

# The Spirit of the Bush

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# The Spirit of the Bush

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PART ONE

BY

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31 CUNNINGHAM STREET

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# The Spirit of the Bush



## PART ONE

### CHAPTER I.

#### A Visit to the Bush.

A MAN WAS ONCE very tired and weary of the city. His business had failed and he was reduced to his last few pounds. This worried him, so he decided to give all the money he had to his wife and ask her to make it last as long as possible.

"I will go into the bush and seek for gold, as there is no work to be had in the city." So saying good-bye to his family, he started off next morning at daybreak for the bush. He thought as he walked along of the many disappointments in his life and felt that at last he was doing the right thing in going away.

He walked miles in the warm sunshine until 11 o'clock, when he began to feel tired, and, looking round, he saw a stream running through the rocks singing merrily, as if to say, "Come and sit by me and rest." So, taking his boots and socks off, he rubbed his feet, and, sitting on the bank of the stream with his back leaning against the trunk of a tree, he fell asleep; and we can imagine him dreaming of gold mines.

The sun gradually climbed higher in the sky and left him exposed to its fierce rays, for the day had grown very hot. Two kookaburras, noticing the man's head exposed

to such heat, were very concerned, and one of them said: "Look, Jack, this seems to be a kind man; let us spread our wings so that he will be sheltered from the sun." They were thus engaged on this kind task, having formed a protecting shield, when Mr. Tom Spider and his family came along.

"What do you think you are doing?" he asked.

"Oh, we are sheltering a kind man from the sun," they replied.

"Is that it!" said Mr. Tom: "I know a better way than that. We will spin a web for him." So they set to work, and in the spiders' wonderful way, by making a very thick web, soon had a screen made which sheltered the man's head completely.

When he awoke he was astonished to find his head surrounded by a beautiful web with no sun shining through. He was wondering at this kind action and as to who could have been so thoughtful when the spiders, noting that he was awake, asked him where he came from.

"The city," replied the man. "I have walked a great number of miles and felt the need of a rest." The spiders then told him how they found the kookaburras sheltering him with their wings and how they had thought of a better way, by spinning a web.

"How can I thank you?" asked the man.

"That's alright," said Mr. Tom Spider; "all my children belong to the Insects' 'One Good Deed a Day' League, and it was a great pleasure to have been of assistance to you. Besides, the web will do to catch our food for the day." God had provided them with a wonderful means by which to catch their food. The kookaburras had flown away, so the man was not able to thank the birds. However, he asked the spiders to thank them for him the next time they saw them. This the spiders promised to do. They then wished

each other good-bye, the man promising that if ever he were passing again he would call and see his new friends, who said the place where they lived was called South Creek.

So he felt very happy as he continued his journey. He could not help noticing how different the world looked; even the leaves of the trees seemed to smile at him. "How glad I am that I came to the bush," thought he; "and how kind and happy everything is." Just at that moment Mr. Kangaroo hopped along, looked at him, then asked: "Where are you going?"

"I am looking for a place in the bush where there is gold so that I can buy food for my family," was the reply.

"What is gold?" enquired Mr. Kangaroo.

"Yellow metal that people in the city exchange for food," replied the man.

"But," said Mr. Kangaroo, "I know where you can get food without gold. We don't bother about anything like that, for there is plenty of food, and we just take it as we want it. I have heard that people waste a lot, but we only gather enough for each meal. You follow me." And with that he hopped along, followed by the man, who felt so well even his feet seemed to have lost their soreness.

They travelled for a long distance, then came to a beautiful bay surrounded by thickly wooded hills with giant palms overhanging the water. "This is Pittwater," said Mr. Kangaroo.

"What a glorious spot!" exclaimed the man, his eyes shining. He caught a glimpse of tiny bays with white sandy beaches and an island in the distance. It was a wonderful sight, and nowhere in the world could be found anything to compare with its natural beauty.

"You will find the beach only one mile from here,"

said the Kangaroo. "It is a lovely spot, and to-morrow I will show you a palm grove where you will be able to build a cabin. There are wild yams, berries and other fruit to eat, while in Careel Bay there are shell fish, oysters and many other things, so you need not worry about food—or gold."

"We will all help you to build your cabin, but you are tired now" (it had grown very late) "and there is a very cosy cave nearby which will be a shelter for you to-night. I will tell all my friends that you are here and they will bring you food."

Away he went, and soon along came a procession of animals, each laden with something to eat. The bandicoots had dug up yams, the birds had branches covered with berries, and others had nuts.

"This is quite a feast," exclaimed the man. "What a wonderful place this is, and how I would like to have my family here."

All the animals helped to build a shelter of ti-tree in front of the cave, and soon everything was made very snug for the night. The kangaroo then explained that:

"Each day they did a kindly deed,  
If only to supply a need,  
To help the one who was in need,  
So on his journey he could speed."

The man lived here for some time and then thought how nice it would be to have his family with him. Consulting with his friends, they arranged that the kangaroo should show him the way home.

He reached the city safely and told his family all about the wonderful new home. Of course, they wanted to go with him immediately, but father said before going he must tell everyone about the kindness of the animals and try and make everyone kind to them.

## CHAPTER II.

### Meeting Bush Friends.

FATHER and his family, after making all arrangements for the journey to the bush home, said good-bye to their friends and started out early one bright morning. Everyone was in great glee. The only sadness was having to leave Douglas' cat behind. Poor Douglas pleaded to be allowed to take his pet, but Father would not consent, as he thought the cat would not understand their kind friends, and cause strife by killing some poor creature, smaller than himself, who had done Father a kindness. So puss was given to Douglas' friends, with strict orders to feed him well.

The day was beautiful, with a sun not too warm, so that one could walk in comfort, and even Douglas soon forgot all about his puss in his delight at each new flower and animal they passed.

About 10 o'clock a halt was made, and everyone sank down into the thick bed of leaves which carpeted the woods and talked of what they would do when they reached the bush. Of course, Douglas was going to keep a pet opossum and Jessie a bear, while Mac was more keen on lizards and frogs, and kept his Father busy answering questions about blue tongues and whether their bite was poisonous. Father explained that their bite was like that of a dog, and they were not venomous. Everyone chatted away in great spirits.

Just then Mr. Bunny came along crying, but seeing the strangers, was about to scamper away, when Father noticed his sad look and inquired into the matter.

"My poor wife has been caught in a trap and can't get out," wailed the bunny. "I love her so much, but the trap's spring is too strong for me, and I cannot set her free."

"Oh, don't cry," the children called, "we will come and help you." So, springing up, they were soon racing after the bunny, who went like the wind.

On reaching the spot they could not see Mrs. Bunny, because a swarm of bees were circling round to protect her. At the approach of the children the bees hastily flew out at them, thinking them enemies, for at one time they had been in a hive and remembered that they had been robbed of all their honey. So of course they felt that the children were enemies and were very angry, but the rabbit explained the object of the visitors. Flying to a near-by tree, the bees watched Father carefully free Mrs. Bunny from the trap. Her leg was badly hurt, but no bones were broken, so with Kathleen's handkerchief they carefully bandaged the leg and made Mrs. Bunny as comfortable as possible.

Mr. Bunny thanked them with tears in his eyes. He said they had only been married six weeks, although they had been sweethearts for years. Mrs. Bunny's mother had objected to the marriage, as Mr. Bunny was very thin and she thought that he was lazy, and thus could not find good patches of grass, with the result that his wife might starve. However, this was not the case at all. As a baby, coming out of a burrow, the roof had fallen in and had hurt his back, and it was not cured until wise Dr. Crow had treated him. This treatment had made him quite well, so they were married and were very happy indeed.

The bees consulted together, and one was asked to interview the Queen Bee and see if she would allow the family to have some honey. "Of course, they can take as much as they please," was the answer. Even the drones

worked themselves into a pitch of excitement, fussing around the boys and girls, showing them the way to their home.

