

It was Preston, and he seemed to be riding easily and contentedly. On the hill to the right the silhouette of another rider appeared. It was Colston, and he was going as hard as he could. The fox, too, had given Colston a decided advantage, for he had swerved considerably to the left, a fact that placed Preston nearly a half-mile farther from the dogs than Colston was.

Collingsworth glanced at Mary and smiled, but she did not return the smile. She was very pale, and she swished the air with her riding-whip so suddenly and so vigorously that her horse jumped and snorted.

“Don’t do that, child!” said Collingsworth, in a low tone. His eye had run ahead of the dogs, and he caught sight of the fox, doubling back up the valley, the dogs going down on one side of a low swampy growth that extended part of the way through the low ground, and the fox going back on the other side. He was going very nimbly, too, but his brush was heavy with dew, and his mouth was half open.

Mary glanced at Collingsworth, but that gentleman was looking steadily at Preston. Then a singular thing happened. Preston,