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to be her friend. It was he who had given her the "Walden."

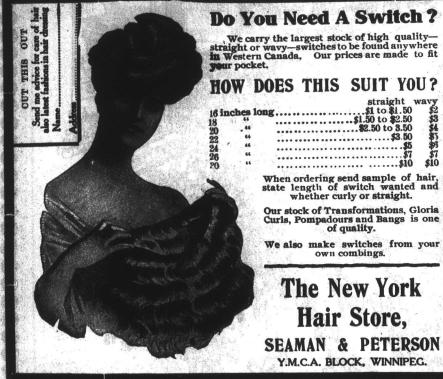
He had just a few words to say her. "Where no one can see us," to her. he said, and she left her potatopatch and went over to the barn, where they sat on an old reaper. Yes, just a few words, but they were hard to say. He blundered through them, his eyes on the ground. And as they were said, Marty set her teeth and drew in her breath. But following them came a silence so complete that Fred was, at last, bound to look at her. Her face frightened him. Something in her had surely had its death-blow. Happiness dies hard; and the desire for

it dies never.
"Marty," he said, quickly, "he did not-you have not-

She understood him and answered: "No, Fred, not that. I can see now that he never would have wanted me. Is it very, very wrong of me to wish he had? Am I unwomanly to say so and to feel so?"

ride, a girl he had known for two days only, but around whose waist he passed his arm unreproved. How many arms had encircled it, he idly wondered. But then she was bewitchingly pretty—so much so that it was an hour or two into Sunday before he unhitched in his own yard. But in the evening he went to see Marty. Her father and mother had gone to a camp-meeting and she was alone and sitting in the kitchen, the door open to the autumn sights and sounds. The kitchen itself had always a homelike air, was clean as hands could make it, and prints of good pictures printed on the walls redeemed its poverty. Those pictures had helped Marty many a time. She had that thirst for the beautiful and for its expression that makes for joy and for sorrow.

The thought in his mind as he rode out had been how best to bring the thing to a finish. The devil in him desired confession just for the sake of seeing how Marty would take it, but always he had killed his "No, no, never more a woman— take it, but always he had killed his but you must brace up, Marty. A prey quickly and mercifully, and so



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"THOSE TOIL-WORN HANDS... HUNG IN FRONT OF HER, LOOSELY CLASPED, AND ANDREW TOOK THEM IN HIS AND BENT HIS FOREHEAD UPON THEM." face like that will give you away at now; and he decided that to pick

"I am thinking of father, how he will laugh; he has laughed all the time—and of poor mother."

"But, Marty, this gives you your chance to come out even, or I would have throttled the fellow right there! Not a soul will know but you and me-and you can chuck him overyou can laugh at him—you can pretend to him and every one that you knew all the time and were fooling him. You can make him the laughing-stock of the town. You must do it as quick as you can, Marty."
"Yes, next time he comes, Fred."

"You're game; I knew you would be!" And he took her hand and pressed it warmly, kindly, then rose to his feet to go. "Marty, I hated to his feet to go. "Marty, I hated to come! And for God's sake, don't take it too hard—he isn't worth it—"
"You've been a real friend to me, Fred," she answered. "No woman could have done it so well for me."

That was true. Marty was always one of those women whose friends are men; her strength required their masculine strength, and to them she gave restful understanding of

That day was Saturday, and in the evening Andrew did not come. A: quarrel was the better, and fling out of the house-never to return. But how to quarrel with this quiet girl in this peaceful little room? Instead, he leaned forward from his chair to kiss her, but she drew back, and there at once was the opening has wished. Why, he asked, was he not to kiss her?

Marty's eyes rested upon him &

moment in silence.
"Don't you think it's time we gave it all up?" she asked then.
"Gave what up? What do you

mean?' "Making love to each other," she said, quietly, but her gaze now was on the stove. For one thing, she hated to see his face change, as change it did, but he answered

steadily enough:
"I don't know what you mean,

Marty.' "Yes, you do. You made a bet or something that you would catch me, like you hunt and catch a bird. But two can play at that game, can't they? Can you blame me if I wanted to get the better of you when you were trying to get the better of me?"

He was silent for several moments: then he said, quite calmly: "I don't blame you at all. I rather



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their weakness. a matter of fact, he was taking another girl for a moonlight buggy that a hunter is caught in his own