OLD CHICAGO – WHEN CHICAGO WAS A TOWN

THE DUEL

MARY HASTINGS BRADLEY

The Old City Fiction Series

OLD CHICAGO

By MARY HASTINGS BRADLEY

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THE DUEL

When Chicago Was a Town

The second story of Old Chicago takes place in 1835. Settlers have returned to the site of Fort Dearborn and have built there the beginnings of Chicago. To the town Robert Heywood comes across Lake Michigan with his bride, Barbara. Heywood was a business man and he was one of those who were to make Chicago into the future city. In contrast there was Pierre Le Brun, French trapper, a handsome devil-may-care fellow, representative of the old order of things. The three central characters were at a ball, the night when the Indians from whom the town land had been purchased were celebrating their departure from their forefathers' hunting grounds. The trapper and the bride find they love each other and Le Brun and Heywood, in a violent quarrel, demand satisfaction of each other in a duel. The story is a tensely dramatic one, and reveals a period when a business center was developing where so recently the frontier had been.

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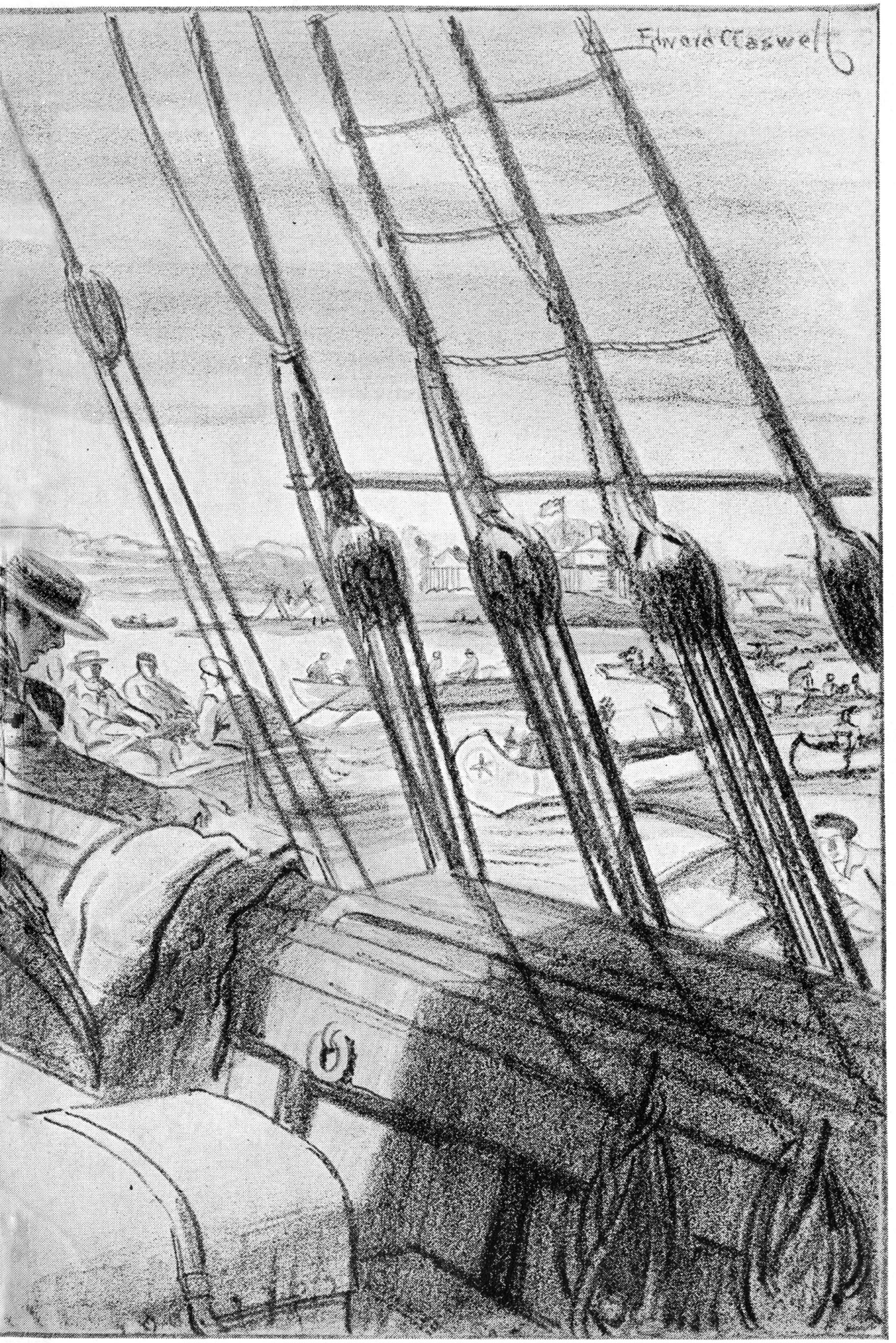
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OLD CHICAGO

THE DUEL

When Chicago Was a Town

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DECORATIONS BY
EDWARD C. CASWELL

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THE DUEL

SHE stood at the rail, staring shorewards, and wondered why the anticipated rapture did not rise in her at first sight of her future home. She felt only an emptiness as vast as the spread of water about her.

She ought to have been enchanted. The scene was lovely. Between the blue of lake and sky the low shore was a wash of palest green, edged with the silver-gilt of sand dunes sparkling in the sun. Like one of Miss Ely's water colors. It held, too, that note of human interest Miss Ely so advised in landscapes, for, as the brig brought her closer, Barbara Heywood saw that the sands were animate with tiny-seeming figures about toylike wigwams, and on the lake were frail

canoes paddled by dusky forms. . . . A scene from a romance, so delicate, so unsubstantial, it seemed to have no relation to that robust young settlement her husband had described.

Her husband. She was scarcely wonted to the word or the fact; she had been married but thirty-three days and thirty-two of them had been filled with journeying, with stagecoaches, canal boat and brig, with the discomforts, the flushed confusions, the distressful exigencies of such a honeymoon. But she had met the discomforts gayly; the long days on the brig had seemed anything but tedium. Then when the very moment arrived for whose sake all these hardships had been braved—

Why was it, she thought childishly, when she was so ready to make the most of everything that nothing in life

seemed quite up to what she had expected?

The other passengers were what her blunt New England grandmother would have called gabbling like geese in their excitement—as well they might after those twenty-three days upon the *Illinois*. And she herself felt nothing but this stealing emptiness, this wave after wave of something she did not understand—the only recognizable emotion was the familiar embarrassment at Mrs. Jones' bulk there at her right, an embarrassment shot with excruciating sympathy for the poor lady's lack of privacy. Her sympathy would have liked to murmur something consoling about the journey's end, but no words occurred to her inexperience, so she kept her eyes steadily on the shore.

Was it homesickness? Experimentally she evoked the picture of her father's

house under the Longmeadow elms, of her mother sewing in her accustomed rocker, but she seemed able to think of them quite unemotionally.

"*Bien,* madame, we arrive!"

She turned with a swift movement which brought her face, deep within its bonnet, up towards those black eyes smiling down. She had never seen eyes so black; one could not tell where the irises left off. And his hair was as dark. An extraordinary young man, this Pierre Le Brun, traveler, trader, who had joined the boat at Mackinac; tall, lean, sallow rather than sun-browned, with a nose too long and thin, and a mouth as sharp-edged and mobile as his veering moods.

She did not know how brightly her own face gave back his greeting.

"What do you think of your first glimpse of Chicago?"

Without waiting, the young Frenchman went on in his fluent but sometimes mispronounced English, "And do not let any one tell you that the name comes from wild onion!"

But every one had always told her so, Barbara Heywood protested. Every one was wrong, he insisted. There was indeed an Ojibwa word, She-kag-ong, which meant strong and was used for wild onion, but Chicago, he said, was not from that.

"A hundred and fifty years ago," he told her, "that great explorer, Robert Cavalier de La Salle, wrote to a friend in France a eulogy of this place. He saw the importance of its location, its great waterways. He saw here the gate of empire, the seat of commerce."

Le Brun said *ompeer* and *commairse,* but Barbara was quick-witted; in her in-

terest she had forgotten her strange low-spiritedness.

He went on: "This is what he wrote: 'Everything inspires to action. The man who grows up here will be an enterprising man. Each day he will exclaim, "I act, I move, I push!" If I were to give this place a name, I would derive it from the nature of the place, and the nature of the man who will occupy it—*ago,* I act, *circum,* all around—Circago!' "

"And you think that Chicago—?"

He was not handsome, she was telling herself. Distinguished, yes. She had a recollection of faces like his in pictures of old portraits—dark, sardonic, almost cruel.

"But certainly! I believe that he imparted this word to an Indian chief who recollected it but imperfectly, making it Che-cau-gou, so the first settlers took that

word confusing it with the one for strong or wild onion. . . . But I am wasting your time." He thrust his enthusiasm out of sight as one stuffs something indiscreet into a pocket. "It is not upon derivations that the inhabitants of this place will regale you."

"Then let me have them while I may," Barbara smiled.

She was enchanting when she smiled. Laughter broke up the shyness of her eyes; golden motes of light seemed to swim in them. Something elfin and mischievous danced out in that smile as if saying that this demure demeanor, the dark, enveloping dress, the tied bonnet brim were all a masquerade. Le Brun's eyes, so keen and hard in movement, became possessed of a curious gentleness.

"Carpe diem?" he smiled back. "Pardon, madame; I studied with the Jesuits

in France, and they were insistent upon Latin."

France. . . . That was what made him so different, she thought. France. Paris. . . .

"And did you learn your English from them, too?"

"No, from others. And later in Canada. I have been an exile these five years —since I was seventeen."

The word touched her. "You miss your France?"

"To be French and out of France is always to have a little sickness in the soul," he confessed ruefully. "But I would not remain—not for the life to which they destined me. A priest! No, madame, that was not my metier."

Heartily her Protestant blood endorsed that. It was odd, she felt, symbolic of this new, free life that she should be know-

ing some one who had studied with Jesuits.

"When they saw my determination," he was continuing, "my foster parents made some representations—means were found to send me to their relative in Canada, in the fur trade. It is for his company I journey."

"You were brought up by foster parents?" That, too, seemed romantic. He had never said so much of his life before, not in all his talk. But then they had never been so long alone.

"Most excellent bourgeoisie." His mouth twisted ironically. "But their sobriety was not in my blood." He said it with arrogance, and she wondered what blood it was, secret, lawless, illicit, that ran in him. He went on. "And now, having known this new life, this life of the wilderness, France has a rival in my heart.

. . . You know that picture of Titian's, Love Profane and Sacred?"

She hadn't the remotest idea of any picture of Titian's. Resentfully she thought how Miss Ely had failed her.

"There are two women," he explained, "or rather, the same woman, the eternal feminine, in different guise. One is richly gowned, in all the seduction of art, the other absolutely nude, in the beauty that God gave her—"

Very hurriedly she flung out, "They are stopping the ship!"

He gave a glance to the commotion behind them, the flapping sails being gathered in by barefoot men aloft among the spars, the ropes hauled taut below, while orders, crackling with oaths, were shouted out. Then his look sharpened on the flushed confusion of her face. A very agony of shyness was in it.

"*Mon dieu,* have I said anything?" he asked comically.

