WIDENER LIBRARY
HX DMDI U

RE TISH

MARY ROBERTS RINEHART

Digitized by Google
Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

AL 3147.5.20

HARVARD
COLLEGE
LIBRARY

Digitized by Google
Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

MORE TISH

MARY ROBERTS RINEHART

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

MORE TISH

By MARY ROBERTS RINEHART

Author of

"Tish," "Bab, a Sub-Deb," "A Poor Wise Man," "Affinities, and Other Stories," "The After House," "Long Live the King," "Where There's a Will," "Window at the White Cat," etc.

A. L. BURT COMPANY

Publishers New York

Published by arrangement with George H. Doran Company

Digitized by Google

Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

HARVARD COLLEGE
LIBRARY

Prof. Samuel H. Ayres

Copyright, 1921,
By George H. Doran Company

Copyright, 1912, 1917, 1919,
By The Curtis Publishing Company

Printed in the United States of America

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

CONTENTS

I

PAGE

THE CAVE ON THUNDER CLOUD 9

II

TISH DOES HER BIT 75

III

SALVAGE 161

Digitized by Google

Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

THE CAVE ON THUNDER CLOUD

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

MORE TISH

THE CAVE ON THUNDER CLOUD

I

IT is doubtful if Aggie and I would have known anything about Tish's plan had Aggie not seen the advertisement in the newspaper. She came to my house at once in violent excitement and with her bonnet over her ear, and gave me the newspaper clipping to read. It said:

"WANTED: A small donkey. Must be gentle, female, and if possible answer to the name of Modestine. Address X 27, Morning News."

"Well," I said when I had read it, "did you insert the advertisement or do you propose to answer it?"

Aggie was preparing to take a drink of water, but, the water being cold and the weather warm,

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

she was dabbing a little on her wrists first to avoid colic. She looked up at me in surprise.

"Do you mean to say, Lizzie," she demanded, "that you don't recognize that advertisement?"

"Modestine?" I reflected. "I've heard the name before somewhere. Didn't Tish have a cook once named Modestine?"

But it seemed that that was not it. Aggie sat down opposite me and took off her bonnet. Although it was only the first of May, the weather, as I have said, was very warm.

"To think," she said heavily, "that all the time while I was reading it aloud to her when she was laid up with neuralgia she was scheming and planning and never saying a word to me! Not that I would have gone; but I could have sent her mail to her, and at least have notified the authorities if she had disappeared."

"Reading what aloud to her—her mail?" I asked sharply.

"'Travels with a Donkey,'" Aggie replied. "Stevenson's 'Travels with a Donkey.' It isn't safe to read anything aloud to Tish any more. The older she gets the worse she is. She thinks that what any one else has done she can go and do. If she should read a book on poultry-farming she would think she could teach a young hen to lay an egg."

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

As Aggie spoke a number of things came back to me. I recalled that the Sunday before, in church, Tish had appeared absorbed and even more devout than usual, and had taken down the headings of the sermon on her missionary envelope; but that, on my leaning over to see if she had them correctly, she had whisked the paper away before I had had more than time to see the first heading. It had said "Rubber Heels."

Aggie was pacing the floor nervously, holding the empty glass.

"She's going on a walking tour with a donkey, that's what, Lizzie," she said, pausing before me. "I could see it sticking out all over her while I read that book. And if we go to her now and tax her with it she'll admit it. But if she says she is doing it to get thin don't you believe it."

That was all Aggie would say. She shut her lips and said she had come for my recipe for caramel custard. But when I put on my wraps and said I was going to Tish's she said she would come along.

Tish lives in an apartment, and she was not at home. Miss Swift, the seamstress, opened the door and stood in the doorway so we could not enter.

"I'm sorry, Miss Aggie and Miss Lizzie," she said, putting out her left elbow as Aggie tried to

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

duck by her; "but she left positive orders to admit nobody. Of course if she had known you were coming—but she didn't."

"What are you making, Miss Letitia?" Aggie asked sweetly. "Summer clothes?"

"Yes. Some little thin things—it's getting so hot!"

"Humph! I see you are making them with an upholsterer's needle!" said Aggie, and marched down the hall with her head up.

