its owner was one who had pushed frugality to the borders of a vice. It was not a pleasant face, but now it wore an almost benign expression under the influence of Miss Cassandra's eyes. So intent, apparently, were both of them upon each other that they did not notice the group on the bench at the other side of the grove. William Wetherell ventured to ask Jethro who the man was.

"N-name's Lovejoy," said Jethro.

"Lovejoy!" ejaculated the storekeeper, thinking of what Mr. Merrill had told him of the opponents of the Truro Franchise Bill. "President of the 'Northwestern' Railroad?"

Jethro gave his friend a shrewd look.

"G-gettin' posted — hain't you, Will?" he said.

"Is she going to marry that old man?" asked Cynthia.

Jethro smiled a little. "G-guess not," said he, "guess not, if the old man can help it. Nobody's married him yet, and hain't likely to."

Jethro was unusually silent on the way back to the hotel, but he did not seem to be worried or displeased. He only broke his silence once, in fact, when Cynthia called his attention to a large poster of some bloodhounds on a fence, announcing the fact in red letters that "Uncle Tom's Cabin" would be given by a certain travelling company at the Opera House the next evening.

"L-like to go, Cynthy?"

"Oh, Uncle Jethro, do you think we can go?"

"Never b'en to a show — hev you — never b'en to a show?"

"Never in my life," said Cynthia.

"We'll all go," said Jethro, and he repeated it once or twice as they came to Main Street, seemingly greatly tickled at the prospect. And there was the Truro Franchise Bill hanging over him, with only a week left of the session, and Lovejoy's and Duncan's men sitting so tight in their seats! William Wetherell could not understand it.

CHAPTER XIV

IN WHICH THE BACK SEATS ARE HEARD FROM

HALF an hour later, when Mr. Wetherell knocked timidly at Number 7, — drawn thither by an irresistible curiosity, — the door was opened by a portly person who wore a shining silk hat and ample gold watch chain. The gentleman had, in fact, just arrived; but he seemed perfectly at home as he laid down his hat on the marble-topped bureau, mopped his face, took a glass of iced water at a gulp, chose a cigar, and sank down gradually on the bed. Mr. Wetherell recognized him instantly as the father of the celebrated Cassandra.

"Well, Jethro," said the gentleman, "I've got to come into the Throne Room once a day anyhow, just to make sure you don't forget me — eh?"

"A-Alvy," said Jethro, "I want you to shake hands with a particular friend of mine, Mr. Will Wetherell of Coniston. Er — Will, the Honorable Alvy Hopkins of Gosport."

Mr. Hopkins rose from the bed as gradually as he had sunk down upon it, and seized Mr. Wetherell's hand impressively. His own was very moist.

"Heard you was in town, Mr. Wetherell," he said heartily. "If Jethro calls you a particular friend, it means something, I guess. It means something to me, anyhow."

"Will hain't a politician," said Jethro. "Er — Alvy?"

"Hello!" said Mr. Hopkins.

"Er — Will don't talk."

"If Jethro had been real tactful," said the Honorable Alvy, sinking down again, "he'd have introduced me as

the next governor of the state. Everybody knows I want to be governor, everybody knows I've got twenty thousand dollars in the bank to pay for that privilege. Everybody knows I'm going to be governor if Jethro says so."

William Wetherell was a little taken aback at this ingenuous statement of the gentleman from Gosport. He looked out of the window through the foliage of the park, and his eye was caught by the monument there in front of the State House, and he thought of the inscription on the base of it, "The People's Government." The Honorable Alva had not mentioned the people — undoubtedly.

"Yes, Mr. Wetherell, twenty thousand dollars." He sighed. "Time was when a man could be governor for ten. Those were the good old days — eh, Jethro?"

"A-Alvy, 'Uncle Tom's Cabin's' comin' to town to-morrow — to-morrow."

"You don't tell me," said the Honorable Alva, acquiescing cheerfully in the change of subject. "We'll go. Pleased to have you, too, Mr. Wetherell."

