

You will then be required to return to the Reservation and carry out all the plans recommended by you for the civilizing of the tribe. Your mare is in the same stable as the thoroughbred that I have bought to use as her riding mate."

The changed tone in the girl's voice compelled Hardy to look up. In her radiant eyes he saw a look that could not be mistaken. The smile that had seemed so mocking was now tenderly teasing.

"Marie — you — " he stammered. "Are you certain it is — love — not a passing feeling of pity?"

"Pity! For you?" she cried. "Do you think I could dare to pity *you*? — a man like you! I could not have been so presumptuous even had those treacherous conspirators succeeded in crushing you. Do you think it was pity that made me live a lie all this time — that forced me to flout you and accept his detestable attentions?"

Her voice sank to a note of deep humility.

"I know how very unworthy of you I am. Yet I hope I am not so unworthy as that first day at the coulée, when I scorned you, and you, with your skill and courage and moderation, saved us without harming those whose attack he had wantonly brought upon us. I was a coquette — a coquette infatuated with the kind of man with whom a coquette deserves to be infatuated. But I was not altogether frivolous. I soon perceived your immeasurable superiority over him.