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Cissy told him, with an humbleness that was unlike all the things that had gone before in her life. "Well, I could have toasted bread — and — and fried bacon while you hunted your gold mine!"

Up on the box Maria was talking to Pomp, who was very drunk and very garrulous. He was trying to ask her if she thought she'd make her home at the mine after this.

"In co'se I'm gwine be wharevah Miss Cissy lives," she said. "You know how helpless she is. She cain't even put on her own shoes an' stockin's. She look lak gwine enny-whar 'thout me!" She chuckled deep at a reminiscence. "She tried hit once, dat air time she went to Washington. She say when she got home dat she nevah wuz gwine leave me behine ergin."

"But the bread wasn't made," Billy was saying inside the coach, "in those days, and at that place the baker didn't come by in the morning. We had to make it ourselves. And it wasn't often fit to eat, much less to save over and toast. And there wasn't any bacon. We couldn't afford bacon."

Again that little soft, mothering cry.

Ah, but if she had known in that stupid convent with those silly nuns, those chattering girls, if she had but known! She might have been with him. He needed her then. She had money that would have meant some-