

and trouble of the last few days gathered themselves into a haunting fear. The windows of the recluse's room, overlooking the garden, stood wide open to the summer breeze. Was it the moonlight or the play of her own fancy, or did a slight form, dreamily indistinct in the prevailing obscurity, appear there? An overwhelming impulse moved Diane. She could no longer stifle the cry of her anguish. Sinking on her knees, stretching out passionate, imploring hands, her voice, clear and piercing, echoed through the stillness: "Have you no feeling, far away there, for our trouble? Even in heaven itself it seems as though one's heart must be touched by love and grief and pain. You have sacrificed yourself for the country, can't you help us in our extremity? Du Chêne may be grievously wounded, he may be lying still in death. Have you ceased to hear? to feel? Does no woman's heart beat in your breast?" Did a white face, with deep, sunken, haggard eyes look wildly down upon her. It seemed to the excited girl driven wild by her own fancy as much as by stress of circumstances that her cry fell upon a passionless, unseen world that returned no answer to her longing. A strange, dead despair settled down on her.

"It's all alike, St. Joseph and the saints, you are all dead, or deaf, or dumb, but we others are only flesh, and our hearts throb, and bleed and burn. Du Chêne is nothing to me, he did not even guess that I cared for him. The shame of it stung me to death and drove me frantic. I merit suffering, I who dealt it out to others, but why should he pay the penalty for my fault? I have been pitiless, the good God may well be pitiless to me. If I could only tell the Chevalier that I repent—I never thought my coquetry meant suffering." Diane recalled her misdeeds in a voice of anguish. "And Pierre, too, he would have been happy enough with his prayers and his painting had I but let him alone. He said I did not know the meaning of love—I have learned too late. With all your prayers, and vigils, and mortifications you will not help us, and I—I would rather be wicked and aid and suffer with those I love—" Then a new thought struck her. "There is the mountain cross of M. de Maisonneuve; it is said great graces have been obtained there."

"Lydia, Lydia, awaken. We will go to pray at the cross of M. de Maisonneuve."

The English girl lay sleeping with her hand upon her cheek, like a baby. It was hard to realize that she was slumbering on the brink of terror and desolation. The perfect repose of her position was so oddly childish and restful. Diane's face grew sweet and womanly as she knelt beside the couch. Lydia started up with a faint cry, rubbing her eyes and her soft flushed cheeks.

"Diane, why have you awakened me?" sitting up and staring at the Demoiselle de Monestrol as if she were not sufficiently wide awake to realize what the scene meant. Then she flung herself downwards on the pillows and broke into violent sobbing.

"Something has happened, news has come, evil tidings."

"No; no news has come. Lydia, rise and dress. We will go to the mountain cross to pray for Du Chêne."

"But it is still dark night, still and lonely—the savages—I dare not."

"The greater the merit of the pilgrimage; it may help us to obtain grace."

Action was a relief from pain, and Diane was bestirring herself vigorously. Finding herself being dressed against her will, Lydia ceased to resist. Indeed, this pale girl with a troubled restlessness in her anxious eyes, a pathetic droop of the red lips, bore so little resemblance to vivid, brilliant Diane that Lydia was thoroughly frightened.

Soon the two girls, like shadows moving amidst shadows, were traversing the deserted streets. The chant of the St. Lawrence filled the air, the river trembled with violet tints and glancing, pearly shafts, and anon a silvery gleam. Presently they crossed a swift flowing stream and emerged into the open country. No vagrant echo, not even the stir of a leaf disturbed the stillness. The dew was rich with cool, moist fragrance. The moon-

beams piercing through the interlacing branches threw chequered shadows on the path and anon amidst vistas of leafy shade they caught fleeting glimpses of the illuminated world beyond. The scene was incredibly solitary and mournful as the two girls crept under the flickering shadow of the trees. The path was simply an Indian trail. Vegetation was dense, tangled with vines, sombre with gloomy foliage, through which the white light, a lustrous presence, strove to penetrate. Lydia's terror rendered her helpless and hysterical. All Diane's faculties were absorbed in a bewildering, sombre excitement as, with the English captive sobbing, panting, clinging to her arm, she made her way through the thicket. Once the long, dewy trail of a creeper smote her lightly in the face, a soft rustle among the leaves caused the heart to leap in her breast, the long drawn cry of a bird in melancholy cadence broke the stillness. Gleaming white amidst dark, glossy foliage, arose on Mount Royal the cross erected by Maisonneuve in a vow to God for the conversion of the savages. Lydia, overcome by fatigue, the night air, the secrecy and agitation of the expedition, sank down against a boulder. The wooded gray slope towered immutably above them, the wind was harping in the pines. The moon had dropped below the horizon, familiar objects acquired strangely grotesque forms in the uncertain light, a single luminous star palpitated in splendid ecstasy. Diane knelt at the foot of the cross. Then her hands clenched and her whole frame began to shake.

