

“In the hock of the ham!” exclaimed Mary.

“Oh, I was talking to myself,” explained the gray cavalier, laughing. “If you’ll put a ham on the ground and make an outline of it, you’ll get a good map of this chase, in my opinion. The line at the big end of the ham will be Little River. The line on the right will be the way the fox went, and the line on the left will be the way he’ll come back. If you ask me why a fox will run up stream when he’s not hard pushed, I’ll never tell you, but that’s the way they do.”

A quarter of an hour passed — a half-hour — three quarters. Then, far to the left, there came upon the morning wind a whimpering sound that gradually swelled into a chorus of hounds.

“He’s cut out a bigger ham than I thought he would,” said Collingsworth.

The sun was now shining brightly. An old bell-cow, browsing on the Bermuda roots on the hillside, lifted her head suddenly as she heard the hounds, and the kling-kolangle of the bell made a curious accompaniment to the music of the dogs, as they burst from a thicket of scrub-pine and persimmon bushes