"Alvy," said Jethro, again, "'Uncle Tom's Cabin' comes to town to-morrow."

Mr. Hopkins stopped fanning himself, and glanced at Jethro questioningly.

"A-Alvy, that give you an idea?" said Jethro, mildly.

Mr. Wetherell looked blank: it gave him no idea whatsoever, except of little Eva and the bloodhounds. For a few moments the Honorable Alva appeared to be groping, too, and then his face began to crease into a smile of comprehension.

"By Godfrey, Jethro, but you are smart," he exclaimed, with involuntary tribute; "you mean buy up the theatre?"

"C-callate you'll find it's bought up."

"You mean *pay* for it?" said Mr. Hopkins.

"You've guessed it, Alvy, you've guessed it."

Mr. Hopkins gazed at him in admiration, leaned out of the perpendicular, and promptly drew from his trousers' pocket a roll of stupendous proportions. Wetting his thumb, he began to push aside the top bills.

"How much is it?" he demanded.

But Jethro put up his hand.

"No hurry, Alvy — n-no hurry. H-Honorable Alvy Hopkins of Gosport — p-patron of the theatre. Hain't the first time you've b'en a patron, Alvy."

"Jethro," said Mr. Hopkins, solemnly, putting up his money, "I'm much obliged to you. I'm free to say I'd never have thought of it. If you ain't the all-firedest smartest man in America to-day, — I don't except any, even General Grant, — then I ain't the next governor of this state."

Whereupon he lapsed into an even more expressive silence, his face still glowing.

"Er — Alvy," said Jethro, presently, "what's the name of your gal?"

"Well," said Mr. Hopkins, "I guess you've got me. We did christen her Lily, but she didn't turn out exactly Lily. She ain't the type," said Mr. Hopkins, slowly, not without a note of regret, and lapsed into silence.

"W-what did you say her name was, Alvy?"

"I guess her name's Cassandra," said the Honorable Alva.

"C-Cassandry?"

"Well, you see," he explained a trifle apologetically, "she's kind of taken some matters in her own hands, my gal. Didn't like Lily, and it didn't seem to fit her anyway, so she called herself Cassandra. Read it in a book. It means, 'inspirer of love,' or some such poetry, but I don't deny that it goes with her better than Lily would."

"Sh-she's a good deal of a gal, Alvy — fine-appearin' gal, Alvy."

"Upon my word, Jethro, I didn't know you ever looked at a woman. But I suppose you couldn't help lookin' at my gal — she does seem to draw men's eyes as if she was magnetized some way." Mr. Hopkins did not speak as though this quality of his daughter gave him unmixed delight. "But she's a good-hearted gal, Cassy is, high-spirited, and I won't deny she's handsome and smart.

She'll kind of grace my position when I'm governor. But to tell you the truth, Jethro, one old friend to another, durned if I don't wish she was married. It's a terrible thing for a father to say, I know, but I'd feel easier about her if she was married to some good man who could hold her. There's young Joe Turner in Gosport, he'd give his soul to have her, and he'd do. Cassy says she's after bigger game than Joe. She's young — that's her only excuse. Funny thing happened night before last," continued Mr. Hopkins, laughing. "Lovejoy saw her, and he's b'en out of his head ever since. Al must be pretty near my age, ain't he? Well, there's no fool like an old fool."

"A-Alvy — introduce me to Cassandry sometime — will you?"

"Why, certainly," answered Mr. Hopkins, heartily, "I'll bring her in here. And now how about gettin' an adjournment to-morrow night for 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'? These night sessions kind of interfere."

Half an hour later, when the representatives were pouring into the rotunda for dinner, a crowd was pressing thickly around the desk to read a placard pinned on the wall above it. The placard announced the coming of Mr. Glover's Company for the following night, and that the Honorable Alva Hopkins of Gosport, ex-Speaker of the House, had bought three hundred and twelve seats for the benefit of the members. And the Honorable Alva himself, very red in the face and almost smothered, could be dimly discerned at the foot of the stairs trying to fight his way out of a group of over-enthusiastic friends and admirers. Alva — so it was said on all sides — was doing the right thing.

