shut in her own field, and they didn't see her again that day. The rest of the time flew by; there were endless new things to watch and notice. And then it was evening and bed-time.

'Never mind,' said Mother as she kissed them good-night. 'It's another day tomorrow.'

CHAPTER II

THE NEXT DAY

BREAKFAST was just finished, and the sun had dried the dew on the grass. Tony and Jill clambered up the ladder in their little stable, squeezed through the trap-door, and sat dangling their legs in the loft window. The neat cottages surrounding the green mostly had their doors open. Busy housewives shook out rugs and chatted to each other, and some groups of children appeared, some playing, some helping their mothers.

Two very small girls—one just a little older and taller than the other, but otherwise as alike as two pins—' or two twins,' said Jill—came trotting out of a cottage at the side of their own house. They each wore a flowered pinafore over a blue frock, and they each had two short yellow pigtails, and rosy cheeks and blue eyes, and very short and sturdy legs. Each carried a large basket and they crossed the green towards the village shop, which had over the door the legend : ' Mrs Banks, Licensed to Sell Tobacco, Confectionery, Sweets,' and in larger letters ' POST OFFICE,' while a blue sign begged one to ' Telephone Here.'

Some dogs were playing tag on the grass.

'That's Shep, the Giles's dog, that black and white collie,' said Tony. 'Oh, look, there's Syd.'

Skidding and swerving through the open white gate of the farm on an old and rusty bicycle came Syd, his red hair flying in the wind. He pedalled rapidly along the side of the green, turned the corner and, nearly colliding with the two very small girls, he fell off the bicycle at the shop and rushed inside.

'I wonder what's up?' asked Tony. 'Not like Syd, you would say, to be in such a hurry.'

'Perhaps Mrs Giles has had an accident and he's going to telephone,' said Jill.

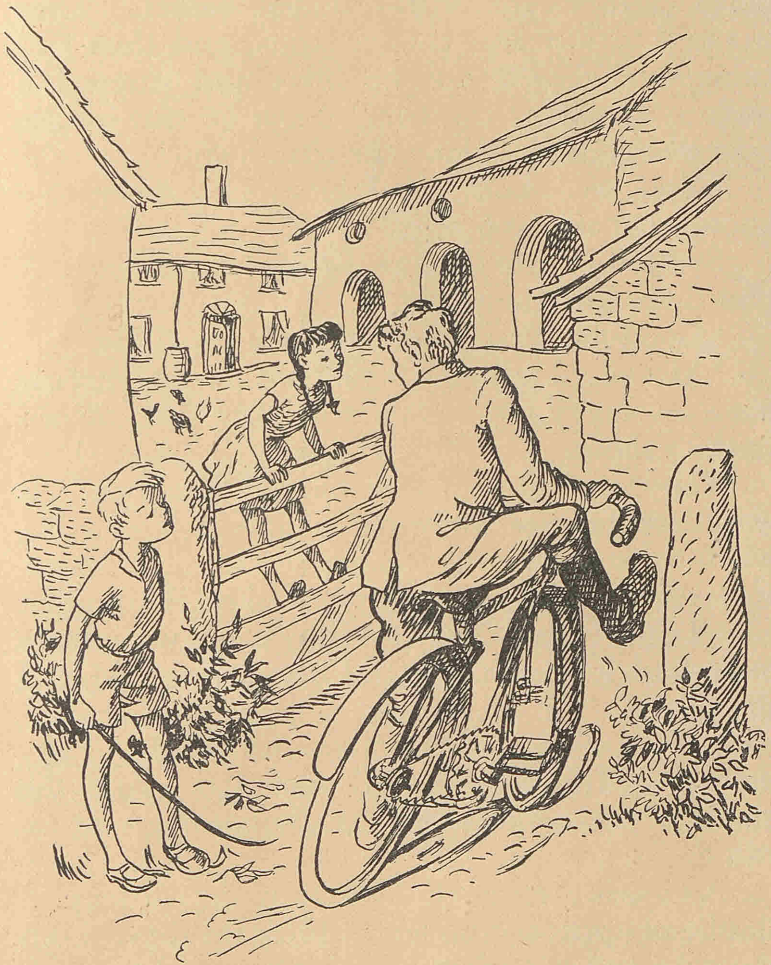
'Can't be ; I saw Mrs Giles just a minute ago.'

'Perhaps she's got a headache and wants some aspirin.'

'Perhaps your grandmother,' said Tony firmly. 'I'm going down to see what I can see.'

With one accord they scrambled down the ladder and were out by the gate before you could say knife. Syd was still in the shop. They sauntered across the green and Jill began to swing on the farm gate while Tony swished at nettles with a stick that was leaning by the post. Minutes went by. Everything was quite peaceful; nothing stirred in the courtyard—though that in itself was unusual ; Shep barked and leapt in the grass with the other dogs ; women called to each other from the houses. But still no Syd.

