tions were true or false, for he was a friend of Jethro's. Her natural impulse — the primeval one of a creature which is hurt — had been to hide herself ; to fly to her own room, and perhaps by nightfall the courage would come to her to ask him the terrible questions. He was a friend of Jethro's. An illuminating flash revealed to her the meaning of that friendship — if the accusations were true. It was then she had thought of Miss Lucretia Penniman, and somehow she had found the courage to face the sunlight and go to her. She would spare Mr. Merrill.

But had she spared him ? Sadly the family sat down to supper without her, and after supper Mr. Merrill sent a message to his club that he could not attend a committee meeting there that evening. He sat with his wife in the little writing room, he pretending to read and she pretending to sew, until the silence grew too oppressive, and they spoke of the matter that was in their hearts. It was one of the bitterest evenings in Mr. Merrill's life, and there is no need to linger on it. They talked earnestly of Cynthia, and of her future. But they both knew why she did not come down to them.

"So she is really going to Coniston," said Mr. Merrill.

"Yes," answered Mrs. Merrill, "and I think she is doing right, Stephen."

Mr. Merrill groaned. His wife rose and put her hand on his shoulder.

"Come, Stephen," she said gently, "you will see her in the morning."

"I will go to Coniston with her," he said.

"No," replied Mrs. Merrill, "she wants to go alone. And I believe it is best that she should."

CHAPTER XII

"IN THE TANNERY SHED !"

GREAT afflictions generally bring in their train a host of smaller sorrows, each with its own little pang. One of these sorrows had been the parting with the Merrill family. Under any circumstance it was not easy for Cynthia to express her feelings, and now she had found it very difficult to speak of the gratitude and affection which she felt. But they understood — dear, good people that they were : no eloquence was needed with them. The ordeal of breakfast over, and the tearful "God bless you, Miss Cynthia," of Ellen the parlor-maid, the whole family had gone with her to the station. For Susan and Jane had spent their last day at Miss Sadler's school.

Mr. Merrill had sent for the conductor and bidden him take care of Miss Wetherell, and recommend her in his name to a conductor on the Truro Road. The man took off his cap to Mr. Merrill and called him by name and promised. It was a dark day, and long after the train had pulled out Cynthia remembered the tearful faces of the family standing on the damp platform of the station. As they fled northward through the flat river-meadows, the conductor would have liked to talk to her of Mr. Merrill ; there were few employees on any railroad who did not know the genial and kindly president of the Grand Gulf and sympathize with his troubles. But there was a look on the girl's face that forbade intrusion. Passengers stared at her covertly, as though fascinated by that look, and some tried to fathom it. But her eyes were firmly fixed upon a point far beyond their vision. The car stopped many times, and flew on again, but nothing seemed to break her absorption.

At last she was aroused by the touch of the conductor on her sleeve. The people were beginning to file out of the car, and the train was under the shadow of the snow-covered sheds in the station of the state capital. Cynthia recognized the place, though it was cold and bare and very different in appearance from what it had been on the summer's evening when she had come into it with her father. That, in effect, had been her first glimpse of the world, and well she recalled the thrill it had given her. The joy of such things was gone now, the rapture of holidays and new sights. These were over, so she told herself. Sorrow had quenched the thrills forever.

The kind conductor led her to the eating room, and when she would not eat his concern grew greater than ever. He took a strange interest in this young lady who had such a face and such eyes. He pointed her out to his friend the Truro conductor, and gave him some sandwiches and fruit which he himself had bought, with instructions to press them on her during the afternoon.

Cynthia could not eat. She hated this place, with its memories. Hated it, too, as a mart where men were bought and sold, for the wording of those articles ran in her head as though some priest of evil were chanting them in her ears. She did not remember then the sweeter aspect of the old town, its pretty homes set among their shaded gardens — homes full of good and kindly people. State House affairs were far removed from most of these, and the sickness and corruption of the body politic. And this political corruption, had she known it, was no worse than that of the other states in the wide Union : not so bad, indeed, as many, though this was small comfort. No comfort at all to Cynthia, who did not think of it.

