

Chapter VI - Prince Nimble

"GOOD gracious!" said the little girl, looking around her; "I'm as good as lost in this strange place, and I don't know in what direction to go to get home again."

So she sat down on the grass and tried to think which way she had come, and which way she ought to return in order to get across the gulch to the farmhouse.

"If the Rolling Stone was here, he might tell me," she said aloud. "But I'm all alone."

"Oh, no, you're not," piped a small, sweet voice. "I'm here, and I know much more than the Rolling Stone does."

Twinkle looked this way and then that, very carefully, in order to see who had spoken, and at last she discovered a pretty grasshopper perched upon a long blade of grass nearby.

"Did I hear you speak?" she inquired.

"Yes," replied the grasshopper. "I'm Prince Nimble, the hoppiest hopper in Hoptown."

"Where is that?" asked the child.

"Why, Hoptown is near the bottom of the gulch, in that thick patch of grass you see yonder. It's on your way home, so I'd be pleased to have you visit it."

"Won't I step on some of you?" she asked.

"Not if you are careful," replied Prince Nimble. "Grasshoppers don't often get stepped on. We're pretty active, you know."

"All right," said Twinkle. "I'd like to see a grasshopper village."

"Then follow me, and I'll guide you," said Nimble, and at once he leaped from the blade of grass and landed at least six feet away.

Twinkle got up and followed, keeping her eye on the pretty Prince, who leaped so fast that she had to trot to keep up with him. Nimble would wait on some clump of grass or bit of rock until the girl came up, and then away he'd go again.

"How far is it?" Twinkle once asked him.

"About a mile and a half," was the answer; "we'll soon be there, for you are as good as a mile, and I'm good for the half-mile."

"How do you figure that out?" asked Twinkle.

"Why, I've always heard that a miss is as good as a mile, and you're a miss, are you not?"

"Not yet," she answered; "I'm only a little girl. But papa will be sure to miss me if I don't get home to supper."