In the distance the two tiny girls staggered



'Morning,' said Syd. 'You'll have to excuse me.'

down the steps of Mrs Banks's shop, each weighed down on one side with a laden basket. They stopped to rest and change arms, and then Syd came out, picked up the bike, and stopped a minute to talk to the two. Then he was on the bike and charging along the road again.

'You see,' said Tony bitterly. 'Even *they* know what the trouble is.'

Syd fell off the bike at their feet and swung it past them into the yard.

'Good-morning,' said Tony very politely.

'Morning,' said Syd. 'You'll have to excuse me . . . hurry. . . . See you later,' he turned back to shout.

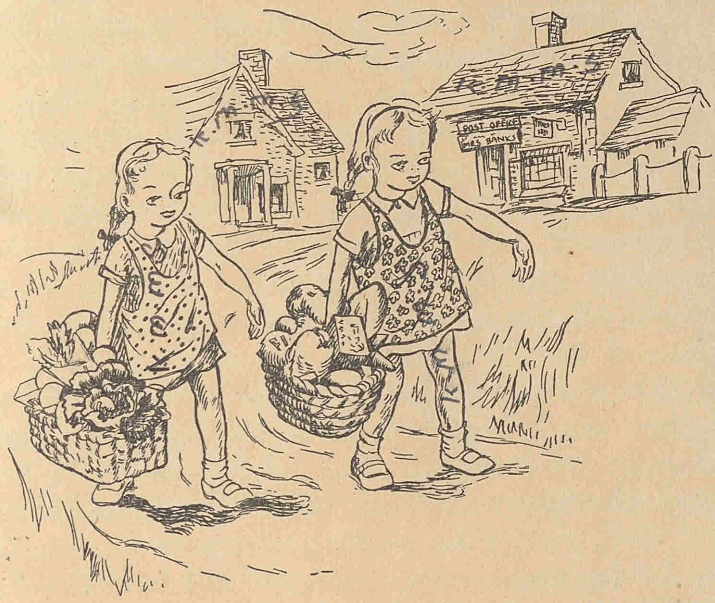
Tony swished at nettles harder than ever. It was dreadful not knowing what was going on, when there was really nothing else to think about.

'What about your stamps?' asked Jill timidly.

'Tchah!' said Tony. 'Why can't we just go in and ask if we can help? I mean, we could feed the calves.'

'Oh no, we couldn't,' said Jill firmly. 'Besides they'll have been fed ages ago. And the chickens too. And there's really nothing else we can do.'

A moody silence fell, broken by the clatter and shuffle of approaching feet. Jill leapt down from the gate and it clicked to. Tony ceased to swish nettles, and gazed instead at the spectacle which was just marching by. The two little girls were



struggling along with their baskets piled high with groceries. Their cheeks—what Tony could see of them—were scarlet and their mouths were compressed and stern while the breath whistled in and out of their nostrils. They were very, very young and they were staggering from side to side of the road, tacking like ships in full sail against the wind.

Just as they came abreast of the farm gate the handle of one basket broke with a loud snap, and tomatoes, eggs, potatoes, a jar of malt, a bag of sugar and some bacon spilled themselves into the dust and scattered.

The little girl was not the sort to cry. She looked at the disaster and her cheeks grew, if possible, a little redder ; that was all. With a sigh she stooped and started to put the things back again. Jill and Tony rushed to help, and most of the stuff, except for one broken egg, was pushed back somehow into the basket ; but the sugar bag was broken and little drifts of white escaped all the time. Jill knelt in the dust and balanced one thing on the other.

'There !' cried the other little girl. 'Now Mother won't half be vexed ! I said you were too little to carry all that lot !' She put her own basket down carefully and rubbed her hands.

'Well,' said Jill reasonably, 'it was the handle that broke, you know. She couldn't help that.'

'That's not it,' said the little girl, looking remarkably sharp. 'She's too little to manage, that's the trouble. Now me, I'm the eldest, I can carry things all right without for ever dropping them.' Then she suddenly let out a shriek. 'Oh, Maisie ! Now however did you let me forget ! We've gone and forgotten the pegs ! Mother'll be ever so cross, what with the basket and everything ; now you stay here with the boy and girl and I'll get 'em.'

And, leaving her own basket and the ruin of the other, she trotted as fast as her two short legs could carry her back to the shop.

Jill finished packing the parcels back in the

basket, while Maisie stood first on one fat leg and then on the other, and Tony very kindly fished a piece of string out of his pocket and mended the handle as well as he could. By this time all three were the best of friends, and Maisie told them all about the new baby at their house, and how she and Doris both had to help Mum all they could, and mostly always did the shopping, and how Dad was a thatcher and thatched Mr Giles's ricks for him.

