

staying in Saint Paul. He gave John back his share. Fannie held tightly to Annie's hand; Mabel Jackson had Melinda. The boys stayed close behind them. Mabel threatened to tie a rope to the youngest boy if he tried personally to find out how the train worked. The man called out the names of the families ready to board: Charles Nichols, J.P. Morris, Manual Moore, John Hale, Charles Jackson, Johnny Bronson, Ganden Carter, Charley Scott, West Adams, Dave Lewis, and the Frasers. There were more, but John only heard these names before he climbed aboard and helped his family into the railroad car. Fannie placed Melinda and Annie on the bundles so they could see out of the window.

The train pulled out slowly. Annie thought that time would never come. Cars shuffled back and forth on the sidings. Important looking people got on and off; some of them stopped and looked at her family and wrote something down, then got off again. Annie watched a portly man in a blue suit with large gold buttons turn several white families away. She sighed when she heard the man say "All Aboard, Coal Miners train going west." Blue Bell, the doll, was going west too, and it was tucked securely in the corner by the window. There were tears; mothers and daughters parted company for the first time. Annie's chin quivered, and she wanted to cry too.

The train rounded the corner of the yard. It chugged and rocked and passed the dingy buildings put up around the yard. Twenty minutes later the train rolled through the country side. Fields of flowers bloomed and lazy cows grazed in the fields. The scenery blurred.

Annie and Melinda fell asleep. Fannie laid them on the empty seats and covered them. "Too much for one day." She kissed them. Claude stayed awake. The three boys of Charles Jackson became his very best friends. There were all kinds of games to invent aboard a train — games that only three boys could think up.

The train gathered speed. It climbed sloping hillsides

and over viaducts. The river looked small in the canyons below. John watched Negro men working on the tracks. He silently wondered if their job was better than the coal mines. It looked just as rough to him — they swung the heavy hammers repairing the tracks. The nights were cold going through the mountains. Two days out and the conductor called out, "Bismark, North Dakota." Two men fought and the noise woke Annie. The train pulled to a stop and the fighting men got off. The copper mines were a tempting place to disembark. Mabel talked hurriedly. "Pull down the shades on the windows! The white people are throwing rocks at the train." Fannie pushed Annie and Melinda away from the window in case one broke and glass shattered all over them. The boys worked out a spy system of their own. They found an empty seat and peered from behind closed shades at any activities outside. The reports came back regularly, "There is a man with a rock not far away." The journey had lost some of its charm for the children, and the job of entertaining them became harder. The train made an unscheduled stop in Pasco, Washington. John and Charles watched fifty more Pinkerton detectives get aboard. "I am going to find someone and ask them what it is all about." John came back and sat staring out of the window. Anger swelled up in his face. He did not have time to explain what he had heard. They had not been told that there was a strike on in the Franklin, Washington coal mines. 30-30 Winchesters and carbines were already being handed out to the men on the train, and they were told there might be trouble. Some of the families got off at Yakima, Washington to farm the rich ground and work in the apple orchards. Big Jim Shepardson, the spokesman for the group, got off in Rosalyn, along with the family of Charles Jackson. John parted company with his friend only 100 miles from their destination, Franklin, Washington.