

I was going to do, I had bolted out of a window and was halfway across the lawn. I expected to hear them call me back, but they did not; so, as the day was very warm, I trotted quietly along the edges of the fields until I came to the wood-lot. I had made up my mind what I would do: I would live in the woods and be a wild dog, until they all came out to hunt for me, and beg my pardon, and promise never to treat me so again. Then, if they would come soon—within a day or two—I might perhaps forgive them, and go home with them, entirely for Helen's sake; but if they did not come by the next afternoon, when they did I would bark scornfully and dash into the woods, leaving them all to mourn for me. I don't believe I ever should have thought of all this if it had not been for a ridiculous story in a paper which Uncle Jake had picked up somewhere, and which I had heard him spelling out to Aunt Nancy a day or two before. It was all about a boy that acted in this way, and I thought it was very fine indeed. This is my only excuse for being such a perfect fool as I was that day, and, although it is a very poor one, it is perhaps better than none. I took a good drink from a stream before going into the wood, and then I hunted about for a place to sleep in, for I was quite resolved not to go home that night, or at any rate not unless they came for me; and somehow I did not much believe they would. I had just found a tolerably good place, and was scratching some dead leaves together for a bed, when I was a good deal startled to hear a voice, which I at once