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Perceiving the way she had slept, she sat up very straight, and turned away her face, till Jim could just make out the deep flush spreading up into her temples.

"Oh, but you didn't mind the bear!" he protested pleadingly. "You're not cross at me for holding you, Melissy, are you? I *had* to hold you, or you'd have fallen out o' the pung. An' I do so want to take care o' you *always*, Melissy, girl! You're not cross at me, are you?"

Melissa kept her face turned away; but presently she answered in a very low voice—

"No, Jim, I—don't think I mind at all. Oh, we're almost home! How can I ever thank you?"

"I reckon you know how, little girl!" he answered. "There's just one way for me, an' I reckon you've known it this long while."

Melissa said nothing at all for several minutes, pretending, even to herself, that she was thinking. As a matter of fact she was not thinking at all, but simply feeling—feeling wildly and inexplicably happy. At last she said, in a hesitating voice—

"If mother or father asks you to come and