After a while she rose and followed the new conductor to the Truro train, glad to leave the capital behind her. She was going to the hills — to the mountains. They, in truth, could not change, though the seasons passed over them, hot and cold, wet and dry. They were immutable in their goodness. Presently she saw them, the lower ones : the waters of the little stream beside her broke the

black bonds of ice and raced over the rapids ; the engine was puffing and groaning on the grade. Then the sun crept out, slowly, from the indefinable margin of vapor that hung massed over the low country.

Yes, she had come to the hills. Up and up climbed the train, through the little white villages in the valley nooks, banked with whiter snow; through the narrow gorges, — sometimes hanging over them, — under steep granite walls seared with ice-filled cracks, their brows hung with icicles.

Truro Pass is not so high as the Brenner, but it has a grand, wild look in winter, remote as it is from the haunts of men. A fitting refuge, it might be, for a great spirit heavy with the sins of the world below. Such a place might have been chosen, in the olden time, for a monastery — a gray fastness built against the black forest over the crag looking down upon the green clumps of spruces against the snow. Some vague longing for such a refuge was in Cynthia's heart as she gazed upon that silent place, and then the waters had already begun to run westward — the waters of Tumble Down brook, which flowed into Coniston Water above Brampton. The sun still had more than two hours to go on its journey to the hill crests when the train pulled into Brampton station. There were but a few people on the platform, but the first face she saw as she stepped from the car was Lem Hallowell's. It was a very red face, as we know, and its owner was standing in front of the Coniston stage, on runners now. He stared at her for an instant, and no wonder, and then he ran forward with outstretched hands.

"Cynthy — Cynthy Wetherell!" he cried. "Great Godfrey!"

He got so far, he seized her hands, and then he stopped, not knowing why. There were many more ejaculations and welcomes and what not on the end of his tongue. It was not that she had become a lady — a lady of a type he had never before seen. He meant to say that, too, in his own way, but he couldn't. And that transformation would have bothered Lem but little. What was the change, then? Why was he in awe of her — he, Lem

Hallowell, who had never been in awe of any one? He shook his head, as though openly confessing his inability to answer that question. He wanted to ask others, but they would not come.

"Lem," she said, "I am so glad you are here."

"Climb right in, Cynthy. I'll git the trunk." There it lay, the little rawhide one before him on the boards, and he picked it up in his bare hands as though it had been a paper parcel. It was a peculiarity of the stage driver that he never wore gloves, even in winter, so remarkable was the circulation of his blood. After the trunk he deposited, apparently with equal ease, various barrels and boxes, and then he jumped in beside Cynthia, and they drove down familiar Brampton Street, as wide as a wide river; past the meeting-house with the terraced steeple; past the post-office, — Cousin Ephraim's post-office, — where Lem gave her a questioning look — but she shook her head, and he did not wait for the distribution of the last mail that day; past the great mansion of Isaac D. Worthington, where the iron mastiffs on the lawn were up to their muzzles in snow. After that they took the turn to the right, which was the road to Coniston.

Well-remembered road, and in winter or summer, Cynthia knew every tree and farmhouse beside it. Now it consisted of two deep grooves in the deep snow; that was all, save for a curving turnout here and there for team to pass team. Well-remembered scene! How often had Cynthia looked upon it in happier days! Such a crust was on the snow as would bear a heavy man, and the pasture hillocks were like glazed cakes in the window of a baker's shop. Never had the western sky looked so yellow through the black columns of the pine trunks. A lonely, beautiful road it was that evening.