Doris, hot and panting, arrived, looking exactly like Maisie, but pinker and an inch or two taller, and clutching a paper bag full of clothes-pegs.

'Now then, Maisie,' she said briskly, between pants, and sounding as if she were at least twelve years old and not just a pocket-size six. 'Now, then, come away off that bit of road or you'll be in the way when Mr Smart comes. He'll come rushing along in his Austin and run you down as soon as look at you. And don't be all day about it. Just you pick up that basket the kind boy's mended for you and come along.' (Tony at once felt about three years old.)

Jill felt about as small as Maisie, and she asked humbly as Doris urged her little sister across the green, 'Who is Mr Smart?'

Doris turned. 'He's the vet,' she said scornfully. 'I thought everybody knew that. He's a terror, Mr Smart is. Mr Giles's cow's ill. Come on, Maisie.'

'Well!' gasped Tony. 'And I thought girls weren't tough! I hope I never meet her when she's older, that's all! Tough! Jill, have you ever seen anybody like her?'

'No,' said Jill truthfully. 'I never have. And I'll never again say country people are slow. Those kids can't be more than six, Tony.'

They both gazed after the indomitable couple, staggering their uncertain way beneath the weight of groceries. Jill thought to herself sadly, '*She* would never be scared of a calf, Doris wouldn't! She'd give it one hit and it would fall down!'

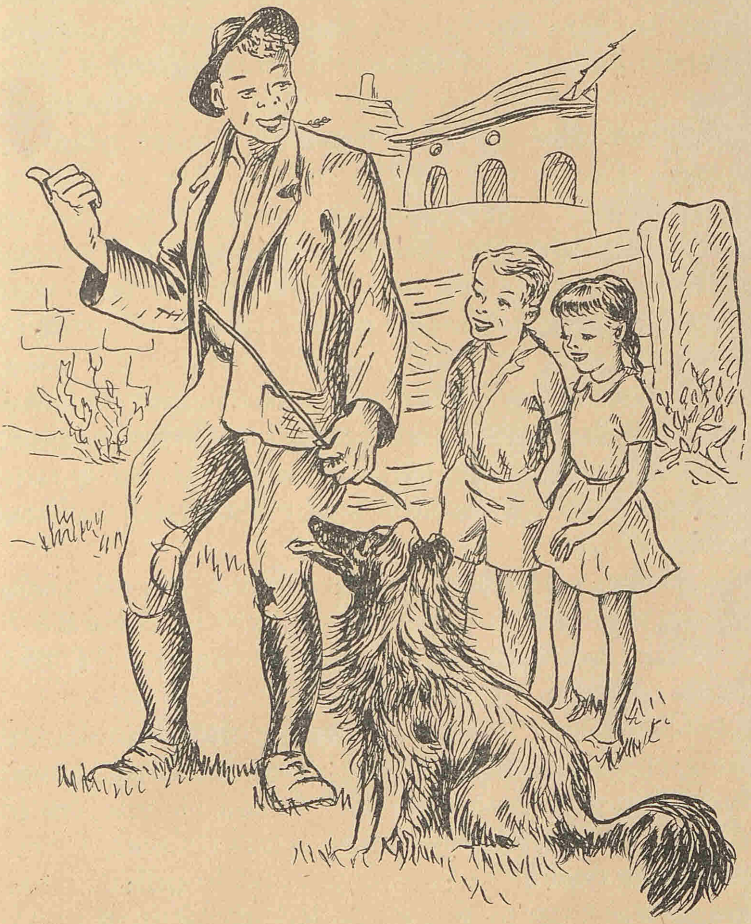
There was a wild hoot and a flurry of dust, and a small dilapidated car shot up the road and came to a standstill right at their feet. With a scream of brakes it stopped just as Tony shot a yard into the air.

A man with a red face peered out. 'Open the gate, young man!' he roared.

Tony jumped to attention and swung the gate wide, and the car, rocketing and bouncing on the rough ground, swept past them into the farm courtyard and round the corner of the house to the front entrance. They heard a jolly roar, 'Mrs Giles! Mrs Giles! Where's your good man? What?' and gradually the roar sank to a mutter.

'Mr Smart,' murmured Tony, rather unnecessarily. 'Wonder how the cow is?'

Just then Syd appeared looking his normal



'Going up to look at the sheep,' he said.

steady self again. No-one could think he had been the wild and dishevelled figure hurtling along to Mrs Banks's so short a time ago. He grinned amiably at the children, plucked a long grass and put it in his mouth and remarked, 'The vet, that is. Mr Smart. Smart man he is too. Cow's sick, that's why I was in such a mortal hurry. Telephoning I was ; you have to be quick with cows because they go under easy once they start. But she'll do all right now that the vet's come. Father puts a power of faith in him.'

He took the grass out of his mouth and whistled shrilly. Shep raced instantly up to his master, and sat wagging his tail in the dust, and gazing adoringly with his soft bright eyes. Syd took no notice of him.

'Going up to look at the sheep,' he said, picking up the stick. 'Would you care to come?'

'Can a duck swim?' asked Tony. 'I like sheep anyway.'

With Shep following obediently they skirted the green and turned in the direction of the moor. Syd opened a gate and they found themselves in a huge field, half moor, half grazing-land, where in the far corner some sheep stood huddled. The rough track on to the moor led across it, dipping and rising, and beyond the farther hedge lay the moor itself.

Syd did not follow the track but began to

walk across the field to the sheep. Their way passed by a grassy mound, too small to be called a hill.

'What's that?' asked Tony.

'A barrow,' said Syd.

'If that's a barrow, I'm an Austin Seven,' said Tony smartly and giggled.

Syd laughed. 'Oh, not a wheel-barrow, Tony. It's a burial mound of the old chaps who lived here long, long ago—the Britons. They always buried their chiefs and important men with earth piled above them in this way; it must have been higher then. Inside, I believe, there are two or three stone rooms, or passages, and beside the dead man they buried his weapons and his drinking cups and ornaments. I've never seen inside one myself, though many people used to come up here in father's young days, digging and excavating.'

'Well!' said Jill, impressed and excited. 'How perfectly wonderful, Syd! Do you think we could excavate one and try to find things some day? Real Ancient Britons were they, Syd?'

'Ay,' said Syd. 'Real Ancient Britons right enough they were, but I doubt if you'd find anything even if you were to dig for a week, Jill. Most of these graves were robbed hundreds of years ago anyway, and the professors and people took everything else. Not but what a friend of

father's once found an old gold collar one day when he was digging for draining ! '

Even Tony was excited by that.

' Come on, Jill,' he cried, and they ran up the slope and on to the top of the mound. It was disappointing, for there was only a little hollow at the top, covered with rough tussocks like the rest of it. No chance of treasure here ; it must have been opened and filled in again ! They looked over to the moor, and, sure enough, they could see other little mounds here and there in the distance. Ancient Britons !

A cloud slid over the sun. The moor looked very grim and desolate. There were patches of bright green among the purple heather.

' There's quite a lot of grass on the moor,' said Tony.

' Not grass,' said Syd, ' or not much of it. That green is bog. It's deep and dangerous, and you've got to watch how you go. Mostly the animals know where it's deep, and we don't lose many ; but if one does stray, and does put his foot where he shouldn't—squelch, in he goes, and the mud sucks him down, and then he's gone.'

Jill shuddered.

' That bog must have swallowed many an animal in days past—ay, and men too for that matter. It's deep beyond man's measuring. Ah, you need to be careful of bog-land, and where

you see that bright green of the moss, that's where you need to watch out! Do you see the Stone?'

The children looked, and just then the sun came out again. They saw a big stone, like a column, rearing huge and tall and grey on the moor not far from the gateway.

'That's a Druid Stone,' said Syd. 'You've heard of the Druids?' The children nodded.

'Nobody knows or can know how the folk in those days put up such great stones without knowing our engineering ways or having cranes or anything of that sort. But on many of the moors around these parts they've got the Druid Stones—for ancient worship, no doubt.'

'The Ancient Britons were here long, long before the Romans, weren't they?' said Jill. She was standing on a burial mound and looking at a Druid Stone. It was old things coming alive, and although it was exciting, she shivered.

'It's a very long time ago,' said Tony quietly.

Shep whined; he was tired of staying still.

Syd said, 'Ah, Shep! What about those sheep?' And he waved his arm and whistled, so that Shep knew what he had to do and raced off, barking, to the far corner of the field. The sheep bunched closer together when they saw the dog coming. Then when he drew near them they scattered wildly so that Shep had to be very clever to drive them in some sort of order to where

Syd was waiting to count them and look them over.

An old ram, trotting in state behind the flock, stopped once or twice to teach the impudent dog a lesson. He made short rushes at Shep, who stood and barked at him. Then the ram lowered his head and charged with his great curling horns, so that Shep edged away respectfully, showing his teeth. But soon the flock, breathless and in some disorder, was huddled near the entrance gate, and Shep lay down near by, panting, his tongue out and his bright eyes alert to see any straying member.

Jill and Tony watched from the top of the barrow while Syd counted the flock rapidly, and the sheep stood still and nervous, eyes on Shep.

' Where's the ram ? ' asked Tony.