Father said he had never seen such a wonderful lot of honey before; each cell was tightly packed with delicious liquid; and, indeed, the bees could well be proud of such a store, for they had won the first prize at the local bee show. Every one of the family had his meal of honey, and they all carried some away with them to Mrs. Bunny. Then, saying good-bye, they parted from their friends and continued their journey.

After lunch Father said he would like to show them where he had slept on his first journey. He found the stream, and there were the kind spiders, and weren't they delighted when Father took from his pocket a tin of flies he had caught in the city. The spiders' webs had all been blown down during a storm on the previous night. Some were sick with cold and had not recovered sufficiently to spin another web. The family did not see the kookaburras, as the spiders told them they were away working on a new home for their eldest boy, who was thinking of getting married.

These birds had found a new ants' nest and had been invited to make their home there. It is difficult work picking a hole in the ants' cement which forms the ants' nest, and it would take them some days to finish it. Father asked the spiders to remember him to the kookaburras. He explained that his new home was by a wonderful water, and begged that they be sure to visit him some day.

So again the family started on their journey, everyone enjoying the wonder of it all.

Mr. Hawk, flying high up in the clouds, noticed the man walking along and quickly sent word by a swallow

to tell Mr. Kangaroo that the friends were here; then he flew down and gave Father all the Pittwater news. There were three new baby kookaburras, a brood of wild ducklings, also Mr. Carpet Snake had awakened after his long winter sleep and was very excited after hearing the news that the family intended living with them. He said they could have his old skin to make into shoes. The animals in the bush were well, and anxious for the man's return.

"Good-bye," said Mr. Hawk, "I'll see you later, as I have yet to catch my tea." So away he flew, and the children thought they had never seen a bird fly so fast. Soon the kangaroo came hopping along, and what an exciting time there was as he was introduced to Mother, Mac, Jessie, Lois, Douglas, Kathleen and Mavis.

"We must hurry," said the kangaroo, "or it will be dark before we reach home."

The sun was setting as they topped the last hill.

"Stand a moment," said the guide, "and look at the sunset." The family had never seen a more beautiful sight. There lay Pittwater ringed around with trees and sandy beaches, and in the distance, Kuring-gai Chase with a glow of gold from the sun's last effort to light up the earth; and crimson clouds and deep shadows in the valleys all helped to make a wonderful picture for the boys and girls.

Each bared his head and thanked the Maker of all these wonderful things, and Father hoped the children would grow up good boys and girls and be thankful for so wonderful a world in which to live.

Then Father spoke the following words:

"Thou noble setting sun, we see  
New life and wealth in watching thee  
As proudly sailing to your rest  
You know this day you've done your best.  
As if the parting caused you pain  
You shoot your rays to sky again  
And tint the clouds with mellow glow;  
The tree tops thank you as you go  
For warmth that you have given to-day  
And ask you can't you longer stay;  
But smiling in your old red mood  
You'll tell that earth has other brood  
And would be pained if deed so rare  
As never to them shedding light  
But leaving all to lasting night.  
They do not fear, for in the morn  
You'll usher in a lovely dawn."

The trees joined them in silent prayer and the majestic eagle soared the sky like a sentinel watching over all, and as the shadows deepened the silence was broken by the kangaroo, who asked Father who it was who created these wonderful things. Mac said he knew, but Father suggested that it be left for another time, when he would tell the friends all about the wonderful world in which we live.

They went down the hill and saw before them all the birds and animals of the bush to welcome them. The fish blew bubbles in the water, and every animal was excited as they were introduced to the family and were pleased that they were going to be their neighbours.

The children were tired, but very happy. Father and Mother soon had them tucked in bed in their cosy cave. Father then asked the fireflies to put out their lights, and soon all were in blissful slumber, dreaming of the happenings of the day.



## CHAPTER III.

## The Giant Tree.

AT daybreak next morning the children were awakened by a most wonderful burst of laughter. This was the kookaburras' morning call to all life to rise and greet the dawn. Great choruses filled the air, first on one hill and then taken up by another party, until the whole air was filled with their mirth.

Although the children had seen a kookaburra at the Zoo, it was quite different to hear hundreds of these wonderful birds all joining in one great laugh.

Father then explained that the kookaburras always greeted the dawn so, and also in the evening gave note of the setting sun. If it were fine they laughed for joy for so lovely a day, and if it were raining they laughed all the louder because of the extra number of grubs they would find.

Mac was the first to dress. He hurried out of doors, quickly followed by the whole family. "Good-mornings" were exchanged, then Father suggested that a dip in the bay would be a good idea as the first part of the day's programme.

The whole animal kingdom was now awake, and the air was filled with the sound of birds singing, wallabies hopping and bears grunting. All seemed bent on starting the day with as much noise as possible.

"What is that?" asked Mavis, as a beautiful song was heard.

"That is a magpie," said Father, and cried, "Good morning, Mr. Magpie! Thank you so much for your song."

"Good morning," replied the magpie; "I thought you would like it. Our singing master said that I was to be sure and sing my best for you this morning, and he will be pleased when I tell him you liked it."

"I see you are bound for a dip. You will find a great number of us already at our favourite beach. Mr. Eagle said he would call on you later in the day, as he had such a busy morning and could not see you earlier. He saw you admiring the sunset last evening, and said he had never seen a finer one himself. He is very fond of the great spaces and seldom comes to visit us. Good-bye for the present; I will see you soon."

"Can we swim on the beach with the animals?" asked Douglas.

"Yes," said Father; "it's not far and is a lovely spot."

So, clambering down the hillside over rocks and across fallen trees, they were soon at the beach. Then! What a sight met their eyes! All the animals were gambolling in the water, birds were twisting on their backs and flapping their wings, all enjoying the cool water together. The black swan made a fine picture as he sailed in stately dignity among the smaller birds. Those of the animals who could not swim played on the edge of the bay, and you should have heard the chuckles of the kookaburras as they pushed each other into the deeper water. The swans sometimes took the smaller birds on their backs for a sail, and what a pretty picture it made with the long line of swans all with smaller birds on their backs. When Father arrived with his family, the animals all rushed from the water to be introduced to the children. What a time they had! "Good

morning!" sounded from all throats with a heartiness that was good to hear.

Mrs. Kangaroo was delighted to meet the children, and congratulated Father and Mother on their handsome family. She said she had twelve children, most of them now grown up with families of their own. Little Pat was the youngest and was quite a baby; she was still in her mother's pouch. This amused the children, and when her mother lifted her out they laughed to see such long legs, for Pat looked very comical, as all baby kangaroos do. Her mother said she would grow into a very handsome animal. Mac and Douglas thought her very ungainly; but they had never seen a baby kangaroo before, so could not be blamed for their silent mirth.

The mother kangaroo said she had been very ill, but was now much better. Her illness was caused through the loss of her son, Tom, who had been caught by some wicked men, taken to the Sydney Zoo and shut up within a wire enclosure. He was such a handsome fellow and loved the bush so much that his mother thought he would die at the Zoo. However, Mr. Hawk had flown to the Zoo and managed to see him and talk with him. Tom sent a message to his mother saying: "Do not worry, for they treat me very well, and I am hoping some day to escape and return home. I am well fed and looked after, and nearly all the people who come to see me are very kind. A nasty animal called a dog tried to bite me, but I was able to kick him hard and he ran away crying."

"So now I am feeling much better," said Mrs. Kangaroo, "and feel sure Tom will escape, as he is very clever."

"The water is lovely this morning," she continued, "and makes one feel like staying in all day; but there is too

much to do, and all the children have to be taken to a new patch of green grass."

Kathleen begged to nurse Pat, but Mother Kangaroo said she would send her over to play some day.

"Come, children," said Father, "or we will be late."