For a long time the silence of the great hills was broken only by the sweet jingle of the bells on the shaft. Many a day, winter and summer, Lem had gone that road alone, whistling, and never before heeding that silence. Now it seemed to symbolize a great sorrow: to be in subtle harmony with that of the girl at his side. What that sorrow

was he could not guess. The good man yearned to comfort her, and yet he felt his comfort too humble to be noticed by such sorrow. He longed to speak, but for the first time in his life feared the sound of his own voice. Cynthia had not spoken since she left the station, had not looked at him, had not asked for the friends and neighbors whom she had loved so well — had not asked for Jethro! Was there any sorrow on earth to be felt like that? And was there one to feel it?

At length, when they reached the great forest, Lem Hallowell knew that he must speak or cry aloud. But what would be the sound of his voice — after such an age of disuse? Could he speak at all? Broken and hoarse and hideous though the sound might be, he must speak. And hoarse and broken it was. It was not his own, but still it was a voice.

"Folks — folks'll be surprised to see you, Cynthy."

No, he had not spoken at all. Yes, he had, for she answered him.

"I suppose they will, Lem."

"Mighty glad to have you back, Cynthy. We think a sight of you. We missed you."

"Thank you, Lem."

"Jethro hain't lookin' for you by any chance, be he?"

"No," she said. But the question startled her. Suppose he had not been at home! She had never once thought of that. Could she have borne to wait for him?

After that Lem gave it up. He had satisfied himself as to his vocal powers, but he had not the courage even to whistle. The journey to Coniston was faster in the winter, and at the next turn of the road the little village came into view. There it was, among the snows. The pain in Cynthia's heart, so long benumbed, quickened when she saw it. How write of the sharpness of that pain to those who have never known it? The sight of every gable brought its agony, — the store with the checker-paned windows, the harness shop, the meeting-house, the white parsonage on its little hill. Rias Richardson ran out of the store in his carpet slippers, bareheaded in the

cold, and gave one shout. Lem heeded him not; did not stop there as usual, but drove straight to the tannery house and pulled up under the butternut tree. Milly Skinner ran out on the porch, and gave one long look, and cried: —

"Good Lord, it's Cynthy!"

"Where's Jethro?" demanded Lem.

Milly did not answer at once. She was staring at Cynthia.

"He's in the tannery shed," she said, "choppin' wood." But still she kept her eyes on Cynthia's face. "I'll fetch him."

"No," said Cynthia, "I'll go to him there."

She took the path, leaving Millicent with her mouth open, too amazed to speak again, and yet not knowing why.

In the tannery shed! Would Jethro remember what happened there almost six and thirty years before? Would he remember how that other Cynthia had come to him there, and what her appeal had been?

Cynthia came to the doors. One of these was open now — both had been closed that other evening against the storm of sleet — and she caught a glimpse of him standing on the floor of chips and bark — tan-bark no more. Cynthia caught a glimpse of him, and love suddenly welled up into her heart as waters into a spring after a drought. He had not seen her, not heard the sound of the sleigh-bells. He was standing with his foot upon the sawbuck and the saw across his knee, he was staring at the woodpile, and there was stamped upon his face a look which no man or woman had ever seen there, a look of utter loneliness and desolation, a look as of a soul condemned to wander forever through the infinite, cold spaces between the worlds — alone.

Cynthia stopped at sight of it. What had been her misery and affliction compared to this? Her limbs refused her, though she knew not whether she would have fled or rushed into his arms. How long she stood thus, and he stood, may not be said, but at length he put down his foot and took the saw from his knee, his eyes fell upon her, and his lips spoke her name.

"Cynthy!"

Speechless, she ran to him and flung her arms about his neck, and he dropped the saw and held her tightly — even as he had held that other Cynthia in that place in the year gone by. And yet not so. Now he clung to her with a desperation that was terrible, as though to let go of her would be to fall into nameless voids beyond human companionship and love. But at last he did release her, and stood looking down into her face, as if seeking to read a sentence there.

And how was she to pronounce that sentence! Though her faith might be taken away, her love remained, and grew all the greater because he needed it. Yet she knew that no subterfuge or pretence would avail her to hide why she had come. She could not hide it. It must be spoken out now, though death was preferable.

