

such days as these. It's selfish, but I can't help it. There are so many things you will have to do without me. Don't you ever think of that?"

His eyes grew grave, and he reached out and took her hand in his.

"I think, rather, of the trials life may bring, Victoria," he answered, "of the hours when judgment halts, when the way is not clear. Do you remember the last night you came to Jabe Jenney's? I stood in the road long after you had gone, and a desolation such as I had never known came over me. I went in at last, and opened a book to some verses I had been reading, which I shall never forget. Shall I tell you what they were?"

"Yes," she whispered.

"They contain my answer to your question," he said.

"What became of all the hopes,
Words and song and lute as well?
Say, this struck you — 'When life gropes
Feebly for the path where fell
Light last on the evening slopes,

"One friend in that path shall be,
To secure my step from wrong;
One to count night day for me,
Patient through the watches long,
Serving most with none to see.'

Victoria, can you guess who that friend is?"

She pressed his hand and smiled at him, but her eyes were wet.

"I have thought of it in that way, too, dear. But — but I did not know that you had. I do not think that many men have that point of view, Austen."

"Many men," he answered, "have not the same reason to be thankful as I."

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There is a time, when the first sharp winds which fill the air with flying leaves have come and gone, when the stillness has come again, and the sunlight is tinged with a