There was a lumbering sound behind them on the mound, a panting breath, and in one flash Jill saw the big ram close beside her. With a vicious butt of its great head it knocked poor Tony flying down the side of the barrow, head over heels. The ram, victorious, just stopped to scrape its sharp and angry hoofs on the grass, and then turned on Jill. But with a yell and one leap Jill landed safe below beside the startled Syd, while Shep streaked up and over the mound and with snapping jaws pursued the fleeing ram in a fine half-circle.

Syd burst into a great shout of laughter. He



bent double, hands on knees, his face scarlet. 'Ha, ha, ha!' he roared. 'Ha, ha, ha! Excuse me, but . . . ha, ha, ha . . . you did look a comical sight. I shall never forget it, never. Oh my, but you looked great coming down in a bundle, and that old ram looking down the side after you. Ha, ha, ha!' And he was off again.

'My goodness!' gasped Tony, getting up slowly and painfully. He rubbed his seat tenderly. 'Ow!' he cried. 'I won't be able to sit down for a week!'

'It's all right for you, Syd,' said Jill indignantly, half crying with fright. 'But I don't *like* rams. I never would have thought a—a *sheep* would be savage. I'll never like sheep again, never! I thought they were gentle!'

'So they are, so they are, Jill,' gasped Syd

between hiccoughs of laughter; and taking out his handkerchief he wiped his eyes. 'So they are. I can't think what got into that old ram. But I tell you what I'll do; I'll move him right away now into that field over there all by himself, shut away from this lot of sheep, and then when you want to go up on the moor—and you'll be wanting to do that, I know—you won't be worried. That's what I'll do Don't you worry. Oh, but dang me, if Tony didn't look funny!' And off he went into gales of laughter once more.

In the end Tony began to laugh too, and Syd, his shoulders still shaking with laughter, cried, 'Come on, Shep, fetch 'im, fetch 'im!' and took endless trouble to herd the old ram across the field and through a gate to another field. There they could see him glaring through the bars, but quite, quite safe. Jill felt mightily relieved when he was shut away.

'There!' said Syd when that was done. 'Now when you two want to explore the moor you won't be troubled by him.'

And soon they were all three walking back home again, Tony groaning now and then, and Shep chasing after imaginary rabbits.

When they reached the farm, Mrs Giles met them in the courtyard.

'Morning, Jill and Tony,' she said, and then: 'Now, Syd, the vet's been and gone, and Daisy'll do all right except for Father having to be with

her for a bit, poulticing and keeping her warm. So you get on as fast as you can, for we're all behindhand with the work and I'm run off my feet. I'm sure Jill and Tony will excuse your company, for there's much to do.'

'We'll push off,' said Tony quickly. 'And thank you, Syd, for telling us about the barrows.'

'Rather,' said Jill. Then as they walked across the green she said, 'Let's ask Mother if we can go a picnic.'

CHAPTER III

ON THE MOORS

MOTHER was in the kitchen, packing the sandwiches and fruit and tomatoes and chunks of cake for the picnic. Tony stuffed everything into two small rucksacks while Jill fetched the walking-sticks she and Tony always carried on their tramps.

'Now remember,' said Mother, 'what I've told you. Be careful not to go near the bogs. Keep to the tracks on the moor as much as you can; but where it looks bright green, or mossy, that's bog-land, and very dangerous. You can sink very deep in those bogs, Mr Giles was telling me. So mind you are careful and sensible.'

Both children promised. 'We will remember,'

they said, and Mother was satisfied they meant it. ' We know all about the bogs. Syd was telling us.'

' And be back for tea,' called Mother, waving from the gate as Tony and Jill set off, rucksacks on backs. They turned the corner of the green and took the track which led through the field. The sheep were grazing placidly, and there was no sign of the ram through the far gate.

' I like sheep,' said Jill. ' Except rams,' she added hastily.

Tony frowned ; he wished he had a sister who wasn't nervous.

' You shouldn't talk like that,' he said rather crossly. ' Nobody will ever *know* if you don't talk about it.' And he whacked at a thistle with his stick. Jill walked on, thumping with her feet.

' Well, I don't care,' she said at last. ' I can't help it. I try and I try, but I'm still frightened of cows, and of horses too when I'm close to them ; they're so big.'

Tony grunted. ' Well, you're not doing so badly really, I suppose. You're getting used to the calves for a start— —'

' All except White-socks,' said Jill quickly.

' . . . and next week I think you ought to begin driving the cows or something like that. With a stick, of course. Then that will get you used to them.' He looked sideways at Jill, who had given a little sigh. ' Well, I say, Jill, you can't be a *coward*, you know.'

'No,' agreed Jill rather sadly. And they walked on in silence till they came to the gateway on to the purple heath-covered moor.

