

"I was going to give you some good advice," proceeded Bonamy. "But it don't matter to me what becomes of you, if you talk that way. I don't believe now that Mark danced with you at all."

"You don't, hey? You jest go right straight and ax Major Lathers. Didn't he try to keep Mark from dancin' with me? He'll tell you all about it."

"Oh, that's what I wanted to know—whether Lathers was there or not. You've told me now."

"No, I haint, nuther."

"Why, how could Lathers tell me about Mark's dancing with you, and how could he try to keep Mark from dancing with you, if he was not there? But I won't tell Lathers," he added, as though in a half soliloquy, "for I don't want to get you into trouble. You know he's sheriff, and the sheriff takes up people. If I should tell him you were in town now ——. But you said he was there that night, didn't you?"

"I haint agoin' to talk to you no more. You'll make me tell more'n I ever know'd, in spite of myself, with yer everlastin' talkin' an' talkin', an' axin an' axin. Go long with yer old ——."

But Nancy did not finish her sentence. Bonamy had cowed her so that she feared she knew not what of defeat and mortification if she should say another word, and she was utterly choked with vexation.

Colonel Bonamy had at least made sure that Nancy would carry no confidences to the ingenious sheriff. His vague hints had excited an undefined fear in her ignorant mind, already cowed by the badgering and tormenting course of cross-questioning to which she had been subjected. The whole machinery of the law was incomprehensible by her, and she was not sure but that Major Lathers, if he should come to know how many engaged lovers she had at one time, might send the jury to arrest her, whereupon she would be in danger of being tried by a lot of lawyers and colonels, and then locked up by the judge.

She went back to Haz Kirtley's full of wrath, but all her ferocity was dammed up and turned back in a flood of bitterness upon herself. So entirely had the lawyer daunted her that she even feared to resort to her extreme revenge of an interview with Roxy. Roxy might triumph over her also, exulting in her own success. She sullenly put the saddle on old Bob and rode away up the hill, stopping at the top to shake her fist and threaten that she would yet come back and tell that good-for-nothing town girl something that would make her hate Mark Bonamy.