

A COMPLETED SACRIFICE.

situation, so dear to the French heart, operated in her favor. She enjoyed posing as a victim of affliction, and performed the role so modestly and gracefully that she won all hearts. Du Chesne to her would remain a tender, pensive memory, which throughout her life would be capable of affording occupation for an idle hour, comfort for a distressed one, and which would not forbid consolation.

Two years later, the Sieur d'Ordieux, by the death of his uncle, became Duke de Ronceval, and triumphed over his enemies. Though he had entered upon a great inheritance, and become a peer of France, the pompous little man was faithful in his attachments. He did not forget those who had befriended him in the day of adversity; his heart remained true to the woman whom he had loved with all the devotion of which he was capable.

The future of her niece had furnished the consuming anxiety of Madame de Monestrol's existence. If her protector Le Ber should die, what would become of the beautiful portionless girl? If Diane only had a vocation, that would simplify matters; she might become a nun, and a safe retreat would be secured from the perils of the world. But Diane had no vocation, and the Duke de Ronceval's affection offered a solution of the difficulty.

When an advantageous settlement was in question, it was not the custom in those days to consult the bride's taste. The sacrifice of the individual for the good of the race was then—as it still to a large extent