

THE LITTLE SHEPHERD OF KINGDOM COME

"Ole Miss," she said, indignantly, "my Tom say that he can't get nary a triffin' nigger to come out hyeh to wuk, an' ef that cawnfiel' ain't ploughed mighty soon, it's gwine to bu'n up."

"How many horses are there on the place, Mammy?" asked Dan.

"Hosses!" sniffed the old woman. "They ain't nary a hoss—nothin' but two ole broken-down mules."

"Well, I'll take one and start a plough myself," said Harry.

"And I'll take the other," said Dan.

Mammy groaned.

.

And still the wonder of that night to Chad and Margaret!

"It was General Hunt who taught me to understand—and forgive. Do you know what he said? That every man, on both sides, was right—who did his duty."

"God bless him," said Chad.

XXXI

THE WESTWARD WAY

MOTHER TURNER was sitting in the porch with old Jack at her feet when Chad and Dixie came to the gate—her bonnet off, her eyes turned toward the West. The stillness of death lay over the place, and over the strong old face some preternatural sorrow. She did not rise when she saw Chad, she did not speak when he spoke. She turned merely and looked at him with a look of helpless suffering. She knew the question that was on his lips, for she dumbly motioned toward the door and then put her trembling hands on the railing of the porch and bent her face down on them. With sickening fear, Chad stepped on the threshold—cap in hand—and old Jack followed, whimpering. As his eyes grew accustomed to the dark interior, he could see a sheeted form on a bed in the corner and, on the pillow, a white face.

"Melissa!" he called, brokenly. A groan from the porch answered him, and, as Chad dropped to his knees, the old woman sobbed aloud.

In low tones, as though in fear they might dis-

THE LITTLE SHEPHERD OF KINGDOM COME

turb the dead girl's sleep, the two talked on the porch. Brokenly, the old woman told Chad how the girl had sickened and suffered with never a word of complaint. How, all through the war, she had fought his battles so fiercely that no one dared attack him in her hearing. How, sick as she was, she had gone, that night, to save his life. How she had nearly died from the result of cold and exposure and was never the same afterward. How she worked in the house and in the garden to keep their bodies and souls together, after the old hunter was shot down and her boys were gone to the war. How she had learned the story of Chad's mother from old Nathan Cherry's daughter and how, when the old woman forbade her going to the Bluegrass, she had slipped away and gone afoot to clear his name. And then the old woman led Chad to where once had grown the rose-bush he had brought Melissa from the Bluegrass, and pointed silently to a box that seemed to have been pressed a few inches into the soft earth, and when Chad lifted it, he saw under it the imprint of a human foot—his own, made that morning when he held out a rose-leaf to her and she had struck it from his hand and turned him, as an enemy, from her door.

Chad silently went inside and threw open the window to let the last sunlight in: and he sat there, with his face as changeless as the still face

THE WESTWARD WAY

on the pillow, sat there until the sun went down and the darkness came in and closed softly about her. She had died, the old woman said, with his name on her lips.

Dolph and Rube had come back and they would take good care of the old mother until the end of her days. But Jack—what should be done with Jack? The old dog could follow him no longer. He could live hardly more than another year, and the old mother wanted him—to remind her, she said, of Chad and of Melissa, who had loved him. He patted his faithful old friend tenderly and, when he mounted Dixie, late the next afternoon, Jack started to follow him.

"No, Jack," said Chad, and he rode on, with his eyes blurred. On the top of the steep mountain he dismounted, to let his horse rest a moment, and sat on a log, looking toward the sun. He could not go back to Margaret and happiness—not now. It seemed hardly fair to the dead girl down in the valley. He would send Margaret word, and she would understand.

Once again he was starting his life over afresh, with his old capital, a strong body and a stout heart. In his breast still burned the spirit that had led his race to the land, had wrenched it from savage and from king, had made it the high tem-

THE LITTLE SHEPHERD OF KINGDOM COME

ple of Liberty for the worship of freemen—the Kingdom Come for the oppressed of the earth—and, himself the unconscious Shepherd of that Spirit, he was going to help carry its ideals across a continent Westward to another sea and on—who knows—to the gates of the rising sun. An eagle swept over his head, as he rose, and the soft patter of feet sounded behind him. It was Jack trotting after him. He stooped and took the old dog in his arms.

"Go back home, Jack!" he said.

Without a whimper, old Jack slowly wheeled, but he stopped and turned again and sat on his haunches—looking back.

"Go home, Jack!" Again the old dog trotted down the path and once more he turned.

"Home, Jack!" said Chad.

The eagle was a dim, black speck in the band of yellow that lay over the rim of the sinking sun, and after its flight, horse and rider took the westward way.

BOOKS BY JOHN FOX, JR.

Published by CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

The Little Shepherd
of Kingdom Come

Illustrated by F. C. YOHN

12mo. \$1.50

"Potent with the wine of life."—*World's Work*.

"Destined to become a classic."

—*Philadelphia Enquirer*.

"Spirited and good to read."—*Chicago Tribune*.

"A notable story."—*Boston Transcript*.

"A fine conception."—*New York Sun*.

"A very good novel . . . well worth reading."

—*London Spectator*.

"Not a dull page . . . Actual, human, and exciting."

—*London Morning Post*.

"Vivid, straightforward, unpretentious, and interesting."—*London Athenæum*.

"A sweet and wholesome story."—*King*.

"One of the most brilliant American novels we have met."—*Star*.