

struck one since he had come to manhood. But this beautiful being, who was like a bit of flame, would be blown out by harshness or force, and one would have only the cold body left. If he could not make her love him at the end of the three months——

Then he sought Destournier, and laid the tale before him. He had won Mademoiselle honorably. She had given her promise. At the end of the three months he would come for her. Now he had resolved to go to the islands, since it would be wretched to stay here and not see Mam'selle.

"Yes, the best thing," Destournier said, but he was stunned by the bargain. Was his life to cost that sacrifice? There must be some way of preventing it.

As the days went on he considered various plans. This was why Rose was so languid and unlike herself. Perhaps the hard winter and poor food had something to do with it. She had bought his life at too great a sacrifice. And then came the sweet, sad knowledge that he loved her, also.

The spring was quite early. Men began to work in their gardens and mend the damages of the winter, but with a certain fear of what was to come. And one day Destournier found Rose sitting in the old gallery, where she had run about as a child. But she was a child no longer. The indescribable change had come. There were womanly lines in her figure, although it was thinner than of yore, and the light in her eyes deeper.