

Lyster thought of doing, for he himself felt powerless against the lot of men, who were not harsh or rude in any way, but who simply wanted to know "why"—so many "whys" that he could not answer.

Not less trying to him were the several who persisted in asserting that she had done a commendable thing—that the country ought to feel grateful to her, for the man had made trouble along the Columbia for years. He and his confederates had done ugly work along the border, etc., etc.

"Sorry you asked me, Max?" she said, seeing his face grow gloomy under their cheering (?) assertions.

He did not answer at once, afraid his impatience with her might make itself apparent in his speech.

"No, I'm not sorry," he said, at last; "but I shall be relieved when the others arrive from the lake. Since you utterly refuse to confide even in me, you render me useless as to serving you; and—well—I can't feel flattered that you confide in me no more than in the strangers here."

"I know," she agreed, with a little sigh, "it is hard on you, and it will be harder still if the story of this should ever creep out of the wilderness to the country where you come from—wouldn't it?" and she looked at him very sharply, noting the swift color flush his face, as though she had read his thoughts. "Yes—so it's lucky, Max, that we haven't talked to others about that little conditional promise, isn't it? So it will be easier to forget, and no one need know."

"You mean you think me the sort of fellow to break our engagement just because these fools have mixed you up with this horror?" he asked, angrily. "You've no right to think that of me; neither have you the