And he was waiting. Did he guess? She could not tell. He had spoken no word but her name. He had expressed no surprise at her appearance, asked no reasons for it. Superlatives of suffering or joy or courage are hard to convey — words fall so far short of the feeling. And Cynthia's pain was so far beyond tears.

"Uncle Jethro," she said, "yesterday something — something happened. I could not stay in Boston any longer."

He nodded.

"I had to come to you. I could not wait."

He nodded again.

"I — I read something." To take a white-hot iron and sear herself would have been easier than this.

"Yes," he said.

She felt that the look was coming again — the look which she had surprised in his face. His hands dropped lifelessly from her shoulders, and he turned and went to the door, where he stood with his back to her, silhouetted against the eastern sky all pink from the reflection of sunset. He would not help her. Perhaps he could not. The things were true. There had been a grain of hope within her, ready to sprout.

"I read two articles from the *Newcastle Guardian* — about you — about your life."

"Yes," he said. But he did not turn.

"How you had — how you had earned your living. How you had gained your power," she went on, her pain lending to her voice an exquisite note of many modulations.

"Yes — Cynthy," he said, and still stared at the eastern sky.

She took two steps toward him, her arms outstretched, her fingers opening and closing. And then she stopped.

"I would believe no one," she said, "I will believe no one — until — unless you tell me. Uncle Jethro," she cried in agony, "Uncle Jethro, tell me that those things are not true!"

She waited a space, but he did not stir. There was no sound, save the song of Coniston Water under the shattered ice.

"Won't you speak to me?" she whispered. "Won't you tell me that they are not true?"

His shoulders shook convulsively. O for the right to turn to her and tell her that they were lies! He would have bartered his soul for it. What was all the power in the world compared to this priceless treasure he had lost? Once before he had cast it away, though without meaning to. Then he did not know the eternal value of love — of such love as those two women had given him. Now he knew that it was beyond value, the one precious gift of life, and the knowledge had come too late. Could he have saved his life if he had listened to that other Cynthia?

"Won't you tell me that they are not true?"

Even then he did not turn to her, but he answered. Curious to relate, though his heart was breaking, his voice was steady — steady as it always had been.

"I — I've seen it comin', Cynthy," he said. "I never knowed anything I was afraid of before — but I was afraid of this. I knowed what your notions of right and wrong was — your — your mother had them. They're the principles of good people. I — I knowed the day would come when you'd ask, but I wanted to be happy as long as I could. I hain't been happy, Cynthy. But you was right

when you said I'd tell you the truth. S-so I will. I guess them things which you speak about are true — the way I got where I am, and the way I made my livin'. They — they hain't put just as they'd ought to be, perhaps, but that's the way I done it in the main."

It was thus that Jethro Bass met the supreme crisis of his life. And who shall say he did not meet it squarely and honestly? Few men of finer fibre and more delicate morals would have acquitted themselves as well. That was a Judgment Day for Jethro; and though he knew it not, he spoke through Cynthia to his Maker, confessing his faults freely and humbly, and dwelling on the justness of his punishment; putting not forward any good he may have done, nor thinking of it, nor seeking excuse because of the light that was in him. Had he been at death's door in the face of nameless tortures, no man could have dragged such a confession from him. But a great love had been given him, and to that love he must speak the truth, even at the cost of losing it.

But he was not to lose it. Even as he was speaking a thrill of admiration ran through Cynthia, piercing her sorrow. The superb strength of the man was there in that simple confession, and it is in the nature of woman to admire strength. He had fought his fight, and gained, and paid the price without a murmur, seeking no palliation. Cynthia had not come to that trial — so bitter for her — as a judge. If the reader has seen youth and innocence sitting in the seat of justice, with age and experience at the bar, he has mistaken Cynthia. She came to Coniston inexorable, it is true, because hers was a nature impelled to do right though it perish. She did not presume to say what Jethro's lights and opportunities might have been. Her own she knew, and by them she must act accordingly.

