

THE TRAIL OF THE LONESOME PINE

"And you've kept that, too, you had it when I——"

"When you were wiser maybe than you are now."

"God save me from ever being such a fool again." Tears started in her eyes.

"You haven't forgiven me!" she cried.

"Uncle Billy says it's as good now as it was then."

He was looking at her queerly now and his smile was gone. Slowly his meaning came to her like the flush that spread over her face and throat. She drew in one long quivering breath and, with parted lips and her great shining eyes wide, she looked at him.

"Now?" she whispered.

"Now!" he said.

Her eyes dropped to the coarse gown, she lifted both hands for a moment to her hair and unconsciously she began to roll one crimson sleeve down her round, white arm.

"No," said Hale, "just as you are."

She went to him then, put her arms about his neck, and with head thrown back she looked at him long with steady eyes.

"Yes," she breathed out—"just as you are—and now."

Uncle Billy was waiting for them on the porch and when they came out, he rose to his feet and they faced him, hand in hand. The moon had