I was quite bewildered. For even if Tish had decided on a walking tour I couldn't imagine what an upholsterer's needle had to do with it, unless she meant to upholster the donkey.

We got down to the entrance before Aggie spoke again. Then:

"What did I tell you?" she demanded. "That woman's making her a——"

But at that very instant there was a thud under our feet and something came "ping" through the floor not six inches from my toe, and lodged in the ceiling. Aggie and I stood looking up. It had made a small round hole over our heads, and a little cloud of plaster dust hung round it.

"Somebody shot at us!" declared Aggie, clutching my arm. "That was a bullet!"

I stooped down and felt the floor. There was

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

a hole in it, and from somewhere below I thought I heard voices. It was not very comfortable, standing there on top of Heaven knows what; but we were divided between fear and outrage, and our indignation won. With hardly a word we went back to the rear staircase and so to the cellar. Halfway down the stairs both of us remembered the same thing—that it was Tish's day to use the basement laundry, and that perhaps——

Tish was not in the laundry, nor was Hannah, her maid. But Tish's blue-and-white dressing sacque was on the line, and the blue had run, as I had said it would when she bought it. In the furnace room beyond we heard voices, and Aggie opened the door.

Tish and Hannah were both there. They had not heard us.

"Nonsense!" Tish was saying. "If anybody had been hit we'd have heard a scream; or if they were killed we'd have heard 'em fall."

"I heard a sort of yell," said poor Hannah. "I don't like it, Miss Tish. The time before you just missed me."

"Why did you stick your arm out?" demanded Tish. "Now take that broomstick and we'll start again. Did you score that?"

"How'll I score it?" asked Hannah. "Hit or

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

miss?" She went to the cellar wall and stood waiting, with a piece of charcoal in her hand. The whitewashed wall was marked with rows of X's and ciphers. The ciphers predominated.

"Mark it a miss."

"But I heard a yell——"

"Fiddle-de-dee! Are you ready?" Tish had lifted a small rifle into position and was standing, with her feet apart, pointing it at a white target hanging by a string from a rafter. As she gave the signal Hannah sighed, and, picking up a broomhandle, started the target to swaying, pendulum fashion; Tish followed it with the gun.

I thought things had gone far enough, so I stepped into the cellar and spoke in ringing tones.

"Letitia Carberry!" I said sternly.

Tish pulled the trigger at that moment and the bullet went into the furnace pipe. It was absurd, of course, for Tish to blame me for it, but she turned on me in a rage.

"Look what you made me do!" she snapped. "Can't a person have a moment's privacy?"

"What I think you need," I retorted, "is six months' complete seclusion in a sanitarium."

"You nearly shot us in the upper hall," Aggie put in warmly.

"Well, as long as I didn't shoot you in the

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

upper hall or any other place, I guess you needn't fuss," said Tish. "Ready, Hannah."

This time she shot Hannah in the broom-handle, and practically put her *hors de combat;* but the shot immediately after was what Tish triumphantly called a clean bull's-eye—that is, it hit the center of the target.

That is the time to stop, when one has made a bull's-eye in any sort of achievement, I take it. And Tish is nobody's fool. She took off her spectacles and wiped the perspiration and gunpowder streaks from her face. She was immediately in high good humor.

"Every unprotected female should know how to handle a weapon," she said oracularly, and, sitting down on the edge of the coal-bin, proceeded to swab out the gun with a wad of cotton on the end of a stick.

"The poker has been good enough for you for fifty years," I retorted. "And if you think you look sporty, or anything but idiotic, sitting there in a flowered kimono and swabbing out the throat of that gun——"

Just then the janitor came down, and Tish gave him a dollar for the use of the cellar and did not mention the furnace pipe. Aggie and I glanced at each other. Tish's demoralization had begun. From that minute, to the long and entire-

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

ly false story she told the red-bearded man in Thunder Cloud Glen several days later, she trod, as Aggie truthfully said, the downward path of mendacity, bringing up in the county jail and hysterics.

We went upstairs, Tish ahead and Aggie and I two flights behind, believing that Tish with an unloaded gun was a thousand times more dangerout than any outlaw with an entire arsenal loaded to the muzzle.

We had a cup of tea in Tish's parlor, but she kept us out of the bedroom, where we could hear Miss Swift running the sewing machine. Finally Aggie said out of a clear sky:

"Have you had any answers to your advertisement?"

Tish, who had been about to put a slice of lemon in her tea, put it in her mouth instead and stared at us both.

"What advertisement?"

"We know all about it, Tish," I said. "And if you think it proper for a woman of your age to go adventuring with only a donkey for company——"

"I've had worse!" Tish snapped. "And I'm not feeble yet, as far as my age goes. If I want to take a walking tour it's my affair, isn't it?"

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"You can't walk with your bad knee," I objected. Tish sniffed.

"You're envious, that's what," she sneered. "While you are sitting at home, overeating and oversleeping and getting fat in mind and body, I shall be on the broad highway, walking between hedgerows of flowering—flowering—well, between hedgerows. While you sleep in stuffy, upholstered rooms I shall lie in woodland glades in my sleeping-bag and see overhead the constellation of—of what's its name. I shall talk to the birds and the birds will talk to me."

Sleeping-bag! That was what Aggie had meant that Miss Swift was making.

"What are you going to do when it rains?"

"It doesn't rain much in May. Anyhow, a friendly farmhouse and a glass of milk—even a barn——"

Aggie got up with the light of desperation in her eyes. Aggie hates woods and gnats, has no eye for Nature, and for almost half a century has pampered her body in a featherbed poultice, with the windows closed, until the first of June each year. Yet Aggie rose to the crisis.

"You shan't go alone, Tish," she said stoutly. "You'll forget to change your stockings when your feet are wet and you can't make a cup of coffee fit to drink. I'm going too."

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Tish made a gesture of despair, but Aggie was determined. Tish glanced at me.

"Well?" she snapped. "We might as well make it a family excursion. Aren't you coming along, too, to look after Aggie?"

"Not at all," I observed calmly. "I'll have enough to do looking after myself. But I like the idea, and since you've invited me I'll come, of course."

At first I am afraid Tish was not particularly pleased. She said she had it all planned to make four miles an hour, or about forty miles a day; and that any one falling back would have to be left by the wayside. And that if we were not prepared to sleep on the ground, or were going to talk rheumatism every time she found a place to camp, she would thank us to remember that we had really asked ourselves.

But she grew more cheerful finally and seemed to be glad to talk over the details of the trip with somebody. She said it was a pity we had not had some practice with firearms, for we would each have to take a weapon, the mountains being full of outlaws, more than likely. Neither Aggie nor I could use a gun at all, but, as Tish observed, we could pot at trees and fenceposts along the road by way of practice.

When I suggested that the sight of three

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

women of our age—we are all well on toward fifty; Aggie insists that she is younger than I am, but we were in the same infant class in Sunday-school—three women of our age "potting" at fences was hardly dignified, Tish merely shrugged her shoulders.

She asked us not to let Charlie Sands learn of the trip. He would be sure to be fussy and want to send a man along, and that would spoil it all.

What with the secrecy, and the guns and everything, I dare say we were like a lot of small boys getting ready to run away out West and kill Indians. In fact, Tish said it reminded her of the time, years ago, when Charlie Sands and some other boys had run away, with all the carving knives and razors they could gather together, and were found a week later in a cave in the mountains twenty miles or so from town.

Tish showed us her sleeping-bag, which was felt outside and her old white fur rug within. Aggie planned hers immediately on the same lines, with her fur coat as a lining; but I had mine made of oilcloth outside, my rheumatism having warned me that we were going to have rain. I was right about the rain.

I had an old army revolver that had belonged to my father, and of course Tish had her coal-cellar rifle, but Aggie had nothing more danger-

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

ous than a bayonet from the Mexican War. This being too heavy to carry, and dull—being only possible as a weapon by bringing the handle down on one's opponent's head—Aggie was forced to buy a revolver.

The man in the shop tried to sell her a small pearl-handled one, but she would not look at it. She bought one of the sort that goes on shooting as long as one holds a finger on the trigger—a snub-nosed thing that looked as deadly as it was. She was in terror of it from the moment she got it home, and during most of the trip it was packed in excelsior, with the barrel stuffed with cotton, on Modestine's back.

Which brings me to Modestine.