When he had finished speaking, she stole silently to his side and slipped her hand in his. He trembled violently at her touch.

"Uncle Jethro," she said in a low tone, "I love you."

At the words he trembled more violently still.

"No, no, Cynthy," he answered thickly, "don't say

that — I — I don't expect it, Cynthy, I know you can't — 'twouldn't be right, Cynthy. I hain't fit for it."

"Uncle Jethro," she said, "I love you better than I have ever loved you in my life."

Oh, how welcome were the tears! and how human! He turned, pitifully incredulous, wondering that she should seek by deceit to soften the blow; he saw them running down her cheeks, and he believed. Yes, he believed, though it seemed a thing beyond belief. Unworthy, unfit though he were, she loved him. And his own love as he gazed at her, sevenfold increased as it had been by the knowledge of losing her, changed in texture from homage to worship — nay, to adoration. His punishment would still be heavy; but whence had come such a wondrous gift to mitigate it?

"Oh, don't you believe me?" she cried, "can't you see that it is true?"

And yet he could only hold her there at arm's length with that new and strange reverence in his face. He was not worthy to touch her, but still she loved him.

The flush had faded from the eastern sky, and the faintest border of yellow light betrayed the ragged outlines of the mountain as they walked together to the tannery house.

Millicent, in the kitchen, was making great preparations — for Millicent. Miss Skinner was a person who had hitherto laid it down as a principle of life to pay deference or do honor to no human made of mere dust, like herself. Millicent's exception, if Cynthia had thought about it, was a tribute of no mean order. Cynthia, alas, did not think about it: she did not know that, in her absence, the fire had not been lighted in the evening, Jethro supping on crackers and milk and Milly partaking of the evening meal at home. Moreover, Miss Skinner had an engagement with a young man. Cynthia saw the fire, and threw off her sealskin coat which Mr. and Mrs. Merrill had given her for Christmas, and took down the saucepan from the familiar nail on which it hung. It was a miraculous fact, for which she did not attempt to account, that she was

almost happy: happy, indeed, in comparison to that which had been her state since the afternoon before. Millicent snatched the saucepan angrily from her hand.

"What be you doin', Cynthy?" she demanded.

Such was Miss Skinner's little way of showing deference. Though deference is not usually vehement, Miss Skinner's was very real, nevertheless.

"Why, Milly, what's the matter?" exclaimed Cynthia, in astonishment.

"You hain't a-goin' to do any cookin', that's all," said Milly, very red in the face.

"But I've always helped," said Cynthia. "Why not?"

Why not? A tribute was one thing, but to have to put the reasons for that tribute into words was quite another.

"Why not?" cried Milly, "because you hain't a-goin' to, that's all."

Strange deference! But Cynthia turned and looked at the girl with a little, sad smile of comprehension and affection. She took her by the shoulders and kissed her.

Whereupon a most amazing thing happened — Millicent burst into tears — wild, ungovernable tears they were.

"Because you hain't a-goin' to," she repeated, her words interspersed with violent sobs. "You go 'way, Cynthy," she cried, "git out!"

"Milly," said Cynthia, shaking her head, "you ought to be ashamed of yourself." But they were not words of reproof. She took a little lamp from the shelf, and went up the narrow stairs to her own room in the gable, where Lemuel had deposited the rawhide trunk.

Though she had had nothing all day, she felt no hunger, but for Milly's sake she tried hard to eat the supper when it came. Before it had fairly begun Moses Hatch had arrived, with Amandy and Eben; and Rias Richardson came in, and other neighbors, to say a word of welcome: to hear (if the truth be not too disparaging to their characters) the reasons for her sudden appearance, and such news of her Boston experiences as she might choose to give them. They had learned from Lem Hallowell that Cynthia had returned a lady: a real lady, not a sham

one who relied on airs and graces, such as had come to Coniston the summer before to look for a summer place on the painter's recommendation. Lem was not a gossip, in the disagreeable sense of the term, and he had not said a word to his neighbors of his feelings on that terrible drive from Brampton. Knowing that some blow had fallen upon Cynthia, he would have spared her these visits if he could. But Lem was wise and kind, so he merely said that she had returned a lady.