The animals had by this time nearly finished their swim. The boys and girls enjoyed themselves frolicking about in the cool water, and as they could all swim they had swimming races with the animals.

When they left the water they found the bush creatures had provided them with towels made from ti-tree bark; so soon all were dried and dressed and ready for breakfast. This consisted of ground roots for porridge, wild fruit and honey sent by the bees.

"Now," said Father, "this cave is not big enough for us all; we will have to build a cabin. We will have a talk with the animal architects, who are wonders at construction; but to-day we will explore the bush and bay."

Pitwater is about four miles long and enters from Broken Bay, Lion Island being situated at the entrance. The bay is surrounded with dense scrub, with numerous sandy beaches along the shore. The bush was a wonderful sight, with giant gums, ironbarks, stringy barks, oaks and a profusion of wild flowers. The children were particularly interested in a giant spotted gum whose every line and limb breathed strength and vigour; such a fellow he looked as he smiled at the children and waved his branches in greeting. He seemed sorry that they could not climb up and sit on his limbs, and told them that they must have climbing lessons from Mr. Bear, who was a splendid climber and would be delighted to teach the children. The gum then told them that the bear boarded with Mrs. Grey Gum. She did not charge him anything for his board.

"Sometimes he sleeps in my branches on a stormy night," said the Spotted Gum, "but does not like my leaves as well as Mrs. Grey Gum's. She grows a special leaf of which the bear is very fond. Come and play around me often and learn to climb."

This the children promised to do.

Then Kathleen recited:

"You great and noble, virile tree,  
How straight you stand, so big and free,  
The monarch of your forest home,  
Like king upon his gilded throne.

"Your name is right, the Spotted One,  
For centuries you've seen the sun,  
Who helped to mottle your giant trunk,  
Which age, like mortals, has not shrunk.

"What stormy battles you have fought,  
In Heaven's bliss you're often caught,  
As elements have tried in vain  
Your massive limbs to rend in twain.  
And then, as if in angry spite,  
Have wiped a sapling out of sight.  
And then gone off in whirling glee  
Some further mischief still to see.

"See how your root has tapped the ground  
To stand the strain that here is found,  
And makes you laugh at stormy night  
That tries to trip you in the night.

"And round about in sheltered spots,  
Thus shaped by roots and kindly knots,  
There moss has clung in thoughtful mood  
And formed soft beds for leaves to brood.  
But finding that their strength was spent,  
They settle down and are content  
To help in further building you  
And join with rain and sun and dew.

"And maiden-hair here gently asks  
May she help you in any tasks?  
And with wild violets make a home  
Where ants and spiders like to roam,  
And seem to think as they, like dots,  
Walk in and out your weathered spots  
They own you, trunk and limbs and all—  
Their thoughts are big, if bodies small.

"But they forget bear has a say,  
Who sits and sleeps the livelong day,  
And out on tree trunk has his home,  
Where he at times wakes up to roam.  
The eagle also makes his nest,  
But does not always take a rest;  
But up he soars in sky so high,  
With searching eye for game, if nigh.

"And what of sparrow and of dove?  
The latter peace appears to love,  
And how the magpie warbles long  
And thanks you for a home so strong;  
You thought not when you were a shrub  
You'd end in being bushlands' hub.

"So you have stood the stress of time  
And reached proportions now sublime,  
And so the gentle rustling breeze  
Bestirs the leaves she loves to tease;  
In stately dignity you stand  
And love of those around command."

Near the spotted gum was a sparkling stream running into the bay. Father said: "This is our present water supply." And the stream sang a song of joy as it splashed over rocks and under ferns.

There was one clear patch of ground where Father said he would make his garden, for he had brought with

him seeds of flowers, vegetables and fruit. There was a slope to the water on the banks of the stream. The bandicoot said the soil was good, as he had done a lot of digging there for wild yams.

While they continued to explore, the children were startled to see an enormous snake on the path, but Father told them not to be frightened, as it was only Mr. Carpet Snake having a rest. Just then the snake looked up and, smiling at the children said: "Good morning, friends! Welcome from our family. We have heard of your kindness to Mr. Bunny. Mr. Eagle saw you all and sent us an account of your kind actions. I hope we will be great friends."

Father introduced all the family and thanked Mr. Snake for the kind offer of his old skin.

"Oh, that's nothing," said Mr. Snake. "I grow a new one every year. I hear you are going to build a cabin. I will help you all I can when you are ready. Please let me know how I can assist you. All my friends have their old skins, which would make lovely well-paper."

Father was delighted, and told the snake that in the city they were making the skins of snakes into shoes, bags, belts and other things, and he thought that to panel the cabin inside with them would be a very good idea.

"Good-bye," said their friends. "I will meet you soon again and have another chat. In the meantime I will collect the skins for you."

"Thank you very much," said Father, and the rest of the party called out: "Good-bye, kind Mr. Snake."

"He must be fourteen feet long," said Father, "and so friendly. Did you see how he waved his tail to us and how the rats and mice ran over his back and yet he did not mind?"

"I like him," said Mac; "we will be great friends." For Mac always liked snakes and lizards, etc.

Mr. Bandicoot then came running up and exclaimed: "I was digging for roots in a cave and found this stone axe. It will be useful in building your cabin."

Mac then grew excited and asked the bandicoot to show him where the cave was, after which the animal offered to take them there the next day.

## CHAPTER IV.

## Planning the Cabin.

ON returning to their cave, the party found Mr. Kangaroo waiting for them, with the good news that, after a meeting, the animals thought the best way to assist them was to have a working bee, each of the animals and birds assisting in the building of the cabin.

Father then said he thought of asking their architects for advice, as he was not very well acquainted with building matters. An interview was then arranged with the architects for that afternoon at three o'clock under the shade of the spotted gum.

Mr. Kangaroo told Kathleen that she could have Pat Kangaroo during the afternoon to play with. Then, bidding her good-bye, he hopped away. Father thought the animals must worship a God of Love, for they seemed to be always doing kind actions.

After lunch an hour's rest was proposed, under the shade of the trees, and so they were all asleep when along hopped Jack Kangaroo with Baby Pat on his back. This awakened the family, and Kathleen was soon nursing her new little friend. She was such a trick, trying to climb into Kathleen's blouse and hair, and altogether such a loving little animal that Kathleen thought never before had she seen such a darling. Of course, they had all to have a nurse, and Jack Kangaroo was much amused at the fuss made over his little sister. He made great friends with

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Lois and Douglas, and was soon playing hop, skip and jump with them. But Doug., who was a big boy, could not do half as well as Jack, who explained to them that his tail was of great assistance to him.

"Why haven't we got tails?" asked Lois.

Father explained that a long time ago we did have tails and lived in the bush in trees, but our great-grandfathers were very bad and the other animals cut off their tails, with the result that human beings have none.

"And did human beings grow better without their tails?" asked Jessie.

"No, they grew worse. In the old days threw rocks at each other, and now they make guns and throw lead, which kills them."

Mac said he would never leave the bush, and perhaps some day he would grow a tail. Some of the family wanted tails and some did not. Jack Kangaroo roared with laughter at the argument, then joined in a merry game of chaungs. Jack said his big brother, Bill, would give them a ride when he came to see them. Then he raced home, leaving little Baby Pat with Kathleen.

"Now, children, it must be three o'clock. Yes, I see the architects, so we will hurry off to the gum tree," said Father.

"Oh, here you are again," cried the gum. "I heard about the meeting, and was hoping you would hold it under my shade, as I may have some valuable suggestions to make."

In a few minutes the architects arrived, each one being there exactly on time. The animals always keep appointments, and are never late. Even the children are punctual for school.

First came the Magpie, a great designer and builder of wicker and mud plaster work. Some examples of the Magpies' nest-work are in the animal museum and are much admired.

