

question at such a time? He and she were alone in the empty woods and the night held them. Sandy turned to her.

"As God hears me — yes, lil' Cyn, with all my heart and soul. I have loved you all my life."

"In this bag," Cynthia touched the bag at her waist, "are the letters I wrote to you, Sandy, while you were away. I hid them in an old tree by Stonelledge. The tree kept them safe for — me. There are a right many — all answers to the one you sent me. Do you want them, Sandy?"

"Yes."

"Here — Sandy!"

The letters, more precious than any other gift, lay in his keeping at last.

"God bless you, lil' Cyn."

She smiled divinely.

"I wandered far down in the valley, Sandy, and I had a hard lesson to learn; a hard thing to do, and I've come home to find you waiting for me. Oh! tell me, dear, isn't there one law, just one in our land to set a lil' girl free who has made a mistake?"

Behind the two by the fire a door opened and, on the threshold stood Levi Markham perplexed and awed. Slowly the meaning of the scene came to him; Matilda had somewhat prepared him; the question of the girl by Sandy's side shed a blinding light upon the confusion of his thoughts. Standing there, rugged and strong, he seemed the personifica-