And they had found a lady. As they stood or sat around the kitchen (Eben and Rias stood), Cynthia talked to them — about Coniston: rather, be it said, that they talked about Coniston in answer to her questions. The sledding had been good; Moses had hauled so many thousand feet of lumber to Brampton; Sam Price's woman (she of Harwich) had had a spell of sciatica; Chester Perkins's bull had tossed his brother-in-law, come from Iowy on a visit, and broke his leg; yes, Amandy guessed her dyspepsy was somewhat improved since she had tried Graham's Golden Remedy — it made her feel real lighthearted; Eben (blushing furiously) was to have the Brook Farm in the spring; there was a case of spotted fever in Tarleton.

Yes, Lem Hallowell had been right, Cynthia was a lady, but not a mite stuck up. What was the difference in her? Not her clothes, which she wore as if she had been used to them all her life. Poor Cynthia, the clothes were simple enough. Not her manner, which was as kind and sweet as ever. What was it that compelled their talk about themselves, that made them refrain from asking those questions about Boston, and why she had come back? Some such query was running in their minds as they talked, while Jethro, having finished his milk and crackers, sat silent at the end of the table with his eyes upon her. He rose when Mr. Satterlee came in.

Mr. Satterlee looked at her, and then he went quietly across the room and kissed her. But then Mr. Satterlee was the minister. Cynthia thought his hair a little thinner and the lines in his face a little deeper. And

Mrs. Samuel Price.

Mr. Satterlee thought — perhaps he was the only one of the visitors who guessed why she had come back. He laid his thin hand on her head, as though in benediction, and sat down beside her.

"And how is the learning, Cynthia?" he asked.

Now, indeed, they were going to hear something at last. An intuition impelled Cynthia to take advantage of that opportunity.

"The learning has become so great, Mr. Satterlee," she said, "that I have come back to try to make some use of it. It shall be wasted no more."

She did not dare to look at Jethro, but she was aware that he had sat down abruptly. What sacrifice will not a good woman make to ease the burden of those whom she loves! And Jethro's burden would be heavy enough. Such a woman will speak almost gayly, though her heart be heavy. But Cynthia's was lighter now than it had been.

"I was always sure you would not waste your learning, Cynthia," said Mr. Satterlee, gravely; "that you would make the most of the advantages God has given you."

"I am going to try, Mr. Satterlee. I cannot be content in idleness. I was wasting time in Boston, and I — I was not happy so far away from you all — from Uncle Jethro. Mr. Satterlee, I am going to teach school. I have always wanted to, and now I have made up my mind to do it."

This was Jethro's punishment. But had she not lightened it for him a little by choosing this way of telling him that she could not eat his bread or partake of his bounty? Though by reason of that bounty she was what she was, she could not live and thrive on it longer, coming as it did from such a source. Mr. Satterlee might perhaps surmise the truth, but the town and village would think her ambition a very natural one; certainly no better time could have been chosen to announce it.

"To teach school." She was sure now that Mr. Satterlee knew and approved, and perceived something, at least, of her little ruse. He was a man whose talents fitted him for a larger flock than he had at Coniston, but he possessed

neither the graces demanded of city ministers nor the power of pushing himself. Never was a more retiring man. The years she had spent in his study had not gone for nothing, for he who has cherished the bud can predict what the flower will be, and Mr. Satterlee knew her spiritually better than any one else in Coniston. He had heard of her return, and had walked over to the tannery house full of fears, the remembrance of those expressions of simple faith in Jethro coming back to his mind. Had the revelation which he had so long expected come at last? and how had she taken it? would it embitter her? The good man believed that it would not, and now he saw that it had not, and rejoiced accordingly.

