

out confusion, and every appearance of art was kept successfully in the back-ground, he was willing to sit and listen as he would to a fine actor when reciting the impassioned language of the stage. "This man is a very fine actor," was his first thought, "he knows his part well. It is astonishing, however, that he is willing to remain in such a limited sphere—with such an eye and voice—such flowing language and graceful elocution, he might make his fortune in any city. It is incomprehensible that he is content to linger in obscurity." Thus Villeneuve speculated, till his whole attention became absorbed in the sermon, which as a literary production was exactly suited to his fastidiously refined taste. The language was simple, the sentiments sublime. The preacher did not bring himself down to the capacities of his auditors, he lifted them to his, he elevated them, he spiritualised them. He was deeply read in the mysteries of the human heart, and he knew that however ignorant it might be of the truths of science and the laws of metaphysics, it contained many a divine spark which only required an eliciting touch to kindle. He looked down into the eyes upturned to him in breathless interest, and he read in them the same yearnings after immortality, the same reverence for the Infinite Majesty of the universe, which moved and solemnized his own soul. His manner was in general calm and affectionate, yet there were moments when he swept the chords of human passion with a master's hand, and the hectic flush of his cheek told of the fire burning within.

"He is a scholar, a metaphysician, a philosopher and a gentleman," said Villeneuve to himself, at the close of his discourse, "If he is an actor, he is the best one I ever saw. He is probably an enthusiast, who, if he had lived in ancient days, would have worn the blazing crown of martyrdom, I should like to see his daughter." The low notes of the organ again rose as if in response to his heart's desire. This time there was the accompaniment of a new female voice. The congregation rose as the words of the anthem began. It was a kind of doxology, the chorus terminating with the solemn expression—"for ever and ever." The hand of the organist no longer trembled. It swept over the keys, as if the enthusiasm of an exalted spirit were communicated to every pulse and sinew. The undulating strains rolled and reverberated till the whole house was filled with the waves of harmony. But high and clear and sweet above those waves of harmony and the mingling voices of the choir, rose that single female voice, uttering the "burden of the anthem, "for ever and ever."

Villeneuve closed his eyes. He was oppressed by the novelty of his sensations. Where was he? In a simple village church, listening to the minstrelsy of a simple village maiden, and he had frequented the magnificent cathedral of Notre Dame, been familiar there with the splendid ritual of the national religion, and heard its sublime chantings from the finest choirs in the universe. Why did those few monotonous words so thrill through every nerve of his being? That eternity which he believed was the dream of fanaticism, seemed for a moment an awful reality, as the last notes of the Pæan echoed on his ear.

When the benediction was given and the congregation were leaving the church, he watched impatiently for the foldings of the red curtains to part, and his heart palpitated when he saw a white-robed figure glide through the opening and immediately disappear. The next minute she was seen at the entrance of the church, evidently waiting the approach of her father, who surrounded by his people, pressing on each other to catch a kindly greeting, always found it difficult to make his egress. As she thus stood against a column which supported the entrance, Villeneuve had a most favorable opportunity of scanning her figure, which he did with a practised and scrutinising glance. He was accustomed to Parisian and English beauty, and comparing Grace Blandford to the high-born and high-bred beauties of the old world, she certainly lost in the comparison. She was very simply drest, her eyes were downcast and her features were in complete repose. Still there was a quiet grace about her that pleased him—a blending of perfect simplicity and perfect refinement that was extraordinary. Mr. Blandford paused as he came down the aisle. He had noticed the young and interesting looking stranger, who listened with such devout attention to all the exercises. He had heard, for in a country village such things are rapidly communicated, that there was a traveller at the inn, a foreigner and an invalid—two strong claims to sympathy and kindness. The pallid complexion of the young man was a sufficient indication of the latter, and the air of high breeding which distinguished him was equal to a letter of recommendation in his behalf. The minister accosted him with great benignity, and invited him to accompany him home.

"You are a stranger," said he, "and I understand an invalid. Perhaps you will find the quiet of our household more congenial this day than the bustle of a public dwelling."

Villeneuve bowed his delighted acceptance of this most unexpected invitation. He grasped the