

"Oh, indeed!" he held out his hand for it, and was about to break the seal, but looking up, said, "Mina, run and fetch somebody to hold the horse. You look very tired, Ferial; you have ridden hard, and we know through what sort of country. Madame," he said, turning to his wife, "will you give orders that refreshments may be set before M. Ferial."

The servants were all at work out of doors, so Mina held the horse, and coaxed him to eat some bits of cake out of her hand, and Madame d'Auban went herself to the kitchen to prepare food for the stranger.

D'Auban sat down at the table, and was soon absorbed in the contents of M. Perrier's letter. As soon as he had finished the first sheet he handed it to Father Maret, and so on with the others. When both had read the whole despatch, the Father said:

"Your provisions are realized, sooner than we expected."

"Ay," said d'Auban, "I had long feared something of the kind; but how different it is only to anticipate such a calamity, and to have it actually present before one, almost at one's own doors!"

"What will you do?"

"I must go as soon as possible. I don't see how it can be averted. I consider every Frenchman is bound to obey the Governor at this moment as if he were commanding officer."

"And your wife and child?"

"I should like at once to take them to New Orleans, where they would be in safety, and then place myself at M. Perrier's disposal."

"I suppose that would be the best; not but that they would be safe here, I think. We could trust our Indians."

"Oh! for that matter, I believe every one of them would shed his blood for the mother and the child; but my wife could not endure, I am sure, to be left behind, especially as you, too, are going away. No; we must set off as soon as we can, and must break it to her at once."

"You have no fears for the journey?"

"Not any immediate fears. As I was saying an hour ago, I have long felt that we are living on a volcano. You notice the day fixed for the general insurrection is still some weeks distant, the 15th of January, according to our calendar. I suspect that up to that moment we shall find

the Indians more than commonly friendly. But for the future of the colony! God help all those engaged in the struggle. I fear it will be a terrible one! Ah!" he said, leaning his head on his hands, "our honeymoon is over! It has lasted nearly ten years. We ought not to repine. It is not often given to man to enjoy ten years of almost uninterrupted happiness. Here she comes! How will she bear to leave St. Agathe! And poor little Mina—what will she feel? Well, well, it must be gone through."

"I will leave you" Father Maret said, as he moved towards the door. "You had better be alone to talk over this matter with your wife! and I have much to do at home. But when your plans are settled, let me know, and on what day you will start."

As he was walking away, Madame d'Auban called him back. He waved his hand with a kind smile, but went on; and her husband said:

"He is anxious to get home, dearest; and I want to talk to you."

"What is the matter, Henri? What does M. Perrier say? Oh! I am sure there is something amiss; I see it in your face. For God's sake, what is it? Nothing that will separate us? I can bear anything but that."

"Not now, not at present, if you will come with me to New Orleans, where I must go at once. M. Perrier has received information that a general rising of the Indian tribes will take place on the 15th of December—that they have planned a general massacre of the French. If the Governor had not received timely notice of this conspiracy, the whole colony must have perished. Now there will be time to avert the danger. He wishes me to come to him as soon as possible. He says my long intimate knowledge of the Indians will be of great service at this moment, when the lives of Frenchmen and the fate of the colony hang on a thread. Now, dearest wife, what do you think we should do? For the present we run no danger in remaining here. So many of the Illinois are Christians, that there is no danger of their rising against us."

Madame d'Auban did not answer at once. She walked onwards a few steps into the garden, which had grown beautiful under her care. She looked at the majestic river, the pine forest, the grove