"To teach school," he said. "I expected that you would wish to, Cynthia. It is a desire that most of us have, who like books and what is in them. I should have taught school if I had not become a minister. It is a high calling, and an absorbing one, to develop the minds of the young." Mr. Satterlee was often a little discursive, though there was reason for it on this occasion, and Moses Hatch half closed his eyes and bowed his head a little out of sheer habit at the sound of the minister's voice. But he raised it suddenly at the next words. "I was in Brampton yesterday, and saw Mr. Graves, who is on the prudential committee of that district. You may not have heard that Miss Goddard has left. They have not yet succeeded in filling her place, and I think it more than likely that you can get it."

Cynthia glanced at Jethro, but the habit of years was so strong in him that he gave no sign.

"Do you think so, Mr. Satterlee?" she said gratefully. "I had heard of the place, and hoped for it, because it is near enough for me to spend the Saturdays and Sundays with Uncle Jethro. And I meant to go to Brampton to-morrow to see about it."

"I will go with you," said the minister; "I have business in Brampton to-morrow." He did not mention that this was the business.

When at length they had all departed, Jethro rose and

went about the house making fast the doors, as was his custom, while Cynthia sat staring through the bars at the dying embers in the stove. He knew now, and it was inevitable that he should know, what she had made up her mind to do. It had been decreed that she, who owed him everything, should be made to pass this most dreadful of censures upon his whole life. Oh, the cruelty of that decree!

How, she mused, would it affect him? Had the blow been so great that he would relinquish those practices which had become a lifelong habit with him? Would he (she caught her breath at this thought) — would he abandon that struggle with Isaac D. Worthington in which he was striving to maintain the mastery of the state by those very practices? Cynthia hated Mr. Worthington. The term is not too strong, and it expresses her feeling. But she would have got down on her knees on the board floor of the kitchen that very night and implored Jethro to desist from that contest, if she could. She remembered how, in her innocence, she had believed that the people had given Jethro his power, — in those days when she was so proud of that very power, — now she knew that he had wrested it from them. What more supreme sacrifice could he make than to relinquish it! Ah, there was a still greater sacrifice that Jethro was to make, had she known it.

He came and stood over her by the stove, and she looked up into his face with these yearnings in her eyes. Yes, she would have thrown herself on her knees, if she could. But she could not. Perhaps he would abandon that struggle. Perhaps — perhaps his heart was broken. And could a man with a broken heart still fight on? She took his hand and pressed it against her face, and he felt that it was wet with her tears.

"B-better go to bed now, Cynthy," he said; "m-must be worn out — m-must be worn out."

He stooped and kissed her on the forehead. It was thus that Jethro Bass accepted his sentence.

CHAPTER XIII

CYNTHIA BECOMES A TEACHER

At sunrise, in that Coniston hill-country, it is the western hills which are red, and a distant hillock on the meadow farm which was soon to be Eben's looked like the daintiest conical cake with pink icing as Cynthia surveyed the familiar view the next morning. There was the mountain, the pastures on the lower slopes all red, too, and higher up the dark masses of bristling spruce and pine and hemlock mottled with white where the snow-covered rocks showed through.

Sunrise in January is not very early, and sunrise at any season is not early for Coniston. Cynthia sat at her window, and wondered whether that beautiful landscape would any longer be hers. Her life had grown up on it; but now her life had changed. Would the beauty be taken from it, too? Almost hungrily she gazed at the scene. She might look upon it again — many times, perhaps — but a conviction was strong in her that its daily possession would now be only a memory.

Mr. Satterlee was as good as his word, for he was seated in the stage when it drew up at the tannery house, ready to go to Brampton. And as they drove away Cynthia took one last look at Jethro standing on the porch. It seemed to her that it had been given her to feel all things, and to know all things: to know, especially, this strange man, Jethro Bass, as none other knew him, and to love him as none other loved him. The last severe wrench was come, and she had left him standing there alone in the cold, divining what was in his heart as though it were in her own. How worthless was this mighty power which