

herself than Roxy. She wouldn't have minded going to Texas with Mark.

And Whittaker, who had observed Nancy's curious behaviour on the wharf-boat, went home, putting this and that together, troubling himself with forebodings about Roxy's future, and with griefs about his own disappointment, and with questions whether he had done quite right or not. He, at least, had a bumble-bee in his head for he walked the floor of the upper porch half the night.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A MONITOR IN MASK.

THE next day after the passage of the "Duke of Orleans" being Sunday, Mother Tartum contrived to keep the most conflicting rumours agoing in regard to the condition of Colonel Bonamy. She stood at the gate all day, hailing the negro messenger, the doctor going, the doctor returning, and everybody else, in turn, hearing where they had information or thought they had, and telling her latest, where they had none.

On Monday morning Whittaker rose, after a sleepless night, and thought it his duty to call at Colonel Bonamy's, and inquire after his health. If, perchance he were dead of apoplexy, the minister could condole with the family, and if he were better, he might sympathize with the patient. Anyhow, he would have a chance to speak with Mark about his plans of life, and he might happen to meet—say Amanda, or Janet, or—or well, yes, but that was not to be desired at all; though he might, by some strange accident, see Roxy herself. He did not admit to himself that the dull agony that had kept him awake the livelong night, promised to be quieted a little, if that he could but look into the face of Roxy and hear her voice.

It was Roxy whom he met at the door, and who was startled at the wan look of his face. She asked him to sit on the vine-covered front porch, and she told him in answer to his enquiries, that Colonel Bonamy was lying quietly asleep in his room at the right; that he had had a stroke of paralysis from apoplexy; that his right side was quite powerless, but they hoped he would recover. She was dressed in a fresh calico, and her exertions for the sick man had brought back a little of the wonted look of peace, benevolence and hopefulness to her face. When she could act in the direction natural to her, she was happy—when her energetic spirit was thwarted it became an energetic temper; and the conflict between her irritability and her conscience produced the most