

lovely head, which, perhaps for the last time—and the thought was agonizing—found its resting place upon his bosom, he breathed a heartfelt prayer to the Virgin for her safety, and their reiteration to love and happiness. The silence of several minutes which ensued, was broken by St. Vallery—he had been too intent upon studying the map spread out before him, to heed the low-breathed and broken tones of the lovers; but a sudden thought seemed to strike him, and he said abruptly:

“Léon, I am not superstitious—never, that I recollect, had dream or omen any weight with me before; but now, I confess it, I am haunted by one which seems to me in very truth a supernatural omen. In glancing over this map, the island of St. Helens, here laid down, brought it with fresh force to my mind, though, in fact, ever since its occurrence, the impression has been strangely vivid.* Do you remember, in one of the most severe thunder storms of last summer, how the lightning scathed that majestic elm, upon this island, beneath which the Marquis de Vaudreuil signed the articles which transferred these provinces from the French to the British crown? The giant tree had battled with the elements for centuries; for even at the time of this transaction, it was no longer in its youth, and as I read the circumstance of its destruction at this time, it seems to me a visible token from heaven, that the country, which, by right of discovery, of prior settlement, and of conquest from the aborigines, justly appertained to the French, is about to pass through another revolution, which will restore it to the descendants of its earliest possessors.”

Léon could scarcely repress a smile at the avowal of this idle superstition, from the lips of St. Vallery, and he pitied the delusion of a naturally strong mind, so absorbed by the passion of the moment, as to seize upon all events, and wrest every physical occurrence to the favoring of a darling project.

“I well remember the tree,” he replied, “from childhood it has been an object of my ardent admiration, with its broad majestic arms, its mass of living foliage, and its gigantic trunk, around which, in bygone times, have clustered the nobles of England and France; and beneath whose shade, before the face of the white man was seen by their wondering eyes, the red children of the forest sang their war songs, and smoked the calumet of peace. But the last time I rowed my canoe around the island, I could almost have wept over the stately ruin, as it stood scathed and blackened in the summer air. Yet I cannot say, sir, that I read

in its fate any omen of evil to the present possessors of the soil. It is a common thing to see a tree smitten by lightning—the state of our own minds only, gives mysterious meanings to natural events,—else when the old oak at the head of the Friar’s Walk, was some years since blasted in a like manner, why did you not regard it as an augury of strange and wonderful events?”

“For this reason,” said St. Vallery impatiently, “because it was not a tree connected with the histories of the past,—because the times demanded no supernatural indications,—and because” he added half smiling, “I am not, as I told you, superstitious. Yet let the subject pass, I have my own feeling about it, and you are welcome to yours; but we must settle other matters now. Millicent, my dear,” he said, addressing her, “there is no use in attempting to conceal the state of affairs from you; by to-morrow night, Léon and myself are obliged to be at St. Charles, but short as the time is, I cannot depart till I have placed you in a safer home than this.”

“Dear papa,” she said, “my safety is with you and Léon. I will not—I cannot be separated from you, and if your path leads through danger and death, there shall mine fearlessly go with you.”

“Impossible!” exclaimed St. Vallery; “the beautiful village of St. Charles is converted into a military garrison filled with armed men, in hourly expectation of an assault. It is therefore no place for women, not even for those who have lost the attractions of youth and beauty, which are still yours—and can you, my child, ask to be conducted there?”

“Yes, any where with you and Léon for my safe-guard,” she answered passionately; “plead for me, Léon—plead that we may not be separated—should we part now, we meet no more in this life.”

“Dearest girl, yield not to such a frightful thought,” said Léon tenderly; “but Millicent, you must not go with us,—for your own sake—for mine, cease to urge a wish of which you would assuredly repent.”

“And do you too, Léon, cast me from you?” she asked reproachfully—“you, who have a thousand times sworn never to forsake me; my affianced—to whom I have plighted vows which only the holy sacrament of marriage can render more binding.”

“Ah, if I could ever keep you at my side!” he exclaimed, “but that is impossible. You shall hear from us every day, dear Millicent; but do not persist in accompanying us. To the dangers and discomforts of a beleaguered camp, I cannot

* A fact.