

you were blind, as blind as was your poor comrade," with a little sob in her voice. "You were both braver with men than with women, else you would each have learned sooner," smiling through gathering tears. "As for you, I could not propose to you, you know," with tender coquetry.

"I thought you considered me merely as a warm friend," I answered humbly. "There was nothing to indicate that I might have presumed—"

"A woman may not wear her heart upon her sleeve," she told me, with a fine dignity. "What the lover may plainly see, in such case, so may the world, and the prize's value lessens in his eyes. And a bold lover, *mon chere*," now with laughter in her eyes, "will make an end of doubt, for weal or woe. He will not dawdle."

"True, Renee," I answered, with humility. "I was faint of heart, though deep in love. And you divined it?"

"I had thought so," she answered, her eyes now darkening with a reminiscent shadow, "until you left me so suddenly, the day you told me of him out yonder," indicating the moonlit lake, "nor stopped, even to comfort your sister or any of us, all of whom loved him. Then I thought you selfish in your grief, and afterward, when you failed to write me, I wondered if, after all, you had ever cared for me as I had thought. And I suffered agonies because of my feeling for you, that seemed so unrequited, for I am proud, Gilbert!" with a regal lifting of her little head. "But now I understand," her lovely hand upon my shoulder. "Poor boy, you have suffered, as have I. But now the day breaks for us."

"'And the shadows flee away,' dear heart." I breathed, drawing her close. "Ours the full of life,