

II.

The haymakers paused and leaned upon their forks, children left the strawberry vines and climbed upon the fences, as the coach from the distant city dashed down the street towards the four corners, and the welcoming hotel, with its big dormer windows and well-carved verandah. As it whirled by, the driver shouted something at a stalwart forgeron, standing at the doorway of his smithy, and he passed it on to a loitering mealman and a limeburner.

A girl came slowly over the crest of a hill. Feeling her way with a stick, she paused now and then to draw in long breaths of sweet air from the meadows, as if in the joy of Nature she found a balm for the cruelties of Destiny.

Presently a puff of smoke shot out from the hillside where she stood, and the sound of an old cannon followed. From the Seigneurie, far over, came an answering report; and Tricolors ran