

Téphany broke the ice which had formed between them with a smile. The curé's expression when the word "England" fell from his lips indicated accurately enough his limitations.

"You won't refuse English money?" said Téphany.

"I would accept alms for my poor people from the king of the cannibals, how much more from a young and charming lady. All the same, we must have some talks, you and I."

"Many, I hope," said Téphany, gravely.

As père Hyacinthe went his way Téphany reflected that here was a man who might help her. She thought with pleasure of his large sinewy hands, his square massive head. Head and hands indicated grasp, tenacity and power.

That evening Mary Machie and she were sitting in the big salon of the annexe with Carne and Keats. Carne was holding forth. Téphany listened half smiling, because in Carne's voice she caught echoes of what Michael had said long ago. Like Michael, the Californian seemed to have made a special study of the province, although this was his first visit to Pont-Aven.

"I met the curé to-day," said Téphany.

Carne had plenty to say about père Hyacinthe. Mr. Keats, too, put in a word:

"A good fellow, that. The big square peg in the big square hole. Of course the day of these fellows is drawing to a close."

"Just so," said Machie, nodding.

"I don't agree with you, Mr. Keats," Téphany said, with a slight emphasis. "The day is dawning. Their interference in politics has brought upon them heavy punishment—and I, for one, don't regret it. Now, they will attend to what really concerns them, to what they thoroughly understand. What threatens the soul of the province is not rationalism, nor Freemasonry, as some of the priests would have us believe, but drink. Let the priests fight that!"

"I'll step off my perch," said Keats cheerfully. "You've forgotten more about Brittany than I ever knew, Miss Lane."