"It's for Du Chêne, for his life we pray. He is so young, he might be so happy. Holy Virgin Mother, who knowest the secrets of all love and suffering, I ask nothing for myself, let me suffer but spare him." The clear, young voice profaned the solemn hush of Nature; the mellow, contralto tones had risen to a husky shrillness, in which there was a note of presaging horror. "They are too holy, the saints, they set themselves against us—oh, how can they look sadly on our pain? God in Heaven, have mercy! or, is he too high and great to care for our poor, miserable suffering! I will sacrifice myself, my life, what does it matter? If he returns I will enter the Congregation as a novice, only spare him, spare him, oh God!" Then such a paroxysm of suffocating sobbing came upon her that she writhed and battled for air; then, worn out with wild, heart-broken weeping, she lay at the foot of the cross, exhausted and motionless.

As the girls returned, the first rays of the summer dawn were breaking in the east in flushes of sea-shell pink and saffron, overhead the sky held quivering lights ready to flash into a blaze. A sense of spiritual freshness, of physical renewal, was in the cool blueness of the morning, the fragrance of the dew was in the atmosphere. The mountain slopes lay motionless in amethystine shadow. The trees gave out a sense of strength, the golden rod gleamed in the hollows, the heights were purple bronze. As they reached the city, Diane turned to her companion a face that glowed with some subtle inspiration.

"Be assured Du Chêne is safe. God is good. Oh, behold! a messenger has arrived for M. du Plessis, sent by M. de Callières. Is there news of M. de Valrenne's command?"

"Oshawa has been sent to say that they have caught sight of the enemy. M. de Callière lies ill at La Prairie. M. de Valrenne is stationed between Chambly and La Prairie." Le Ber showed no other token of weakness but a momentary trembling of the lips about the mouth.

"Oh, my uncle, even to-night they may be with us victorious."

Le Ber smiled. It would never do to admit possibility of disaster.

"The sky may brighten for the colony, my daughter. I have ever remarked that good and ill luck runs in courses. Our good fortune may now commence."

A number of women who had been passing the night in prayer, were now emerging from the Church of Notre Dame. Among them, erect and stately, walked Madame de Monestrol leaning on Nanon's arm, followed by Madame de St. Rochs with her baby in her arms. Pierre, thin and sal-low, unsupported by that sweet sense of well-doing

which is generally supposed to be the reward of virtue, pushed his way through the assembly to the spot where the Demoiselle de Monestrol stood a little apart.

"Diane, I have here for you a picture of Our Lady of Pity surrounded by the five wounds of her son. I have held a novena in honour of St. Joseph and all the holy saints. For nine days a member especially dedicated to the holy angels, have I prayed, and no light has dispersed the darkness of my soul. Dazzling visions, the creation of the Father of Evil, ever appear before my eyes. Instead of the angelic faces that once beamed upon me, it is thine I see, glorified by the crown of martyrdom."

Diane, looking at him with wistful eyes, showed a novel patience.

"Dear Pierre, we are all sorely tried by anxiety and suspense. Forget your own temptations, my cousin, in thoughts of others. Could you not support my uncle? On every hand are those who need your ministrations."

As the girl's soft hand touched him Pierre shivered.

"I stand alone. My father is absorbed in worldly interests, your heart is engrossed by vanity." Pierre felt it unreasonable and monstrous that anything but the painful state of his own concerns should occupy Diane's mind. "What are the trivial affairs of this life, privation, danger, and even death, in comparison with the perils that menace the soul."

CHAPTER XIV.

"Let not the waters close above my head,
Uphold me that I sink not in this mire,
For flesh and blood are frail and sore afraid,
And young I am, unsatisfied and young,
With memories, hopes, with cravings all unfed,
My song half sung, its sweetest notes unsung,
All plans cut short, all possibilities."
—C. ROSETTI.

The next day a terrible storm broke over Ville Marie. Great trees groaned and shrieked and were shivered like saplings in the blast; the wind raved, the whole heavens were illuminated by the swift, electric flashes. Nature, in her convulsive throes, smote the stoutest heart with terror. Late in the afternoon the tempest ceased. The sun set fair and beautiful with rays of purple and gold, the clouds, black with the recoil of tempest, breaking into rifts, floated and drifted, trailing gorgeous with colour in vivid, numberless hues. The flaming light reached up into the calm zenith, the St. Lawrence gleamed like burnished gold as the sky turned into a heavenly vision of wider, diviner beauty.

Diane joined Le Ber as she walked down to the shore. His lace was gray with consuming care, his eyes had a famished expression. The Demoiselle de Monestrol slipped her hand within his arm and moved on, step by step, at his side, offering a mute, responsive sympathy that was grateful to her soul.

"We shall have news to-day, my daughter. Behold M. du Plessis on the shore!"

Restless expectation tinged everybody's thoughts. These were exciting moments of intense anxiety to the French commander; no one understood better than he the reality of the danger that threatened the settlement. His brow was puckered with care and he assumed that indescribable air of endeavouring to seem at ease which has so painful an effect upon the nerves of others who are suffering from the same strain of suspense.

As she looked out upon the shining waters of the river a strange perception, such as is occasionally, at some supreme crisis, borne in upon the souls of those who walk in a sweet and gracious reality before the sight of God, came to Diane de Monestrol, as though the world had broken into fragments and lay crumbling at her feet.

(To be continued.)

IN SCOTLAND, on the ordination of elders, a grave old doctor delivered the charge:—"Me brethren, rule weel, but rule sae that nae man or bairn i' the kirk will ken that they are ruled. Me brethren, pray God to give you common sense. It is a chief grace to an elder."