

"How much men know!" she said, with a long sigh of admiration.

The sun was dropping down behind the distant mountains, pine- and fir-clad. She had never looked upon so grand a scene and was filled with a tremulous sort of awe. Up there the St. Charles river, here the majestic St. Lawrence, islands, coves, green points running out in the water where the reedy grass waved to and fro, tangles of vines and wild flowers. And here at their feet the settlement that had just sprung into existence.

"You must be fatigued," he said suddenly. "Pardon my forgetfulness. I have been so interested myself."

"Yes, I am a little tired. It has been such a strange afternoon. And that poor little girl, Monsieur—does that woman care well for her? She has the coarseness of a peasant, and the child not being her own——"

"Oh, I think she is fairly good to her. We do not expect all the graces here in the wilderness. But I could wish——"

Madame Giffard stumbled at that moment and might have gone over a ledge of rock, and there were many there, but he caught her in strong arms.

"How clumsy!" she cried. "No, I am not hurt, thanks to you. I was looking over at that woman with something on her back that resembles a child."

"Yes, a papoose. That is their way of carrying them."

"Poor mother! She must get very weary."