

Alix's beloved Tamalpais, the man's erect form with its slight limp, the dog following faithfully, his plummy tail and feathered ruff showing a dull lustre in the starlight.

Cherry, with her violet eyes and corn-coloured hair, Cherry, with her little hands gathered in his, and her heart beating against his heart, and Alix, his chum, his companion, his comrade on so many night walks under the stars—he had lost them both. But it was Alix who was closest to his thoughts to-night, Alix, the thought of whom was gradually gripping his heart and soul with a new pain.

Alix was his own; Cherry had never been his own. It was for him to comfort Cherry, it had always been his mission to comfort Cherry, since the days of her broken dolls and cut fingers. But Alix was his own comforter, and Alix might have been laughing and stumbling and chattering beside him here, in the dark, wet woods, full of a child's happy satisfaction in the moment and confidence in the morrow.

"Alix, my wife!" he said softly, aloud. "I loved Cherry—always. But you were mine—you were mine. We belonged to each other—for better and for worse—and I have let you go!"

He went on and on and on. They were plunging down hill now, under the trees. He would see a light after awhile, and sleep for a few hours, and have a hunter's breakfast, and be gone again. And he knew that for weeks—for months—perhaps for years, he would wander so, through the great mountains, with their snow and their forests, over the seas, in strange cities and stranger solitudes. Always alone, always moving, always remembering. That would be his life.