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ing clods at his side. Bronzed by frost
and sun, with his brick-red neck and and sun, with his brick-red neck and
arch of chest revealed by the coarse blue shirt that, belted at the waist, enhanced his slenderness of flank, the repentant prodigal was at least a passable specimen of the animal man; but it was the strength and patience in his face that struck the girl, as he turned
towards her, bareheaded, with a little smile in his eyes. She also noticed the smile in his eyes. grained hands and the stain of the soil upon him to her uncle, who sat his horse, immaculate as usual, with gloved hand
on the bridle, for the Englishmen at on the bridle, for the Englishmen at
Silverdale usually hired other men to do their coarser work for them. in face of my opinion?" said Barrington. "Of course, I wish you success, but that ful."
Witham laughed as he pointed to a great machine which, hauled by four horses, rolled towards them, scattering the black clods in its wake. "I'm do-
ing what I can to achieve it, sir," he ing what "In fact, I'm staking somewhat said. "In fact, lm staking some gang ploughs and cultivators cost me more ploughs and cultivators cost me
dollars than I care to remember."
dollars than I care to remember." dryly "Still, we have always considered oxen good enough for breaking prairie at
Silverdale." Silverdale.
Witham
Witham nodded. "I used to do so, sir, when I could get nothing better, but after driving oxen for eight years one finds out their disadvantages."
Barrington's face grew a trifle stern. "There are times when you tax our patience, Lance," he said. "Still, there is nothing to be gained by questioning your assertion. What I fail to see is where your reward for all this will come from, because I am still convinced that the soil will, so to speak, give you back eighty cents for every dollar you put into it. I would, however, like to look at those implements. I have never seen better ones."
He dismounted and helped his companion down, for Witham made no answer. The farmer was never sure what actuated him, but, save in an occasional fit of irony, he had not attempted by any reference to make his past fall into line with Courthorne's since he had first been accepted as the latter at Silverdale. He had taken the dead man's inheritance, for a while, but he would stoop no further, and to speak the truth, which he saw was not credited, brought him a grim amusement as well as flung a sop to his pride. Presently and there was a kindly gleam in her andes as she glanced at the splendid eyorses and widening strip of ploughing horses and the hope of youth, Lance "You have the hope of youth, Lance, to make this venture when all looks black-and it pleases me," she said. "Sometimes I fancy that men had braver hearts than they have now when I was roung."
Witham flushed a trifle, and stretching out an arm swept his hand round the horizon. "All that looked dead an very little while ago, and now you can see the creeping greenness in that for aver and even if one is beaten again, ever, apd an in knowing that there is mow, I am coite aware that you are fancying a quite aware that you are fancying a
speech of this kind does not come well speech of
from me"

Maud Barrington had seen his gesture, and something in the thought that impelled it, as well as the almost statuesque pose of his thinly-clad figure, appealed to her. Courthorne as farmer, with the damp of clean effort on his forehead and the stain of the good soil that would faithfully repay it on his garments, had very little in common with the profligate and gambler. Vaguely whe wondered whether he was not workshe wo his own redemption by every ing out his from the virgin wheat furrow the doubt crept prairie, and then again the doubt crept in. Could this man
"You will plough all your holding Lance?" asked the elder lady, who had not answered his last speech yet, but meant to do.
"Yes," said the man. "All I can. It's a big venture, and if it fails will cripple me; but I seem to feel, apart from any reason I can discern, that wheat is go ing up again, and I must go through

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