

to exert her skill to unravel the web she had so carefully woven, and to recall him from the banishment into which her artifices had driven him. Of Narcisse's disappointment she thought not. Happily for the latter, his characteristic versatility had saved him from all pain on this account; and when Madame Mailhot sent for him, with the intention of breaking the matter to him, his artless nature anticipated her communication, and rendered it unnecessary, by the confession of his passion for Miss Gower. Although secretly laughing at his folly, she encouraged it, and advised him to persevere in his pursuit of the young lady, while she would calm Marie's disappointed feelings, by uniting her to Toussaint Laberge, providing he would assist her in recalling him to Canada. To this he readily consented, and together they planned the surprise which afterwards succeeded so well. Narcisse went himself to bring back the wanderer, carrying with him Madame's consent to his marriage with her niece, on condition that he obeyed her injunctions of secrecy; she wished to get up a scene, to produce a sensation. It is of little consequence to some that they inflict pain upon others, provided they are themselves amused; and certainly Madame Mailhot had no objection to prolonging Marie's punishment, so long as she could retain her authority over her. Her scheme was well nigh defeated by Mr. Frechette, only the day before the contemplated marriage was to have taken place, he having only that morning learned from one of his neighbours that his son was to be united to Marie the next day. As speedily as possible he hastened to prevent the ceremony, and fortunate was it for Madame's plan, that such was his intention, for so pleased was he to find the report untrue, that he willingly agreed to assist her in her little *equivoque* upon her niece.

Toussaint, in consequence of engagements in business, was unable to leave Vermont until near the time appointed for the marriage, so that poor Marie had no chance to hear of his return, and imagined he had relinquished her entirely; then maidenly pride enabled her to struggle with her grief, and in a great degree to conceal it. Her delight at this denouement may be conceived: to find herself not only restored to the affections of her lover, but actually his wife, filled her with grateful emotions. She forgot her aunt's former severity, and only remembered the kindness she had so recently shewn her, and her full heart overflowed with feelings of thankfulness almost too vivid for utterance. Sweet Marie! few possess in such abundant measure as filled thy soul the lovely Christian attributes of meekness and a forgiving spirit! Mayest thou ever retain them, uninjured by communion with a proud and revengeful world. Thy heart was a deep fountain of kindly impulses, from whence issued no contaminating stream to poison the felicity of others. Whether the merce-

nary Madame Mailhot felt herself entitled to these grateful effusions, or whether she experienced a pang of remorse on hearing them, must remain a secret in her own bosom; but she received them very graciously, and turning to Laberge, who had listened attentively to her explanation, and who, from his knowledge of her character, had supplied in his own mind several deficiencies in her narrative, she kindly said:

"And now Toussaint must accept the congratulations of his new aunt, and allow her to believe that he has forgiven her former opposition to his wishes, in consideration of her recent exertions in his favour."

He took her extended hand, and shaking it cordially, assured her that his first wish was to live in harmony with her, as the friend who had sheltered and protected his Marie from her childhood; and he sincerely hoped that an interchange of kindnesses would always continue between relatives so nearly allied.

These speeches being duly made, Laberge then turned to Narcisse, who sat sighing and silent, and gently tapping his shoulder, he said, "Why, Narcisse, my man, are you asleep? Pray wake up, and share our happiness; but for you, my good fellow, I should never have known how much my dear little wife here grieved for my departure, and I am desirous to repay you by shewing you a pretty girl this evening, who will drive all thoughts of Miss Gower out of your head."

"I am very glad you are so happy, Toussaint," sighed the lover; "but I wish to see nothing more beautiful than one I have already seen."

"But you surely do not expect to win her affections?"

Narcisse smiled mysteriously, as he answered:

"Perhaps that is not now to be done; perhaps?"—and he approached his lips to the ear of his friend,—"perhaps they are already won."

"Pshaw, pshaw, my dear fellow! do not raise such 'castles in the air.'"

"If you knew all," interrupted Narcisse, "you would believe what I say."

"Well then, tell me all—tell me your reason for supposing that Miss Gower loves you."

"Because she likes to be near me when I am at work—because she always calls upon me to do any little job in the garden; and because she speaks so kindly to me when I have done; and because she is the sweetest little creature in the world."

A burst of laughter from Madame Mailhot, at this passionate out-break of the love-lorn swain, startled him and checked his ecstasies, but Laberge kindly said:

"Well, Narcisse, let us suppose for one moment that all this is reality, and that the lady likes you; can you imagine that she will marry you? She is of a different creed from you, and her station in life