'Hallo!' cried Tony. 'This bit of hedge is tumbling down. I wonder if the sheep have been straying.'

They leaned over the gate and looked across the moor. The curlews whistled in the blue sky, the wind sighed over the sweet heather, and it was very still and hot.

'Nothing about,' said Tony, and the children went through on to the moor, shutting the gate carefully behind them. Away to the right, not far from the earth bank enclosing the moorland, was the old Druid Stone. The children turned in that direction, dawdling, and when they reached the base of the stone they slipped off their rucksacks and sat down.

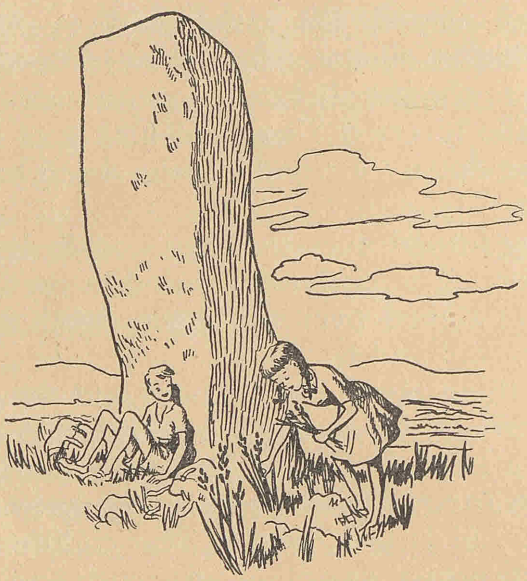
Tony wiped his brow. 'Whew! It's hot,' he said. Jill began to pick rushes and heather.

'There's bog on the far side of the Stone,' she said. 'Do you think we ought to move?'

Tony shook his head. 'It's safe enough here,' he said. 'There are patches of it all over the place, but if we look where we're going it's all right.'

Jill listened. 'Is that a curlew calling? Perhaps we're near a nest.' They stayed very still and the sound came again.

'That's no curlew,' cried Tony, jumping up.



'Who-oo-oo-oo. Whooo-oo,' came the call. It was more of a wheeze than a whistle.

Jill cried, 'That's an animal, not a bird!' and she ran round the Stone. There, sunk to its shoulders in the middle of a smallish patch of bog, almost still but with its head moving feebly in the oozy green, was a slime-covered, frantic-eyed calf.

'Whoo-oo-oo,' it called again weakly, its big eyes rolling, red and terrified.

'Oh,' whispered Jill. 'Oh, Tony, the poor calf!'

Tony cried, 'It's White-socks! See the blaze on her forehead!' And he took a quick step

forward. 'We must get her out,' he said. Jill seized his arm.

'Tony, don't—you can't go in the bog. You'll be caught yourself!' She looked round the empty moor. 'There's nobody here. Oh, if only there was someone to help!'

'Well, there isn't,' said Tony gruffly. 'It's us or nobody.'

'Ooo-oo-oo,' wheezed White-socks in answer, turning her head to them a little and plunging her feet in the mud. There was a horrid sucking sound, and her back sank lower under the green surface.

The children couldn't bear this, orders or no orders. 'All right, White-socks,' called Tony. 'We'll get you out!'

But though he sounded confident, he had no idea how to begin. It was Jill, still looking over the moor, who suddenly cried out and ran to the hedge.

'Come on, Tony,' she yelled; and she was tugging at an old hurdle, leaning in a gap between two trees, before Tony quite saw what she was after. But as he ran to help Jill to drag the hurdle down and tug it over to the bog, he could see that here was a plan which might work.

White-socks, quiet now and too tired to struggle, lay in the marsh with only her head and shoulders above the surface. She was breathing in quick gasps.

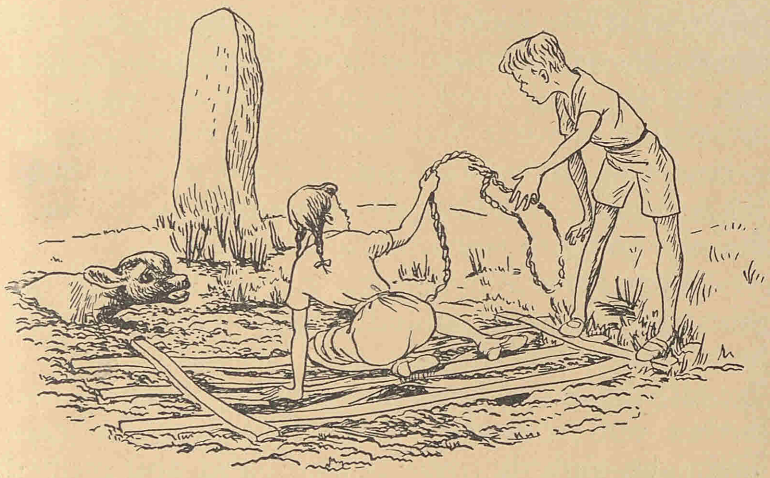
Tony and Jill didn't need to say anything to each other ; they both knew what they would do. They would push the hurdle across the boggy ground where it would float for long enough for them to crawl across it and reach the little calf.