So it was that one sensation followed another at the capital, and the politicans for the moment stopped buzzing over the Truro Franchise Bill to discuss Mr. Hopkins and his master-stroke. The afternoon *Chronicle* waxed enthusiastic on the subject of Mr. Hopkins's generosity, and predicted that, when Senator Hartington made the motion in the upper house and Mr. Jameson in the lower, the General Court would unanimously agree that there would

be no evening session on the following day. The Honorable Alva was the hero of the hour.

That afternoon Cynthia and her father walked through the green park to make their first visit to the State House. They stood hand in hand on the cool, marble-paved floor of the corridor, gazing silently at the stained and battered battle-flags behind the glass, and Wetherell seemed to be listening again to the appeal of a great President to a great Country in the time of her dire need — the soul calling on the body to fight for itself. Wetherell seemed to feel again the thrill he felt when he saw the blue-clad men of this state crowded in the train at Boston: and to hear again the cheers, and the sobs, and the prayers as he looked upon the blood that stained stars and stripes alike with a holy stain. With that blood the country had been consecrated, and the state — yes, and the building where they stood. So they went on up the stairs, reverently, nor heeded the noise of those in groups about them, and through a door into the great hall of the representatives of the state.

Life is a mixture of emotions, a jumble of joy and sorrow and reverence and mirth and flippancy, of right feeling and heresy. In the morning William Wetherell had laughed at Mr. Hopkins and the twenty thousand dollars he had put in the bank to defraud the people; but now he could have wept over it, and as he looked down upon the three hundred members of that House, he wondered how many of them represented their neighbors who supposedly had sent them here — and how many Mr. Lovejoy's railroad, Mr. Worthington's railroad, or another man's railroad.

But gradually he forgot the battle-flags, and his mood changed. Perhaps the sight of Mr. Speaker Sutton towering above the House, the very essence and bulk of authority, brought this about. He aroused in Wetherell unwilling admiration and envy when he arose to put a question in his deep voice, or rapped sternly with his gavel to silence the tumult of voices that arose from time to time; or while some member was speaking, or the clerk

was reading a bill at breathless speed, he turned with wonderful nonchalance to listen to the conversation of the gentlemen on the bench beside him, smiled, nodded, pulled his whiskers, at once conscious and unconscious of his high position. And, most remarkable of all to the storekeeper, not a man of the three hundred, however obscure, could rise that the Speaker did not instantly call him by name.

William Wetherell was occupied by such reflections as these when suddenly there fell a hush through the House. The clerk had stopped reading, the Speaker had stopped conversing, and, seizing his gavel, looked expectantly over the heads of the members and nodded. A sleek, comfortably dressed man arose smilingly in the middle of the House, and subdued laughter rippled from seat to seat as he addressed the chair.

"Mr. Jameson of Wantage."

Mr. Jameson cleared his throat impressively and looked smilingly about him.

"Mr. Speaker and gentlemen of the House," he said, "if I desired to arouse the enthusiasm — the just enthusiasm — of any gathering in this House, or in this city, or in this state, I should mention the name of the Honorable Alva Hopkins of Gosport. I think I am right."

Mr. Jameson was interrupted, as he no doubt expected, by applause from floor and gallery. He stood rubbing his hands together, and it seemed to William Wetherell that the Speaker did not rap as sharply with his gavel as he had upon other occasions.

"Gentlemen of the House," continued Mr. Jameson, presently, "the Honorable Alva Hopkins, whom we all know and love, has with unparalleled generosity — unparalleled, I say — bought up three hundred and twelve seats in Foster's Opera House for to-morrow night" (renewed applause), "in order that every member of this august body may have the opportunity to witness that most classic of histrionic productions, 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.'" (Loud applause, causing the Speaker to rap sharply.) "That we may show a proper appreciation of this compliment, I move you, Mr. Speaker, that the House adjourn

not later than six o'clock to-morrow, Wednesday evening, not to meet again until Thursday morning."