Several times he had said things, in his outspoken foreign way; once he had held forth upon the transient Indian marriages between young white men and young squaws, to Robert's great indignation at having such a subject broached before her. She had tried to think she was indignant, too. But now she was really shocked; tongue-tied with embarrassment. . . . *Absolutely nude.* . . . Her cheeks were flaming. She feigned a breathless interest in the ship.

"Are we anchoring out here? So far from shore?"

"But yes, it is too shallow to go more near. We take off in the small boats—do you not see them all about us?" Still his puzzled eyes searched the signs of her distress.

"Well, wifey, here you are!" Possessively Robert Heywood slipped an arm through his bride's. He was a sturdy, broad-chested young man; at twenty-five his body held no more than a hint of stockiness to come. Like Le Brun he was clean-shaven but the sun had burned his skin darker than his hair and shot with blood the whites about his remarkably bright blue eyes. His features were blunt, forceful, instinct with energy.

"You stole a march on me. I was looking after the boxes below."

"I was explaining to madame," said Le Brun punctiliously, "how my countryman, La Salle, predicted long ago the character of the men of this place. Men of action. Men of enterprise. And so he named it—"

"Oh, it's from an Indian name. . . . See Fort Dearborn, wifey? They've

whitewashed the stockade again. There's the lighthouse. And that water, behind the sand, that's the river. It makes a bend about the Fort, runs right along the shore and empties down there to the south."

Conscientiously his young wife stared at the whitewashed stockade, the log towers above, but clearer than her vision of these was her consciousness of Le Brun's ironic smile at this deliberate exclusion. She felt a confusion of spirit, indignation at Robert, indignation at Le Brun for letting her see his perception of the slight.

"See those poplars north of the river? And that big cottonwood? That's John Kinzie's house under them—you'd have liked old John Kinzie. Wonderful character, regular old-timer. Here before the Massacre—used to be a silversmith. He died five, six years ago. Sons live here now—and the old lady. . . . And see

those piers, there to the south? Two of them. Some day there'll be a dozen. And up the river is a brick warehouse—first brick building built for storage. Gurdon Hubbard did it. He's a leader—worth five hundred other men. When the Winnebago war broke out, when I first got here, he rode night and day to get reinforcements from Danville. He can outride and outrun and outfight any Indian alive."

She remembered the name, she said. She remembered, too, that one of those transient Indian marriages Le Brun had mentioned had been Hubbard's to a young girl called Watseka. Le Brun had spoken of it indulgently, as if these alliances were permissible, but Robert had been angry to have it mentioned of a man he so admired, and even angrier to have it mentioned before his wife.

"Some day we'll cut out the sand bars at the mouth of the river," Robert Heywood was continuing, "and deepen the channel so big ships can go up. You'll see an anchorage here as thick with masts as a forest with trees!"

In his voice was an enthusiasm which recalled Le Brun's when speaking of La Salle. It occurred to Barbara Heywood that here was another allegory of two loves, the Past and the Future, though which was Sacred and which Profane she could not have said.

"I act, I move, I push!" Le Brun was murmuring.

The irony instantly put her on Robert's side. She retorted, "You do not then admire that enterprise which your La Salle so eulogized?"

"Infinitely. I mock my own deficiencies. As a trader I dream dreams—but

not of peltries or of piers. I am in business, madame, to put bread into my mouth and effect, some day, a return to France."

Robert Heywood gave the Frenchman a look in which a certain astonishment and distrustful contempt were mingled.

"Look—they've got the boxes off," he interposed. "Come, wifey, if you want to be first ashore."

Wagstaff, the captain, was passing behind them. "Here, you let Mrs. Jones be first," he roared out jovially. "I reckon your little lady's in no such haste—"

Silly to mind that laughter, Barbara thought, hurrying along the crowded deck after her Robert's broad shoulders. But her lashes clung to her flushed cheeks.

Back in the cabin, a cubbyhole of cramped discomfort, they seized the boxes they had reserved for carrying, then hurried out again on deck into a confusion of

eddying passengers. On the water below, all about the ship, were a flock of lighters, canoes, Mackinac boats, all struggling for place and shouting up for trade. Captain Wagstaff was urging hasty departure.

"See that cloud, sou'-west-by-sout'? You people better hurry if you want to get ashore within a week—if I get driven out to the lake again only the Lord knows when I'll get back, and He won't tell. . . . Here, Mr. Gale, you and your lady and the young ones this way. Mr. Jones you get your *family* off quick! . . . Heywood, tell your little lady not to change her mind in a canoe or she'll tip it over. . . . All right, Le Brun, you got room there, too."

They crowded into the boat with boxes and bags about them; the oarsmen, French-Canadians, half-breeds, bent their

broad backs, and oars flashed in the sun, riverlets of sparkling water running back along the blades. The lake that had seemed so quiet from the brig's deck was suddenly animated; little waves bounced them up and down, and a brisk breeze—perhaps the forerunner of the cloud sou'-west-by-sout'—crisped the wave tops into tangles of white foam.

This was gay, adventurous, Barbara Heywood thought, clutching her billowing skirts and laughing childishly at the spray in her face.

"La vie sauvage," Le Brun shouted across to her, and she had French enough for understanding.

Out of the breakers they slipped into the river mouth, into water calm as a canal that ran for a time between sand, then between sedge and weeds and wild flowers. Robert pointed out the cabins, the

locations, excited as a boy. This was homecoming, Barbara saw, after his six months' absence, homecoming as his return to his native Massachusetts had not been. They reached a brick warehouse where a crowd was collected.

White men. Red men. Dusky half-breeds. All colors of men. All kinds of costumes. Broadcloth and buckskin, blue jeans, calico, beads, feathers, top hats. . . . Barbara had seen Indians along the way, and her interest was all for these white men shouting greetings at her husband.

"Hello, Heywood! . . . How! How! (This was mock Indian.) Welcome back, Heywood—and welcome to your lady."

She was on shore in the jostling throngs, with the sweating half-breeds shouldering the boxes through the groups, in a confusion of greetings and presenta-

tions. She was conscious of hearty handshakes, of the smell of whisky. . . . Men were chewing and spitting. . . . There were youths in cotton shirts and moleskin trousers stuffed in long boots. There was a little immaculate man in a frock coat—it must be suffocating on that hot May day—with dark trousers, stiff white shirt, and shining boots. There was a ruddy-faced man who looked like a Southerner. There was a very New England-looking young man she heard addressed as "Deacon." There was an alert youth with the merriest of eyes.

Robert flung her asides, descriptions. The smiling-eyed young man was Charles Butler, come that year—best type of citizen. The frock-coated one was Jimmy Marshall, doctor and dancing master. "Wait till you see him do the Money Musk, wifey, and the Virginia Reel!"

The Southerner was Archibald Clybourn. "Honored to make your acquaintance, Mrs. Heywood." He was splendid, Robert said—never took advantage of any one. Did the butchering. During the Black Hawk War, when the settlers jammed the Fort, he saw that every one had fresh beef—never raised the price.

The "Deacon" was Philo Carpenter. Religious—organized the first Sunday School a month after he'd got here. And with character a credit to his creed. "If we had more like him!" And that was H. O. Stone over there—smart as a whip. Another Joseph Peacock, gunsmith. . . . And this was James Kinzie, old Kinzie's oldest son.

Gratefully Barbara seized on a name she knew. "I've heard so much of you, Mr. Kinzie. You're one of the real pio-

neers, aren't you—here as a boy during that Massacre?"

A pinch on her arm. Later the hurried explanation that this son of Kinzie's was from an earlier alliance; he'd parted from that wife, and she'd gone south and married again, and he'd married the present Mrs. Kinzie. This boy had been south with his mother during the Massacre days—later he and his sister Elizabeth had rejoined the father and his second wife. The two sets of children seemed to get along. Robert and John Kinzie were the boys out on the lake during the Massacre. She'd like young Mrs. John. Vivacious. Well educated.

A small, meek "Oh," of enlightment. A wondering confusion about all these marriages.

A dark, powerful-looking man was shaking hands. He had a smile of such

rare sweetness that her own flashed out to meet it. Gurdon Hubbard, that hero of Chicago. Why, he'd been just a boy, she thought, on those first lonely trading trips among the Indians. Robert had told her how he'd saved a sick companion, packing him on his back through the snow when they were starving. . . . She felt a sentimental pang for that young Watseka who had lost him. But the Indian girl had married again, one of Hubbard's friends.

A slight, pleasant-looking man with a red skin. "George W. Dole—biggest-hearted man in town!" Another was "Charley Cleaver, who runs the soap factory." A hearty laugh greeted her mild essay, "I'm sure I need a great deal of your soap now, Mr. Cleaver." And then, "Ashbel Steele—has the best dogs here for running wolves."

The names, tags of descriptions rattled about her, and she smiled and responded, eager as she always was to please and be pleased, but with a strange feeling all the time of looking on herself playing the new-come bride—looking on from some great distance.

A stout fellow was forcing his way through the crowd; he was shapeless as putty in disreputable clothes ending in high, muddied boots, with a battered hat on the back of his round head.

"Hello, Heywood—say your squaw's been asking for you!"

A shocked stillness, then the stir of the throng shouldering the fellow away. Her husband's voice with a note of forced good nature, "Lying again, Charley!" And to her, "That's Lying Charley—always up to his tricks."

She smiled proudly, and when a rush

of declarations broke out that Charley had been drinking again her smile took on a gay negligence. As if she needed reassurance!

Then she saw Le Brun's eyes slanting down at her. There was malice in them and sly knowingness. As if he believed it—as if he wanted her to believe it. Resentment flared in her—she gave him a young, very haughty look. Suddenly her dual consciousness dissolved. There was no longer any smiling bride playing her pretty part nor any wondering onlooker—there was only a girl whose head ached, standing in a brick warehouse full of heat and flies and strange people, beside a river that smelled unbearably.

Their boxes were stacked at last, the big boxes of furniture that had been started from the east two months before their marriage; and with their hand lug-

gage they were on their way to the inn. Le Brun, swinging a carpetbag, a bundle wrapped in cloth under his arm, was beside them. He always stopped at the Sauganash, he said. No host like jolly Mark Beaubien.

The Green Tree for them, Heywood said. Barbara was surprised into a swift glance. He had always said the Sauganash before. Perhaps he had noticed that slanting look. Perhaps he had tired of the Frenchman's presence. Perhaps—shaming thought!—he found him too "attentive."

Her heart began to beat oppressively at that. She forgot her resentment against Le Brun; she was only artlessly anxious not to have him estranged. They seemed arrived at the Sauganash almost at once. She saw a long frame building growing out of a little log one, with a row

of men sitting out, chairs tilted back. One who had on a blue coat, blue as the shutters of the house, came forward quickly, a paunchy but sturdy figure, with laughing wrinkles in his dark skin radiating out from his bright eyes when he saw Le Brun.

He broke into an almost unintelligible explosion of words. "Ah, *mon brave,* zu come again!" He clapped him on the shoulders; he promised to play the fiddle if Le Brun would sing French songs. Then he whirled about to Heywood. "Ah —*une petite madame!*" and his bright eyes examined the girl quickly while he was bowing and smiling over the brief presentations. He was reproachful when Heywood said they weren't stopping.