Tish received three answers to her advertisement: One was a mule, one a piebald pony with a wicked eye, and the third was a donkey. It seemed that Stevenson had said that the pack animal of such a trip should be "cheap, small and hardy," and that a donkey best of all answered these requirements.

The donkey in question was, however, not a female. Tish was firm about this; but on no more donkeys being offered, she bought this one and called him Modestine anyhow. He was very dirty, and we paid a dollar extra to have him washed with soap powder, as our food was to be

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

carried on his back. Also the day before we started I spent an hour or so on him with a fine comb, with gratifying results.

I must confess I entered on the adventure with a light heart. Tish had apparently given up all thought of the aeroplane; her automobile was being used by Charlie Sands; the weather was warm and sunny, and the orchards were in bloom. I had no premonition of danger. The adventure, reduced to its elements of canned food, alcohol lamp, sleeping-bags and tooth-brushes, seemed no adventure at all, but a peaceful and pastoral excursion by three middle-aged women into green fields and pastures new.

We reckoned, however, without Aggie's missionary dime.

Aggie's church had sent each of its members a ten-cent piece, with instructions to invest it in some way and to return it multiplied as much as possible in three months. This was on Aggie's mind, but we did not know it until later. Really, Aggie's missionary dime is the story. If she had done as she had planned at first and invested it in an egg, had hatched the egg in cotton wool on the shelf over her kitchen range and raised the chicken, eventually selling the chicken to herself for dinner at seventy-five cents, this story would never have been written.

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

What the dime really bought was a glass of jelly wrapped in a two-day-old newspaper. But to go back:

We were to start from Tish's at dawn on Tuesday morning. Modestine's former owner had agreed to bring him at that hour to the alley behind Tish's apartment. On Monday Aggie and I sent over what we felt we could not get along without, and about five we both arrived.

Tish was sitting on the floor, with luggage scattered all round her and heaped on the chairs and bed.

She looked up witheringly when we entered.

"You forgot your opera cloak, Lizzie," she said, "and Aggie has only sent five pairs of shoes!"

"I've got to have shoes," Aggie protested.

"If you've got to have five pairs of shoes, six white petticoats, summer underwear, intermediates and flannels, a bathrobe, six bath towels and a sunshade, not to mention other things, you want an elephant, not a donkey."

"Why do we have a donkey?" I asked. "Why don't we have a horse and buggy, and go like Christians?"

"Because you and Aggie wouldn't walk if we did," snapped Tish. "I know you both. You'd have rheumatism or a corn and you'd take your

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

walking trip sitting. Besides, we may not always keep to the roads. I'd like to go up into the mountains."

Well, Tish was disagreeable, but right. As it turned out the donkey, being small, could only carry the sleeping-bags, our portable stove and the provisions. We each were obliged to pack a suitcase and carry that.

We started at dawn the next day. Hannah came down to the alley and didn't think much of Modestine. By the time he was loaded a small crowd had gathered, and when we finally started off, Tish ahead with Modestine's bridle over her arm and Aggie and I behind with our suitcases, a sort of cheer went up. It was, however, an orderly leave-taking, perhaps owing to the fact that Tish's rifle was packed in full view on Modestine's back.

I have a great admiration for Tish. She does not fear the pointing finger of scorn. She took the most direct route out of town, and by the time we had reached the outskirts we had a string of small boys behind us like the tail of a kite. When we reached the cemetery and sat down to rest they formed a circle round us and stared at us.

Tish looked at her watch. We had been an hour and twenty minutes going two miles!

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

II

WE were terribly thirsty, but none of us cared to drink from the cemetery well; in fact, the question of water bothered us all that day. It was very warm, and after we left the suburban trolley-line, where motormen stopped the cars to look at us and people crowded to the porches to stare at us, the water question grew serious. Tish had studied sanitation, and at every farm we came to the well was improperly located. Generally it was immediately below the pigsty.

Luckily we had brought along some blackberry cordial, and we took a sip of that now and then. But the suitcases were heavy, and at eleven o'clock Aggie said the cordial had gone to her head and she could go no farther. Tish was furious.

"I told you how it would be!" she said. "For about forty years you haven't used your legs except to put shoes and stockings on. Of course they won't carry you."