Mr. Jameson of Wantage handed the resolution to a page and sat down amidst renewed applause. Mr. Wetherell noticed that many members turned in their seats as they clapped, and glancing along the gallery he caught a flash of red and perceived the radiant Miss Cassandra herself leaning over the rail, her hands clasped in ecstasy. Mr. Lovejoy was not with her — he evidently preferred to pay his attentions in private.

"There she is again," whispered Cynthia, who had taken an instinctive and extraordinary dislike to Miss Cassandra. Then Mr. Sutton rose majestically to put the question.

"Gentlemen, are you ready for the question?" he cried. "All those in favor of the resolution of the gentleman from Wantage, Mr. Jameson — " the Speaker stopped abruptly. The legislators in the front seats swung around, and people in the gallery craned forward to see a member standing at his seat in the extreme rear of the hall. He was a little man in an ill-fitting coat, his wizened face clean-shaven save for the broom-shaped beard under his chin, which he now held in his hand. His thin, nasal voice was somehow absurdly penetrating as he addressed the chair. Mr. Sutton was apparently, for once, taken by surprise, and stared a moment, as though racking his brain for the name.

"The gentleman from Suffolk, Mr. Heath," he said, and smiling a little, sat down.

The gentleman from Suffolk, still holding on to his beard, pitched in without preamble.

"We farmers on the back seats don't often git a chance to be heard, Mr. Speaker," said he, amidst a general tittering from the front seats. "We come down here without any l'arnin' of parli'ment'ry law, and before we know what's happened the session's over, and we hain't said nothin'." (More laughter.) "There's b'en a good many times when I wanted to say somethin', and this time I made up my mind I was a-goin' to — law or no law."

(Applause, and a general show of interest in the gentleman from Suffolk.) "Naow, Mr. Speaker, I hain't ag'in' 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.' It's a good play, and it's done an almighty lot of good. And I hain't sayin' nothin' ag'in' Alvy Hopkins nor his munificence. But I do know there's a sight of little bills on that desk that won't be passed if we don't set to-morrow night — little bills that are big bills for us farmers. That thar woodchuck bill, for one." (Laughter.) "My constituents want I should have that bill passed. We don't need a quorum for them bills, but we need *time*. Naow, Mr. Speaker, I say let all them that wants to go and see 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' go and see it, but let a few of us fellers that has woodchuck bills and other things that we've got to git through come down here and pass 'em. You kin put 'em on the docket, and I guess if anything comes along that hain't jest right for everybody, somebody can challenge a quorum and bust up the session. That's all."

The gentleman from Suffolk sat down amidst thunderous applause, and before it died away Mr. Jameson was on his feet, smiling and rubbing his hands together, and was recognized.

"Mr. Speaker," he said, as soon as he could be heard, "if the gentleman from Suffolk desires to pass woodchuck bills" (renewed laughter), "he can do so as far as I'm concerned. I guess I know where most of the members of this House will be to-morrow night —" (Cries of 'You're right,' and sharp rapping of the gavel.) "Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my resolution."

"The gentleman from Wantage," said the Speaker, smiling broadly now, "withdraws his resolution."

As William Wetherell was returning to the Pelican House, pondering over this incident, he almost ran into a distinguished-looking man walking briskly across Main Street.

"It was Mr. Worthington!" said Cynthia, looking after him.

But Mr. Worthington had a worried look on his face, and was probably too much engrossed in his own thoughts

to notice his acquaintances. He had, in fact, just come from the Throne Room, where he had been to remind Jethro that the session was almost over, and to ask him what he meant to do about the Truro Bill. Jethro had given him no satisfaction.

