

and the cries of the feathered world came from the distance.

The girl's appeal was irresistible. Kars caught her in his arms, and his passionate kisses rained on her upturned face. All the ardor of his strong soul gazed down into her half-closed eyes in those moments of rapture.

"You couldn't help it? No more could I," he cried, yielding all restraint before the passion of that moment. "I had to get around. I had to see the day from its beginning. Same as I want to see it to its end. Great? Why, it's everything to me—to us, little Jessie. I want it all—all. I wouldn't miss a second of its time. I watched the first streak of the dawn, and I've seen the sun get up full of fire and glory. And that's just how this day is to us. Think of it, little girl, think of it. By noon you'll be my wife—my wife. And after, after we've eaten, and Father José and Bill have said their pieces, we'll be setting out down the river with all the folks we care for, for a new, big, wide world, and the wide open trail of happiness waiting for us. If it wasn't I'm holding you right now in my arms I guess it—it would be incredible."

But the girl had suddenly remembered the possibility of prying eyes. With obvious reluctance she released herself from the embrace she had no desire to deny.

"Yes," she breathed, "it's almost—incredible." Then with a sudden passionate abandon she held out her arms as though to embrace all that which told her of her joy. "But it's real, real. I'm glad—so glad."