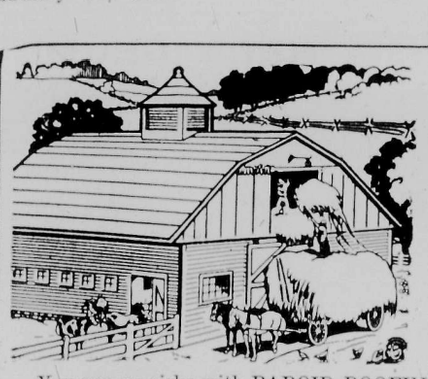

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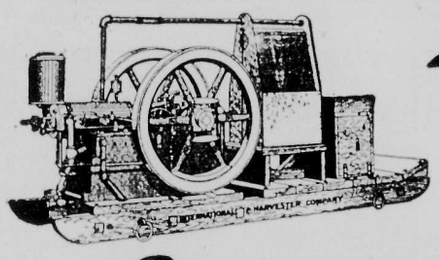

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fore; the withdrew her hand from his arm with shame and terror stamped on every feature.

"Go up there! Go to show myself to your guests!" exclaimed she, with choking accents, as she stepped back a pace from him. "Oh, Francois Bigot, spare me that shame and humiliation! I am, I know, contemptible beyond human respect, but still—God help me!—I am not so vile as to be made a spectacle of infamy to those drunken men whom I hear clamoring for me, even now."

"Pshaw! You think too much of the proprieties, Caroline!" Bigot felt sensibly perplexed at the attitude she assumed. "Why! The fairest dames of Paris, dressed as Hebes and Ganymedes, thought it a fine jest to wait on the Regent Duke of Orleans and the Cardinal du Bois in the gay days of the King's bachelorhood, and they do the same now when the King gets up one of his great feasts at Choisy; so come, sweetheart—come!" He drew her towards the door.

"Spare me, Francois!" Caroline knelt at his feet, clasping his hand, and bathing it in tears—"Spare me!" cried she. "Oh, would to God I had died ere you came to command me to do what I cannot and will not do, Francois!" added she, clasping hard the hand of the Intendant, which she fancied relaxed somewhat of its iron hardness.

"I did not come to command you, Caroline, but to bear the request of my guests. No, I do not even ask you on my account to go up to the great hall: it is to please my guests only." Her tears and heartrending appeal began to sober him. Bigot had not counted on such a scene as this.

"Oh, thanks, Francois, for that word! You did not come to command my obedience in such a shameful thing: you had some small regard left for the unfortunate Caroline. Say you will not command me to go up there," added she, looking at him with eyes of pitiful pleading, such as no Italian art ever portrayed on the face of the sorrowing Madonna.

"No," he replied, impatiently. "It was not I proposed it: it was Cadet. He is always a fool when the wine overflows, as I am too, or I would not have hearkened to him! Still, Caroline, I have promised, and my guests will jeer me finely if I return without yoou." He thought she hesitated a moment in her resolve at this suggestion. "Come, for my sake, Caroline! Do up that disordered hair; I shall be proud of you, my Caroline; there is not a lady in New France can match you when you look yourself, my pretty Caroline!"

"Francois," said she, with a sad smile, "it is long since you flattered me thus! But I will arrange my hair for you alone," added she, blushing, as with deft fingers she twisted her raven locks into a coronal about her head. "I would once have gone with you to the end of the world to hear you say you were proud of me. Alas! you can never be proud of me any more, as in the old happy days at Grand Pre. Those few brief days of love and joy can never return—never, never!"

Bigot stood silent, not knowing what to say or do. The change from the bacchanalian riot in the great hall to the solemn pathos and woe of the secret chamber sobered him rapidly. Even his obduracy gave way at last. "Caroline," said he, taking both her hands in his, "I will not urge you longer. I am called bad, and you think me so; but I am not brutal. It was a promise made over the wine. Varin, the drunken beast, called you Queen Vashti, and challenged me to show your beauty to them; and I swore not one of their toasted beauties could match my fair Acadienne."

"Did the Sieur Varin call me Queen Vashti? Alas! he was a truer prophet than he knew," replied she, with ineffable sadness. "Queen Vashti refused to obey even her king, when commanded to unveil her face to the drunken nobles. She was deposed, and another raised to her

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