

it sparkled the ring, which Father Clement had often seen upon the finger of Aimée La Voison, and knew to have been given as the pledge of De Bourgainville's love.

His doubts were ended, and he stood waiting, on-ly, till she should rise from her devotions, to address her. She had nearly finished them,—and as, in the fervour of her soul, the last words of her petition burst audibly from her lips: “Holy Father, thou canst save him! Blessed Virgin, intercede for me, and snatch him from the tomb which opens to receive him!” She rose, and throwing back her veil, turned upon the priest a face, which, even in sorrow and in tears, was radiant with almost seraphic beauty. She had believed herself alone with her God; but at the sight of Father Clement she started, and a livid paleness overspread her features. But instantly the blood rushed back with overwhelming force,—she beheld him who had been a father to herself, and to De Bourgainville,—she marked the tender compassion of his air, the pitying kindness of his eyes—and, bursting into a passion of hysteric sobs, she sank again powerless upon the steps of the altar. The kind heart of Father Clement bled for the anguish that he witnessed, and hastily approaching the object of his sympathy, he strove gently to raise her from the ground.

“Daughter,” he said, “thou hast cast thyself at the mercy-seat of God, and there poured out thy soul in humble prayer and supplication, uttering the language of a meek and contrite spirit. Beware, now, lest thou pollute this hallowed spot with the tears of earthly passion.”

“Father, reproach me not,” exclaimed the unhappy girl, in accents broken by her sobs; “even God permits my tears; it is he who has afflicted me, and thinkest thou he will break, with his anger, the feeble reed which his hand has bruised?”

“His goodness is abundant, my daughter, and it is therefore I would have thee feel, if he has chastened thee, it has been done in mercy. Thou hast despised the privileges which he offered thee; thou hast forsaken the Christian community where thy dying mother placed thee, and hast chosen to thyself an idol, whom God has doubtless smitten to remind thee of thy dependence and mortality.”

“Father, God formed my heart for tender affections; wherefore, then, should he chastise me, because I have indulged the innocent emotions which he implanted in my nature?”

“We cannot fathom his designs, my child; but perhaps thou hast indulged these emotions to excess, and, in the pleasures of an earthly love, forgotten the higher and holier object of thy worship.”

“Never, father, have I been thus ungrateful to the Author of my being. To him, each morning, I have offered the earliest incense of praise; my latest prayer, at night, has arisen to him; and he

has mingled with all my hopes and dreams of future happiness.”

“And yet, my daughter, thou didst voluntarily forsake the place where he is worshipped, with all the rites and ceremonies of our most holy faith; thou didst desert the altars where his image stands, renounce the offices and deeds of mercy, which, as a member of this blessed house, it was thy duty to perform, and hide thee in those wild and savage haunts, where never temple rose to the Most High, nor holy chant of Christian tongue awoke the echoes of the heathen solitude.”

“Father, his temple is the universe; why, then, should his service be confined to the narrow space enclosed by mortal hands? Thinkest thou the humble offering of a contrite heart will not rise with equal acceptance to the throne of God, from the midst of his own matchless works, as from gorgeous altars, surrounded by adoring crowds?”

“My daughter,” said the monk, with somewhat of sternness in his accent, “who has taught thee to believe that our religion is encumbered with vain pomps and idle ceremonies? Hast thou held communion with those heretics, who have come to invade our colony, to profane our temples, to overturn our faith, that thou speakest thus lightly of the venerable worship which thy fathers have instituted, and thy God has condescended to accept?”

“Forgive me, father, if I have spoken with seeming irreverence of what I hold most sacred. I meant but to say that God is not confined to temples made with hands, and that, in my own sweet island-home, I have knelt and worshipped him with as pure and holy fervour as ever warmed my heart before this blessed altar, and in the presence of these consecrated objects.”

Father Clement gazed upon her for a moment in silence, then said, in tones of sorrow rather than of anger, “It is then true, my daughter, that thou hast been dwelling in that lonely isle! Thou hast tempted the fury of those frightful rapids, and preferred their hideous discord to the sublime peals of the organ, and the chant of those holy nuns, who have nurtured thee in their own bosoms, as a daughter.”

“And I render to them, father, a daughter's love, and more than a daughter's gratitude; but my mother was a denizen of the woods, and with her milk I imbibed a love of freedom and of nature, which are inwrought with my very being. My ear is never wearied by the music of those restless rapids, of which thou speakest with so much horror,—my devotion kindles when I gaze upon the ample arch of heaven at noon-day, or at night, when glorious with its host of stars, and my eye dwells with unsated pleasure on the boundless landscape, with all its rich variety of garniture.”

“My daughter, this is the romantic enthusiasm of early youth—time and the sorrows of earth will