

## CHAPTER III.

"No; their god is mammon, a very hateful idol." To make his meaning clear, he used to show them a piece of gold, and to say that for the sake of that metal many a baptised European imperilled his immortal soul. The Indians of the Mission got into the habit of calling gold the white man's manitou, that is, his domestic idol. It became, therefore, an immense consolation to Father Maret when a Frenchman came into the neighborhood whom he could point out to the native converts as an example of the practical results of true religion. He was wont to say that d'Auban's goodness and Therese's virtues made more converts than his sermons. His own example he, of course, counted for nothing. It was not, then, extraordinary that he should feel anxious about the character of the new inhabitants of St. Agathe, and their probable intimacy with his friend. He had often regretted that one so well fitted for domestic life and social enjoyments should be cut off by circumstances from congenial society. The amount of friendly intercourse which was amply sufficient for his own need of relaxation could not be so for one whose solitary existence was an accident, not a vocation. He might not be conscious of it as yet, but with advancing years the want of a home and of friends was sure to be more keenly felt. Glad, indeed, would he have been to think that his partnership, that these new acquaintances, were likely to fill up his void, and to prove a blessing to his friend. Never was a more fervent prayer breathed for another's weal than that which rose from Father Maret's heart that night for the companion of his solitude. None feel more solicitude for the happiness, or more sympathy with the trials of others, than those who have renounced earthly happiness themselves. There is something in their sympathy akin to a mother's love or a guardian angel's pity.

Therese met the priest as he was turning back towards the village. After saluting him in the Indian fashion, she said, "The eagle spreads his wings over the nest of the white dove. The strong befriends the weak. It is good, my father."

"I hope so," the black robe kindly answered, as he led the way into the church, where the people were assembling for evening prayer.

Forebodings come, we know not how or whence,  
Shadowing a nameless fear upon the soul,  
And stir within our hearts a subtler sense  
Than light may read, or wisdom may control.

M. DE CHAMBELLE, no longer the manager of a plantation, trod the earth with a lighter step, and strolled through the plantations, bowing affably to the negroes and chatting with those of the laborers who spoke French or German. As to d'Auban, he applied himself to the business he had undertaken with his usual energy and intelligence—an additional amount of labor was a boon to him. He had "the frame of adamant and soul of fire," to which work is as necessary as food or air. He was glad also to adopt, with regard to the slaves on the St. Agathe estate, the measures he had so successfully carried out for the benefit of his own laborers. Though he had not yet seen Madame de Moldau, the very thought of a European lady such as Therese had described her, in the house he used to call a folly, seemed to make a difference in his life. At all hours of the day he pictured her to himself, and tried to imagine her existence within those four walls, with no other companion than her garrulous old father, who chattered as if he could keep nothing to himself, and yet never dropped a word that threw light on her sorrow or her story, whatever it was, or give the least clew to their past history.

One evening, as he was passing through the shrubbery, he caught sight of her on the balcony of the pavillon. Her head was thrown back as if to catch the breeze just beginning to rise at the close of a sultry day. He stood riveted to the spot. "She is very beautiful," he said, half aloud, "much more beautiful than I expected." She turned her head and their eyes met, which made him start and instantly draw back. He was distressed at having been surprised gazing at her, but he could not help feeling glad that he had seen her at last. Who was she like? Very like somebody he had seen before, but he could not remember where. "I am sure her face is not a new one to me," he thought. "How intensely blue her eyes are! What a very peculiar-looking person she is! Her dress is different, too, from anything we see here. What was it? A black silk gown, I think, opening in front, and a lace cap fastened on each side