

heard charming voices saying to him—'Ingrate, where art thou going?' His heart sank and his eyes filled with tears; but his destiny urged him on. He plunged into the forest through which he must pass in order to reach the village.

In a few brief minutes, at the same place where he had met her a year previously, on the same day, at the same hour, Maurice perceived Madeleine seated and in reverie. Just as in the past year, the orphan had not heard the noise of the gallop upon the moss; raising her eyes, she saw her cousin looking at her. It was the same frame and the same picture. Nothing was changed; but in the place of a scarcely-developed, slender and sickly child, without beauty and grace, there was a white figure around which was commencing to hover the golden host of sweet dreams of youth. It was not yet the full-blown flower; but the bud had half-opened its envelope. It was not the full daybreak, but the incipient dawn, when Nature, near to waking, trembles into life under the first kisses of the morning. Maurice sprang from his horse. He hastened to embrace his cousin and to bid her adieu; then, regaining his saddle, he pursued his way, never suspecting, alas! that he was leaving happiness behind him.

After he had disappeared at a turn in the path, Madeleine turned towards the chateau. When she entered the *salon*, the chevalier was seated at the corner of his deserted fireplace. She went and leaned her elbows sorrowfully upon the back of the fauteuil in which the old man sat in a dejected attitude, and remained some moments contemplating him in silence.

'My father,' said she, finally bending her blonde head towards him, 'my father, there is left you a daughter.'

The chevalier smiled and drew her softly to his heart.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FORTUNES OF LOVE.

After the departure of Maurice, Madeleine became all the joy of Valtravers. It was she who enlivened with evergrowing grace the roof that the presence of this young man no longer animated. She was seen like a young Antigone, redoubling, around her old uncle, her pious and touching cares; although with a sadder heart and a more reflective mind than usually belonged to her age, she understood how, in amusing him, to forget herself, and transform her natural gravity into smiling serenity. She accompanied him on all his excursions, loitered around him

when he worked in his workshop, read his papers aloud, did not oblige him to repeat again the stories of emigration, and especially never failed to go into ecstasies before all the pieces of carving with which this indefatigable artist loaded every corner and recess of the chateau. At the same time, she was the loved daughter—and very truly lovable—of the marquise, who instructed her in painting, and was overjoyed to develop all the sweetness that God had implanted within her. In this manner between, these old people, the child increased in talents and amiable virtues. Three years after her arrival Madeleine was a good and beautiful creature, not, it is true, of that accomplished and conventional standard of beauty to which seem irrevocably consecrated all the heroines escaped from the brains of romancers and poets. Neither tall nor short, her form was not absolutely as pliant as a reed. A critic, enamoured with the plastic side of Art, would indeed have found something to object to in the oval of her face. Her hair, of an indecisive brown, would not perhaps have perfectly satisfied the highest ideal in the world, having neither the black of ebony nor the golden glister of the silky corn. If her skin had that dull whiteness of the camellia that defies the efforts of sun and air, her eyes were not of a very pure or very bright azure. If her teeth, ranged like the pearls of a necklace, had the limpid light of mother-of-pearl, her mouth was a little too large, the lips were a little too full; lastly, the eyelashes in drooping fell not upon the cheek like the fringes of a gonfalon; and, to speak the truth, the line of the nose only recalled vaguely the royal nose of princely races. As it was, however, her features and entire person formed a *suave ensemble*, in which the imperfections of detail united and harmonized so well that each of them appeared to be an increased seduction and charm. I prefer these beauties less correct than sympathetic, in which the heart is captivated before the eye; and which, without possessing anything that dazzles or fascinates at the first view, are ever prepared to awaken, in those who understand them, some unforeseen grace and new enchantment. Although occupied with domestic administration, and charged with watching over the good order of the house, the precocious wisdom and reason that she possessed did not exclude from the mind of Madeleine either refinement, poetry, or even a certain romantic and dreamy turn of mind that she had received alike from her mother, from Germany and from God. She was, on the whole, a pleasant girl to see, in all the bloom of youth and health, of rich and expansive

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