Next the White Ant, the great tree doctor came; then Mr. Bandicoot, the excavator; the Bee, wax worker and planner, whose work in wax excites the admiration of all; then came Mr. Bark Grub, the decorator. Some of his decorations on the trees are very beautiful, and Father congratulated him on his designs. The grub said their work was very slow, but they used a great number of workers, which helped them to complete their contracts.

Mr. Emu said he would be very handy to them in carrying pebbles from the beach in his beak, and could assist in many other ways. He said he was not a very great designer like the Bark Grub, but could mix cement very well, as his legs were very powerful.

The Platypus said he was very expert in cellar work, and if the cabin were built near a stream he would build an outdoor ice-chest for them. There were numerous others, each expert in his own particular line.

The White Ant was elected chairman of the meeting, being recognised as perhaps having the greatest ability in woodwork.

Father said the human beings hated the white ant, as he destroyed the wood in their homes, and asked the white ant to explain to them his interesting work.

"It's all very well for people to talk that way," began the white ant; "but they would leave us to starve." They cut down the trees and cart them away, and where are we to get our food from? We couldn't eat earth and must have our proper food. I will explain to you our life work.

"We are sent for, say, by Mr. Spotted Gum here; we examine him and find, perhaps, he has a lump on his trunk. This is a disease, and he feels sick. We then send a lot of workers to eat the lump off, working from the inside. We have to work away from the light and weather, as we cannot stand exposure. Soon the tree will get well again. If the lump were not treated, it would grow bigger and eventually kill the tree."

"I know," broke in the gum, "for I have a family curing me now, and it is a great relief. I will soon be out of pain altogether."

"Then," continued the ant, "we sometimes find a limb diseased. We eat through it until it falls to the ground, making food for grubs and manure for the soil. So here and there throughout the bush you will see us at work, curing lumps, sore limbs and root cancer. Then, some of our poor friends suffer from heart disease. We have to send our best trained workers to cure those cases. So you see we have a tremendous work to do. We also build cement huts on the ground and in the trees; the tree huts we allow the kookaburras to live in. We always have plenty of workers ready to help in this great task. It is a labour of love, for we are very fond of it."

Mavis said she thought it a very noble work, and Father and Mother thought the White Ant a very wonderful insect.

"I will now call on the Gum Tree for suggestions," said the chairman.

Mr. Gum said he had thought of a plan which should be nice—a rustic cabin with stone foundations and chimney, log walls of ironbark and oak, web windows, block floors and roofed by the birds with nest work treatment of twigs and mud, finished over with waterproof ant cement.

This was agreed to by everyone. Then each bird and

animal present promised to do his share, the Bee calling out excitedly: "Leave all the wax polishing to me." Mr. White Ant said he would cut out all drain pipes and gutters, and he thought that there was quite a stock already, as they had cured so many trees of heart disease who would gladly be a gutter or a drain pipe. Mr. Ironbark suggested that his bark be used for tanks to hold water, and the Bees would make the joints watertight with wax. The Spotted Gum then explained that quite a number of trees, including himself, were rather delicate from birth and could not stand exposure after being cut down, but would assist in being furniture.

"Of course, I'm too big to cut down, but you are welcome to some of my limbs. It does us good to have our limbs lopped occasionally, so please help yourselves."

"Of course," said the Bandicoot, "I am going to take Mac to the cave to-morrow for more axes, so we will be able to make a start almost immediately."

Father then thanked them for their kindness and invited them for afternoon tea. Some delicacy was provided for everyone, the children having prepared the meal while the meeting was in progress.

Mr. and Mrs. Butcher Bird sang a duet, and the Woodpecker played on a near-by tree. The Maggie gave a treat by warbling so beautifully that it brought tears to the eyes of the listeners.

Everybody was happy and in great spirits. Father asked the children to take notice of the wonderful co-operative spirit amongst the bush folk, and to try and cultivate it themselves.

After the children had had a romp with the animals the family retired for the night, all tired, but happy, after a most wonderful day.

## CHAPTER V.

## King Billy's Cave.

THE NEXT morning, at 4 o'clock, Father was awakened by a knock, and, on rising, found that it was the eagle. "Good morning, Mr. Eagle, and what brings you out so early to us?"

"I'm sorry to get you up so early, but I think the dawn this morning will be beautiful, and you should not miss it. I know how you admired the sunset the other day."

"I wonder if I should disturb the children," thought Father; but they were already crowding behind the door, and on hearing Father's remark rushed out to greet the bird.

"Good-morning, Mr. Eagle," they chorused.

"You have a fine family," declared the eagle, when the introductions were over. "I welcome all to Eagle Lookout. Come up whenever you feel inclined."

"Who would like to see the dawn from Eagle Lookout?" asked Father.

"Me! Me! Me!" from everyone. So hurrying into their clothes, all were soon on their way.

It was about a mile and a quarter to the place where the eagles had their home, so in twenty minutes they were all clambering up the headland and soon reached the Lookout, a little breathless after their hurry.

The Lookout was situated on the northern headland of the beach, it being the highest point of this part of the coast.

"You have a wonderful position here," said Father.

"Yes, we have. Many years ago the eagles were very delicate and were ordered mountain air, and we have grown very strong and healthy living on the heights." And indeed he was a noble bird, measuring ten feet from tip of wing to tip of wing, and stood as tall as Mac, with such piercing eyes from looking at long distances.

"There it comes!" as a grey streak appeared in the sky.

Then Mavis said:

"The dawn! It comes with herald's song,  
By all bush life it's greeted long;  
From kookaburras' laughing mirth  
To sprightly peewits' tiny girth.  
They turn their eyes to eastern view  
To see the day brought in anew,  
And watching from their mountain height  
They see a faintly spreading light,  
The clouds take shape in forms so bold  
Until their base is tipped with gold,  
Then spreading glow throughout vast space,  
Make moon retire with pale good grace.

"A wondrous scene is here portrayed,  
With mountain peaks so big and staid,  
And interspersed with silver grey  
They form fantastic shapes to stay  
A moment in their changing mood,  
The picture then becomes more crude,  
With jagged peaks that pierce the sky  
As rays shoot up and pass them by,  
They tint their edge with crimson glow  
As mountain tops with lava flow;  
To form like rubies on the shore,  
A place for lovers to explore.

"The pale blue shades entrance the eye  
And make the heart of man to sigh,  
Who in a lonely mood was caught  
And now can see his life was naught  
Without this pure true thought of light  
To chase all fears away with night,  
And noble thoughts course through his mind  
As treasures of God's love unwind.

"The ocean grows so calm and still,  
He seems to wait his store to fill  
Of power to tip his horses white  
When sun's hot rays have shown their might,  
On widening circle light is spread  
And leaves smile up for daily bread,  
For sun to them is food to store,  
He makes tree trunks expand their bore.

"Then in the far off gullies deep  
The owl sneaks off for daily sleep;  
For light to him spells nothing more,  
And soon you'll hear his happy sneer,  
As dreaming of the mice he'll catch  
When sun has closed his evening latch.

"And then from out the ocean bed  
Old Sol shows up his face in red,  
And greeting all with sunny smile  
He warms your heart and life's worth while.

"We stand and watch the changing scene,  
Spellbound as if in wonder dream,  
And try to grasp the thought behind  
The Architect's great Master Mind.

"How great Thou art, the One Divine,  
Who mak'st for us this light to shine  
In glorious tribute to Thy might,  
As turning daylight into night,  
And like the steady ocean's roll,  
Thine arms reach out from pole to pole."



Everything was very peaceful as the sun climbed higher and higher, spreading his mantle of brightness and happiness over the world. Then Mr. Eagle asked them all to come and meet Mrs. Eagle and his family.

"I did not disturb them before, as they were saying their prayers, their usual practice at sunrise," he said.