They slid it out from the firm heather, across a little belt of rushes, out on to the bright green moss, which looked so attractive for little calves to nibble. Yes, they could reach White-socks all right ; if they pushed it over only a little more they would be near enough to seize hold of her head and try to pull her out. But how ? Calves are heavy things, even without sticky mud. The children stopped, the hurdle half-way across.

' Wait,' said Tony suddenly. ' I've got an idea. Wasn't there an old halter by the tree ? ' And he raced back to the hedge. Yes, he was right.

' I've got it ! ' he shouted triumphantly, waving the halter and its long strong rope as he ran back to where Jill crouched waiting by the bog. ' Now we really can do something.'

With the halter wound round his shoulders, Tony helped Jill to push the hurdle its full length over the mud, where it floated well enough, one side of it resting on firm ground. Jill stood up, while Tony, his face screwed up with effort, crawled forward, a few inches at a time. Now he was over the reeds, now he began to go over the treacherous moss ; but the hurdle began to



give and tilt down, so that he shuffled back hastily. Kneeling back on his heels, he wiped his muddy hands on his trousers, scratched his ear, and frowned.

'Ooo-oo-oo!' mooed the little calf feebly.

Jill pushed Tony to one side. 'Let me try. I'm lighter than you,' she said breathlessly, and she knelt gently on the middle bar of the hurdle as it lay longwise. Then she turned sideways to even out her weight, and shuffled crab-wise along the wooden slats. Tony stood with his feet braced on the edge of the hurdle to try to keep it level. Gently Jill eased herself along. The hurdle moved and dipped a little, but it stayed on the surface.

Now Jill was near the calf, and she held an arm out for the rope.

'Good girl, Jill,' said Tony softly, not to

frighten White-socks. He threw the rope ; Jill caught it, and turned to find the big imploring eyes of the calf fixed on her. She remembered something of what Syd had said. What was it ? —how you felt when animals needed your help. Jill suddenly *knew* that she was going to do this ; she was going to rescue White-socks all right.

' Dear little White-socks, sweet little pet,' she murmured, but very quietly so that Tony wouldn't hear. ' It's all right now.'

All the time she was leaning farther and farther out from the hurdle and over the calf. Then she took the rope in one hand and pushed it bravely right into the bog under White-socks' head, and her other hand pulled it out at the other side. There ! Now White-socks had the rope under her head. Jill stayed quite still thinking. That wouldn't do. When they pulled the rope, White-socks would choke. She would have to put the rope under her shoulders—but she couldn't reach !

She cried, ' I can't reach, Tony ! ' and tears filled her voice.

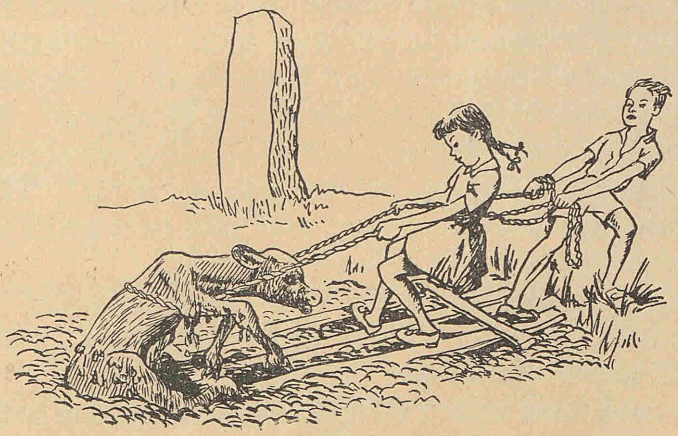
Tony bit his hands with impatience there on the edge. He said, ' Jill ! I know. Keep it under her head and *pull*. Pull as hard as you can ; never mind her choking. Then when her head's up, get the rope round lower down. But whatever you do, *don't cry*, or you can't do anything ! Go to it, you're doing fine ! '

Jill sniffed bravely, and then : ' Poor little White-socks. I'm going to pull you out now,' she said, and she tugged with all her strength on the rope.

Poor White-socks indeed ! The rope came tight round her throat, and feeling herself choke she gave a last tremendous kick, and a miracle happened. She got one bent knee up on the hurdle and lay half on it, her head on one side, froth bubbling out of her mouth.