"Duncan and Lovejoy have their people paid to sit there night and day," Mr. Worthington had said. "We've got a bare majority on a full House; but you don't seem to dare to risk it. What are you going to do about it, Mr. Bass?"

"W-want the bill to pass — don't you?"

"Certainly," Mr. Worthington had cried, on the edge of losing his temper.

"L-left it to me — didn't you?"

"Yes, but I'm entitled to know what's being done. I'm paying for it."

"H-hain't paid for it yet — hev you?"

"No, I most assuredly haven't."

"B-better wait till you do."

There was very little satisfaction in this, and Mr. Worthington had at length been compelled to depart, fuming, to the house of his friend the enemy, Mr. Duncan, there to attempt for the twentieth time to persuade Mr. Duncan to call off his dogs who were sitting with such praiseworthy pertinacity in their seats. As the two friends walked on the lawn, Mr. Worthington tried to explain, likewise for the twentieth time, that the extension of the Truro Railroad could in no way lessen the Canadian traffic of the Central, Mr. Duncan's road. But Mr. Duncan could not see it that way, and stuck to his present ally, Mr. Lovejoy, and refused point blank to call off his dogs. Business was business.

It is an apparently inexplicable fact, however, that Mr. Worthington and his son Bob were guests at the Duncan mansion at the capital. Two countries may not be allies, but their sovereigns may be friends. In the present instance, Mr. Duncan and Mr. Worthington's railroads were opposed, diplomatically, but another year might see the Truro Railroad and the Central acting as one. And Mr.

Worthington had no intention whatever of sacrificing Mr. Duncan's friendship. The first citizen of Brampton possessed one quality so essential to greatness — that of looking into the future, and he believed that the time would come when an event of some importance might create a perpetual alliance between himself and Mr. Duncan. In short, Mr. Duncan had a daughter, Janet, and Mr. Worthington, as we know, had a son. And Mr. Duncan, in addition to his own fortune, had married one of the richest heiresses in New England. *Prudens futuri*, that was Mr. Worthington's motto.

The next morning Cynthia, who was walking about the town alone, found herself gazing over a picket fence at a great square house with a very wide cornice that stood by itself in the centre of a shade-flecked lawn. There were masses of shrubbery here and there, and a greenhouse, and a latticed summer-house: and Cynthia was wondering what it would be like to live in a great place like that, when a barouche with two shining horses in silver harness drove past her and stopped before the gate. Four or five girls and boys came laughing out on the porch, and one of them, who held a fishing-rod in his hand, Cynthia recognized. Startled and ashamed, she began to walk on as fast as she could in the opposite direction, when she heard the sound of footsteps on the lawn behind her, and her own name called in a familiar voice. At that she hurried the faster; but she could not run, and the picket fence was half a block long, and Bob Worthington had an advantage over her. Of course it was Bob, and he did not scruple to run, and in a few seconds he was leaning over the fence in front of her. Now Cynthia was as red as a peony by this time, and she almost hated him.

"Well, of all people, Cynthia Wetherell!" he cried; "didn't you hear me calling after you?"

"Yes," said Cynthia.

"Why didn't you stop?"

"I didn't want to," said Cynthia, glancing at the distant group on the porch, who were watching them. Suddenly she turned to him defiantly. "I didn't know you were in that house, or in the capital," she said.

"And I didn't know you were," said Bob, upon whose masculine intelligence the meaning of her words was entirely lost. "If I had known it, you can bet I would have looked you up. Where are you staying?"

"At the Pelican House."

"What!" said Bob, "with all the politicians? How did you happen to go there?"

"Mr. Bass asked my father and me to come down for a few days," answered Cynthia, her color heightening again. Life is full of contrasts, and Cynthia was becoming aware of some of them.

"Uncle Jethro?" said Bob.

"Yes, Uncle Jethro," said Cynthia, smiling in spite of herself. He always made her smile.

"Uncle Jethro owns the Pelican House," said Bob.