There stood all the eagles on another rock, thanking God for such a wonderful world. Mr. Eagle then beckoned to Mrs. Eagle and family, and all were introduced, the children greatly admiring the young eagles, these in turn thinking their visitors wonderful too.

Their host pressed them to stay to breakfast, but Father thought they had better return, as a big day was before them. So, parting with mutual good wishes and a promise to meet again soon, the family faced downhill for a swim and breakfast, but not before each had been given a beautiful tail feather and a promise of many for the new home.

"Now boys and girls," said Father, "swim-oh!" And gathering their towels, all were soon at the pool.

"Good morning! Good morning!" from every side greeted them, and Father, Mother and the family felt it was good to be alive. The black swan promised to teach the children the water glide. He looked so handsome sitting on the water and said it was so simple; but the children could not hope to sit the water with such grace as the swan.

Father was chatting to the kangaroo and asking him if the eagle often came down to the valley. "No, he loves the big spaces and soaring through the clouds, but he always keeps us posted with anything he sees that may be of interest to us. He is very kind hearted and a great friend of mine. I often spend the dawn with him."

After breakfast the bandicoot arrived. He was just on

time, as he had to sharpen his claws, thinking he had better be ready for a big day's digging.

Mac and Douglas decided to go with him. Mother packed their lunches and away they went, clambering over rocks and through dense brush. The distance was not very great, but the country was rough and walking a slow job.

"There," said the bandicoot, "is the cave!" And before them was a great overhanging rock fully sixty feet deep by two hundred feet long. Mac rushed forward and was digging before the others came up, so eager was he to find some treasures left by the aborigines.

The bandicoot told them that years ago a great king had lived there with his tribe. "Our lives were never safe with such people about, and we are glad that they have disappeared. A great number of battles have been fought for possession of this cave, as it was the finest around, and the last tribe held it for many years; their king was a great warrior."

The floor of the cave was several feet deep with shells and rubbish, the accumulation of centuries.

Then the excitement began. Mac found a spearhead, then Douglas a fish hook, whilst fish hooks of a larger type and flint axes came to light, large and small; such a number of various weapons were dug up that the boys were wildly excited.

The bandicoot was then seen tugging at a big stone; the children helped him until there appeared a slab of stone with carvings upon it.

"This is a carving of old King Billy," said Mac, and, sure enough, cleaning the stone, there was the king himself, very roughly carved, but quite distinct. It looked very old, while, in addition, was a diagram of the cave and a mark pointing to another rock some distance away. "That

must be where he is buried," cried Mac. So soon they were all digging away until Mac, carefully removing some soil, found the skeleton of King Billy, and they soon had his bones on the grass, with a collection of nulla nullas, spears and boomerangs.

This was a wonderful find, and there was more excitement when Mac found the carved battle axe of the old king, which had notches on the handle showing how many men he had killed in battle.

The boys decided to try and find a cave near-by and make it into a museum.

"I'm hungry," said Douglas.

"Oh, bother dinner," said Mac; "let's dig and find more treasures." But the bandicoot said he was not used to missing his meals, so unpacking their hamper they were soon eating their lunch. Mother had provided roots for the bandicoot so he did not have to dig for his dinner. He told the boys that the bandicoots always lived on roots, and their main work was digging the soil and exposing it to the sun. They worked every night and some days. It was much cooler at night, he said, and digging kept the ground sweeter, which made the grass grow better.

The kangaroos gave prizes for the best patches of grass where they had been digging, so there was plenty of competition. They enjoyed their work, as it was a labour of love. The worms assisted them in this great work, but they were very slow.

"I will collect anything I find during my work, and also tell all my mates to do the same," said the friendly little animal.

Mac and Douglas were covered with dirt from head to foot, but very happy.

The day was drawing to a close and they had a wonderful collection to take home, but the difficulty was to carry such a load. This problem was solved by a number of kangaroos who had come to help them. So all were soon homeward bound, the kangaroos with burdens tied to their backs. The boys wondered if the king had a family and if he had been killed in battle.

Father and Mother were very delighted at so great a find and gathered everything together in a pile till a cave could be found for a store.

The rest of the family were almost asleep, and drowsily inquired if the boys had found anything.

So another perfect day came to an end.

## CHAPTER VI.

## A Site for the Cabin.

THE following morning everyone was up early and had a hurried breakfast, as Father wished to inspect the site for the new home, and the family were to accompany him.

"The kangaroo said he would arrive at 7 o'clock," said Father. "Oh, here he is." And with his great hops he was soon with the friends to lead them to Palm Grove. He asked Douglas and Lois if they would like a ride. They had been longing for one. Billy Kangaroo had accompanied his father, so after thanking him Douglas climbed on Billy's back, while Lois climbed on to the larger animal. The rest of the children were very envious of Douglas and Lois, but they were happy when told they could have a ride later in the day.

It was not rough riding the animals; they hopped with a long low motion. It was very thrilling to the children, with the cool morning breeze fanning their cheeks, travelling through the bush. There were giant trees, stately palms and bottle brush; the ground was covered with maiden-hair fern, wild violets and boronia, making the whole into a fairy land of great beauty. Mother felt she had never been so happy before, and when a kookaburra flew down and sat on her shoulder, she thanked God for this peaceful spot in which they could live contentedly, away from the city's maddening rush.

The old man bear then climbed down from his grey gum home with slow, dignified walk, gathered a bunch of flowers and handed them to Mother.

He said the bears were a very contented family. Baby Bear then poked his nose round a limb, and seeing his father talking climbed from his perch and joined the party.

Everyone fell in love with baby bear, with the gentle look in his eyes, and Jessie, picking him up, felt she could eat him, so soft and furry and cuddlesome he felt. She wanted to keep him for the day, so father bear excused himself for a few minutes to see baby's mother, and ask if Jessie might have him for a while. The mother consented. Great was Jessie's joy when he came back with the good news and said he would call before night for baby.

In the meantime Douglas had told Billy Kangaroo that he would love an opossum to play with. Bill said: "We will go and see the opossum family." So hopping for a few minutes they came to their home in a hollow tree. Bill introduced Douglas to the mother animal. He explained that this little boy was anxious to have an opossum for his friend. The mother said Douglas could take Dick, and Dick was overjoyed to be chosen for Douglas' friend. They had met at the pool the previous morning. Away Doug. rode with Dick in front of him, clinging to Billy's neck.

"Where have you been, Douglas?" asked Father. Billy explained to him and Douglas, holding up his mate, gave the good news to the rest of the children.

"Now," said Father, "we must hurry, or we will not be able to finish our work for the day."

Soon they were at the Palm Grove. All stood together, amazed at the beauty of the place. The palms covered about two acres of ground, such stately fellows with leaves waving to the breeze.

Here and there were gums and ironbarks where lived kookaburras in the ants' nests, and magpies sang to the party beneath. It was a perfect home for animals and birds.

There was a clear piece of land on the western side, close to a lovely little stream, and everyone exclaimed together: "There is the place for the cabin!" And it *was* a lovely spot.

There was a giant red gum, with its gnarled limbs and an enormous spread of branches that came down almost to the ground. Such a tree to climb! Mac was soon in the branches, where there were natural seats that one could sleep in, so broad and flat were they. The red gum said that he was called the "King of the Red Gums" and he was very proud of the title. He was very pleased to meet the city folk, and when he knew they intended to build their cabin near by he was highly delighted, and said he would protect them from the storms.

Father had been examining the stream. Here again Nature had been kind, for the water was pure and sparkled like diamonds as it sang its song of joy to all.

"You are indeed a wonderful stream," said Father. "I have never tasted water so pure before. You will be a life-giving spring for us. We will commence the cabin straight away, and during the evenings will be able to chat with you when we are living here." The spring then said he would tell them a great history of Pittwater.

"I love telling stories of the past," he said.