"It isn't my feet, it's my head," Aggie sniffed. "If I had some water I'd b-be all right. If you're going to examine everything you drink with a

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

microscope you might as well have stayed at home."

"I'd have died before I drank out of that last well," snapped Tish. "One could tell by looking at that woman that there are dead rats and things in the water."

"You are not so particular at home," Aggie asserted. "You use vinegar, don't you? And I'm sure it's full of wrigglers. You can see them when you hold the cruet to the light."

We got her to go on finally, and at the next well we boiled a pailful of water and made some tea. We found a grove beside the road and built a fire in our stove there, and while Modestine was grazing we sat and soaked our feet in a brook and looked for blisters. Tish calculated that as we had been walking for six hours we'd probably gone twenty-two miles. But I believe it was about eight.

While we drank our tea and ate the luncheon Hannah had put up we discussed our plans. Tish's original scheme had been to follow the donkey; but as he would not move without some one ahead, leading him, this was not feasible.

"We want to keep away from the beaten path," Tish said with a pickle in one hand and her cup in the other. "These days automobiles go every-

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

where. I'm in favor of heading straight for the mountain."

"I'm not," I said firmly. "Here in civilization we can find a barn on a rainy night."

"There are plenty of caves in the mountains," said Tish. "Besides, to get the real benefit of this we ought to sleep out, rain or shine. A gentle spring rain hurts no one."

We rested for two hours; it was very pleasant. Modestine ate all that was left of the luncheon, and Aggie took a nap with her head on her suitcase. If we had not had the suitcases we should have been quite contented. Tish, with her customary ability, solved that.

"We need only one suitcase," she declared. "We can leave the other two at this farmhouse and pack a few things for each of us in the one we take along. Then we can take turns carrying it."

Aggie wakened finally and was rather more docile about the suitcases than we had expected. Possibly she would have been more indignant; but her feet had swollen so while she had her shoes off that she could hardly get them on at all, and for the remainder of the day her mind was, you may say, in her feet.

At four we stopped again and made more tea. The road had begun to rise toward the hills and

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

the farmhouses were fewer. Ahead of us loomed Thunder Cloud Mountain, with the Camel's Back to the right of it. The road led up the valley between.

It was hardly a road at all, being a grass-grown wagontrack with not a house in a mile. Aggie was glad of the grass, for she had taken off her shoes by that time and was carrying them slung over her shoulder on the end of her parasol. We were on the lower slope of the mountain when we heard the green automobile.

It was coming rapidly from behind us. Aggie had just time to sit on a bank—and her feet—before it came in sight. It was a long, low, bright-green car and there were four men in it. They were bent forward, looking ahead, except one man who sat so he could see behind him.

They came on us rather suddenly, and the man who was looking back yelled to us as they passed, but what with noise and dust I couldn't make out what he said. The next moment the machine flew ahead and out of sight among the trees.

"What did he say?" I asked. Aggie, who has a tendency to hay-fever, was sneezing in the dust.

"I don't know," returned Tish absently, staring after them. "Probably asked us if we wanted a ride. Lizzie, those men had guns!"

"Fiddlesticks!" I said.

Digitized by Google

Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"Guns!" repeated Tish firmly.

"Well, what of it? Our donkey has a gun."

And as at that instant the sleeping-bags and provisions slid gently round under Modestine's stomach, the green automobile and its occupants passed out of our minds for a while.

By the time we had got the things on Modestine's back again we were convinced he had been a mistake. He objected to standing still to be reloaded, and even with Tish at his head and Aggie at his tail he kept turning in a circle, and in fact finally kicked out at Aggie and stretched her in the road. Then, too, his back was not flat like a horse's. It went up to a sort of peak, and was about as handy to pack things on as the ridge-pole of a roof.

For an hour or so more we plodded on. Tish, who is an enthusiast about anything she does, kept pointing out wild flowers to us and talking about the unfortunates back in town under roofs. But I kept thinking of a broiled lamb chop with new potatoes, and my whole being revolted at the thought of supper out of a can.

At twilight we found a sort of recess in the valley, level and not too thickly wooded, and while Tish and I set up the stove and lighted a fire Aggie spread out the sleeping-bags and got supper ready. We had canned salmon and potato

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

salad. We ate ravenously and then, taking off our shoes and our walking suits, and getting into our flannel kimonos and putting up our crimps—for we were determined not to lapse into slovenly personal habits—we were ready for the night.

