

ing young to whatever qualification he was praised for possessing. I used to ask myself with a smile what the French Canadian girls at home would think of a cavalier upwards of thirty years old?

I was then twenty years, my father forty-one, and he with his beautiful expressive brown eyes, finely cut mouth, and suave easy French manners, was to me infinitely more a beau garçon than Colonel Devereux with his studied manners and poor French, which he insisted on speaking to me although my English was as pure as his own.

These were my first impressions of Colonel Devereux, and in a measure they continued with unabated force, although from his assiduous endeavors to please and amuse me, his unremitting attention in all our walks and rides, and even from his weekly journeys up to London bringing my little commissions of colored silk beads and ribbons for my work, all chosen with the most punctilious good taste, I came in a short time to look upon him as one I could hardly do without; he had a fund of anecdote which he poured into my ear as he took the place which he had established for himself beside me at breakfast, lunch or dinner, making me enjoy myself as I could not otherwise have done; he paid me such marked attention, that at last he considered himself entitled to be looked upon as my lover, a thing I had never dreamed of, while not only he entertained this fancy himself, but my aunt and uncle and indeed their visitors were talking of my good fortune in having captivated the rich and handsome Colonel.

My father was expected in the middle of January, I was to visit London with him for a few weeks, and then to return to my own Canadian home, an event which I looked forward to as the consummation of my happiness, my father and my mother, my brothers and a baby sister whom I had never seen, were each in their place the dearest in all the world to me, and if truth must be told, next to them, came two of the nuns with whom I had passed the last five years. The twenty-fourth of December came with green grass and (for England) with clear skies; the day was mild, grey and soft, myself and several of my aunt's visitors were employed searching for gum clove and other winter flowers amid the cultivated plots on the lawn; while thus employed Colonel Devereux came up in his riding costume, a short whip in one hand and a parcel which looked very much like a bouquet of flowers covered with white tissue paper in the other.

"What a handsome man Colonel Devereux is," said one of the young ladies.

"Yes," replied another, "he is to me the handsomest officer in the guards."

He was flushed from exercise, evidently in high good humor, a mood which he did not always indulge in, and I joined heartily in their opinion, keeping to myself, as my aunt had taught me to do, the ideas I had respecting his age.

He came and stood among us chatting gaily, there were other gentlemen present and by and by I found myself standing *à-la-élite* with the Colonel, the others having wheeled off in different directions.

"You told me the other day, Miss D'Auvergne that you had never seen a capercaillie (a Scotch cock of the mountains) there is a magnificent specimen of the cock and his quiet looking brown mate, which has just arrived this morning, as a present to General Rosenham from a friend of his in the Highlands of Scotland, they have been placed in one of the summer houses as a temporary abode. Shall I conduct you to the place? They are well worth seeing."

"Oh! by all means," replied I, "I should so much like to see those birds. We know one or two Scotch families in my native Canada and it will be something to tell them when I go home."

He led the way through a narrow path bordered on each side by a thick holly hedge whose dark green polished leaves and scarlet berries shone bright around us.

We had seen and admired the capercaillie and his mate, given them a bunch of red berries which the Colonel had pulled from a mountain ash close by, and which the poor imprisoned birds ate with avidity, although they would not touch some wheat or barley grain that the forester had placed for them.

We were now on our return home and nearly at the end of the holly-sheltered path, when Colonel Devereux uncovering the parcel he held in his hand, disclosed to my delighted gaze an immense bunch of the most exquisite red and white roses! I was quite taken by surprise, and involuntarily exclaimed:

"The roses of Cashmere."

They were not the delicate, fragile-looking things we see brought from a hot-house, but great thick-leaved, strong, glorious flowers, each petal looking as if made of wax.

I caught myself in the act of holding out my hand to grasp them. He saw and understood the half motion I made and smiled, a little smile, but a pleased and happy one, saying, as he placed them in my hand:

"Are they not beautiful? I rode twenty miles this morning to get them for you. That is the reason I was not by your side at breakfast."

I had missed him from our morning meal, and felt that it was a dull one because he was not there. I took the flowers from his hand. They were an immense bouquet, at least fifteen or eighteen flowers, the deep pink of those red roses surpassing in beauty anything I had ever seen. I thanked him warmly, adding, "It is the most beautiful present I ever received."

"I have a far finer present to give you in the evening," said he, "and one that will last when these flowers have faded, and I shall expect you to give me something in return. You know it is our English fashion to exchange presents on Christmas Eve."

"I know," replied I, "my aunt has told me so; but I am sorry to say" (I felt the warm blood of shame mounting to my face as I spoke) "that I have neglected to provide myself with such."

This was mere thoughtless negligence on my part. My father kept me amply supplied with money, and there were many opportunities by which I might have got anything I was pleased to order from London.

"You have something in your possession I have coveted very much," said he, "almost since the first day we became acquainted. When I present you with my Christmas gift I shall ask you for it. It is far more beautiful in my eyes than those roses, full of beauty and sweetness as they seem to you."

I glanced at once I knew his meaning.

In a half idle, half busy sort of way, I had been engaged since my childhood in England on a pair of white silk slippers embroidered in gold. They were intended for my dear father, and had been begun before I left the convent. I was sure Colonel Devereux would adore those slippers for his Christmas gift. The work was very elaborate, and I had often heard him express his admiration of it, saying more than once he admired it because it was so different from the floss and beads with which other young ladies adorned their fancy work.

"Oh!" said I, "I think I know what you mean, I shall be most happy to grant your request. You have been so kind to me since I came to live with my aunt and uncle that it will afford me great pleasure to give you anything I have which you deem worth your acceptance."

He smiled, a quiet, pleased, yet strangely expressive smile, as if he would try to hide the meaning which his face expressed. I remembered this afterwards; at the time I had a little idea of what his meaning was as if my years had been ten instead of twenty. In our convent life we never hear a word of *beaux* or love, and we go into the world strangely unprepared for such. A girl fresh from convent life should never mix with the world save under the eye of a mother.

We had wandered on towards the house and were now at the hall door and I sought the drawing room that I might show my beautiful roses to Miss Rosenham, determined that during the rest of my residence in England I would rise two hours earlier every morning in order to embroider another pair of slippers for papa, to replace those which I fancied I had just given away. Immediately on my entering the drawing-room my aunt exclaimed:

"Oh! such roses—what beauties—where did you get them? Are they from the greenhouse?"

"No," replied I, "there are only China roses to the greenhouse; and these are great large healthy garden beauties. Colonel Devereux gave them to me; he rode twenty miles this morning to get them."

I placed them in my aunt's hands, saying as I did so, "Take which you like best, and as many as you like."

She smiled significantly as she said "No; I will not take one of them, although I admire them very much. Colonel Devereux has taken a great deal of trouble to give you the pleasure which it is evident these roses afford you, it would be but a poor return were you to distribute them among your friends. Carry them to your own room and place them in water. To-day I will be very busy, every moment of my time occupied; but to-morrow I shall speak to you about Colonel Devereux and your roses."

I stared with unfeigned surprise, wondering what she meant, but made no reply. I was about to leave the room when my aunt called me back, saying:

"Euralie, do you think you would have confidence to sing to-night before our assembled guests that beautiful anthem, 'Christ is born in Bethlehem' with which you so overpowered your uncle and me one evening we were alone, shortly after you came to us?"

"Oh, yes!" replied I; "I have often sung it as a solo at the convent, where we had many visitors from Paris;" and I smiled as I added, "The French are better judges of music than you English are."

"You must not make such remarks as that, Euralie," replied my aunt; "they are almost gauche. A girl of twenty years should know better. I fear you are sadly deficient in many things you ought to know; however, we shall talk about all that to-morrow. Meantime, go up to the schoolroom; the children and their governess are out walking, so you will have opportunity to practise your anthem undisturbed. I mean that you should astonish my guests with it to-night."

I went to my own room, and carefully placing my roses in water, proceeded to the music-room in search of my music portfolio that I might practise the anthem, as my aunt requested.

The music room was an ante-chamber adjoining the drawing-room; and as I entered, before I had time to find the music I sought, I heard my own name pronounced (as Euralie) in an impetuous, angry tone by Colonel Devereux. Astonishment more than curiosity made me stop that I might hear what he said, and to whom he spoke, an indignant flush mantling to my cheek at the liberty he took in using my Christian name while speaking of me. I had only caught the sound of my own name uttered by Colonel Devereux,

but not the sense of the words which he spoke. It was my aunt who replied, and her words were clear enough, standing as I was only a few yards from the speaker, with an open door between us. I could not see my aunt, but I heard every word she said as clearly as if I stood by her side.

"It is possible you may be mistaken, Colonel Devereux; Euralie is as much a child as I to any knowledge she has of the ways of the world as if she had only numbered ten years instead of twenty. She is sincerely attached to her father and mother, and I am very sure they will never consent to her marrying any one who will not make Canada his home. 'God sooth the earth in families' may be truly said of those French Canadians. They cannot endure to be separated from each other, and you see there what you never can in an English home, grandparents, parents and their children, all inhabiting one house and living in the utmost harmony and love. No, Colonel Devereux, I cannot give my countenance to your paying your addresses to my niece until you have first the sanction of her parents. Her father will be here in January. It is proper you should speak to him before saying more than you have already said to Miss D'Auvergne on the subject, and I, as your friend, advise you to give up all thoughts of her, unless you can make up your mind for her sake to live and die a French Canadian."

"As to that," replied Colonel Devereux, "it is simply nonsense. What English gentleman would bury himself in a colony, and in Lower Canada, with its eternal snows, of all other places in the world? Monsieur and Madame D'Auvergne must learn to part from their daughter as other civilized people do. I am quite secure as to the place I hold in Euralie's heart. I have made up my mind to be her husband, and you know enough of me to be sure that whatever I make up my mind to I shall do."

As he said these words his voice became hard and stoney, the words uttered in low, distinct, hissing accents, which, indignant as I was, made me shiver with a dread of I knew not what.

"I will certainly promise no such thing," he continued. "Monsieur D'Auvergne may fancy what he pleases. When I am married, my wife and I shall live in the old English home where my fathers have lived for centuries."

"Laying aside all questions as to what you might, or might not promise to Monsieur D'Auvergne," replied my aunt, in accents which told me she was irritated by his pertinacity, "Euralie is deeply attached to her parents, and I am much mistaken in her if she will consent to leave those she has known and loved from infancy, the land of her home and kindred, and come to England to live among a people who do not even speak her language."

He spoke again, in the same hard, unfeeling tone:

"When I am married, it is not at all likely that I should consult even my wife on the subject of where my future home shall be. Euralie's husband is her master, and she will soon be taught that it is her interest as well as her duty to obey him."

I heard no more. I ran with light steps up to my own room, seized the roses I had so treasured a few minutes before, dried their stems carefully, and, bringing them down, threw them on the centre table in the music-room, a place where I was very sure they would be seen by Colonel Devereux.

My aunt and he were still talking, but I did not linger a second. I despised myself for having listened to the hateful words I had heard. If it were possible, I would have left the house and England that very hour. I could have lashed myself because I had permitted him day after day to sit beside me as if he had a right to that place. A thousand little circumstances, that seemed things of naught an hour ago, appeared to me now in their true light; I had unwittingly encouraged the man, virtually fed his vanity until he imagined I loved him. What would I not have given to undo the work of the past two months? He would be my master and husband indeed! All my French blood boiled at the thought. I gathered up my music and sought my own room, where, looking the door, I paced to and fro, more like a chafed and angry animal than aught else.

I felt as if the only thing on earth that could appease my wrath would be to put his head on the floor and stamp on it.

My mother is De Salaberry, my father a D'Auvergne. They boast themselves of their pure unmixed French blood of the old Régime, the only admixture being that of my grandmother, a Rosenham, and they are of a quiet, unobtrusive race; but I began to think then, and I had more reason to think so since, that there must have been an admixture of Indian blood in my race, and that it all flowed down in one little channel into my own veins.

I was all a savage for hours that day. However, it died down as such paroxysms must die. I became quiet at last; I could sit down and think, and I began to cast in my mind what my demeanor was to be during the evening when, of necessity, I must once more meet Colonel Devereux.

If my heart and passions resembled a volcano in the morning, I had, by my strong will, kept them enclosed in a coating of hard cold lava for the evening. I had no doubt the opportunity would be given me, and I had determined to show Colonel Devereux in as few words as possible, and with an exterior as cold as the ice of my native land, that he was nothing to me, never could be anything except an acquaintance

of the passing moment, that he had sadly overrated himself and his attractions, his vanity, and self-love had miserably deceived him. He my master, indeed! How those words grated and rung in my ears. And yet, alas! alas! it was but too true; he did, indeed, become my master,—the master of my destiny,—in misery and disgrace more bitter than death.

I did not go to dinner that evening, but I joined the party in the drawing-room in time to sing the anthem my aunt wished her guests to hear.

I suppose it was the temper I was in gave strength to my voice, enabled me to throw all my passion, every feeling of my soul into it. I never sang so well—never before, never after. My voice filled that great lofty room as if it had been that of a strong man. No one spoke nor moved during the pause of my voice; a pin could not have dropped to the ground unheard, and when the last words of the joyful psalm, "Christ is born in Bethlehem," died away upon my lips, I sat for some seconds with my hands lying on the keys of the piano, entranced with the music I myself had made.

There was a dense crowd behind and around me, but, thanks to my aunt, General Rosenham took his place by my side, turning over the leaves of the music, thus preventing Colonel Devereux from approaching me.

Giving me his arm as I rose, he kindly said: "You must be tired. Come and rest with me on the balcony."

I gladly accepted his offer and we sought the balcony, a beautifully enclosed place full of flowers and climbing roses, where the soft heated air made me always fancy I was back in sunny France.

The time had come for cutting the Christmas cake. It was the fashion of their house that the master and mistress should do so, and one of my little cousins came to tell her father his services were needed for the important occasion.

"Come with me, Euralie," said the old gentleman; "you shall help to cut the cake, and perhaps you may be lucky enough to get the ring."

Without thinking for a moment what would most likely be the effect of my remaining there alone, I begged of him to leave me, saying:

"I shall rest for a few minutes longer, and then join you in the drawing-room."

As he left me I leaned back on the rustic sofa where I sat, closing my eyes from a weariness. The fatigue occasioned by my passionate emotions overpowered me more than all the physical suffering I had gone through in my past life, were it all put together and heaped in one.

I was thinking of the quiet convent home I had left, and of the different way the day would have been spent had I awaited there my father's arrival in Europe, and not come, as my own earnest desire was, to taste the pleasures of the world at Eldon Hall.

I must have been entirely absorbed by my own thoughts, or the din of laughing and talking in the drawing-room must have drowned all nearer sounds, as I fancied myself the sole occupant of the balcony until a light touch on my arm made me open my eyes to see Colonel Devereux quietly seated beside me.

"I fancied you asleep," said he, "and touched your arm that I might ascertain the truth of my surmise."

I did not answer, in truth I knew not what to say, if I had had my choice at that moment the wide Atlantic would have been flowing between us, I would never have seen his face nor heard his voice again.

The loathing and dread I had for the man must have been sent me as a forewarning of the evil days he was to bring on me and mine. The words which I had overheard him say were no sufficient cause for my entertaining the feelings I did towards him. In another I am sure they would have been treated by me with more of contempt than aught else.

"Where are your roses?" he asked in the soft tones he knew so well how to assume.

"The roses you brought here in the morning?" replied I, scarcely knowing what I said. All the many preconceived words as sentences I had put together in the afternoon, while pacing up and down in my own room, had vanished into thin air. "I offered the half of them to my aunt, and as she would not divide your present with me, I left them on the large table in the music-room. I fancied you would have found them there."

There was a dim, softened light from the drawing-room, which fell with a gentle radiance into the balcony where we sat. I looked at him as I spoke. He returned no answer except by knitting his brows with a scowl which told as plainly as his words of the morning had done—he was able to be my master.

He recovered himself quickly, however, and said in a soft voice, as if touched with pity:

"Poor dead roses! Had I known their fate I should have gone and gathered them together and given them cool water to drink of and bathed in. I sometimes think those beautiful flowers are more sensitive than we imagine, and feel neglect in some hidden way that is not revealed to our coarser natures."

He spoke for a few minutes of the gorgeous flowers of India, the roses of Persia, the lilies of the Holy Land, the rose of Sharon, and then he added, "How much I should like to show you all those beautiful things—the flowers and gems of those Eastern lands." He said something more about having to be tied down by the conventionalities of society. I know not what he said; my heart was beating in great wild throbs; I did not try to listen; I was longing to