

up and tell me that I am asleep and dreaming dreadful horse-dreams,—nightmares, I mean. My Godamidey, Mary,—I just can't stand it—nohow."

Mary's drenched violets that stood her now for eyes opened upon him. "Oh, Chris, my Chris," she faltered, shrinking still farther off, "don't make this last mistake, dear. Don't think a broken habit, or a great wave of pitying tenderness can ever take the place of that deeper and holier thing—of——"

She could not speak the culminating word, but he felt her shiver like a twanged and muted harp.

"Love," he said for her. "That is the word I need. What am I made of, darling, but the long, patient years of loving you? What do I care for insects, or writing, or fame, or anything else beside, if you air taken from me? I see it now for the first time sunrise-clear. There ain't been another woman,—not even another thought, though once—you know," he nodded shyly—"Lizzy Lycosa."

"Chris—Chris," she sobbed in an abandonment of joy. "Yes, it is true,—you need me—oh, Chris—and I need you."

He bent the rough head before her. From out the past there came the vision of a young lad's agony out on a not-far-istant hill. He caught her two hands in his and looked straight into her eyes. "I can't do withouten ye, Mary. I can't do withouten ye, nohow."