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for Angelique, that these two could have frankly understood each other. Bigot, in his sudden admiration of the beauty of this girl, forgot that his object in coming to see her had really been to promote a marriage, in the interests of the Grand Company, between her and Le Gardeur.

"I am a simple quail," thought he, "to be caught by her piping. Par Dieu! I am going to make a fool of myself if I do not take care! Such a woman as this I have not found between Paris and Naples.

These were his thoughts, but in words he replied, "The lady of Beaumanoir is not my wife, perhaps never will be." Angelique's eager question fell on very unproductive ground. Angelique repeated the word superciliously.

"It depends on you, Mademoiselle des Meloises," said he. "Had you been my treasure-trove, there had been no 'perhaps' about it."

The Intendant held out his hand as he uttered the dulcet flattery, and she placed her hand in his, but it was cold and passionless. Her heart did not send the blood leaping into her finger-ends as when they were held in the loving grasp of Le Gardeur.

"Angelique, I have seen no woman like you, in New France or in Old; you are fit to adorn a court, and I predict you will—if—if—"

"I will show you the way, if you will permit me, Angelique: Versailles is the only fitting place for the display of beauty and spirit like yours."

Angelique thoroughly believed this, and for a few moments was dazzled and overpowered by the thought of the golden doors of her ambition opened by the hand of the Intendant.

world," thought she, "could vie with Angelique des Meloises if she chose to enter the arena to supplant La Pompadour? Nay, more! If the prize of the King were her lot, she would outdo La Maintenon herself, and end by sitting on the throne."

Angelique was not, however, a milkmaid to say yes before she was asked. She knew her value, and had a natural distrust of the Intendant's gallant speeches. Moreover, the shadow of the lady of Beaumanoir would not wholly disappear.

"Trifling! By St. Jeanne de Choisy, I was never more in earnest, Mademoiselle!" exclaimed Bigot. "I offer you the entire devotion of my heart."

"Fair words are like flowers, Chevalier," replied she, "sweet to smell and pretty to look at; but love feeds on ripe fruit. Will you prove your devotion to me if I put it to the test?"

"Most willingly, Angelique!" Bigot thought she contemplated some idle freak that might try his gallantry, perhaps his purse. But she was in earnest if he was not.

"I ask, then, the Chevalier Bigot that before he speaks to me again of love or devotion, he shall remove that lady, whoever she may be, from Beaumanoir!"

"Remove that lady from Beaumanoir!" exclaimed he in complete surprise; "surely that poor shadow does not prevent your accepting my devotion, Angelique?"

"Yes, but it does, Chevalier! I like bold men. Most women do, but I did not think that even the Intendant of New France was bold enough to make love to Angelique des Meloises while he kept a wife or mistress in stately seclusion at Beaumanoir!"

"No doubt"—Angelique's nostril quivered with a fine disdain—"the hospitality of Beaumanoir is as broad and comprehensive as its master's admiration for our sex!"

Bigot was not angry. He gave a loud laugh. "You women are merciless upon each other, Mademoiselle!"

"But she has been! You have loved her at some time or other! and she is now living on the scraps and leavings of former affection. I am never deceived, Chevalier!"

"But how in St. Picot's name did you arrive at all this knowledge, mademoiselle?" Bigot began to see that there was nothing for it but to comply with every caprice of this incomprehensible girl if he would carry his point.

"Oh, nothing is easier than for a woman to divine the truth in such matters, Chevalier," said she. "It is the sixth sense given to our sex to

protect our weakness: no man can make love to two women but each of them knows instinctively to her finger-tips that he is doing it."

"Surely woman is a beautiful book written in golden letters, but in a tongue as hard to understand as hieroglyphics of Egypt."

"Thanks for the comparison, Chevalier," replied she, with a laugh. "It would not do for men to scrutinize us too closely, yet one woman reads another easily as a horn-book of Troyes, which they say is so easy that children read it without learning."

"It was always my good fortune to be conquered in every passage of arms with your sex, Angelique," said he, at once radiant and submissive.

She complied without hesitation, and sat down by him, gave him her hand again, and replied with an arch smile, while a thousand inimitable coquettries played about her eyes and lips.

"It is a bargain henceforth and forever, Angelique!" said he; "but I am a harder man than you imagine: I give nothing for nothing, and all for everything. Will you consent to aid me and the Grand Company in a matter of importance?"

"I wish you to do it, right or wrong, proper or improper, although there is no impropriety in it. Improper becomes proper if you do it, Mademoiselle!"

"Well, what is it, Chevalier,—this fearful test to prove my loyalty to the Grand Company, and which makes you such a matchless flatterer?"

"Just this, Angelique!" replied he. "You have much influence with Seigneur de Repentigny?"

"Against him? For him! We fear much that he is about to fall into the hands of the Honnetes Gens: you can prevent it if you will, Angelique?"

"I have an honest regard for Seigneur de Repentigny!" said she hastily. "I can take no part against the Seigneur de Reoentigny;"

"I am glad to find you so sincere a friend to Le Gardeur," remarked Bigot craftily. "You will be glad to learn that our intention is to elevate him to a high and lucrative office in the administration of the Company, unless the Honnetes Gens are before us in gaining full possession of him."

"They shall not be before us if I can prevent it, Chevalier," replied she, warmly. She was indeed grateful for the implied compliment to Le Gardeur.

"I thought so. It was partly my business to tell you of our intentions towards Le Gardeur."

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