

mitted: 'I reckon I should feel lost if I was to live inland very far.'

'And at home we could get you work at once. There's enough for you to do about the place, for we could take in a good bit more garden to till. And you and I could move into another cottage, and leave Mary and Danny to themselves, if you'd rather; and then there'd be the two gardens to tend to. There are two or three of the cottages to let at Pensallas Mine. There are only two occupied—ours and one John Toms. Kias.'

'Pensallas Mine,' he said vaguely. 'Oh, yes; I'm always forgetting you've left the old place! I can't somehow picture any one living in that lonesome spot, out on those great moors. Don't you feel afraid, child?'

'No; we've never felt afraid nor lonesome since we've been there. We've got a dog and cat; and it's so comfortable inside when the house is shut up one doesn't feel miserable or lonely. We are too far out of the way of anybody to come to do us harm. We ain't worth coming so far to rob; and,' she went on musingly, 'I think God seems nearer one in a great open place like that.'

But still Mercy's argument could not prevail on Zekiel to come home when he was released; and when she saw how absolutely painful the thought of facing his old friends and neighbors, and worse still the widow and children of the man he had murdered, was, she ceased to urge him, though bitterly disappointed.

He won't tell me where he is going or anything,' she said to me, tears running down her cheeks, 'because he won't hear of my giving up my home here to go with him. But I must. I couldn't let him go away alone to a strange place amongst nothing but strangers. He is getting to be an old man now, and is broken-spirited and frail; and there's no knowing how he'll be able to get work or food or anything. I must find out where he goes, and must follow him. I think he won't send me away when he has felt the loneliness a little while.'

But the thought of giving up her little house and the moors she loved so, and Mary and the children, was a terribly hard blow to her, and all the harder because so sudden and unexpected. I could see she became almost heartbroken as the time drew near for her to say farewell to it all.

She was very quiet, and talked only of the happy home she hoped to make for her father, and of their future life together; but her eyes would linger wistfully on the purple heathery sweeps of the moor around her, or her fowls and ducks, and the little flower garden she had tended so carefully, and where 'my boy's love,' and 'my lavender bushes,' as I always called them, still lingered in honorable old age.

She took an almost fierce pleasure in doing all she could for Mary and Danny, and all the time her home-sickness was terrible. That she battled against it, and battled against it bravely, there is no denying; but she could not keep all the signs of it out of her poor, sad eyes, and wistful mouth.

To say Mary Truman grieved would be but to very mildly express her feelings. Life without Mercy seemed to her impossible. It could not be—it must not be! Her grief was overwhelming and unrestrained; but it warmed Mercy's heart—it did her good to be told how much she was loved, and would be missed.

Her life had been very starved of love, and to hear and see the love she had won for herself was more to her just then than the knowledge of it in her own heart.

But all Mary's wails and moans, and the children's pleadings did not turn her from her purpose. If her father would not come to her home, she must go and make a home for him, wherever he chose to be, and stay with him as long as he needed her. And from that determination she would not swerve.

So the weeks sped by, and the day of his release came. Mercy did not go to meet him when he came out, for he had expressly bidden her not. But, early though the hour was when the prison gates were opened before him, Mercy was up earlier, her face pale with emotion, her heart throbbing, her brain busy with a thousand thoughts, trying hard to go on with her work, and bide patiently till she might go to him.

All through the long night she had lain awake, praying passionately for help and guidance in her course, and as morning dawned, and the eventful day wore on, she prayed continually for strength—and found it.

Calm succeeded storm. Her course was plain before her. She had only to bow her head to the yoke, and she would do it, cost her what it might. She would think only of the happy side, of her home with her father, the happy life she would strive to make for him, and was anxious only to live the better life, and repair the errors of his past life.

'Ah!' she sighed, once more, 'if he would only come back here and see the moor, and the sea he loved so, I am sure he would be happy.' But she put the thought from her.

It was not to be. He felt he could not face the victim of his crime. Probably Mary would shrink from seeing him; certainly the children would look with horror and the intolerance of youth upon him. She had thought only of herself and not of him. Of course, it was better he should go away. She could be happy anywhere—in a little while.

The day wore on to a stormy ending, and evening closed in swiftly. A hurricane blew over the hill and across the moor; a thick, driving rain swept across the flat land in great clouds. With an increased sense of comfort and safety, and a sigh of content and regret, Mercy shut the cottage door, and stirred up the fire to a quick blaze. She loved to sit inside in the light and warmth, and hear the storm raging without.

From the little back kitchen came sounds of frizzling and snapping, and a savory smell of bacon frying, while the kettle on the hob in the front kitchen hummed and then sang. Mercy took out the little black tea-pot and warmed it with water from the singing kettle, and stood there for a moment in the glow of the fire, pondering what her first step must be. She must keep a watch on her father's movements, or she might lose sight of him altogether, seeing it was his great aim to hide himself completely.

Mary's heavy step in the back kitchen, and her voice addressing the cat, roused her. She tried to be bright and cheerful before the others; she did not want to worry them before it became inevitable.

The frizzling and spluttering ceased, and there was a rattle of a dish being put into the oven. Mercy turned away to empty the teapot and make the tea, and at the same moment came a knock at the door. It was so sharp and loud a knock that there was no putting it down to the racket of the storm; and before Mercy could reach the door it was repeated, making the hearts of the two women leap with fright. Swiftly she flew and undid bolt and latch, and opened it wide.

The sudden rush of wind and rain blew up the flame of the lamp, and nearly put it out. Mary caught up the lamp, and, sheltering it behind her apron, stepped forward behind Mercy. The light fell full on the form in the doorway. At the sight of a man standing there Mary started with fear; Mercy gave a terrified scream.

'Dave!' she cried, 'Dave! What is it? What has happened? Tell me!' She was alarmed as well as surprised, for David Warne leaned against the doorpost like a man exhausted and half stupefied. Only by a great effort could he bring himself to speak.

'Come,' he said, 'quickly. Bring lantern and ropes, and help, if you can get it; he may be saved yet.'

'Who?' cried Mercy, thinking only that he was raving, and little guessing at the answer.

'Your father.'

For a moment she stood thunderstruck. 'Father!' she gasped. 'Father here?'

'Yes; it is he. I can't stay to tell you now; he has fallen—down one of the pits—and is hurt. I will tell you all by and by.'

Without another question, they flew about to do his bidding, hastily collecting all the clothes-lines they possessed, and the lanterns, and summoning John Toms from his snug fireside, to his great amaze, to lend his assistance.

Soon young John Toms and his brother Luke were speeding, lantern in hand, across the desolate moor and up steep Pensallas Hill for help and the doctor, while all the other inhabitants of the little spot hurried to the pitside to do the best they could, and that quickly.

For what, to Mercy, at least, seemed a lifetime of terror and anxiety, they struggled in the rain and tempest, sometimes hopeful, sometimes despairing of reaching him before it was too late.

Zekiel Pendray had fallen down a pit by the old mine—a pit many feet deep—and that he was injured badly they could not doubt. By the flickering light of the clumsy lanterns they lowered they could see his white face with its closed eyes, and the rain beat down on it, and the lantern-light shone on it; but he paid no heed.

One thing was certain—he was too much hurt to help himself. Dave could not be spared, nor John Toms, for their strength was necessary to hold up the ropes and raise him. Danny could go, but he could not lift him alone, nor fasten the ropes round him.

'I will go,' said Mercy decisively. 'Fasten a rope around me and let me go with Danny.'

David Warne groaned when he heard her decision.

'Could you hold the rope and let me go?' he asked eagerly.

'No, no; I will go. I can ease him. Our ropes are not very strong either, and I am light to raise. You and John Toms must try to manage alone, for it will be long before help can come from Pensallas. It will take the children double the usual time to cross the moor on such a night. Come, Danny you are not afraid, are you?'

So Danny, with his heart beating with excitement, and Mercy, with hers full of chill fear, were lowered in turn over the rough sides of the deep pit; and there between them they raised the unconscious man and carried him to the side, where the Danny you are not afraid, are you?'

He was only a light weight, and Mercy's heart ached to see how thin and aged he was. Then, after much labor and struggling, with the rain soaking them, and the wind roaring around them, they fastened