

draw a knife on me, and I could n't help myself, I'd say Preston. That's a fact."

What Mary would have said the old hunter never knew until long afterward, for just at that moment a quavering, long-drawn note came stealing up from the valley below.

"That's my beauty!" exclaimed Collingsworth. "That's Music, telling what she thinks she knows. Wait!"

Again the long-drawn note came out of the valley, but this time it was eager, significant.

"Now she's telling what she knows," exclaimed Collingsworth.

The dogs went scampering to the signal. Music was not indulging in any flirtation. The drag was very warm. Whalebone, Matt Kilpatrick's brag dog, picked it up with an exultant cry that made the horses prick their ears forward. Then Rowan joined in, and presently it was taken up by every ambitious dog on the ground. But there seemed to be some trouble. The dogs made no headway. They were casting about eagerly, but in confusion.

"If you'll excuse me, Miss Mary, I'll go down and try to untangle that skein. That fox is n't forty yards from Music's nose."