

THE PRAIRIE WIFE

car down at Long Beach, that I realized there *was* a trump card and that Dinky-Dunk had been too manly to play it.

I had a lot of thinking to do, the next three days.

When Theobald came on from Washington and met the steamer my conscience troubled me and I should still have been kindness itself to him, if it hadn't been for his proprietary manner (which, by the way, had never annoyed me before), coupled with what I already knew. We had luncheon in the Della Robbia room at the Vanderbilt and I was digging the marrons out of a Nesselrode when, presto, it suddenly came over me that the baroness was right and that *I could never marry a foreigner*. It came like a thunderclap. But somewhere in that senate of instinct which debates over such things down deep in the secret chambers of our souls, I suppose, the whole problem had been talked over and fought out and put to the vote. And in the face of the fact that Theobald Gustav had always seemed more nearly akin to one of Ouida's demi-gods than any man I had ever known, the vote had