"My plaz bang up good plaz," Beaubien insisted, in his extraordinary jargon. "My madame, she bully one cook, my

pets, she be goose fedders. I sleeps zu, I eats zu, une dollaire py pig folks. Ze poys and gails I trows out, py gar—tiens, zu no got poys and gails—not?" and he burst into jovial laughter.

Somehow that laughter did not offend. Barbara found herself plucking at her husband's sleeve. "Oh, do let him eat us," she breathed, but he was off, hardly giving Le Brun time for his polite farewells. She was silent, in a strange dismay, and Robert was silent, too, as they trudged on.

Over a corduroy bridge. Past a house with an imitation second story and a swinging sign of some black beast. The Black Wolf Tavern. The first tavern in the settlement, Robert said, breaking the silence. This was Wolf Point. Oh, yes, she said vaguely. Some people, he told her, an edge of antagonism in his voice,

pretended the French had once had some fort here, but there had been nothing really but fortified shelters for transient traders and explorers. Fort Dearborn had been the first military occupation. She assented to this, unheeding.

Another house, with a genuine second story this time. A sign on a smaller post, a painting of something green. The Green Tree Tavern.

She was sorry for her husband when they were inside, for he stopped and stared about the crowded, whitewashed room, as if he were seeing it suddenly through the eyes of a young New England bride. But it did not matter to her; she was not pretending when she smiled at him; she was genuinely uncaring.

She looked about at the puncheon benches, at the stove, rusty now, the tinder box at which a man was lighting a

pipe, at the long bar across one side, cluttered with bottles and glasses and hats and wraps, a bar that ultimately became a desk, for a huge inkwell was standing at one end in a cigar box filled with shot out of which jutted two quill pens; she looked at the long trough across the room's opposite side, at the tin basins, the pails of water with rags thrust through the rust holes, the tilted looking-glasses, the terrible, half-toothless combs tied to them and the more terrible hair brush, and nothing that she saw had any reality to her.

When Robert muttered something apologetic about "primitive conditions" she summoned that wordless smile again, but it was not a smile that brought her face to life. He was telling her that soon they would be in their own home, and that had no meaning for her either. She felt

overwhelmed by that strange depression which had crept upon her at sight of shore. She thought, I must rouse myself, and knew a sudden terror of Robert's noticing.

With desperate assumption of gayety she began asking about the slippers hung along the wall. They were for wearing upstairs, he told her; guests were expected to remove muddied boots below. The mud was bad. One often sank in prairie ooze. She could believe it, she said, showing her little black sandals.

The place was thronged, and while they had been talking, the first comers were being given rooms. Now as they waited she read aloud the list of prices printed on a card.

For each half pint Rum, Wine or Brandy, 25 cents.

Lodging for each person the night, 12½ cents.

Dinner, 37½ cents.

Breakfast and supper, 25 cents.

"And you couldn't ask a better supper, either," said Heywood, brightening. "You wait, wifey, and see."

A room at last, a small room upstairs, with a huge bed, two chairs, two pictures, a strip of carpeting that betrayed the slippers downstairs as pretenders. No provision for washing. That was done at the basins down in the main room. Robert went to endless trouble to bring her a basin and a pail of water; she had their own towels. He ought to have accepted the Carpenters' invitation, he said worriedly, but he had not known how long it would take for them to find a home and had thought it better to be independent. Within herself she thought he might have

consulted her about that invitation, but she was of stuff too gentle to enjoy another's humiliation and she heard herself agreeing that independence was much better. He was easily cheered; he began to talk about the smell of venison.

He was mistaken in the venison, but there was wild duck and fricassee of prairie chicken and wild pigeon potpie on the green checkered oilcloth of the long table to which a bell summoned them. There was bread of Indian meal and tea and coffee—creamless but sweetened with Indian sugar. The water seemed undrinkable to her, but it was a marvelous meal for twenty-five cents, she whispered to him stanchly.

Yet she could not eat. It was the flies, she thought, entangled in the butter, the beetles, forever heading for the vinegar and mustard sauce.

Somehow it was over, the clatter of thick dishes, the talk with the fellow guests, most of whom had been with them on the *Illinois*. Mechanically she had gone through with the movements of attention, of responsiveness. And all the time she had been attending to nothing but that strange, miserable dismay seeping through all her veins—as if she were drowning from within. Never had she known such forlorn, aching wretchedness.

She was tired, she told herself, tired and homesick. She clung to that as if it would save her from this other thing within her which she neither understood nor admitted; this secret, inimical thing which seemed trying to make her give it acknowledgment. It was as if that once she admitted there was anything to acknowledge, she would be done for, so every instinct of defense in her fastened on her

weariness and her homesickness with desperate, tenacious determination.

She let Robert see that she was homesick. She showed him the old-fashioned, square, cherry-veneered clock on the shelf above the tinder box and told him it was like her grandmother's in the kitchen at Lowell. She kept glancing at the green and yellow garmented man, painted on the glass door beneath the dial plate, guiding a blue plow and a purple horse; after that it did not matter if her lips were quivering.

She would be all right in the morning, she insisted to herself. Homesickness always wore away by morning.

Her prayers kept her a long time that night, kneeling by the bed after her husband was in it, her lace-capped head bent religiously, her long fair braids curving over devoutly bowed shoulders. She knelt

till the mosquitoes discovered her bare feet and drove her within the sheets. When her husband's arms went out to her, she made a gesture of frantic caution towards the thin-boarded partition, and met his kiss upon her cheek.

Later, lying beside him in the darkness, her horror at the other invaders of the bed bereft her of more complicated emotions. She thought of the "goose fedder pets" of the Sauganash and was sure they were cleaner, and an anger gained in her against Robert who had refused them, an anger all the stubborner, because to voice the grievance was, perhaps, to have it misconstrued. With that feeling of injury in her heart at last she slept.

Never for an instant the next morning did she admit that all was not right with

her. So profound was her instinct for self-preservation, so unassailed her innocence that the two made common cause, persuading her that her fever of impatience was a natural eagerness to be out seeing this new world. She was persuaded, too, that the fresh green gown with the blond net collar and undersleeves was none too fine for that world's impression of young Mrs. Heywood.

With flying fingers she replaited her honey-colored hair and piled it high on her small head; dipping her brush in water she made a dozen ringlets about her face. Her hair was beautiful, thick and curling, like a child's, but she was never in one mind about her looks. Sometimes she thought she was too slight—was she not forever being called little when she had really height enough?—and that her hair was an odd tawny color and her eyes

almost yellow in their light hazelness, and again she had glimpses in herself of a slender, flying grace, a fugitive, breath-taking loveliness that set her heart wondering.

There was no mirror in the room, but downstairs, while Robert ate heartily of venison, broiled bass and cakes with Indian sugar her stolen glances into the tilted looking-glasses told her that she was radiant. If anything her color was too high, her eyes too bright with that excited expectation that beat in her.

Afterwards it was incomprehensible to her that she had not known. Incomprehensible that this flush-cheeked, impetuous Barbara, straining at her husband's arm as he lingered in chat with Alexander Robinson, the Indian chief, at the door of his trading cabin, had not known that those wings beating in her were not the

pinions of delight but the dark wings of the furies avenging those gay, oblivious days upon the *Illinois*.

On fire to be gone, she stood there, taking her first real look about the country. She had not been conscious of it last evening; now she saw the green prairie running on like a sea, and over it a sky so bright it seemed of no color at all, but the essence of light itself. The sun was shining, the air sweet; it was May at its loveliest.

The foreground was not so lovely; there were Indian cabins about and a circle of dirty, half-naked children and beady-eyed squaws intently taking her in. One of them wanted to finger her new bonnet, a deep straw poke with green and brown ribbons and a blonde lace veil but Robinson warned her away.

Robinson was one of the most impor-

tant men in the place, Robert told her; his influence had kept the natives friendly during that recent Black Hawk uprising and the Winnebago War before that; even back in the time of the Massacre he had tried to prevent the slaughter. He was splendid, Barbara agreed. He looked splendid, she thought; straight as an arrow, his deep-lined face so kind and authoritative. All the others seemed dreary and dirty.

Over the river at last. The chairs before the Sauganash were empty in the sun; the "goose fedder pets" airing out the blue-shuttered windows. Barbara thought of comparisons; swallowed them discreetly. Now the town sprawled before her, a helter-skelter of cabins, houses, shacks, their harsh outlines unshielded by gardens or greenery, their litter, rubbish, outbuildings remorselessly revealed in the

bright May sun. Raw lumber stuck out on dug-up ground. There was something indecent, she thought, in this stark exposure.

Streets were laid out, posts marking their intersections, but for the most part the roads took the shortest cuts across the prairie. There were no sidewalks, and she picked her way carefully over the dried mud. It was fortunate there had been little rain, Robert said; after a rain these roads were bottomless pits. For three months in spring it was almost impossible to get supplies in by wagon. He told the story of a man's head and shoulders seen above the mire and how the man shouted at would-be rescuers, "Don't worry about me—I'm riding a good horse!" and about the signs, "This way to China" and "No bottom here" stuck out of holes. Barbara smiled automatically,

her light hazel eyes under their thick, brown lashes glancing restlessly out through the blonde veil.

Her chief impression was of shops. Extraordinary little shops, some of logs, some of frame, with platforms in front, their windows bedizened with gay calico and ticking, with beads and glittering tinware. Pushing little parvenus of shops, with Indian squaws in shawls and braves in blankets, in spite of the sun, going from door to door. Unabashed little shops, fronting the windy reaches of sky and prairie.

"Not much like Fifth Avenue," Robert laughed, "but some day—"

She thought he was crazy.

This was Lake Street, Robert told her. He pointed out everything, land offices, agencies, a post office. She asked about mails. There was one in that morning

from Green Bay brought by a French-Canadian, Alexis Clermont, and an Indian whom she'd seen at breakfast.

"They make the trip every month—quicker than a horse," he said. "Fifty miles a day, and they pack sixty pounds of mail and a load of blankets, turn and turn about."

"But the eastern mail—?"

"That's coming in by wagon now. . . . Not homesick for letters already, little wife?"

The fondness in his voice made her fly the subject. "Oh, not now! I'm too excited, seeing all this. Let's go on."

Her arm in his pressed him on, past the blacksmith's door where he would have paused to watch Clemence Stose striking sparks from his anvil as he hammered out an Indian tomahawk, past a drug store, Philo Carpenter's, where he would have

gone in to talk with the "Deacon." That was the first drug store in Chicago, he told her. Now there were three. Perhaps four, since he had been gone six months.

He abounded in statistics. He told her which were the first frame dwellings, he pointed out the hardware store of King, Jones and Co., and said that upstairs were the offices of the *Weekly Democrat,* the first newspaper in the place.

"But John Calhoun hasn't got but a couple of copies out since last December," he chuckled. "No paper! The fresh supply came on the brig with us. So you can soon read the news."

She stared at the unwashed windows, the drab exterior. Men of action. Men of enterprise. . . . Hard to believe that out of these crude offices, these calico and ticking shops, these raw and arduous be-

ginnings, any great seat of commerce would arise.

When she thought about it at all, she thought the place was terrible. She saw that for all Robert's forewarnings she had conceived it in terms of a New England town, simpler, of course, and with Indians riding picturesquely about in brilliant colors.

