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THE FORT OF ST. JOHN'S.*

A TALE OF THE NEW WORLD.

BY H. V. C.

CHAPTER VII.

"Love's smiles are ever mixed with tears,

We meet, then come the parting fears."

DAY after day passed away, and Arthur Stanhope still lingered at St. John's, and each returning day he found it more difficult to break away from the charm which bound him there. A satisfactory éclaircissement had taken place between himself and Lucie, and an avowal of his long cherished hopes and attachment, drew from her a blushing confession that his affection was returned with equal sincerity and constancy. He however yielded with much reluctance to Lucie's earnest desire, that he should not at present ask her guardian's sanction to their union; for she had reason to believe that it would not be granted, and that his displeasure would throw a gloomy shade over the few days which they had yet to enjoy, before Stanhope's departure.

It had long been a favorite object with M. La Tour, to unite his nephew in marriage with Miss De Conroy, and De Valette's rank and expectations would have rendered the alliance equal, and in many respects advantageous. Madame La Tour also entered warmly into his views, from a true interest in her young relatives, and a sincere belief that it would promote their mutual happiness and worldly prosperity. She had no suspicion of the selfish policy which, in that as in most other instances, marked her husband's designing character; and which rendered him so intent on the fulfilment of the marriage, that Lucie dreaded to arouse his stormy opposition by appearing in open defiance to his will, before it was absolutely necessary to declare her choice. Lucie had,

however, invariably discouraged De Valette's addresses, though he affected to regard her coldness as mere girlish caprice or coquetry. Apart from her indifference to him, and her religious scruples, the remembrance of Arthur Stanhope had never been effaced from her mind; and, romantic as that attachment seemed, when time and distance separated them, it lingered in her heart, through every change of scene, and brightened the darkest shades of doubt and difficulty and disappointment. Her firmness of mind and principle had enabled her to resist the wishes of her aunt, and the remonstrances of La Tour; and she believed that De Valette had too much pride and generosity to accept a hand which was forced upon him with an unwilling heart, when fully convinced that such were her feelings toward him. Lucie would gladly have consulted her aunt, on so important a subject, but she feared her confidence might expose her to La Tour's displeasure, if he chanced to suspect it.

Stanhope well knew that Lucie could not legally contract a marriage, during her minority, without her guardian's consent; but a few months would obviate this difficulty, and he was therefore reluctantly obliged to remain satisfied with her injunction of secrecy for the present; but the interdiction was relieved by a promise, given with the fervour of heartfelt truth and sincerity, that no earthly power or circumstance should withhold her hand from him, when he came to claim it, early in the ensuing spring.

La Tour, in the mean time, was likely to find ample employment for his time and thoughts, in continued hostility of M. d'Aulney. Disappointed

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