

you understand I'm simply talking for talk's sake as we resume our walk we'll inadvertently change partners — a kind of Women's Exchange as it were old Mother Hubbard she went to the cupboard to get her poor dog a bone but when she got there the cupboard — don't smile so broadly — was bare and so the poor dog had none will that be satisfactory?"

Claude nodded, and as they turned again to their companions the exchange was made with the grace, silence, and calm unconsciousness of pure oversight, — or of general complicity. Very soon it suited Zoséphine and Tarbox to sit down upon a little bench beside a bed of heart's-ease and listen to the orchestra. But Marguerite preferred to walk in and out among the leafy shadows of the electric lamps.

And so, side by side, as he had once seen Bonaventure and Sidonie go, they went, Claude and Marguerite, away from all windings of disappointment, all shadows of doubt, all shoals of misapprehension, out upon the open sea of mutual love. Not that the great word of words — affirmative or interrogative — was spoken then or there. They came no nearer to it than this, —

"I wish," murmured Claude, — they had gone over all the delicious "And-I-thought-that-you's" and the sweetly reproachful "Did-you-think-that-I's," and had covered the past down to the meeting on the bridge, — "I wish," he murmured, dropping into the old Acadian French, which he had never spoken to her before, — "I wish" —

"What?" she replied, softly and in the same tongue.