The spring then told the boys that his mother lived deep down in the earth, where it was very hot, and she always boiled him; then he was filtered as he came to the surface, and that is the reason he was so pure and sparkled so. He asked the children to be careful not to throw anything into the pool, but keep it clean. "I will introduce you

to Mr. Frog, who looks after my house for me. He is a great worker and keeps the water pure after I have given it away." Mr. Frog then hopped out of the pool on to a rock and with a loud croak of welcome to the family told them he was very pleased to see them, and if they lived there he hoped they would be great friends with him.

"What a size he is," said Mac; "he must be six inches long."

The frog said his family was at work, but would meet them later. "We are very happy here with our cleaning work."

"We will have a wonderful garden of wild flowers," said Mavis. "Look at the wild roses waiting to bloom when their time comes, and Christmas bells." The flannel flowers were in bloom, and massed together with the velvety petals, made a wonderful picture.

The red gum told them how wonderful the spring was. "I have grown so large because he invited me to send a root to him, so I can drink on the hottest day, and dry weather has no terrors for me now. You will be very happy here, for Pittwater is a most beautiful district. The swallows who travel to other parts of the world, all tell us they have never seen anything so beautiful during any of their travels. They have told us that Australia is the finest country in the world."

All the children here joined in with: "We know it is, and love Australia fair."

It was soon time to return for lunch, so with Mac and Jessie riding the kangaroos this time, away all hurried. Mac called to Jessie: "What about a race?" The steeds agreed that the finishing post should be Clareville gum tree. The kangaroos hopped great hops, the trees flashed past and the wind blew in the children's faces as father and son

strained to be first at the gum. Jessie's hat blew off, and Mac could not think of anything but holding on to Bill.

The kookaburras laughed loudly, seeing the race through the bush, then the crows, magpies, butcher birds, with lots of other birds of the air, seemed to be flying overhead. The bears grunted applause from their trees. The opossums rushed to the path; the bandicoots stopped digging, and the snakes turned to see the two leaping animals.

Faster and faster went father kangaroo. Bill strained every muscle to keep up with him, but father reached the tree half a hop ahead of him. "I'm too good for you, Bill."

Poor Bill was so winded that he could not reply, and Mac climbed off his back so that he could lie down for a while.

"It was glorious, Mac, wasn't it?" said Jessie, and Mac agreed.

The rest of the family had to be told all about it when they arrived.

"Now for lunch." So climbing the hill to the cave, Mother and the girls soon had the meal ready.

"We will see the beach this afternoon," said Father.

## CHAPTER VII.

### A Trip to the Beach.

**A**FTER lunch Mother insisted on everyone having a rest for an hour. She would not rest herself, as there were some sarsaparilla leaves brewing on the fire, from which she intended to extract a drink which was very healthful for everyone. The leaves were a present from the bears, who said there were plenty others growing in the bush.

The oysters had also sent a message from Carcel Bay, stating that they were anxious for the family to come and help themselves, as they were crowded out and found it hard to accommodate their young children. It was necessary to have room to grow big and fat. Father said they would pay them a visit in the morning sometime.

The children raced over the last hundred yards, Mavis being first to wet her feet in the waves.

The sea was calm and peaceful, with a light breeze blowing just sufficiently to play with the tiny crests which curled with the breakers as they rolled on to the beach. The seagulls were strutting about, and in chatting to the boys told them how they made their nests on the rocks. There was a great family of them. Mother said she was very fond of the seagulls, and asked them to visit her when the cabin was finished. This they promised to do. They also pointed out the different kinds of shells to the boys.

They then introduced all to the periwinkles and other shell-fish. The periwinkles told them not to be afraid to eat them, as their business in life was to provide food for their friends. The boys collected some, taking advantage of the offer. "People," said the little fish, "are not being cruel when they boil us. We hope you will enjoy your meal."

"There is a whale, children," exclaimed Father, and blowing about a quarter of a mile away was a whale resting on the waves.

"If he would only come nearer," said Kathleen. "I have never seen a whale before." The seagulls overheard this remark and decided to tell the whale, so flying to him they asked him if he would not come closer to the shore.

"Yes," replied the whale, "I would love to see the family. Are you sure they are kind people? I have been chased often by men with harpoons, who have tried to kill me, and I have been very lucky indeed to escape." (The whale was very anxious to oblige the seagulls, because, with other birds, they had often given warning of the approach of the fierce whalers.) "Years ago," continued the whale, "there were no such people, but now it's very dangerous to be seen."

"I will come to the rocks on the north end of the beach, where the water is deep. I want to scrape some barnacles off. How these fellows stick to me! But it is their only home. I don't like to get rid of them, but too many make it hard for me to swim fast, and our lives depend on speed very often. Once a barnacle saved my life, for, as a harpoon was thrown at me, I was lying on my side, it struck the barnacle and glanced off my body. I know they mean well."

The birds assured the whale that the family were very kind indeed, and had come to live amongst them for good.

"I am very glad to hear it," replied the whale. "I don't understand these human beings, for, although they can have all the country in which to live, and plenty of room, they crowd into places they call cities, and fight for money and power, which they cannot take away with them. I will come to the rocks at once."

He was an enormous sea animal, fully seventy feet long, and a great age. However, the water was very deep and he was able to come right up to the rocks.

The family had been told by the seagulls where to stand and there they were when the whale came alongside. The children were very frightened at first, but soon became used to him as Father chatted away.

Whales live to a great age—this one told Father that he remembered the first ship that came to Port Jackson. "I swim away to other countries sometimes and have seen ships before."

He wanted to know why people cut the trees down, so Father described the houses in which we live, and explained how the timber was used for the building of them.

Mr. Whale invited them all to have a ride on his back. He said he was going on a long journey north next day, so he would not have another chance of giving them a treat. The seagulls were sent out to tell a number of the animals to join the party, as there was so much room to spare. In about half an hour kookaburras, bandicoots, bears, opossums, kangaroos, magpies, emus, and cranes were all on the rock.

Father carefully helped Mother and the girls on to the whale, then the whole of the animals and birds clambered up.

"All ready?" asked Mr. Whale.

"Yes, yes, thank you," came from the strange crew.

It was a great sight to see the big "ship" slowly leaving the rocks and gradually increasing the speed, until, like a giant vessel, it went racing through the waves.

Such a journey! The whale was travelling at about twenty-five miles an hour, his huge tail lashing the water into foam.

The whale swam to sea for about two hours, then turned, and made the return journey in quick time. He swam close to the rocks again for all to clamber ashore.

Jacky Bear was unfortunate in climbing off, for he slipped and, with a cry of distress, fell into the water.

Mac immediately plunged in after him, while Father told them all to be still. The bear was soon grasped by Mac, who, catching on to Billy Kangaroo's tail, was hauled upon the rocks once more.

Jack was wet, but otherwise not hurt. Mac had scratched his head, which was bleeding, so away flew a kookaburra to find Dr. Spider, who had a wonderful stock of webs for stopping a flow of blood.

He brought the doctor back with him in a short time, and Mac was soon bandaged with the web and feeling much better.

Father Bear, and, indeed, all the animals, made a hero of Mac and crowded round him in their excitement.

The whale said it was very smart of Mac, and the eagle, soaring through the sky, flew down and congratulated him on his presence of mind.

Thanking the whale for his kindness, the whole party made for the beach, while their huge friend swam out to sea, diving, and thrashing the water into foam with his great tail, making a truly wonderful scene.

"He's a noble fellow," said Father; "one can hardly realise his size, until riding upon him."

The children gathered shells for the new home, while Father and Mother watched them.

Mother then told them all to stand round while she said these words:

"When God made Sun and Moon and Stars  
And thought then of the Planet Mars  
The world was not complete to Him;  
He made the Earth and placed therein  
The masterpiece of this great state  
A man, with woman for his mate.

