

# THE LITERARY GARLAND,

AND

British North American Magazine.

VOL. VIII.

MAY, 1850.

No. 6.

## THE AFFIANCED.

A CANADIAN TALE.

Wo! wo! that aught so gentle and so young,  
Should thus be called to stand in the tempest's path,  
And bear the token and the hue of death,  
On a bright soul so soon!

MRS. HEMANS.

Amidst the tumults and alarms which during the unhappy years of 1837-8, disturbed the peace and prosperity of Canada, there occurred in private life many touching incidents, which could not fail to awaken the sympathy of every feeling heart, and wring from it, whatever were its political opinions and prepossessions, the sincere tributes of admiration, pity and regret. Among those which have come to our knowledge, there is none more replete with thrilling and affecting interest than the one we are now about to record.

M. de St. Vallery, was the seigneur of one of those fertile tracts of country which lie upon the banks of the romantic river Richelieu, in the Province of Eastern, or as it was then called, Lower Canada. It was a fief worthy to have been coveted by the proudest of Europe's feudal barons—spreading out its broad acres into fair fields, and sunny slopes, and rich woodlands,—all teeming with the prodigal bounties of the lavish earth, and glowing with a varied beauty scarcely surpassed by the fabled loveliness of Arcadia.

The lord of this beautiful demesne was descended from the noblest blood of France, and though born and educated in Canada, he, like many others of his class, throughout the country, still claimed equality and alliance with the ancient noblesse of his paternal land, and regarded

with almost religious reverence, every memento of his ancestors which bore testimony to his illustrious origin:

This absurd pride of birth was a weak point in the character of M. de St. Vallery; but it was atoned for by many virtues. He was an affectionate father, a true friend, a kind master, and he had been a peaceful subject, till wrought upon by the specious arguments of the discontented, and the whispered suggestions of his own haughty and aspiring spirit, he joined in the outcry against the ruling powers, and took part in the abortive insurrection, the results of which even at this time are to be seen and felt in the Province.

He lived in the midst of his tenantry like an ancient baron of France, equally proud, enjoying the same feudal power, although to a more limited extent, and maintaining as much of the state which belonged to the old regime, as was compatible with the simpler and more primitive habits of the country which, by paternal adoption, he called his own. Early in life he had married the daughter of an Irish officer, who brought him only the dowry of her beauty and her gentleness,—but four years previous to the commencement of our tale she had died, leaving to his care an only daughter, the sole fruit of their union.

Millicent de St. Vallery was now in her seven-