Well, there were Indians, but they were terrible, too. Not cheery, like the ones along the way; these Pottawatomies were a sullen-seeming, dejected lot. Alexander Robinson was the only fine-looking one. These were gaudily painted, in feathers and beads, but the romantic spirit was not there. More than once she saw a brave snoring off his drunkenness in a ditch.

"Can't keep them away from firewater," said Heywood contemptuously.

"We'll be glad to get them out of here."

"They are going—?"

He was surprised she didn't remember. They had signed a treaty two years ago, giving up their lands and agreeing to move west of the Mississippi. "Of course some of the more civilized will stay," he said, "and most of the half-breeds, but we'll see the last of the tribe—and a good riddance."

"I suppose they are dangerous," she assented.

"Oh, not now. Not after what we did to Black Hawk. . . . But the old settlers can tell tales. Not tired, are you, wifey?"

She was not tired at all, she told him, quickening her light step. It was delightful to be moving about after those days on shipboard. Frequently they stepped off the road for the passage of

plodding, disc-wheeled oxcarts, of some lighter, horse-drawn wagon, its rims wound with straw against the mud. Sometimes a covered wagon passed, its canvas opening filled with tow-headed children.

They met the Gale family from the *Illinois,* walking out, too, to see the town; Mrs. Gale had had a millinery shop in New York and said smilingly that soon she would be selling bonnets as pretty as the one Mrs. Heywood had on. Not many ladies were out, but they met two pleasant Bennet girls, and an officer and his wife, on horseback from the Fort, stopped to be presented.

She would like the people at the Fort, Robert told her. She liked everybody, she protested. They were not snobs in Longmeadow. Robert, who was from Lowell, grinned a trifle. They were the

worst sort, he said, the aloof, holier-than-thou sort. They condescend in real kindliness, but it was from the height of Plymouth Rock. New York to them had a Dutch taint; the South was loose-living. Barbara only smiled. It was all right for Robert to tease; he came from good Massachusetts stock, too. His grandfather in the Continental Congress.

Archibald Clybourn rode past on his high gray horse with a bow in true southern style. A young lady that she learned was Mrs. Carpenter drove by in a one-horse shay. Robert said it was the first one in town; he promised her a horse and buggy. They were near the north bend of the river now; on the other side were a few buildings with groves and trees beyond. It looked pleasant, and Robert said he had thought of opening his new office there—but it was a bit far from the

heart of things. He was in the land business; a boom was on and he had gone east for more capital. With the Indians gone, he said, development would begin in earnest.

Across the river he pointed out the sign, "Kinzie and Hunter. Forwarding and Commission," and told her again about the Kinzie names. She was sensitive to being reminded of mistakes and turned the subject quickly to the Massacre itself.

"You said the Kinzies were all saved?"

"Yes—the Indians were friendly to them. But the old lady had a daughter in the fight—married to one of the lieutenants. You ought to hear her tell it. She's living here now. Mrs. Helm."

"And her husband—was he killed?"

"Helm? No, he was taken prisoner, and Kinzie got him sold to his own half-brother, Forsyth, who let him escape, of

course. He's living down in Clay County. Mrs. Helm got a divorce five years ago."

Divorce. The word struck oddly on her New England ears. She reflected that she had never seen a person who had been divorced. This place seemed to make nothing of it. She had heard of nothing but marrying and unmarrying.

They had halted now before a yellow, two-story building. Robert looked at it in rapt attention. "That's the Tremont House—our sixth hotel," he said. It was as if he had said, "That's the Colossus of Rhodes—the sixth wonder of the world." She could think of nothing better than, "What corner is this on?"

"Lake and Dearborn. . . ." He added, "They're starting the new Court House —in brick. We must look at that."

In the Public Square, in the corner where the masons were at work, Heywood

stood, engrossed in the brick beginnings while his wife's eyes roved about the open spaces to the log jail in another corner, behind its high plank palisade. There she saw Pierre Le Brun, sauntering as if negligently, but on the instant he swept off his hat and headed towards them.

And even then she did not know, though her heart was beating as if it would burst her small bodice. . . . But perhaps she would have known if she had seen her face.

"Ah, the public monuments!" the young Frenchman cried gayly. Even as she laughed back she knew that Robert was annoyed with his lightness; she seemed always to be aware how each exasperated the other. But she was determined to ignore everything but the pleasant; it was not hard in the sense of well-being that suddenly had flooded her.

Greetings were exchanged; she heard herself praising the prairie air, admiring the town. "And you have a new citizen—have you heard?" Le Brun told them. "A very little Jones."

A relief, Barbara felt, to be able to mention Mrs. Jones without constraint and to speak of the "dear baby." Accomplished motherhood was respectable—though the farther it was in the past the less embarrassing. She must go see them, she said, throwing back her veil to talk more freely. Its blonde folds floated mistily about her ringlets. She was not unaware how Le Brun's eyes kept coming back to her.

"But you have not seen our edifice the most unique," he was declaring, gesturing towards the southwest, just beyond the Square. Barbara noted that he, too, was fine in new moleskin trousers, a flowing

coat, a dashing stock. "Observe—the hog pound!"

"You mean dog—?"

"But certainly not! These—what do you call them—these razorbacks are always roaming and a pen has been provided for the strays. Only, alas, no one is fleet enough to capture any. Me, I prefer them at large. They consume the refuse our citizens scatter so generously about."

She checked her smile, sensitive to the color in Robert's browned cheek. Silly, she thought, to be so touched over any humor shown his precious Chicago—but then, he felt as he felt, and it was not in her to withhold sympathy from any pang she divined.

She said quickly, "It's a wonder the Indians don't steal them—they are sad thieves, I hear. . . . Mr. Heywood has

just informed me they are to be moved west."

His dark eyes slanted suddenly down on her. "You find that admirable?"

Surprise kept her silent. She had never thought of it as admirable or not. It was expedient. But she was quick-witted and asked, "You mean—for them?"

"It is their home," said the young man in a very detached voice.

"Plenty of land for them west," cut in Heywood, decisively.

"At present. Afterwards—the ocean?" and Le Brun made an expressive gesture with his thin hands.

Robert eyed him. "Are you suggesting, sir, that we are not doing exactly as France or England would have had to do —if they had managed to hold the land?"

Le Brun's black eyes flashed an aware-

ness of the taunt, but his tone was mild. "Oh, it is inevitable," he conceded with his foreign shrug. "But one is permitted to perceive the tragedy."

But that, it appeared, was exactly what Heywood would not permit. "Tragedy! A fine word for moving a drunken lot of redskins to hunting grounds where they'll be no menace to white women and children. Where they'll have everything they want—"

"But if they do not want to go?"

Le Brun went on, "Black Hawk did not want to leave his Illinois home. He swore he had never consented to the treaty. And we are not even sure that he returned across the river to make war. He said, 'I loved my country. I wanted to see it again.'"

"Well, by God, sir, would you have bowed him back and let the scalping be-

gin? . . . Some of the rest of us have wives we cherish," said Robert curtly, "and we cannot indulge our sentiments to Indians as much as you bachelors."

Barbara was crimsoning. Robert was flaunting her in Le Brun's face. The Frenchman looked as if he were about to retort then checked himself; before he could change his mind she flung out breathlessly, in simulated gayety, "Oh, but Mr. Le Brun is not wishing me scalped, husband! We can feel sorry for our enemies, can we not?"

She was not improving matters, siding with the Frenchman; her husband's eyes had an obstinate look. It was strange, she thought, when he disliked disputes, especially useless ones, how violent he had been—and how personal.

Determinedly light she went on, "And I am not sure, too, but what Mr. Le

Brun's sympathy with their removal springs from annoyance at the increased length of the journeys he must make to them to find his furs! Confess, sir—" she smiled upon Le Brun, her eyes unconsciously imploring through their archness, "confess you are thinking of the longer portages—"

Le Brun's smile met her instantly. They were conniving at pleasantness between them. "No, I will not confess to that—I find the *vie sauvage* enchanting. But I confess to an incurable sentiment that makes me see the other side of a question, even when I advance against it. And it is inevitable for your nation to advance," he stated with a little bow to Heywood whose receptive smile merely tightened his lips.

"And I confess to disappointment in the appearance of the Indians," Barbara

said hurriedly, "except Alexander Robinson." She tossed out her impressions of Robinson, and Le Brun answered that he counted him among his closest friends. She was to remember that.

Then her husband offered her his arm. "We must be on our way, wifey. You know we must find some place other than the inn as soon as possible. I had thought to build, but something may be vacant now."

Pierre Le Brun was dismissed. Barbara Heywood could find no fault with her husband; there would have been something inharmonious in having Le Brun accompany them on this intimate quest, but as the young man's tall figure took itself off, something in herself seemed going away from her.

Twice more she saw Pierre Le Brun. Once, fleetingly, on the street, again when

he called at the tavern to bid them farewell, and the three of them sat stiffly on the puncheon benches, exchanging the perfunctory sentences. All the ease between them had fled. Indeed, he appeared so strange that Barbara wondered childishly why he had troubled to come or to bring the fox skins he offered her—with her husband's permission, he added ceremoniously.

She did not wait for Robert. "But, of course I accept!" She caught up one of the skins, a lovely brown, soft and deep as a plume, and wound it about her slim throat, driven by an impulse of coquetry she did not know in herself. "I shall love to wear them, sir."

"And it does not pain you to know how they were caught?" he asked, most disconcertingly. "Snared—in traps?"

Trapped. . . . But all animals were

trapped. How else could one—? Her confused, wide-spaced eyes stared up at him. Very oddly he was smiling at her, a queer, twisted smile. His eyes were bleak. The fox skin dropped from her throat.

"You have no pity for those who are caught?" he murmured. "Caught against their will—to most unwelcome suffering."

It was as if he were saying something else to her. As if that young, twisted mouth, those unhappy eyes were saying, "You have no pity for *me* who am caught? I, who would be free of you?"

But he could not be meaning that.

"They are but beasts, Le Brun, made to be taken," her husband was reminding them.

"Made to be taken," echoed the Frenchman's acquiescent irony.

Of course he meant the foxes.

"If you think so of their sufferings, I wonder you are in trade," Heywood went on. "If I felt like that," and there was sound contempt in his voice and stout conviction, "I would not deal in skins."

That was true, she thought. But it was easier for Robert to live up to his convictions for he never questioned them. Oh, it was hateful the criticism this Frenchman stirred in her! He seemed always holding up a mirror, subtly, ironically. . . .

"I feel for them—and I deal in them," he was declaring, in cynical self-mockery. "It is my misfortune to be able to see what I am doing. But I take my choice. I elect to make my fortune. I console myself that the fox does not spare the hare."

No, the fox did not spare the hare, Barbara thought, as if that made sense.

"On my return, in six months or a year," he told her politely, "I trust you will permit me to offer you some finer ones."

"I am afraid you have spoiled my wife's pleasure in your gifts," said Robert stiffly.

But she would not have that. Trying hard for lightness over the constraint between them, "I shall look forward to them, sir—if you have not forgot us!"

His mouth twisted a little. His eyes, guarded from all expression, just touched hers. And again she had the impression of some bitter, wordless thought. Then, with more speech that did not matter, he was gone.