Tish said there were all sorts of animals on Thunder Cloud, so we built a large fire to keep them away. Tish said this was the customary thing, being done in all the adventure books she had read.

Aggie had to be helped into her sleeping-bag, her fur coat having been rather skimp. But, once in, she said it was heavenly, and she was asleep almost immediately. Tish and I followed, and I found I had placed my bag over a stone. I was, however, too tired to get up.

I lay and looked at the stars twinkling above the treetops, and I felt sorry for people who had nothing better to look at than a wall-papered ceiling. Tish, next to me, was yawning.

"If there are snakes," she observed drowsily, "they are not poisonous—I should think. And, anyhow, no snake could strike through these heavy bags."

She went to sleep at once, but I lay there thinking of snakes for some time. Also I remembered that we'd forgotten to leave our weapons within reach, although, as far as that goes, I should not

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

have slept a wink had Aggie had her Fourth-of-July celebration near at hand. Then I went to sleep. The last thing I remember was wishing we had brought a dog. Even a box of cigars would have been some protection—we could have lighted one and stuck it in the crotch of a tree, as if a man was mounting guard over the camp. This idea, of course, was not original. It was done first by Mr. Sherlock Holmes, the detective.

It must have been toward dawn that I roused, with a feeling that some one was looking down at me. The fire was very low and Aggie was sleeping with her mouth open. I got up on my elbow and stared round. There was nothing in sight, but through the trees I heard a rustling of leaves and the crackling of brushwood. Whatever it was it had gone. I turned over and before long went to sleep again.

At daylight I was roused by raindrops splashing on my face. I sat up hastily. Aggie was sleeping with the flap of her bag over her head, and Tish, under an umbrella, was sitting fully dressed on a log, poring over her road map. When I sat up she glanced over at me.

"I think I know where we are now, Lizzie," she said. "Thunder Cloud Mountain is on our left, and that hill there to the right is the Camel's

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Back. The road goes right up Thunder Cloud Glen."

I looked at the fire, which was out; at Modestine, standing meekly by the tree to which he was tied; at the raindrops bounding off Aggie's round and prostrate figure—and I rebelled. Every muscle was sore; it hurt me even to yawn.

"Letitia Carberry!" I said indignantly. "You don't mean to tell me that, rain or no rain, you are going on?"

"Certainly I am going on," said Tish, shutting her jaw. "You and Aggie needn't come. I'm sure you asked yourselves; I didn't."

Well, that was true, of course. I crawled out and, going over, prodded at Aggie with my foot.

"Aggie," I said, "it is raining and Tish is going on anyhow. Will you go on with her or start back home with me?"

But Aggie refused to do either. She was terribly stiff and she had slept near a bed of May-apple blossoms. In the twilight she had not noticed them, and they always bring her hay-fever.

"I'b goi'g to stay right here," she said firmly between sneezes. "You cad go back or forward or whatever you please; I shad't bove."

Tish was marking out a route on the road map

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

by making holes with a hairpin, and now she got up and faced us.

"Very well," she said. "Then get your things out of the suitcase, which happens to be mine. Lizzie, the canned beans and the sardines are yours. Aggie, your potato salad is in those six screw-top jars. Come, Modestine."

She untied the beast and, leading him over, loaded her sleeping-bag and her share of the provisions on his back. She did not glance at us. At the last, when she was ready, she picked up her rifle and turned to us.

"I may not be back for a week or ten days," she said icily. "If I'm longer than two weeks you can start Charlie Sands out with a posse."

Charlie Sands is her nephew.

"Come, Modestine," said Tish again, and started along. It was raining briskly by that time, and thundering as if a storm was coming. Aggie broke down suddenly.

"Tish! Tish!" she wailed. "Oh, Lizzie, she'll never get back alive. Never! We've killed her."

"She's about killed us!" I snarled.

"She's coming back!"

Sure enough, Tish had turned and was stalking back in our direction.

"I ought to leave you where you are," she said disagreeably, "but it's going to storm. If you de-

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

cide to be sensible, somewhere up the valley is the cave Charlie Sands hid in when he ran away. I think I can find it."

