

THE TRAIL OF THE LONESOME PINE

while you've got me. And you'll have me, dear, forever and ever——"

"Amen," said Hale.

Something rang out in the darkness, far down the river, and both sprang to their feet. "It's Uncle Billy!" cried June, and she lifted the old horn to her lips. With the first blare of it, a cheery halloo answered, and a moment later they could see a gray horse coming up the road—coming at a gallop, and they went down to the gate and waited.

"Hello, Uncle Billy!" cried June. The old man answered with a fox-hunting yell and Hale stepped behind a bush.

"Jumping Jehosopha—is that you, June? Air ye all right?"

"Yes, Uncle Billy!" The old man climbed off his horse with a groan.

"Lordy, Lordy, Lordy, but I was skeered!" He had his hands on June's shoulders and was looking at her with a bewildered face.

"What air ye doin' here alone, baby?"

June's eyes shone: "Nothin', Uncle Billy." Hale stepped into sight.

"Oh, ho! I seel You back an' he ain't gone! Well, bless my soul, if this ain't the beatenest——" he looked from the one to the other and his kind old face beamed with a joy that was but little less than their own.

"You come back to stay?"

June nodded.