

telling of his stubborn lonely courage in the ruined fort. He was fair too which was a great thing.

"Annette," said Biencourt again, more slowly than before.

A few minutes after when Imbert came in from the kitchen, they were standing hand in hand before the fire.

"When spring comes, Imbert, you shall go to France to buy us cattle," said Biencourt in a matter of fact way. "A dozen will do and a few horses, but no colonists, mend, to quarrel and balk our plans. The squaws will work well enough for what we need. They—"

"Wait, wait," cried Imbert, tossing his shaggy mane amazedly about, "I to go alone and have them ask perchance where you have gone! The queen—mother herself may ask, that spawn of the Medicis. What shall I say has become of you?"

Biencourt laughed. Then he turned his half lit blue eyes to Annette and gently laid his hand on her shoulder. The girl drew closer.

"This," said he.