And this time it was as if all of herself were going out that door with him. Within her was suddenly a strange Barbara, choking in distress, who wanted to run out that door after him, crying, "Oh,

come back, come back! Let me see you again—hear your voice! Don't go, don't go!" And that Barbara seemed more real than the composed creature who gathered up the skins and, with a smile, said steadily to her husband, "It was civil of him to bring these. Such fine ones, too. But I suppose he thinks little of skins—he has so many."

She knew then. She knew something dreadful and disastrous had happened. That on her honeymoon, her very honeymoon, she had—not even to herself dared she pronounce "fallen in love with," she said "become attracted to" another man. And she had never suspected what was happening to her! Why, she had been a child, a simple zany, as her grandmother would say.

No, she had never known such things could happen. Not to girls like herself. Not when you were married, when you loved your husband. . . . She had thought that she loved Robert. There had been suitors before, but she had never compromised with her disinclinations though she had become twenty, and her grandmother had warned she might go through the wood and pick up a crooked stick at last. . . . Prettier girls than she had thrown away their chances. . . . Had to marry dolts—or become old maids. . . . Sometimes she had worried about that. Sometimes she had laughed.

Then, at her grandmother's she had met Robert, so strong, so browned, so self-reliant, full of his tales of the Indian country. He had been after her instantly, and she had been all pride and confidence. Had she been tricked, she wondered now,

by her own eagerness, her zest for adventure?

No, she had felt very real affection, trust, tenderness—she felt them still. Not Robert's ardor, of course; women never did—not *good* women—but a content untroubled till this stranger came. Marriage had been strange—that didn't bear thinking about—but Robert had been kind. She loved his kindness; she had supposed that was loving Robert.

She could have wept for the ruin in her heart but she would not weep; there was a courage in her which bore her wound dry-eyed. It was a shameful wound; her terror was that she should betray it. It was like a sickness she could not help, but she could live it through, and no one should ever guess. And there was work in plenty to give the heavy hours the gestures of activity.

They found a house, a "balloon-frame" on stilts. She had never been fond of housekeeping, for all her New England training; she had always turned to books and the fine sewing that was an excuse for daydreaming, but there was a fiber in her which scorned deficiencies, and she could make herself do anything well when she chose.

Valiantly she arranged their few fine mahogany pieces, covered packing cases with dimity for dressers, polished the pine chairs and dining table the sawyers made, struggling all the time with resentful self-pity that she should not be having real happiness in this. She should have been so proud and self-important! She *wanted* to be, she thought passionately; she wanted to be like other wives, single-hearted, absorbed—she was aghast to be caught dreaming of old lost hours on the

brig, of gay, mocking eyes, of a black, high-held head.

What had she ever done to have this happen to her? She had not *deserved* it, she thought rebelliously. What she had conceived as a well-ordered Providence loomed suddenly mysterious, unfathomable, capricious. . . . She tried to tell herself that she had been to blame, she had been too gay, too unthinking, too eager for admiration, but she said it without much conviction—in her heart she was tender to that young, oblivious creature on the brig.

Their days fell into a pattern. She made friends, paid and received calls, chattered of the deficiencies of the little half-breed servant who did the scrubbing and the washing and burnt the roasts when she was out; she went to church and prayer meetings, attended what festivities

there were, danced at the public dances at the Sauganash to Mark Beaubien's fiddle or to a Negro piper and a drummer from the garrison; she joined informal gatherings at the Fort, at the Kinzies', at other little homes like their own. There was a social freemasonry about the place; at the public dances you saw black-braided squaws footing it with cadets from West Point, and ladies in evening toilette with partners in homespun and hobnails. You were what you were.

Her happiest hours were those on the horse that Robert had given her, flying along the hard sand by the lake's edge, the wind in her face. Once Robert scolded for leaving off her riding mask.

"I can't have people think I married a squaw!" From the swift alteration in his features she knew he was reminded of that speech of Lying Charley's on their ar-

rival. It seemed curious to her that she had never, literally, given those words a thought. A proper wife, she felt, would have had some inward qualms, at least. Have managed to find out. . . . Well, Robert's life was the more untroubled for her detachment, she thought wryly. Her feeling for him was so genuinely fond, so sympathetic, that not for worlds would she have hurt him. That feeling was on perpetual guard lest some sudden movement, some unconcealed reluctance of her young flesh might betray her.

He was very busy; the land boom was on, and speculators were flocking on every boat and stagecoach. Lots sold for ridiculously high prices. Sold and sold again. Heywood was intent on repaying his borrowed capital, than on acquiring land for holding. He and Philo Carpenter came in for a good deal of pleasantry on some

of their purchases. Land a mile from the lake. Land far across the river.

"Some day," Robert used to say, when they drove out Sundays to the edge of marshy acres, "some day this is going to be worth real money."

Mrs. Kinzie told him he was "smart." Good-naturedly she scolded at her son Robert who had refused to claim some land he might have had under the Indian treaty two years before. "He just laughed and said we had more'n we could do with now. He'll see!"

The Indian treaty was still vague to Barbara, but when she found that the government had been paying all claims against the Indians out of the purchase money promised for their lands she asked Robert if he hadn't obtained anything.

He hesitated, then said slowly, "No—I couldn't see my way to it."

In the long letters home which she composed with such determined vivacity she was forever recounting how kind her Robert was, how he put up shelves about the house, how his affairs were prospering. "He insists that some day we shall be living in a Mansion in a huge city. Indeed, we have hope of becoming a city very soon if our settlers increase. I wish there were more of the Mechanic class coming here to settle, as there are speculators and investors, for then we would have workmen to make us more comfortable—though, indeed, we have comfort in all necessities now."

June had passed and July. August was dragging its slow length along. The prairie was sweltering in heat, swarming with flies and mosquitoes. The water was dreadful. It was hauled by wagon from the lake and sold by the barrel. Barbara

wished she had never heard of the cholera victims thrown overboard from the ships three years before. On clear days, for a long time, she was told, you could look down and see them.

Always slight, she grew slighter. It was hard to sleep in the heat and in the racket that the Indians were making. For weeks now the Pottawatomies had been gathering to receive their final payments before starting on their long journey to the west, and the place was full of them, sand and prairie studded with wigwams and matting shelters, plains alive with ponies, the streets lined with loungers.

The clothes on the wash line had to be zealously guarded, though Gurdon Hubbard insisted that in the old days the Indians had been honest. Squaws begged from door to door and paid disconcerting visits in their imperturbable way, entering

without knocking and sitting about on the floor as long as they pleased. Sometimes Barbara found pleasure in showing off the treasures on her what-not, the shells from foreign shores, the bits of coral, the paper weight with the flying snowflakes, which elicited grunts of marvel. But again she felt irritation as if these Indians reminded her of something she would forget, Le Brun's dark eyes slanting down on her, "You find that admirable? . . . It is their home."

It was not so bad now, she was told, as two years before when the treaty had been signed. Then there had been thousands of warriors with their families, and the whisky barrels had stood in rows along the roads, and the whooping and dancing had gone on all night. Now an off wind was keeping away the ships with the fresh whisky, with which the traders had

counted on getting hold of the Indians' purchase money. Many people were praying for that wind to hold—Deacon Carpenter the leader.

It was cruel of the traders, Barbara declared indignantly, to take advantage so of those poor Indians. "They have only to refuse!" Mrs. Baggott declared contemptuously. "But they beg for it, the low wretches."

Barbara was told, too, of the memorable duel in which two Indian lads, sons of chieftains, fought to the death with knives, on horseback, for a girl who stood watching, arms akimbo, not a sign of emotion on her dark face. Only at the last, bereft of both, had she wrung her hands in frenzy.

"Insensible creature!" Mrs. Baggott said to that. "Apparently the little clod did not know which one she preferred."

Barbara heard that story with an inward shudder.

There were no duels now, but there was dancing. Her nerves were frayed by the incessant troubling of drums, the insistence of bells. Every Indian, man, woman and child, every piebald pony jangled them at her. The night that she and Robert drove to the Fort to a collation and dance, the prairie was a quivering bedlam of sound.

It was that night which broke her life in two parts, two uneven parts. On one side the long, lifeless days, like the presage of a slow-gathering storm, on the other the driving tempest. She felt caught up in its swift onset from the moment that she turned from the refreshment table and saw Pierre Le Brun standing by their hostess.

Before his casual-seeming progress

about the room reached her she had time to collect herself, time for a very feminine rejoicing that she had worn the new cream-colored India muslin an aunt in New York had just sent on, time for gratefulness that her slightness was yet unaltered by marriage. Else she could not have been here . . . could not have seen him.

He was looking down at her, and they were talking; her voice was only a little breathless as she said, "But this is not six months—or a year!" He answered abruptly, "I turned back—a fool's errand." Then, more evenly, "An Indian matter." But he had been too late, he explained; an accident to canoes had delayed him, and the claim against his Indian friend had been paid. Now in a few days he would set out again.

A few days. What did it matter? He

was here now. The room seemed to swim in light and heat; she was conscious of burning cheeks, of buoyant gayety. She felt suddenly beautiful; she talked easily with every one, she told Commander Whistler how sturdy his little grandson, James McNeill, had been when she saw him last at Lowell; she teased, archly, even the staidest officers.

When the dancing began, she felt as if she could never have enough. The music, the swift advances, the curtseys, the twirls and steps, seemed to release something soaring in herself. Sometimes her hand touched Le Brun's; sometimes their looks met. She thought she had never seen him so young, so boyish, so gay-spirited.

She was astonished that any should complain of the heat and end the dancing so soon.

There were songs. Captain Farraday

had a tenor voice that grew plaintive in old ballads.

"Last night, when the wind it blew cold,
Blew bitter across the wild moor,
Young Mary, she came with her child,
Came home to her own father's door."

Then Le Brun sang French songs without accompaniment, since the Fort fiddler did not know them. Not a word could Barbara understand, but his voice, soft and surprisingly tender, was like a spell. And then he gave them the comic chants of the Canadian *voyageurs,* and Hubbard and others who knew them joined in lustily.

And then—

When farewells were spoken of, was it Le Brun who suggested that they stroll out and view the Indian dancing? Certainly when some one objected that there would be dancing enough in the morning

when the Pottawatomies were giving their farewell war dance, it was Le Brun who declared that the morning's affair was a set piece for the whites; to-night the Indians were dancing for themselves for the last time. And Archibald Clybourne carried the day with his, "True, true—we shall not look upon its like again," so, with the ladies catching up bonnets and shawls, the company trooped out the wicket gates in the double stockade and strolled across the prairie towards the nearest camp fires.

It was when they were all standing uncertainly about, the ladies apprehensive for their sandals and white cashmere stockings, that Le Brun took decisive command.

"Come—here is a fine example of primitive dancing," he exclaimed, pointing to a more distant camp fire with a

frieze of dark, jigging figures silhouetted against it. "Gentlemen—*en avant!* Madame—if you will permit me?" Ceremoniously he offered his arm to Barbara who, startled, moved on beside him.

This innovation in a society where the couples paired as domestically as the animals in the ark touched off a spirit of audacity; not to be outdone the gentlemen began offering their arms to ladies other than the partakers of their bed and board, and in unaccustomed hilarity the company strolled out.

A savage scene, Barbara Heywood thought, with a catch at her impressionable young heart—that wide, night-dark land lit by hundreds of red fires. Hundreds of fires and against them those black, naked figures, circling rigidly, now tense, controlled, now breaking into leaps and bounds. The drums that had been so

troubling her throbbed tumultuously; they had a meaning now and a rhythm, like the swell of a great tide. And those wild figures, projected a moment against the flames, then passing into the darkness, were like the shadows of a dying race, dying to their own music, impotent but unconquered. . . .

