pleasanter to the girl than life as it was forced upon her.

By this time he had reached the door of Mary Frank's home. Mrs. Brown's lace-making was going on monotonously.

Cyril raised his voice and shouted:

'Here's one of your girls. She's been layin' out there in the road all afternoon fur all I know. You'd better see to her.'

His voice aroused her. She moved and put out a hand to hold to him; he felt it was a protest against his leaving her at Browns.

'I wish I could see to her,' he muttered regretfully. 'But, Gee! this will be down to Millville 'fore to-morrow.'

'My sakes!' cried Mrs. Brown. 'I just been 'spectin' to see her come out of her head, most every day. She takes after my family, we all was delicate like.'

'Gee!' began Cyril, 'I reckon she's overdone herself. She don't look able to be out in the sun as much as she is.'

'I 'spect she don't be careful as she ought, but you've heard 'bout pore folks having pore ways.'

'I'll just stay till I see if she's comin' 'round,' said Cyril, as he took one of the rickety chairs.

'That's mighty neighborly of you, Mr. Woodlett. I was just tellin' the girls t'other day that you wasn't such an onneighborly man if you's took on the right side.'

There was no reply to this flattering speech that he could make, so he studied the clock.

Mrs. Brown produced some medicine, and after several vigorous slaps and sundry ejaculations Mary Frank was 'brought around,' as her mother called it.

'Now, if you'll just fan her awhile, Mr. Woodlett, the girls and me will shake you up something to eat.'

Woodlett bent over the girl. Her dark eyes looked hollow and there were same weary lines about them. She looked at him unseeingly.

''Taint no use, I can't get that one in,' she muttered.

'She's not all right,' thought Cyril.

Mrs. Brown came in for a moment, and he spoke to her.

'I think your girl's in a fever af some kind, and I believe she needs a doctor.'

'If she does I don't see how I can—' she paused. A sense of her helpless poverty overtook her.

Mrs. Brown slipped her beads from her pocket and fell on her knees by the bed.

'I'm goin' to say some prayers. I can't do nothin' but that.'

'She needs something to build her up. Did she have any dinner? She looks like she never had eaten anything.' But her mother was praying with her eyes tightly closed.

Cyril went out and closed the rattling gate behind him.

'I guess I'm in for it this time,' he groaned. 'I can't let her die. I'll go for a doctor, and I'll settle the bill, too, I reckon,' he added, grimly.

Darkness was hiding the desolateness of the little cabin and its surroundings when Cyril returned with the doctor from the village.

'What do you reckon ails her, doctor?' asked Mrs. Brown, anxiously.

The old doctor looked at the girl closely.

'She's overworked,' he answered, gruffly. 'Not properly nourished; she's not been well for a long time, but, of course, you didn't notice it. Got any stagnant water 'round here?' he asked suddenly.

'Yes, they have,' spoke up Woodlett. 'An old goose pond right before the door, you might say.'

'We hain't any of us been sick, an' that pond's been there more'n fourteen years,' answered Mrs. Brown sharply.

'But this has been an unusual summer, madam,' answered the doctor suavely. 'Such an unusual amount of sickness, especially in this form,' waving his hand toward the bed, 'typhoid.'

Mrs. Brown caught her breath. 'Has she that?' she murmured. She put her hand over her eyes and Woodlett saw a tear trickle through the worn and browned hand.

'It takes a heap of money to bring them out of that. When my husband died it took the whole tobacco crop to pay the expenses,' she said trembling.

'There's more in the nursing than anything else,' consoled the doctor. 'I suppose you have plenty of milk out here?'

'I don't keep any cow now. I had to sell her to—' Again Mrs. Brown choked over the fact that her cow had paid the taxes.

'You must manage to let her have all the milk she can drink; but mind, no indigestible food, no meat. And, say, drain out that pond and you'll save the grave-digger.'

Woodlett saw the doctor out the gate.

'Just you see her through, will you, Doc? I'll see that the bill's settled.'

The doctor looked down at the rugged but manly face.

'Straws show which way the wind blows, I've heard, but I'm surprised.' Then he rode away.

Woodlett felt the remark like a blow.

'He'll say that in Millville,' he groaned.

He crossed the field to the old house that had sheltered three generations of his name and was still substantial. As he neared the door he noticed how overgrown the lilacs and honeysuckle were.

His grandmother had planted the last shrub there in 1830, and if it had ever received a check its riotous conduct did not testify to it.

A blur and white morning-glory was trailing in the grass by the verandah. He tore up some cloth and trained the delicate blossoms around the railing.

'She would like that better, if the—,' he commenced aloud.

'Gee!' he gasped; 'such a fool.'

But his being one did not prevent him from leading over his favorite cow and recommending her and her acquirements to Mrs. Brown.

'Now I'll leave her here until your daughter gets better. All you've got to do is to feed her and she'll give you plenty of milk, but don't stint Mary Frank.' The name gave him a new feeling.

'She'll never get well. Didn't her father go that way? Though I nearly starved the rest to give him the things he needed?'

Cyril shut his lips tightly. 'We won't give in so easy,' he answered, firmly. 'We will fight each step.'

Mrs. Brown felt the reserve force in that 'we.'

'It is kind of you and neighborly, but it will take the farm to pay it back.'

'I hain't askin' no pay,' answered Woodlett sharply. 'But you must help me in the fight.'

Mary Frank had a cool draught of milk the next morning, but she did not recognise anyone. Her eyes were half-closed, while now and then she complained: 'Oh, me; Oh, me!'

The next morning Cyril came over early. 'I'm going to drain that pond, Mrs. Brown. Your geese can take to the creek for a while.'

Mrs. Brown flushed, but the determined man went on.

He was there when the doctor rode up and looked down at him humorously.

'Taken possession, eh, Woodlett?'

'Look here, Doc., you know I hain't no jokin' man, but them women need a man's help. They're shiftless, anyhow; so was the old man. If that girl gets well I'm going to ask her to be my wife. If she dies, why—.' And he waved his hand resignedly.

'That's right,' assented the doctor; 'get her out of this anyway.'

Several days passed, but the fever was master. Then the day of the crisis arrived.

The doctor stayed three long hours.

'She will get well—now—,' he said measuredly, 'if she has anything to call her back from death. She seems to not have proper energy.'

Woodlett came that evening. He sat studying her face intently.

'Do you know me?' he asked in a low tone.

'Yes, you are Mr. Woodlett,' she said faintly.

'I've been here every day since you've been sick, but you don't remember that.'

'The last few days I remember you.'

'You're glad to be getting all right?' he asked anxiously.

She closed her eyes tightly, then looked sadly out through the gathering night.

'I'm just a burden on mother,' she said apologetically. 'She has such a hard time, anyhow. I hain't never earned a cent, though I've worked and worked. I just feel so tired that if it ain't any harm I'd just as lief not get well.'

'But if you could have a house of your own and comfortable chairs, plenty of cows and horses, with a chance to make your mother's life easier, when then?'

A quick smile trembled across her face.

'Oh, that; that would be all I'd ever want.'

'Then just think of getting ground all right, and I'll see to the rest.'

The days came when Mary Frank could walk out and see the lanes flashing with their borders of golden rod.

Woodlett came over with a light rocker.

'We will move it back after a while,' he said smiling.