"Does he? I knew he was a great man, but I didn't know how great he was until I came down here."

Cynthia said this so innocently that Bob repented his flippancy on the spot. He had heard occasional remarks of his elders about Jethro.

"I didn't mean quite that," he said, growing red in his turn. "Uncle Jethro — Mr. Bass — is a great man — of course. That's what I meant."

"And he's a very good man," said Cynthia, who understood now that he had spoken a little lightly of Jethro, and resented it.

"I'm sure of it," said Bob, eagerly. Then Cynthia began to walk on, slowly, and he followed her on the other side of the fence. "Hold on," he cried, "I haven't said half the things I want to say — yet."

"What do you want to say?" asked Cynthia, still walking. "I have to go."

"Oh, no, you don't! Wait just a minute — won't you?"

Cynthia halted, with apparent unwillingness, and put out her toe between the pickets. Then she saw that there was a little patch on that toe, and drew it in again.

"What do you want to say?" she repeated. "I don't believe you have anything to say at all." And suddenly she flashed a look at him that made his heart thump.

"I do — I swear I do," he protested. "I'm coming down to the Pelican to-morrow morning to get you to go for a walk."

Cynthia could not but think that the remoteness of the time he set was scarce in keeping with his ardent tone.

"I have something else to do to-morrow morning," she answered.

"Then I'll come to-morrow afternoon," said Bob, instantly.

"Who lives here?" she asked irrelevantly.

"Mr. Duncan. I'm visiting the Duncans."

At this moment a carryall joined the carriage at the gate. Cynthia glanced at the porch again. The group there had grown larger, and they were still staring. She began to feel uncomfortable again, and moved on slowly.

"Mayn't I come?" asked Bob, going after her, and scraping the butt of the rod along the palings.

"Aren't there enough girls here to satisfy you?" asked Cynthia.

"They're enough — yes," he said, "but none of 'em could hold a candle to you."

Cynthia laughed outright.

"I believe you tell them all something like that," she said.

"I don't do any such thing," he retorted, and then he laughed himself, and Cynthia laughed again.

"I like you because you don't swallow everything whole," said Bob, "and — well, for a good many other reasons." And he looked into her face with such frank admiration that Cynthia blushed and turned away.

"I don't believe a word you say," she answered, and started to walk off, this time in earnest.

"Hold on," cried Bob. They were almost at the end of the fence by this, and the pickets were sharp and rather high, or he would have climbed them.

Cynthia paused hesitatingly.

"I'll come at two o'clock to-morrow," said he; "we're

going on a picnic to-day, to Dalton's Bend, on the river. I wish I could get out of it."

Just then there came a voice from the gateway.

"Bob! Bob Worthington!"

They both turned involuntarily. A slender girl with light brown hair was standing there, waving at him.

"Who's that?" asked Cynthia.

"That?" said Bob, in some confusion, "oh, that's Janet Duncan."

"Good-by," said Cynthia.

"I'm coming to-morrow," he called after her, but she did not turn. In a little while she heard the carryall behind her clattering down the street, its passengers laughing and joking merrily. Her face burned, for she thought that they were laughing at her; she wished with all her heart that she had not stopped to talk with him at the palings. The girls, indeed, were giggling as the carryall passed, and she heard somebody call out his name, but nevertheless he leaned out of the seat and waved his hat at her, amid a shout of laughter. Poor Cynthia! She did not look at him. Tears of vexation were in her eyes, and the light of her joy at this visit to the capital flickered, and she wished she were back in Coniston. She thought it would be very nice to be rich, and to live in a great house in a city, and to go on picnics.

The light flickered, but it did not wholly go out. If it has not been shown that Cynthia was endowed with a fair amount of sense, many of these pages have been written in vain. She sat down for a while in the park and thought of the many things she had to be thankful for — not the least of which was Jethro's kindness. And she remembered that she was to see "Uncle Tom's Cabin" that evening.

Such are the joys and sorrows of fifteen!