For a moment she felt it all, then she felt nothing but that she and Pierre Le Brun were alone, sharing the solitude, walking farther and farther into it. She ought to have held back for the others, she ought to have drawn away the arm he was pressing against his side—

She was so lost in what she was feeling that she was unconscious of what was taking place in the young man; it was with complete amazement that she heard him saying, in a low, hurried voice, "Do you know why I turned back? Why I could

not stay away? . . . I was dying of hunger and thirst—hunger and thirst for sight of you. 'I will see her,' I said to myself. 'I will see her again—and find, perhaps, that this is a dream—that she is not so dear, so dear'—And then I saw you again, your fair head with its curls, your eyes, so gay, so shy, like a little child's—"

His voice broke with unimaginable tenderness. "Oh, *mon dieu, mon dieu,* how I love you!" he whispered.

She never knew if she said anything or not, but whatever her lips framed was crushed beneath his kiss. And they were two lost young things clinging together in the dark.

She must be mad, she thought aghast, even as their lips met. There was no defense, no pretense in her. She knew an astounding flash of keen, exultant joy,

like a bright wing beating up from an abyss of black despair. The wing would fail, the abyss engulf her, but just for this one moment, she thought wildly—just for this moment—

He began to talk very rapidly, saying things he must have thought out in lonely nights under the stars. If she loved him—Oh, she did, she did, she breathed recklessly against his shoulder—then she must come away with him. Her husband could get a divorce. They would be married and go to France.

Fantastic words. Even he, she thought, must know how fantastic they were, for at her anguished repudiation he passed swiftly into other plans. She feared the scandal—? Poor little love—he would not ask her to come then. Only he wanted her so much. But she could go away, to Danville, to Peoria, to Geneva.

A divorce could be arranged—it was not extraordinary on this frontier. There was Mrs. Helm—the Kinzies—yes, and others. When she was free, he would come at once, he would take her to France, to a society worthy of her beauty. She did not know what connections he had, what doors he could force open. She was not to live here in this mud wilderness.

She could have wept for misery that he must waste this one moment of their lives in futile argument. She could no more leave Robert than she could leave herself. She might bleed to death with longing, but she could never stir. . . . All these wild words had no real meaning. Her life was here, in what he called this mud wilderness—and some loyal pride in her throbbed resentfully at that. She had no thought of trying to escape her destiny. Whatever she suffered in it, without him,

would be as nothing to what she would suffer in disgrace with the world and her own conscience. . . . She thought it strange, even in her surrender, that he should dream her capable of such wicked folly.

Since he must be answered, she tried to answer, tried to make him see. She poured out confused sentences—he had lived too long on the frontier—he did not understand. It did not matter what others did; she could never bring herself to abandonment of duty. Marriage was eternal. His talk was sin.

To every argument she kept saying, "No, no—this is good-by," in desperate fixity. When he fell to kissing her she was frightened. His lips on her throat shamed her. She whispered, "Oh, it is late—we must go—" and suddenly he seemed to be recalled; his arms fell from

her and his eyes searched the darkness with sharp apprehension.

Her bonnet had fallen back, hanging by its strings, and she began replacing it, her fingers trembling, her heart knocking now in panic. He said abruptly, "Have you a brooch, a bracelet?"

She had a brooch of garnets at her breast, and with the same sharpness he told her to loosen it and let it fall. Foolishly she dropped it without looking; their moments of groping in the dark grass and sand seemed to her unending. Then she felt him pressing it into her fingers. "Do not brush off the sand," he cautioned. "It was lost, and we were searching for it."

He said one thing more as they were hurrying back. "Be at the Sauganash tomorrow, to see the dance. Good night—my little love."

If only they could have parted there!

She burned with painful shame as she lived through the falsity of those next scenes—the guilty complicity of their explanations of that lost brooch. She was too agitated to know what the others were thinking—that she was flightily indiscreet, at the very least, to have gone so far away. Robert was concerned, constrained, veiling his vexation with his good sense and his consideration for her. . . . Her poor garnet brooch! How little her mother had thought, when she gave it to her—!

Suppose some one had stumbled on them. . . . She was weak now with terror. . . . Never again—

But deep under the terror, deep under the shame that kept her bitter company—she, Barbara Heywood, out kissing in the dark!—deep under the resolves that promised lifelong expiation, there glowed in

her that secret, unquenchable flame that hides in the heart of one who loves, who knows herself beloved.

She would see him one last time at the Sauganash. There was no harm in that, with all the others there.

From the second-story windows of the Sauganash a little crowd of whites were looking down upon the Pottawatomies' farewell.

The red-skinned warriors, their nearly naked bodies streaked with paint, their black locks tufted with tall eagle feathers, were pouring over the little bridge, a long, yelling line, brandishing knives, bows and tomahawks, advancing straight on towards the hotel. Drums were pounding, whistles shrilling, sticks beating together in a frenzied pandemonium.

Little Mrs. Taylor, peeping over her fluttering fan, cried out in pretty terror, "Oh, oh! It's like a real attack! But look—!"

"A real attack—you don't get that much warning," said Mrs. Kinzie scoffingly. Barbara Heywood, glancing at her, thought it strange her face was so tranquil, so unlined. She, who had seen the real thing . . . broken bodies . . . blood. . . . But then, it was strange that her own face this morning was so unchanged, so innocent.

"Savages!" said Mrs. Baggott fiercely.

Mr. Caton, intent at the window, nodded gravely. "Horrible—demoniac," he was murmuring.

"Horrible—it's magnificent, sir!" Pierre Le Brun, his face pale, his black eyes bright with an inner excitement, flung out the words. "Do you not feel

it? The last war dance! The Pottawatomies' farewell to Chicago!"

Barbara dared not turn her shy eyes toward that voice. She must be so careful now, she was warning herself; she, who had only escaped disaster by a breath. . . . And yet she must be natural, too, not seeming aware of any need for care.

On below them came the rush of vivid bodies, louder and louder sounded the out-cries, the infernal racketing of sticks and drums. The foremost were directly beneath the tavern windows; you could see the sweat and paint running together in the hot August sun. Looking up, straight into the faces of the onlooking whites, the savages let out a wild burst of yells, brandishing their tomahawks up at their old enemies. From the handles there were scalps dangling, black for the most part but many that were fair. . . .

There was a moment's time to wonder, if, crazed by their own frenzy—then the onrush turned and swept on, the others following in long procession. Eight hundred—a thousand—two thousand—as far as the eye could see, over the bridge and beyond, they were coming.

"A dance of lost souls," said the voice of the young Frenchman. "Poor devils—poor devils."

"You seem to pity them, Le Brun, for all their sins," dryly commented an officer of the Fort.

"Their sins? It is their virtues which sent them against us," said Le Brun ironically. "Is not patriotism, love of country, protection of one's own a virtue? So, at least, are we taught."

Barbara could not close her ears to that voice. It did more than knock on her heart; it seemed always prying open some

sealed window of her intelligence, forcing her to look out on some unwelcome thought. But how could the Indians be right when the whites were right, she thought, perplexedly; when the whites were progress, civilization, Christianity? In spite of the precision of all her teaching she began to feel how very tangled a business life was, how only the words about it were definite. She thought, too, with a very feminine resentment, that Pierre Le Brun could not be thinking so much of her and what had taken place last night if he was so full of thought now for these Indians. She could hear him, going on with his disconcerting speeches, as she moved closer to the window, beside Mr. Caton's quiet presence.

She stood staring down at the passing Indians, finding at last monotony in the rigid, spasmodic movements, the tensed

muscles, the reiterated whoops. Restlessly she moved away, drawn back irresistibly to where the men were still disputing. She heard Robert saying, "Well, what's wrong about it all? They signed that treaty—they were well paid for leaving."

"Signed? Well paid?" Le Brun's laugh mocked. He said with spirit, "I was here in '33. I shall never forget. . . . Day after day the gun from the Fort calling in council the chiefs who refused to come—the white agents circulating among the tribes, urging, persuading, bribing, drinking—using every means to persuade, to overpower the poor wretches."

"Look here, sir." There was heat in Heywood's tone. "Are you insinuating that our government did not deal patiently and fairly with those redskins? That is what you seem to be saying, sir."

"Quite fairly—if it is fair to get poor savages so fuddled with drink—"

"To *get* them drunk? You know the commissioners forbade the sale of spirits."

"And the whisky barrels stood out under their very noses! I tell you, I saw with my own eyes, but I can give you another voice, the voice of Charles Latrobe, that young English writer who was here then. He said to me then the very words he wrote later in articles which have just reached me. I can give them to you, word for word."

He began quoting, and Barbara Heywood remembered how he had quoted La Salle to her that day upon the brig. He had a most relentless memory, she thought, stirred to disquiet by the antagonisms in the air. She drew a little closer to her husband; their group was a small,

intent circle in the eddying roomful.

Slowly Le Brun repeated, " 'However anxious I and others might be to exculpate the United States government from the charge of cold and selfish policy towards the remnants of the Indian tribes, and from that of resorting to unworthy and diabolic means in obtaining possession of their lands—as long as it can be said with truth that drunkenness was not guarded against, and that the means were furnished at the very time of the treaty, and under the very nose of the commissioners—how can it be expected but that a stigma will attach to every transaction of this kind? The sin may lie at the door of the individuals more immediately in contact with them; but for the character of the people as a nation, it should be guarded against, beyond a possibility of transgression.' "

Why, that was quite true, she thought, surprised by the closed unreceptivity of those listening faces. Why couldn't they just say so? Here were good people now praying for the continuance of the wind that kept the whisky ships offshore. It seemed to her quite simple to admit that two years before, the prayers—or the response—had been unfortunately lacking, but no such admissions came.

"Well, sir," said Robert contemptuously, "I am sorry that the United States government isn't scrupulous enough to satisfy Mr. Le Brun and Mr. Latrobe!"

"A damned Englishman!" said Henry Baggott. "A damned, sneering, God-save-the-King Englishman!"

"There are ladies present, gentlemen," said the young officer warningly. "I remember Latrobe. A most agreeable fellow. We all liked him at the Fort. . . .

He didn't quite appreciate the difficulties."

"They had to be got to sign," said Robert bluntly.

"And the whites had to profit—eh, Mr. Heywood?"

It seemed to Barbara that Le Brun was deliberately baiting Robert. Under her lashes she stole a glance at the two men, Robert, hot, obstinate, Le Brun with dancing gleams of malice in his black eyes.

Le Brun went on smoothly, "Do you find admirable, also, the terms of that treaty? Do you believe dutifully that it was at the *request* of these chieftains that the government kept back seventy thousand dollars of the purchase price for the tribes' future instruction—"

"A wise provision," said Robert doggedly.

"And it is not repugnant to you that nearly all the commissioners who signed it were profiting by it? Do you believe in the validity of those claims that were paid the whites here out of the Indians' own money? Claims, some of them twenty years old—"

"Would you have had the redskins take their cash across the river and let their creditors whistle for their debts?"