"It is so great, His wondrous thought,  
And children here in school been taught  
That countless years have passed this earth,  
Yet we can't tell you of its birth.  
But grope in darkness as of old,  
We cannot grasp a scheme so bold.

"Some like the bush with trees so grand,  
And others rocks do understand,  
But for sheer pleasure give to me  
The wondrous sight of deep blue sea.  
For by its side I always dream  
Of things in life that might have been.

"If you have watched the waves roll in  
While gentle breezes fan your skin,  
Then you will think his spirit tame  
Until he plays a stronger game,  
And lashes waves to horses white  
When you will understand his might.

"And ships that have crossed over bars  
To steer by heaven's lonely stars  
Are tossed like corks and groan and strain,  
The captain longs for port again.  
He hopes the storm will lose its strength  
And waves return to shorter length.

"I love to roam the sandy beach  
For shells a sermon to me preach  
And lullaby of soothing waves  
Gives me new strength, as sand it laves  
And pebbles have been worn quite round  
With ceaseless rubbing on the ground.

"The tiny crabs crawl out of sight,  
Some to the left and some the right,  
For fear they might be trampled on,  
To creep out later when I've gone,  
And periwinkles are like dots—  
The children boil them in their pots.

"The seaweed in fantastic shapes  
Some, the surfers use for drapes,  
And make themselves to fearsome look  
Like dragons in a picture book.  
They play around with greatest joy,  
For who has not been once a boy?

"The bold headlands defy the sea,  
But as time passes they will be  
So gradually removed from sight,  
The ocean takes a tiny bite;  
But sure as sun, he'll do the deed  
And leave more beaches—it's decreed.

"Then shooting breaker brings its joy,  
For old and young may well employ  
Themselves in healthy exercise;  
You try, and see the great surprise  
You'll get when in a dumper caught,  
Your strength by them you'll know is naught.

"So old sea waves keep rolling on  
And sing to me a lovely song,  
Such peace then enters to my soul  
My body is made clean and whole.  
There resting on the whitened sands  
I dream all day of ether lands.

"Then night falls with its deepening gloom  
The Sun has set, to give Moon room,  
I sit and wonder where God dwells,  
Then putting ear to larger shells  
I hear a voice so faintly say  
This is the end of perfect day."

"Yes," said Father, "this is the end of a perfect day. We can all say that. It is time to start for home. I feel so well in spirit and body, that I know there is certainly a health-giving balm in the bush and the sea."

"I ask of God that He will be  
Always with us near the sea,  
And if we travel off afar  
He'll be our guide and our bright star."

So all happy and tired, they wended their way home.  
"We must be up early again," said Father, "and make a start on the cabin."

On reaching the cave, Mr. White Ant, the architect, was there to greet them. He said he had made an inspection of the ants' work and would like Father to meet him in the morning, to show him the many logs which had been cut down for the cabin.

Father thanked him, and said he would be ready at 4 a.m.

Tea was soon over, and all were a little later in bed, dreaming of whales.



## CHAPTER VIII.

## Building the Cabin.

THE next morning at 4 o'clock Father, Mac and Douglas were ready waiting for the White Ant to come.

"The White Ant said he would be here," said Father, "and I know he will keep his promise; and there he is, waiting at the rock with the Kangaroo." The Kangaroo had kindly offered to carry him, as he was rather slow at walking, this not being the season for wings. The White Ants only fly at certain times.

An inspection was made of many trees. One nice iron-bark looked so healthy that Father asked what was the matter with it.

"He is alright now," said the Ant, "but he has been cured of a very bad attack of heart disease, and when he is cut down will make a splendid drain pipe. We have had to eat four inches from his centre. Very often trees look healthy, but are not so, and we have hard work with some of them to allow us to give them our medicine. Often we have to burrow into the ground before we can reach the affected spot."

They had a look at about a dozen trees ready for their cabin and decided to start cutting them across immediately. This finished the inspection, as the Ant said they were at work on the logs for the walls and the Kangaroos would carry them, with the help of the Emus, to the Palm Grove. So they returned home for breakfast.

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"What is that noise?" asked Douglas. It sounded as if the whole bush world were at the cave. And, sure enough, they were.

"Oh!" exclaimed the Bear. "Here he is."

This was for Mac. They had all gathered to thank him for his action in saving the Bear yesterday. He was presented with a beautiful Blue Tongue Lizard. The Lizard said he had heard that Mac liked his family, so begged to be presented to him. He said he was very useful and would love to run messages for Mac, and could sleep at the foot of his bed.

Mac was delighted. He said he always had been fond of lizards, and the Blue Tongues were his favourites.

There were too many to ask for breakfast, and, in any case, the animals had all breakfasted early. Father told them he would make a start on the cabin about 10 o'clock. It was then 7 o'clock. All promised to be there. The Butcher Birds sang a quartet, "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow." This was much appreciated by the animals and children.

After the others had left, the bear Mac had saved came to him and said he had spent the night in a cave and had found the most beautiful carved boomerang, and would Mac accept it for his museum? Mac was very much affected by this show of gratitude on the part of the bear.

At 10 o'clock the family were at the Palm Grove, as also were the Emus and Kangaroos, with logs ready for placing in position. The Kangaroos had lifted the logs on to the Emus' backs, the beasts standing abreast, and when they were fastened with vines, the Emus walked off with them.

So all day long the work went on. Father laid out the foundation of the cabin. There was an entrance porch

leading into a large room, 30 feet long, with a large stone fireplace at the end. On one side was the parents' room, the boys' room and the girls' room; on the other side there was a kitchen and bathroom.

The Bears proved themselves great hands at rolling stones into position. There was plenty of ant cement handy, and this the Emus mixed with water with their powerful feet. The Platypus had already made a start on the cellar, and the Bandicoots proved themselves masters at excavating. Such a hive of industry the Palm Grove had become! The spring gave out an extra supply of water and the Red Gum cheered them all with his funny jokes, which kept the Kookaburras laughing most of the time. The Magpies gathered a great pile of sticks with the help of the other birds. So the day drew merrily on to a close.

"My word," said Mac, "these ants can work. They have never stopped for a minute the whole day, and it was the same with the bees." They had been busy making a great stock of wax, thousands of them helping in the work.

Shortly before dusk the Snakes began to arrive, all with their old skins carefully rolled up. These were placed in charge of the Red Gum.

"Gee," said Douglas, "I'm tired."

And they were all tired. The Kangaroos offered them all a ride home, but said there would be no racing to-day. Even Father was glad to have a ride on the giant animal.

It was a wonderful day. Mother had stayed at home to have a hot dinner ready for them, and she laughed to see Father astride his animal with his arms round its neck.

It was arranged to work early every morning, then, if it were hot later in the day, they would shelter in the shade for a few hours, say, from eleven o'clock until two. The

boys, you may be sure, were ready for their meal, and as soon as they were finished went straight to bed.

The work of building the cabin went on day after day, and at the end of a month Father said to Mother: "We will be ready to move next week."

So many helpers had made light work. The kangaroos were as strong as lions and marvels at hoisting logs and rocks. The boys always laughed at the emus mixing the cement; sometimes they were so strong that they threw the cement as far as Mr. Red Gum, who said that if they were not more careful he would drop a limb on them.

The roof work proved a great success, and Father said it was a credit to the Magpies. Meanwhile, the ironbark had been made into tanks to catch rain, as Mother decided that for washing purposes the water would be much softer than that of the spring.

Then the day dawned when everything was complete. Chairs and tables had been made, and beds, also a camp oven. The cabin was certainly a great credit to everyone. The spiders glazed the openings for the windows with webs, and told Mother that every morning she could just break them down and every evening they would spin new webs. If the weather were stormy they would spin them several thicknesses. Their work was marvellous. Such designs were always admired. The spiders said they would keep a number of their workers always in the window cracks ready for work.

