

De second growt' I cut myself—tough, tough!"

Something to sell? That wasn't how it sounded.

"Den when you say you come? It's cost you nothing.
Tonaght?

As well tonight as any night.

Beyond an over-warmth of kitchen stove

My welcome differed from no other welcome.

Baptiste knew best why I was where I was.

So long as he would leave enough unsaid,

I shouldn't mind his being overjoyed

(If overjoyed he was) at having got me

Where I must judge if what he knew about an ax

That not everybody else knew was to count

For nothing in the measure of a neighbor.

Hard if, though cast away for life 'mid Yankee,

A Frenchman couldn't get his human rating!

Mrs. Baptiste came in and rocked a chair

That had as many motions as the world:

One back and forward, in and out of shadow,

That got her nowhere; one more gradual,

Sideways, that would have run her on the stove

In time, had she not realized her danger

And caught herself up bodily, chair and all,

And set herself back where she started from.

"She ain't spick too much Henglish—dat's too bad."

I was afraid, in brightening first on me,

Then on Baptiste, as if she understood

What passed between us, she was only feigning.

Baptiste was anxious for her; but no more

Than for himself, so placed he couldn't hope

To keep his bargain of the morning with me

In time to keep me from suspecting him

Of really never having meant to keep it.

Needlessly soon he had his ax-helves out,

A quiverful to choose from, since he wished me