"These were not debts! When, until he learned from the whites, did you ever know an Indian not to pay a just debt? . . . But of course some of these claims would have been difficult for the Indians to understand. . . . Men who were known to be poor at the time of the Massacre, who owned nothing, asking compensation for stock lost! And you know and I know of one claim which was paid years before and was marked paid

in full, which was paid over again two years ago!"

His voice had risen, and the others glanced about quickly to see whom those words might reach and touch. Le Brun's reckless smile mocked them, but he spoke more quietly as he concluded, "I say, merely, that it is a pity all this was not done in a better way."

For a moment Barbara thought that the clash was over. The people about them had been turning away from the windows, now that the procession below was passed, and had begun moving towards the stairs, talking already of other things, of town gossip, of land sales. Henry Baggott had gone off to rejoin his wife. Captain Farraday, who had been looking more and more bored at all this earnestness, was glancing vaguely about for companions. But Heywood and Le

Brun stood like two antagonists reluctant to part.

And Le Brun said, a cutting edge in his derisive voice, "Well, sir, you will be successful—since these are your notions of fair trade!"

Anger blazed in Barbara; she wanted to cry out that Robert had made nothing out of that treaty. She remembered his words, "No—I couldn't see my way to it." Why didn't he speak out and say so—why did he have to uphold it all so obstinately?

What he did was to say to Le Brun in a hot voice, "By God, sir, your concern for these redskins is so great one could almost credit that story—"

"And what story?" said Le Brun in a mere breath of sound.

An instant Heywood hesitated. Perhaps, if Barbara had not been there, and

Farraday. . . . Discretion went to the dogs. He said defiantly, "The story of a Frenchman who passed through here some twenty years ago carrying his half-breed babe to France."

Pierre Le Brun turned pale, or rather, a pallor spread under the sallow brown of his cheeks, making a white ring about his mouth and nostrils. His black eyes, glittering but immobile, never flickered from Robert's face.

"I find you an insolent, lying dog," he said in a voice so low that it reached no farther than their ears yet so sharp that it seemed to go through and through them. "I shall be pleased to back that opinion at any time. My second will call upon you."

There was a stunned silence. Robert then flung out shortly, "When you will," and turned deliberately away.

The thing had happened so quickly that Barbara Heywood could scarcely believe in it; she could not credit that a challenge had been given and exchanged. She cast a dazed look towards Le Brun, a look that just caught his profile as he was moving off, past Farraday who was looking as startled as herself.

It was something which she caught in Le Brun's look, some twist of the mouth, some gleam of triumphant satisfaction which told her that this was real. He would hold Robert to it. . . . She knew how Robert felt about duels, how he despised their senseless folly, their useless risk. They had been brought up in a society which condemned them. The soberer states left that hot-headedness to the rash south—though there were instances, dreadful instances. . . .

Robert was waiting at the head of the

stairs. She was so frightened she could hardly descend; she, who had always laughed at feminine vapors, had to struggle against faintness. Once in the street the fresh air brought back strength and reason; holding his arm tightly she forced out, "Robert—you are not—not going to fight?"

He said bitterly, "Your friend, Mr. Le Brun, appears to desire it."

She could not blame him for his bitterness; better than he she knew her culpability. She knew, too, what Robert was feeling, what self-anger for not having refused upon the instant, what disgust with the whole business. She said timidly, "It was all in heat. . . . It can be laughed away."

Robert said nothing. He never looked at her all the way home but stared straight ahead, holding his features hard set over

the inward turmoil. Only something in his eyes betrayed a bewilderment that went to her heart.

Dinner was a dreadful business. Barbara could say nothing real when the little servant was in the room, and afterwards Robert refused to talk of it. He said sharply, "Let it be. I will not talk of it." Before they were done with the meal a man came to see him, a French-Canadian Barbara had never seen before; she leaped to the conclusion that this was Le Brun's second. The two men talked briefly out in the doorway, then Robert went directly upstairs. Barbara flew after him. The door was locked, and she shook the knob, calling, "Robert, Robert!" "Let me be, Barbara," he said again. What could he be doing there? Getting out his pistols? She wanted to cry out in a louder voice, but she had to move away before the little

half-breed girl could see her there; she felt angered and began to compose very spirited speeches that she had no chance to deliver, for suddenly he came out, ran down the stairs and past her, and was out saddling his horse.

Surely he could not be going out to fight at once! He would never have left her, she thought, without farewells. . . . That wasn't Robert—at least the Robert she had known. . . . He must be riding off his rage—no, he was going to the Fort, to Farraday, the officer who had overheard the quarrel. A second. . . . He would need a second. . . . They would have to keep it secret, of course.

But they would never fight to-day, she said over and over again. Robert was too sensible. He would get his affairs in order first. Write letters. There was still time to stop it. . . . But how? In-

stinctively she knew that she could not move him, that his man's pride was set against any appeal that she might make. He was hardened, not through the mere clash of word and thought between himself and Le Brun, this morning, but through his resentment at last night's affair, the fiercer for being unavowed, and through his instinctive jealousy of Le Brun that might date back earlier than she surmised. No, she could never get Robert to back down.

Hurriedly then she flew upstairs, and with trembling fingers tidied her hair, bathed her flushed face and put on bonnet and shawl. She drew the veil close; she must look like a madwoman, she thought. Outside her door she felt as if half a hundred eyes were staring at her back. She had to get to Le Brun at once—but how? She could not seek him at the Sauganash.

She could not send for him to come here. Robert might return. She set out rapidly.

Out Lake Street. Past the Sauganash. Over the corduroy bridge. If Alexander Robinson should be away! But he was in his cabin, in trade with a dozen Indians all fingering his wares.

Quickly she drew him aside. "A message has come for Mr. Le Brun, a very private message. I know that you are one of his close friends. Can you find him and bring him to me here?"

Another man might have stared, but this dark chieftain looked unconscious of her shaking voice, her frantic eyes. Instantly, as if it were the most natural thing in the world that she was asking, he gestured her within and sent his customers away, closing his door against trade in his absence.

She waited. She lived through a thou-

sand apprehensions. Le Brun might not be at his inn; Robinson might not find him anywhere. She kept going to the door; sometimes she opened it and looked out, sometimes, in fear of observers, she kept from lifting the latch. Finally she forced herself to sit down and wait.

She did not hear their steps; the door opened suddenly on the two tall figures. She rose, her heart beating thickly, and stammered out the story of a message. Le Brun turned to Robinson, and there was a rapid interchange of Indian words between them. "He said that we can talk in here," Le Brun explained as Robinson opened the door into an inner room, and he stepped back to allow Barbara to precede him.

The room was a lean-to, lighted by a high-placed window crossed by rude bars. Bales of merchandise and bundles of pel-

tries were stacked in it, and a cask of whisky, rifles, muskets, rustied tools and various odds and ends. A couch covered with a matted buffalo skin showed that it was sometimes sleeping quarters. There was a smell of oil, spirits, skins, tobacco.

"He will wait in the cabin to keep it closed so we shall be private here," said Le Brun.

And then as the door closed behind them he turned impetuously to her, catching her hands and lifting first one and then the other to his lips.

"My little love! You should not have come—it was rash. But—"

He was alight with a boyish joy.

"Mr. Le Brun—"

"Pierre—say Pierre—"

What did it matter what she said? She was so immersed in her trouble that it was

with an effort she made herself understand his simple gladness at her nearness. She felt herself too drained of emotion by this agony of apprehension ever to be glad again.

She said, "Pierre," almost obliviously, then found a sad pleasure in the intimate word. "Pierre, I came to tell you—this must not go on—this quarrel." She broke off, her eyes searching his face. "You *are* to meet?"

He hesitated; she knew then. "Is it at once? To-morrow? . . . But it must not go on—do you hear? It must not! It *must not!*"

She was clasping the hands she had withdrawn from him, and he put his two strong brown ones enfoldingly about them. "Do not be troubled. There is no need to fear," he said very gently. "I am a sure shot."

He thought that she had come in fear for him. . . . In terror for his life.

She stammered, "I know. . . . I know you are. You told me—on the brig. You told me."

He went on in simple soothing, "I never miss."

Horror pierced her. Her lips were pale as she flung out, "But Robert—Robert has no skill. I heard him say it a hundred times. . . . He has no practice in arms—"

He said coldly, "He is as accustomed as most men."

"No, he is slow. He has had no need—he is no hunter—he has always hated dueling—"

Le Brun's eyes seemed to study her, perplexedly pitying her feminine softness, feeling his way to know how much he might say. His voice had the gentleness

but the inexorability of one who reasons with a loved, confused child.

"But—don't you see, it is the only way. . . . My little one, you would never have had the courage to free yourself. . . . But *this* way—"

This way—! For a moment his words beat on her like senseless blows. And then, suddenly, she found herself seeing a stretch of lonely prairie, saw two dark figures, two automatons of seconds, going through their silly, formal pacings-offs, saw two other figures advancing, taking position. . . . She saw the guns leveled, felt the suspense of counted instants. . . . And then the puffs of smoke from the guns' mouths. One of the figures was falling, falling. . . .

And he thought to free her by killing Robert. He thought that then, with her husband's body in the prairie sod, she

would come to him, to him who had fired that shot. . . .

She gasped, "But that is *murder*—"

"Dueling is not murder, little Barbara."

"It is to me! It would always be to me. I should always think of you—"

He shook his head, infinite depths of irony in his eyes. "One forgets. The world forgets. There would be no disgrace to you if, months later, you give your hand to the conqueror on a field of honor. . . . The world would accept that he had been vindicating, you, against your husband. . . . And, in France—"

Oh, the world, the field of honor, France! She knew a frenzy of impatience at such phrases. What had they to do with her? He was mad, mad! Standing there telling her what people would think when once he had shot Rob-

ert and got him out of the way. Poor Robert, who had never done—

"To talk of him *dead!*" she choked out. She was trembling with indignation to the very core of her heart.

Le Brun looked very grim but unmoved. "We must all die," he said shortly. "And you and I have something to live for."

"Nothing—nothing!" she cried out to that. "If he dies, I should want to shoot you myself!"

In the silence that followed this spirited declaration she had time to grow conscious of a certain naturalness in his shock. A whole-hearted woman, she thought distractedly, would probably have had the elemental human indecency to think first of her lover—but she was not whole-hearted. She could never be, since Pierre had not come first into her life. Then, she

thought, she would have been all his. But she was married to Robert, netted to him in a hundred affections, understandings. That was a love that counted, too; that prompted this terrible fear for him. It was strange she was not more fearful for Pierre—Pierre, to whom this other love, this secret, winged thing in her went out like a wild bird beating its way. But Pierre was confident, able. He had provoked this—deliberately, knowing his skill—and that chilled her. Robert was helpless and vulnerable. . . . Oh, but Pierre was vulnerable, too— But not as Robert—

She felt she was like the Indian girl who had stood by, powerless to decide while two men bled to death for her. Only, instead of immobility, she knew a passion of pity for each one. Whichever fell she lost.

But no one was to fall. She would not have it, she thought desperately.

Le Brun had not moved since her wild speech. She began to understand that she had done something fearful to him, that her words must have slashed like a whip, laying his pride raw. How much she had done she did not know until she heard his voice, like the voice of a stranger, coolly polite, detachedly inquiring.

"Your concern, madame, is for your husband's life?"

Her heart shook under that voice but she answered clearly, "I would keep him from death and you from killing him."