It was thundering louder now, and Aggie was giving a squeal with every peal. We were too far gone for pride. I helped her out of her sleeping-bag and we started after Tien and the donkey. The rain poured down on us. At every step torrents from Thunder Cloud and the Camel's Back soaked us. The wind howled up the ravine and the lightning played round the treetops.

We traveled for three hours in that downpour.

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

III

ONLY once did Tish speak, and then we could hardly hear her above the rush of water and the roar of the wind.

"There's one comfort," she said, wading along knee-deep in a torrent. "These spring rains give nobody cold."

An hour later she spoke again, but that was at the end of that journey.

"I don't believe this is the right valley after all," she said. "I don't see any cave." We stopped to take our bearings, as you may say, and as we stood there, looking up, I could have sworn that I saw a man with a gun peering down at us from a ledge far above. But the next moment he was gone, and neither Tish nor Aggie had seen him at all.

We found the cave soon after and climbed to it on our hands and knees, pulling Modestine up by his bridle. A more outrageous quartet it would have been impossible to find, or a more outraged one. Aggie let down her dress, which she had pinned round her waist, releasing about a quart of water from its folds, and stood looking

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

about her with a sneer. "I don't think much of your cave," she said. "It's little and it's dirty."

"It's dry!' said Tish tartly.

"Why stop at all?" Aggie asked sarcastically. "Why not just have kept on? We couldn't get any wetter."

"Yes," I added, "between flowering hedgerows! And of course these spring rains give nobody cold!"

Tish did not say a word. She took off her shoes and her skirt, got her sleeping-bag off Modestine's back, and—went to bed with the worst attack of neuralgia she had ever had.

That was on Wednesday, late in the afternoon. It rained for two days!

We built a fire out of the wood that was in the cave, and dried out our clothes, and heated stones to put against Tish's right eye, and brought in wet branches to dry against the time when we should need them. Aggie sneezed incessantly in the smoke, and Tish groaned in her corner. I was about crazy. On Thursday, when the edge of the neuralgia was gone, Tish promised to go home the moment the rain stopped and the roads dried. Aggie and I went to her together and implored her.

But, as it turned out, we did not go home for some days, and when we did——

Digitized by Google

Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

By Thursday evening Tish was much better. She ate a little potato salad and we sat round the fire, listening to her telling how they had found the runaways in this very cave.

"They had taken all the hatchets and kitchen knives they could find and started to hunt Indians," she was saying. "They got as far as this cave, and one evening about this time they were sitting round the fire like this when a black bear——"

We all heard it at the same moment. Something was scrambling and climbing up the mountainside to the cave. Tish had her rifle to her shoulder in a second, and Aggie shut her eyes. But it was not a bear that appeared at the mouth of the cave and stood blinking in the light. It was a young man!

"I beg your pardon," he said, peering into the firelight, "but—you don't happen to have a spare box of matches, do you?"

Tish lowered the rifle.

"Matches!" she said. "Why—er—certainly. Aggie, give the gentleman some matches."

The young man had edged into the cave by that time and we saw that he was limping and leaning on a stick. He looked round the cave approvingly at our three sleeping-bags in an orderly row, with our toilet things set out on a clean

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

towel on a flat stone and a mirror hung above, and at our lantern on another stone, with magazines and books grouped round it. Aggie, finding some trailing arbutus just outside the cave that day, had got two or three empty salmon cans about filled with it, and the fur rug from Tish's sleeping-bag lay in front of the fire. The effect was really civilized.

"It looks like a drawing room," said the young man, with a long breath. "It's the first dry spot I've seen for two days, and it looks like Heaven to a lost soul."

"Where are you stopping?"

"I am not stopping. I am on a walking tour, or was until I hurt my leg."

"Don't you think you'd better wait until things dry up?"

"And starve?" he asked.

"The woods are full of nuts and berries," said Tish.

"Not in May."

"And there is plenty of game."

"Yes, if one has a weapon," he replied. "I lost my gun when I fell into Thunder Creek; in fact, I lost everything except my good name. What's that thing of Shakespeare's: 'Who steals my purse steals trash, . . . but he——'"

Aggie found the matches just then and gave

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY