

She took up the letter, held it to the candle, and let it burn slowly on the hearth. To-morrow she would write to him the last word of parting.

"I w'll bear it, and bear it till death. But how long it will be before death comes! I am so young, so healthy. How shall I have patience and strength? Am I to struggle and fall and repent again? Has life other trials as hard for me still?"

With that cry of self-despair, Maggie fell on her knees against the table, and buried her sorrow-stricken face. Her soul went out to the Unseen Pity that would be with her to the end. Surely there was something being taught her by this experience of great need; and she must be learning a secret of human tenderness and long-suffering, that the less erring could hardly know? "O God, if my life is to be long, let me live to bless and comfort——"

At that moment Maggie felt a startling sensation of sudden cold about her knees and feet; it was water flowing under her. She started up; the stream was flowing under the door that led into the passage. She was not bewildered for an instant; she knew it was the flood!

The tumult of emotion she had been enduring for the last twelve hours seemed to have left a great calm in her; without screaming, she hurried with the candle upstairs to Bob Jakin's bedroom. The door was ajar; she went in and shook him by the shoulder.

"Bob, the flood is come! it is in the house! let us see if we can make the boats safe."

She lighted his candle, while the poor wife, snatching up her baby, burst into screams; and then she hurried down again to see if the waters were rising fast. There was a step down into the room at the door leading from the staircase; she saw that the water was already on a level with the step. While she was looking, something came with a tremendous crash against the window, and sent the leaded panes and the old wooden framework inward in shivers, the water pouring in after it.

"It is the boat!" cried Maggie. "Bob, come down to get the boats!"