The bark grubs were still at work, and said it would take them another month to finish their designs. What they had done looked very beautiful.

The platypus had by this time finished the cellar on the spring's bank and the boys had been shown how to place a stone at the entrance, so that it would form a door and any-

one could easily place things inside or take them out. The bees had filled in all the cracks of the logs. The rooms looked very cosy with the snake-skin panelling half way up the walls, where a shelf projected. Stone seats were built in various spots amongst the palms, and Kathleen's wish had been fulfilled—a nice little room had been set apart for a hospital.

Kathleen was very busy during the building operations, for many of the workers had the skin knocked off them, and one kangaroo had his tail badly crushed, but no one was killed or seriously injured.

Then, when all was ready for occupation, Father asked all the animals and birds to come to the cabin warming the next day, as they proposed to move in then.

The last night in the cave was spent by Father and Mother in a long talk. Mother thought the children had grown so much and looked so healthy; Father said it was an object lesson to all to have seen the ants and bees at work. Their industry was wonderful, and they put their whole hearts into the labour. They seemed to work simply for the love of it. There is no jealousy or greed amongst them; they simply do their work and are happy at it. They have developed the community spirit to perfection.

"Well, mother," said Father, "this is our last night in the cave. It has been a wonderful time, and we must thank God for His goodness. You look ten years younger, and I feel a boy again.

"I was just thinking:

"If a man or woman changed their thought  
From greed and power, they'd have a share  
Of happiness the ants have caught,  
And in this world have not a care.

"And this is what God's Book tells us,  
It's plain enough for us to read,  
Of trifling things don't make a fuss  
And you will find you've sown the seed.

"It's true if we continue so  
And try to do with all our might,  
We'd find the thought begin to grow  
And in the end we'd see the light.

"For on this earth we're here to live,  
Some think to grasp or sneak some gain.  
But why should we not like to give  
Something that's in our hand and brain.

"And leave the world a better place  
That noble deeds they've in us found;  
Then we shall have improved the race  
And know for higher plane we're bound."

## Haven.

THE great day had arrived at last, when, after all the strenuous efforts of building, the family was to move into the cabin.

Everywhere there was hurry and bustle, as there was a great deal of cleaning and packing to be done. This kept them all busy until 8 o'clock, when everything was ready. Beds of bracken, with all that was of no use, were stacked in a great heap and burnt. The cave was swept and goods they intended to take packed.

The family then said a last farewell to the cave, where they had been so happy. Mother could not help the tears gathering as she said, "Dear old cave! you have been a safe shelter for us. We leave you, but will often come and sit on the stones and rest by your side, and think of the happy days spent under the shelter of your protecting rock."

Then off they tramped to their new home. It was a glorious day. Everyone walked with swinging strides, anxious to reach the Palm Grove as soon as possible.

"Here we are," said Lois. "The cabin looks lovely this morning." And it was agreed that there had never been a lovelier home.

On entering, they found that the animals had been before them, and great branches of boronia, flannel flowers and gum tips had been placed in jars, giving quite a homely look to the room. Mother said she was sure the bears had been at work.

Mavis ran off to plot out her garden; Mac went to the pool to see the frog; Jessie stayed with Mother, and Douglas accompanied Kathleen to the hospital to fix everything in readiness, in case someone might be injured. Lois climbed into the branches of the red gum to talk with an opossum who had made his home there.

The house warming had been arranged for three o'clock. The store room was packed with everything that might be required for tea. Long tables were placed under the shade of the red gum, and the children set the good things on them, so everything was in readiness for the party.

The animals, birds, reptiles and insects began to arrive in small batches. Mother was at the entrance of the cabin to receive them. First came the rock wallaby, then the kangaroos, bandicoots, bears, opossums, platypus, snakes, lizards, porcupines, kookaburras, magpies, emus, lyre birds, butcher birds, and dozens of other bush cousins.

Such a laughing and talking all at once there was.

As soon as they were all seated at the tables the red gum asked a blessing for the food and other good things provided. He beamed on the crowd and said it was a proud day for him to see so many friends sitting under his branches.

There was great excitement when the bulldog ant got stuck in the honey. The bees flew to his assistance and soon made him presentable again. The spiders dropped from the branches of the trees with long silken threads and spun beautiful designs, which were greatly admired, above the tables. The drinks consisted of crushed wild raspberries in pure spring water and honey water.

After everyone had eaten sufficient, Father rose, and, addressing the gathering, told them how glad he was that he had met the kangaroo on his first journey from the city and had been led to such friends.

"You have been wonderfully good to us and shown kindness which we cannot repay. You are welcome to the Palm Grove whenever you feel inclined to visit us. You will find the cabin always open to you; come as often as you please. If anyone is sick or gets hurt, come to the hospital, where Kathleen will attend you. We love you and wish you all joy."

Loud laughter was heard, and there were the kookaburras who had sheltered Father on his first journey to the bush, and with them the rabbit who had been caught in the trap and had been released by the children. The eagle perched on the red gum told the party he had shown them the right direction to the cabin.

Mr. Rabbit told how the rabbit family had migrated recently to Australia, and liked Australia much better than the old land.

Now for the concert! Stools were pushed back, and everyone sat round in a semi-circle, facing a table, which was used as a platform.

The first item on the programme was a song by the magpie, who warbled a most beautiful rendition of the birds' bush lay. Then the magpie gave a talking song; the butcher bird was next called on. Who has not heard the beautiful notes of this bird? He sang as he had never sung before, and the old red gum specially thanked him for his effort.

An item much appreciated was that of the lyre bird. He imitated all the birds and animals, greatly delighting his audience. Then he danced his famous nest dance, and so gracefully did he execute the steps that Mother asked if he would teach them to the children. Another item the children loved was the kangaroo dance, in which tails were used very effectively.

The bear then recited:

- " You old grey gum,  
 You make my home,  
 All day bees hum,  
 Where I do roam.
- " On limbs I keep  
 Where sun's hot glare,  
 Makes me to sleep  
 After leaf fare.
- " I love your trunk,  
 Where I can climb  
 And make my bunk  
 At any time."

"Yes," said the red gum, "you are more fond of the grey gum than you are of any other tree, but we are not jealous, as we know that her leaves suit your digestion so well."

Next item was a recitation by the kangaroo:

- " Oh, joyful sun,  
 What would we say  
 If you were one  
 To stay away?
- " Our food depends  
 On how you shine,  
 Please this extend  
 To us all time.
- " Your bright old rays  
 In joyful mood  
 Do fill our days,  
 So we'll not brood."

The bees then gave their famous humming song, some singing low and some high notes, resulting in a very pleasing effect. Then the white ant recited a little poem:

"I doctor all the trees  
And love my work to do;  
I work away from breeze  
And darkness suits me too.

"You may not like my ways,  
But I can't help you there;  
It's very hard these days  
To find enough of fare.

"So to your house I go,  
Inviting self right in;  
The food that I love so  
You've stolen: it's a sin.

"You think you're very smart,  
The poor white ant to rob,  
But I will give you start  
And beat you to the job."

Everyone contributed an item to the programme.

The sun was sinking in the west when the concert finished.

Mr. Kangaroo thanked the family for the lovely afternoon. He hoped they would live long and enjoy health and strength. "It makes a great difference having you living with us," he said, "and all the animals love you."

The guests all rose and sang "For They are Jolly Good Fellows" with such a hearty swing that it echoed and re-echoed through the bush.

"Good-bye, everyone," cried the family, standing in a little group at the door of the cabin.

"Good-bye, good-bye, good-bye," came drifting from every side as the animals large and small disappeared through the trees.

Father turned to his family and said: "Children, how truly wonderful is the Spirit of the Bush."

ALEXANDER STEWART JOLLY.

THE END