

do not think them sincere. Honestly, then, I often made pictures of our meeting in my mind — while we marched, and when I lay in my blankets at night; and ever since I parted with Hewett at the crossroads I've been thinking how fine it would be to — to — ”

“ To what? ” she asked.

“ To kiss you again, ” he said.

“ Oh! ” exclaimed the girl softly, her eyes intent on his beaded meccasins.

“ I really thought I was going to do it. My mind was set on it, ” he ventured.

“ And you didn't, after all. ”

“ I don't kiss by force, ” he said, smiling forlornly.

“ Frank, ” she said in a changed voice, “ you must realize now that we are no longer children. ”

“ Children! ” he cried in mild indignation. “ Children! Who says we are children? True, you are only eighteen — but I am twenty-two. Children don't command companies of riflemen campaigning in the wilderness. ” He laughed boyishly at his own big talk.

“ But, in all seriousness, ” he added, “ why have I not as much right to kiss you, now that I am a man, as I had when I was an unappreciative child? ”

“ But you know that you have not, ” she replied quietly.

A change came to Francis Drurie's tanned face.