

"this is Eusena's friend, and she shall be mine also; her smile is like sunshine upon the troubled waters, and touches my heart—I will not leave her."

"But will you not accept me as another friend," returned the enchanted Bouverie, taking her small hand in his, and pressing it.

"I am the truest for one so young and beautiful," said Constance, in a more serious tone than usual; "Aulida has chosen me as her guardian, and such I shall prove to her," and she drew her towards herself as she spoke.

"I humbly yield before your sovereign sway," returned Bouverie, in mock reverence, and turning lightly on his heel, adding in an under tone, "I shall exert my own at a more fitting time."

"He is not angry, I hope," enquired Aulida, looking anxiously after him; "I should be sorry to offend him."

"No, dear Aulida, he is not angry," replied Madame Montresor; "come let us stroll down this charming pathway."

As she spoke she led the way down a sloping bank, overshadowed by lofty pines and cedars, to a little romantic dell, where the rushing sound of a beautiful fall of water enhanced the pleasures of the scene, as it rose in a white feathery foam, and sparkled in the rays of the sun with dazzling brightness. She sat down upon a grassy bank near a picturesque mill, while Aulida and her sister placed themselves at her feet.

"Have you any parents," she continued, "and where do they live?"

"We have a good and kind mother, but she has known much trouble," replied Eusena sorrowfully; "she lost our father two years ago. He was killed while out hunting the moose deer in the forest, by a stroke of lightning—we live together in yonder cottage, and we try to make her happy."

"And you attend your Church regularly, and perform your religious duties, I trust, faithfully?"

"Yes, lady, and our good priest comes often amongst us," returned Aulida; "I strive to please the Great Spirit, and kneel to him in prayer when the golden sun sinks behind the mountains, and when he rises again over the forest trees at early dawn. We were both confirmed a few weeks ago, and Father Clement says we are to receive the communion in another month."

There was a simplicity in the words and manner of the young Indian, which forcibly struck Madame Montresor, who gazed on the beautiful creature with increasing interest.

"You must come with your sister to see me sometimes at Quebec," she said, after a brief pause; "you often go there, I presume."

"Oh yes, often," replied Eusena; "we carry our bark work thither to sell, and parties are sometimes formed to visit the frigates, when we dance, and are treated by the officers."

"And have you ever joined these, Aulida?" asked Madame Montresor in an earnest tone, and laying her hand on the head of the young Indian.

"No lady, never," replied Aulida; "our mother would not spare me."

"She is wise," murmured Constance, who would have said more, only they were now joined by Monsieur Montresor, Bouverie, and a few others of the party.

Constance rose, and drawing her husband aside, conversed with him in low tones, while her eyes were occasionally directed towards Aulida, who had also risen as Bouverie drew near her, saying:

"Yours is a very small heart, I fear—you can only find room in it for one or two."

"Ah, say not so," replied Aulida, raising her soft dark eyes to his; "all good beings I love—I never knew a wicked one, though Father Clement tells me there are many."

"How old are you, sweet Aulida," enquired Bouverie, intently watching her varying and lovely countenance.

"Fifteen years have passed from the earth since I was born," replied Aulida.

"And have you always lived at Lorette?"

"I remember no other spot—every tree, every shrub is familiar to me, and brings happy recollections of my childhood."

"And how do you chiefly employ your time?"

"I work the moccasins and ornaments of bark, and cultivate my little garden. Our days fly swiftly, I often see the long shadows, when I have scarcely thought it noon."

"You are then very happy?"

"Oh, very, very happy—sometimes our mother is sad, but when we tell her that our father is gone to the good Spirit, in yonder beautiful skies, and that we shall all follow him if we pray to God, then is she comforted."

Bouverie became each moment more fascinated by the engaging artlessness of the sweet girl—she was so completely unlike any thing that he had ever met before—that while her beauty fired his imagination, her innocence kept his levity in complete check. It would have appeared profanation to breathe a word of folly into the ears of one so pure and guileless. While thoughts like these passed rapidly through his mind, her eyes fell beneath his fixed and earnest gaze, and she seemed to stand before him as a reproving angel, in whose presence he dared not err. Such self command, however, belonged not to his nature—in a little time after he said:

"And has your young heart never responded to a more tender passion, Aulida? Have you shared it with none save your mother, your sister, and your priest?"

Aulida paused ere she replied to him, for she scarcely understood his words—then, with a smile the most ingenuous, she said: