

great barrier between him and Madame de Moldau was removed, and yet was he to give up all idea of marrying her. "Not free!" He repeated those words, over and over again. "Not free, and even if free, never to be his wife." He pondered over the meaning of these words, and formed a thousand different suppositions in connection with them. The mystery was to remain as deep as ever; he had all but promised not to try to discover it. A hard struggle it was, from that day forward, to conceal feelings which were stronger than he was aware of. During the whole of the past year he had looked forward to a time when he might avow them. He had formed projects and built up schemes connected with a vision of domestic happiness. When he used to read aloud to the assembled party at St. Agathe, or when he drove Madame de Moldau in his sledge over the noiseless frozen prairies, or when bringing home the game after a hunting expedition, he was always dreaming of the time when she would be his wife; and as the hue of health returned to her cheek, and elasticity to her step, as her laugh was now and then heard about the house and in the garden; and above all, when she began to attend the Church of the Mission, and to join in all its services, the dream turned into a real hope, the sudden overthrow of which was a bitter trial. Had she given him reason to hope? Had she encouraged him to love her? This is often a difficult question to answer, especially when people have been thrown together under extraordinary circumstances, or when affection may exist to a certain degree unconsciously. He dwelt on that last thought. He could not but think that she cared for him; but then, if she was not free, their relative position was not only a difficult, but also a dangerous one, and perhaps she would be advised to leave St. Agathe, or perhaps he ought to go away himself. This would be scarcely possible, considering how his own and M. de Chambelle's fortunes were embarked in his present undertakings. He felt himself bound, and this was the practical resolution he formed, not to complicate the difficulties which might arise on this point by giving way henceforward to the expression of feelings not warranted by simple friendship. He would not, by word or look, recall to her mind the words he had

hastily spoken, or give her reason to think that he cherished them in his breast—nay, he would try to subdue them. He would work, not seven years only, as the patriarch for his bride, but, if needs be, all his life, without hope or reward. It was a difficult resolution to act up to, but his sense of honor, his feelings of generosity as well as the dictates of conscience, the dread of driving her away from St. Agathe, enabled him to keep it. His strength of character and habits of self-control stood him in good stead. She did not guess how much he was suffering, whilst everything went on as usual in the course of their daily life.

Meanwhile, another conversation had taken place at St. Agathe. M. de Chambelle, a philosopher of the new school of French infidelity, a despiser of creeds, a free thinker, who had taken unbelief on trust as some do their belief; but who, if he worshipped nothing else, worshipped Madame de Moldau—began to feel leanings towards a religion which made her look so much happier. He borrowed a prayer book, went to church and tried to say his prayers; and when he caught the fever, and shivering, weak, and miserable, was laid up for several weeks, Father Maret, like a Jesuit that he was, sat up with him night after night and robbed him of his scepticism. It oozed from him in the silence of those watches whilst he lay suffering in his uneasy bed, and Christian love and fatherly kindness came near for the first time to his aged heart. There was one green spot in that poor withered heart, but it had never been watered by the dew of heaven. Life had never been much more than a ceremony to him till it had become a suffering. He had bowed and smiled and fidgeted through its long course, and was puzzled at finding what a weary thing it had become. But when he recovered from his illness, the feeble wistful face wore a happier look. The timid heart and narrow mind expanded in the sunshine of faith.

A festival day was at hand at the Mission. It was to take place on the 8th of September, and great preparations were making for it both at St. Agathe and at the Concession d'Auban. Wreaths of flowers, large nosegays of roses and magnolias, and heaps of candles made of the pure green wax of the country, had been conveyed across the river on the preced-