

last, because it was like the one our lord had worn. Had two different visions also passed before Mina's eyes, and had she made a similar choice?

CHAPTER IX.

It had not been easy to induce the Baron de la Croix to give up his favorite idea of a betrothal between Raoul and Mina; but her parents and Madame Armand, to whom Madame d'Auban had confided the grounds of her daughter's refusal, and her own belief that time would overcome her determination to lead a single life, out of fidelity to her promise and affection to her deliverer, found means to persuade M. de la Croix that the engagement must be deferred, and the ring of espousal which he had sent for from Moulins put aside for the present.

D'Auban assured him that, on the whole, it was better the young people should be free till they met again in two or three years, and could better judge of their own feelings.

"But I never heard of feelings in my youth," cried the baron. "The will of my father was the only feeling spoken of when I married Madame de la Croix; and nothing ever answered better than our marriage. But let it be as you wish. Wherever you are in three years' time—whether at the north or south pole—I shall send Raoul to ask for the hand of that pretty little heroine of yours, who, I hope, will not have found out by that time that she has feelings of her own. Feelings, forsooth! do you know, my dear d'Auban, that you have gained some strange ideas in the New World?"

"Or by staying out of the Old one, my dear baron. It is wonderful how absence modifies one's views of certain things. It takes time to tune one's self to the key of European civilization."

"Your daughter finds Raoul agreeable, I hope?"

"Indeed, she does; but truly, my dear friend, she is too much of a child fully to appreciate yet the honor you do her."

"But why is she then so tall? she takes one in."

"Ah! she has seen and felt too much for one so young."

"Ah! feeling again! Feeling and thinking will be the ruin of the present generation."

Raoul was very angry and very unhappy when his mother told him little Mina would not promise to marry him: and he took a long walk by himself, and would not speak to her all the evening. But before she went away, they made friends again, and she rode that last day the dun pony once more, and two or three times he saw her large dark blue eyes filling with tears, as Bertha and Isaure said affectionate things to her. And when he whispered, as he helped her off her horse in the court of the castle, "You are not sorry to part with me, Mina; you care only for my sisters!" she blushed deeply, and said, "I do care for you, Raoul—only—"

"Only what?" he asked, as they both stood by the pony, patting his head.

She did not speak, her heart was so full; she was afraid of crying.

"Only you like a savage better than me. Oh, Mina, I cannot forgive you."

"I never said so," she said, hiding her face in the pony's mane.

"I know all about it," he said, stamping his foot. "I guessed it immediately. I should like to call him out."

"Oh, Raoul!" she said, raising her tearful eyes to his, "who is a savage now?"

"But I cannot bear you to love him better than me."

"There are such different kinds of love. You never saved my life; you never adopted me; you are not alone in the world; you have every thing to make you happy, and he has nothing."

"If he has your love, Mina, he has every thing I care to have. But you say you have a kind of love for me. What sort of a love is it?"

"I don't know; I should like to die for him, if it would make him happy."

"But you would like to spend your life with me—to be my wife?"

"No; I will never be anybody's wife."

"I do not believe that, Mina. But will you make me a promise? Will you promise not to marry anybody else, till I come in three years to see you in the Isle de Bourdon?"

"I don't like to make any more promises," Mina answered sadly. "I do not think promises are good things. One must keep them, you know, Raoul. But I am sure I shall not marry till you come."

This was said with a look which was very like a promise. He felt it as such, and he told his mother so. And after Mina went away, he was always thinking of these words, and of her look when they were said. And he often patted the dun pony, and fed it out of his hand; and his sisters smiled when they saw how fond he was of it; and Isaure peeped into his room, one day, and saw on his table the book of old romances he used to read to them in the library, and the life of Father Claver, which Mina had forgot in hers. She was very sorry when she missed it. It was the book *Ontara* and she were to finish reading when they met again, and she had left it behind at the chateau. Had she left any thing else behind? Not that she knew of, but her mother sometimes thought so.

Some months elapsed, and a ship was nearing the Isle de Bourdon. The passengers were standing on deck watching the coast becoming every moment more distinct. The vessel had had a long and wearisome passage. For three weeks it had been becalmed. But now the shores of the fair Island, its verdant undulating hills with their grand background of mountains, rose before their eyes, as they went on deck at sunrise. St. Andre and St. Suzanne, and the bright little river of St. Jean, and St. Denys, the town where they were to land, were successively all pointed out to them. As they drew nearer they discerned the negroes at work in the fields, and the planters' houses, and the people almost all dressed in white, and wearing straw hats.

"Oh, mamma!" Mina exclaimed, "there is a concession, and a pretty habitation! And, oh, look at those palm-trees, and at those