

T H E W I L D O L I V E

way to you, anyhow. You'll find my bag in the cab, and everything ready. We'll drive, if it's all the same to you."

"Yes, sir. Sure thing, sir."

The man dropped back a few paces courteously, while Ford turned to his friends. His air was buoyant. Miriam, too, reflected the valence of her vision of his triumph. Conquest alone, looking small and white and shrivelled in the rain, showed care and fear.

"I don't think there's anything special to say," Ford remarked, with the awkwardness of a simple nature at an emotional crisis. "I'm not very good at thanks. Miss Strange knows that already. But it's all in here"—he tapped his breast, with a characteristic gesture—"very sacred, very strong."

"We know that," Conquest said, unsteadily, with an embarrassment like Ford's own.

"Well, then—good-bye."

"Good-bye."

With a long pressure of the hand to each, he turned toward his cab. Of the two strangers, one took his place beside the driver on the box, while the other held the door open for Ford to enter. His foot was already on the step when Miriam cried, "Wait!"

He turned toward her as she glided across the wet pavement.

"Good-bye, good-bye," she whispered again; and drawing down his face to hers, she kissed him, as she had kissed him once before, beside the waters of Champlain.

As she drew back from him, Ford's countenance wore the uplifted look of a knight who has received the consecration to his quest. Even the two strangers bowed their