"Why do you come to me? He has only to refuse—"

"He will not listen. His pride is set—after last night—"

Bright color rose in her lifted face, but his own did not soften at any memory.

"You are asking me to withdraw—to apologize for my resentment?"

"Your—?"

She had forgotten Robert's dreadful words. She had forgotten even to ask herself if they were true.

"Let him apologize," said Le Brun icily.

She could have wrung her hands. These men! Their prides!

"What does it matter what he said—you were meaning to provoke him," she cried out. "You know he cannot refuse now—but if you set some meeting, if you talked it over reasonably, gave him a chance to meet you halfway—oh, he would, he would!"

"Then let him come and tell me so—and not send you."

"He did *not* send me!" Oh, this was childish! "You know that I came myself

because I was the one to blame—because I would do anything—*anything*—"

"Yes?" said Le Brun in that chill voice which went through her so unhappily. "Anything is a great deal, madame." He was silent a moment, as if considering. "Well, perhaps you would," he conceded in his ironic way. "A lady who gives her favor can command her service."

Perplexedly she was staring at him. She saw his look go about the cluttered little place, then touch deliberately upon the skin-spread couch. "This is not exactly a boudoir, madame—but it is private. Since you would do so much—would you give me this hour?"

It seemed to her that she must have stood there, looking up at him, a long time before she understood. And then she still stood there, her golden eyes widening, her lips slightly apart, as if more than

anything in the world, more than her own state of shock and affront, it was important to understand the terrible bitterness in that dark face above her. He looked as if he were hating her, wanting to humiliate her, to avenge his flayed pride.

Suddenly she found her voice. "No, I could not do that," she got out. His twisted mouth was beginning its wry irony, but she was inattentive to that; she was curiously preoccupied with a dark lock of hair falling across his eyes. It made him, for all his bitter arrogance, look strangely young and sad.

She said haltingly but very simply, like a confessing child, "If I hated you—I could. I could do anything to save my husband. Even sin might be a duty. . . . But—because—because—I love you—it would be dishonor."

And then she felt as if she had been

dyed in scarlet, so deep was the burning of her shamed blood.

Pierre Le Brun made her no urgings to dishonor. He looked at her, first as if he could not believe his accustomed senses, then with a tragic gentleness. And at that gentleness she began to break down, sobbing out her griefs, how she could not help it if she was bound to Robert, how she was not free for love, how ashamed she was that she had not been a better wife but had brought all this on them all, how she wanted to be good, to make up for all this, to do her duty in the world, to be brave and sensible—

There was a good deal of herself and Robert in it and not so much of Pierre Le Brun. But his anger had melted and he understood, with the clairvoyance of a man of his keenness that he was love, the interloper, powerless to alter her, able

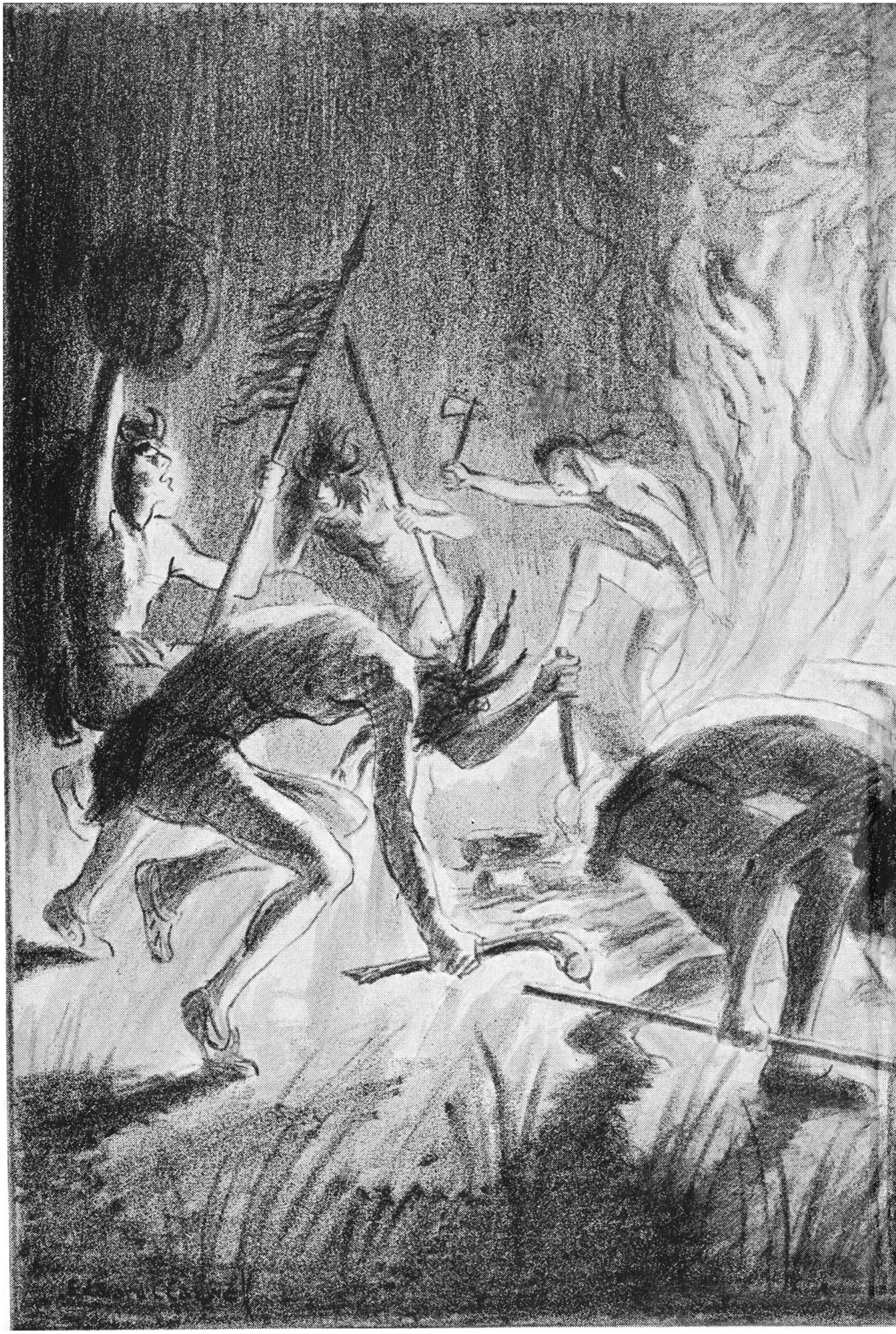
only to cause suffering. He held something, something no one else would ever know. But she would grow older and staider and more wonted to her life; this would be only a dream that would cease even from troubling and be, perhaps, a source of unowned satisfaction in that she had been so loved, so disturbing. . . .

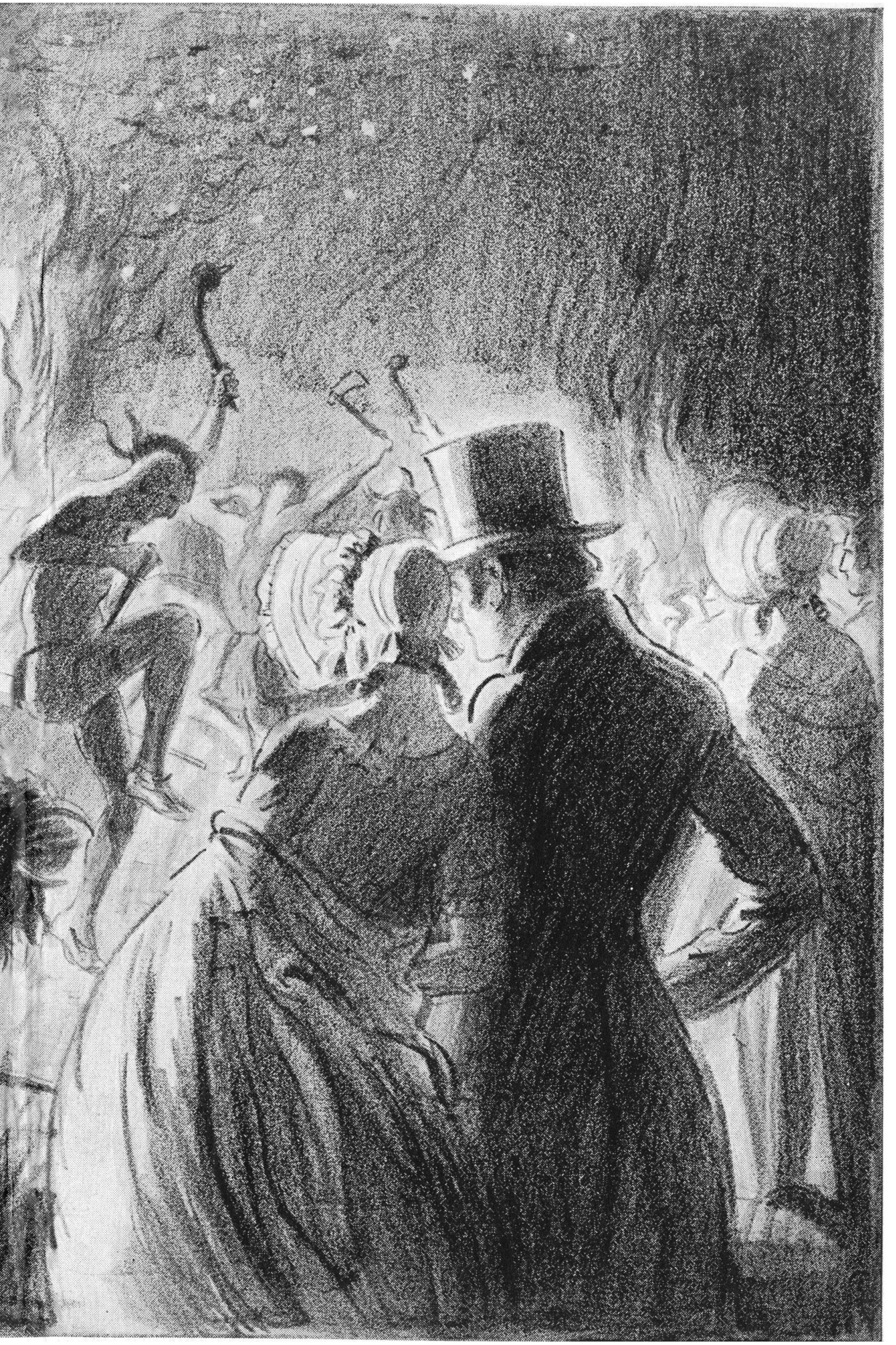
He was of a race that could think all these things even while he looked down on her, huddling on the edge of the couch, her hands hiding her weeping, her curls all disarranged, while all his feeling was wild to touch her, to hold her again, to feel her near.

But he was of another race, too, and when he spoke it was with finality. "Do not cry, little Barbara. It shall be as you wish. I shall arrange something. . . . I will go away now and presently you must come out and go to your home.

. . . In the morning I will start on my trip. I shall not come again. . . . I leave you and this land"—he hesitated, then bared his heart to his own irony—"as my fathers have left it, to your future—your men of enterprise. May all your dreams come true!"

She did not understand all that he was saying. All she understood was that because she had confessed her soul he had left her to win peace for it.





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