' Quick, Jill, the hurdle's giving ! ' yelled Tony. ' Pull for your life ! '

Frightened as she was, Jill didn't hesitate. She felt her knees sinking in the slime, but she slackened the rope and pushed it well round White-socks' shoulders before she pulled again on it. Oh, how she pulled ! She saw White-socks begin to lift out of the mud, and then the hurdle began to sink



lower, so that, rope in hand, she shuffled back to where Tony had come forward a step or two and could hold on too.

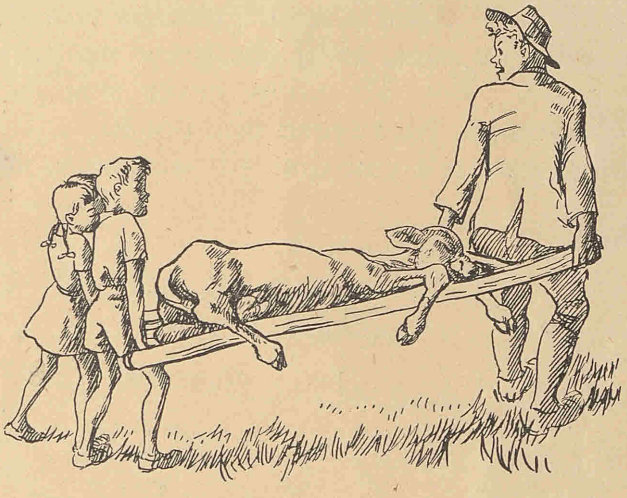
'*Heave-ho!*' shouted Tony, and they dragged White-socks up. Half on, half off the hurdle she lay, half in, half out of the mud. But she felt the sinking hurdle beneath her, and kicked and scrambled for a footing, so that by the time they had dragged her to the edge she was helping herself and it wasn't so difficult.

There she lay, naughty White-socks, safe at last on the rushes! But what a mess she was in! Covered in green slime and bad-smelling mud from head to foot, and not a white sock to be seen. After that last struggle she was so weary that she shut her eyes and laid her head down on the reeds and grasses, her sides heaving for breath.

Tony wiped her down with handfuls of dry grass. He looked at Jill with quite a new look in his eyes. If anybody had been there to see, they might have called it a look almost of respect. But he didn't say anything, and Jill picked grasses too, and began to clean White-socks up a bit. Then Tony gave a little cough, and said in a gruff sort of voice, 'You did jolly well.'

Jill grew quite pink with pleasure under the mud on her face. Then she said, 'Wasn't I silly ever to be frightened?'

And then after a minute Tony said, 'I'd better



cut along to the farm. They'll have to carry White-socks down. Wait here, I'll soon be back.' He set off at a steady jog-trot, while Jill stroked White-socks' dirty coat. The little calf opened one eye, rolled it at her, and then shut it again.

It didn't seem long before Syd came running, dragging a gate he had lifted off its hinges.

'Ah,' he said, moving a straw from one side of his mouth to the other. 'Guess Father'll want to thank you for this, Jill. Tony tells me you did it nearly single-handed.'

'I never did!' protested Jill. But there was no breath for more. It was heavy work carrying White-socks home on the gate for a stretcher.

I should like to be able to say that White-socks was ever after this a good and model calf; but

she never was. After a week's rest she was almost as naughty as ever, until she grew up and got some sense. But Mr Giles never sent her to market, because Jill begged him not to.

And I can tell you that Jill was never afraid again.

She is a good Cow
~~ah~~
This is a good book.
A good story.



Printed in Great Britain by
Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, Edinburgh

IE BA

'Ano

by the te
p

'The

'48 to

'The pro



...inaugura

ODA RAYON CORPORATI

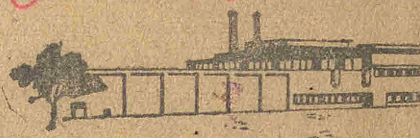
ayon Yarn Manufacturer in India—the seventh Viscose Filament Rayon Yarn
industry today. A Rupee-Eight Crore Project standing on 320 acres will
al know-how of ASAHI CHEMICAL INDUSTRY COMPANY LIMITED, and
nd machinery supplied by MITSUBISHI SHOJI KAISHA LTD., TOKYO (JAPAN)
uarter million pounds per annum of Viscose Filament Rayon Yarn for the text
any has its own power plant with a capacity of generating 10,000 kw

The new plant's daily production of by-products will be:

sulphuric acid, 5 tons of Carbon-di-sulphide, 10 tons of Sodium Sulphate, to be
production of 20 tons of Caustic Soda, 20 tons of Staple Fibre Yarn

ese activities will at the beginning provide 1100 people with livelihood and, initi
accommodation and also an industrial housing colony for labourers with 192
t the same time will make available the complete facilities of a hospital, club a

White Socks.
2435.



Managing Agents: Goe