

was in his character—and it was perhaps the only fault that others noticed in him—a rigidity which made him take extreme resolutions, and act up to them with a firmness bordering on obstinacy. From the moment he found that Madame de Moldau had left St. Agathe he determined to suppress in himself, by a strong effort of the will, all feelings more tender or affectionate than those which it was befitting for him to entertain towards a person in her position. He would work for her and watch over her interests more closely than ever. If she should ever call him to her assistance he would obey her summons and never utter a word of complaint; but, except when business made it necessary, he would never pronounce her name or allude to their former intimacy. And accordingly when Father Maret visited him on his sick bed he did not allude to her departure, and abruptly changed the subject whenever he seemed about to speak of her. At the end of the fourth day the fever abated, but it promised to take an intermittent form, and in the intervals his weakness was great.

Antoine watched him most carefully, and when Therese offered to come and nurse him, he somewhat scornfully rejected her proposal. "These women," he said one evening to his master, "are always fancying that nobody can take care of sick people but themselves. And they are often dreadfully in the way. Ministering angels I have heard them called; very troublesome angels they sometimes are. The second evening after Monsieur came home, and when he was so ill, and I wanted to keep the house quiet, there was Madame de Moldau coming at the door and wanting every minute to know..."

D'Auban started up, the blood rushing violently to his face.

"What did you say?" he asked in a voice, the agitation of which made it sound fierce. "Has not Madame de Moldau left St. Agathe?"

"Oh dear, no! She was here this morning to see how Monsieur was, and if we wanted anything. I did not mean to speak unkindly of her, poor lady! She did not make much disturbance after all, and took of her shoes not to make a noise on the boards."

A joy too great, to deep for words, filled the heart which had so much suffered. It was visible on the face, audible in the

voice of the sick man. Antoine noticed the change. He had some vague idea of what was going on in his master's mind. Perhaps his mention of the Lady of St. Agathe had not been quite accidental. He went on brushing a coat with his face averted from him.

"I should not be surprised," he said, "if she were to be here again this afternoon. I told her we had no more lemons, and she said she would bring or send some. As Monsieur is up to-day, perhaps he would like to see Madame, if she comes herself with them?"

"Of course, if . . . if she should wish . . . But I ought to go myself to St. Agathe. I think I could."

"You! oh, that's a good joke! Father Maret charged me not to let you stir out of the house to-day. To-morrow, perhaps, you may take a little walk."

From the window near which he was sitting, in less than an hour, d'Auban saw Madame de Moldau crossing the glade, and approaching his house. It was a moment of unspeakable happiness. She was still all she had ever been to him. She had not spurned his offers, or sought other protection than his. This was enough. He did not at that moment care for any thing else. Their eyes met as she passed under the window, and in another moment she was in the room.

"Sit down, dear Monsieur d'Auban," were her first words, as he rose to greet her. "Sit down, or I shall go away."

"No! don't go away," he said, sinking back into the arm chair, for he had not strength enough to stand. "For some days I thought you were gone—gone for ever!"

"Did you? O why?"

He drew her silk handkerchief from his bosom. "I found this in a hut a hundred miles off, where the people you were to have travelled with slept a few nights ago. And there was a lady with them besides Madame Latour. . . ."

"O, Monsieur d'Auban, how grieved I am about that handkerchief. It must, indeed, have misled you. What a strange coincidence that you should have found it! I gave it to Mademoiselle La Marche; she was the second lady of the party. They all stopped here for a day. Had it been a fortnight ago I should now have been with them."

"What made me so miserable was the