

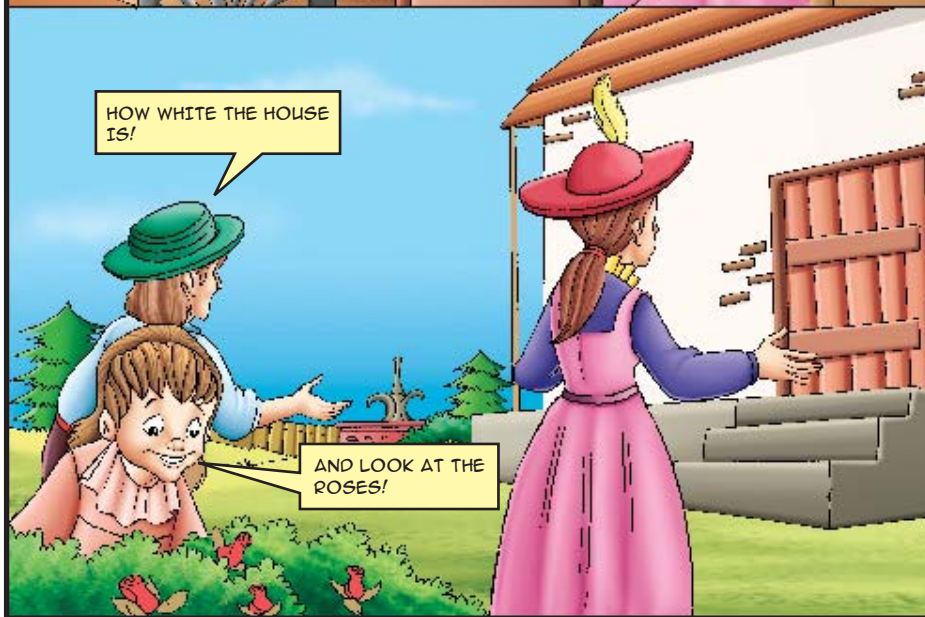
AS A DUSTY HIRED CARRIAGE RATTLED ALONG THE ROAD, THE CHILDREN — ROBERT, ANTHEA, JANE, CYRIL AND BABY HILARY PUT THEIR HEADS OUT OF THE CARRIAGE WINDOW...



THE CARRIAGE REACHED THE VERY TOP OF THE HILL — JUST PAST THE CHALK-QUARRY, AND BEFORE ONE CAME TO THE GRAVEL-PIT. THEN THERE WAS A WHITE HOUSE WITH A GREEN GARDEN AND AN ORCHARD BEYOND.



THE FIVE CHILDREN AND THEIR MOTHER, FINALLY REACHED THEIR DESTINATION.



THE HOUSE WAS DEEP IN THE COUNTRY WITH NO OTHER HOUSE IN SIGHT FOR MILES AROUND. THE CHILDREN'S MOTHER THOUGHT THAT IT WAS QUITE ORDINARY AND RATHER INCONVENIENT.



THIS ISN'T AS GOOD AS I THOUGHT ON THE INSIDE!

BUT TO THE FIVE CHILDREN IT SEEMED A FAIRY PALACE SET IN AN EARTHLY PARADISE, FOR THEY HAD STAYED IN LONDON THE LAST TWO YEARS. AND LONDON CAN BE LIKE A PRISON TO CHILDREN, ESPECIALLY IF THEIR RELATIONS ARE NOT RICH.



IT SEEMS A GOOD PLACE TO PLAY IN!

YES, IT IS RATHER DECENT.

...AND THERE ISN'T A CUPBOARD IN PLACE! OR EVEN A SHELF!!

HOWEVER, MOTHER AND FATHER WERE SUDDENLY CALLED AWAY...LEAVING THE CHILDREN IN THE CARE OF THEIR NURSEMAID, MARTHA.



YOUR FATHER HAS TO GO AWAY ON BUSINESS AND I AM GOING TO STAY WITH YOUR GRANNY WHO IS ILL. IN OUR ABSENCE, I HOPE YOU WILL BEHAVE YOURSELVES AND NOT TROUBLE MARTHA.

YOU DO NOT NEED TO WORRY, MOTHER. WE WILL BE GOOD KIDS AND WE WILL TAKE CARE OF LITTLE LAMB.

WHEN MOTHER AND FATHER WERE GONE, THE HOUSE SEEMED DREADFULLY QUIET AND EMPTY. THE CHILDREN WANDERED FROM ONE ROOM TO ANOTHER AND WISHED THEY HAD SOMETHING TO DO.



I SAY, LET'S TAKE OUR SPADES AND GO AND DIG IN THE GRAVEL-PITS. WE CAN PRETEND IT'S THE SEASIDE.

YES! FATHER SAID IT WAS ONCE THE SEASIDE AND THERE ARE STILL SOME SHELLS BURIED. LET'S GO THEN.

SO THEY WENT, ALL THE CHILDREN, CARRYING THEIR OWN SPADES...

THE GRAVEL-PIT WAS LIKE A GIANT WASH BASIN. CYRIL WANTED TO DIG OUT A CAVE AND ALL THE OTHERS JOINED HIM TOO.

LET'S BUILD A SANDCASTLE!

YES! AND THEN DIG A HOLE THROUGH THE CASTLE TO AUSTRALIA.



YOU SEE, THESE CHILDREN BELIEVED THAT THE WORLD WAS ROUND, AND THAT ON THE OTHER SIDE THE LITTLE AUSTRALIAN BOYS AND GIRLS WERE REALLY WALKING THE WRONG WAY UP, LIKE FLIES ON THE CEILING, WITH THEIR HEADS HANGING DOWN INTO THE AIR!

THE CHILDREN DUG AND DUG TILL THEIR HANDS GOT HOT AND FACES WERE DAMP AND SHINY.

WHAT IF THE BOTTOM OF THE HOLE GAVE AWAY AND WE TUMBLE OVER THE LITTLE AUSTRALIANS?

THEY WOULD THROW STONES AT US AND NOT LET US SEE THE KANGAROOS! LET'S NOT DIG ANYMORE.

YES! IT'S TOO HOT HERE! LET'S GET OUT!

