

CHAPTER XXVIII.

EVERMORE.

MRS. HANKS offered to make a wedding for Roxy. She was quite willing to increase her own social importance by this alliance of Roxy's. But the bride would not have her aunt's fine wedding. She did not want a fine wedding at all. To marry the hero she worshipped and then to start hand in hand with him to the wildest and savagest country they could find, there to live and labour for the rescue of the souls of wicked people, entirely satisfied her ambition.

She did like to accept a wedding from her aunt, for Roxy's humility was purely a religious humility; her pride was quick; to be poor did not trouble her—to be patronized was intolerable, most of all to be patronized by Mrs. Hanks. And had Roxy been willing, Adams would have refused; all his native crookedness was intensified by his antipathy to his sister-in-law. But Roxy accepted from her aunt the loan of Jemima, whose hands rendered an energetic assistance, but whose tongue could not be quite still. Instead of denouncing Mark in particular, she now gave way to philippics against men in general. Roxy's dreams of a lodge in some vast wilderness, with Mark's love to comfort her and a semi-martyrdom to glorify her, were rudely disturbed by Jemima's incessant exposition of the faithlessness and selfishness of the "male sect," as she called it. "They can't no more be depended on than a rotten log acrost a crick. Looks all right, kivered over with moss; but jest try to cross it onst and the crick ill come flyin' up in yore face. I wouldn't marry the whole twelve apossils theirselves. Jest look at Simon Peter and Judas Iscariot, fer instance. I tell you what it is Roxy, the heart of *man* is deceitful, and some men's hearts is desperate."

Twonnet helped also in the wedding preparations, and she was rather more comfortable than Jemima. For when once a wedding is determined on, one ever hopes for the best. The parson, when he blesses the most ill-starred match, hopes for impossible good luck to give happiness to a couple foreordained to misery. Twonnet showed her solicitude now and then by lapses of silence quite unusual. Between the silence of the one and the speech of the other of her helpmates, Roxy wished for Texas.

As Colonel Bonamy considered Mark's marriage with Roxy the surest means of defeating the missionary project, he wished to hasten the wedding, lest something should happen to interfere with his plan. In particular did he appreciate the necessity for haste after his meeting with Nancy. Nancy might appeal to Roxy, or Lathers might get hold of the story and use it to Mark's discredit and his father's annoyance.