

off towards where the steamboat lay. During the whole of the time, she kept up an incessant talk of the delightful view to be had from the river, by which the poor girl was so bewildered, that she scarcely knew where she was till the steamer was shoving off from the wharf; and then serious thoughts entered her mind as to the propriety of the step she had taken, however lady-like the person who had enticed her might be.

Jane was in a sad situation, yet relying on the assurance of her companion, that they would return in the time stated, and the many expressions of kindness which she received, her fears were so far quieted, and she was ultimately reconciled to her position. The scene was new to her, too, and every expression of wonder which she gave utterance to was seized upon by the lady to answer it by some well-timed remark to keep her in a pleasant mood.

While this was going on, the steamboat was rapidly moving onwards on its course, but had Jane been acquainted with the situation of the various towns or villages which line the banks of the St. Lawrence, the fact would have darted across her mind, that the course the vessel was pursuing was an opposite one, or nearly so, to that which she was told it would take. This fact, however, she was not aware of, and her mind had been excited so much by the stories of her companion, that the vessel's destiny seemed of no importance to her. Nuns' Island, and its secluded inhabitants was beyond her credibility, but when she was informed that it was not the only establishment of that character in the country, that there were several of them, her astonishment was greater. All things considered, it must not be wondered that when she was landed at Laprairie, the time occupied on the passage appeared so short, as to confirm her belief in the statement that half an hour would suffice to take them back to Montreal.

As they had reached their destination, the lady suggested that as it would be a few minutes before the vessel returned, it would only be increasing the pleasure of their trip were they to walk up the village. There was no great harm visible in this simple proposition, and as Jane's curiosity was raised by what she had already seen and heard, she readily agreed to it. As they wandered leisurely through the main street, the lady was accosted by a young gentleman, who seemed to be on very friendly terms with her, and the lady, with the utmost politeness, introduced Jane as a young Miss of her acquaintance, lately from Scotland. The young gentleman expressed the great pleasure he experienced in the honour conferred upon him by this introduction, and exerted every means in his power to impress the simple girl with a high opinion of his qualities as a young man of good sense and nice virtue.

"You must be tired, ladies," said he, "and although it is an act I am very seldom guilty of, still, considering the place, the company, and that you have a few minutes still to spare, I must insist on you accompanying me to the hotel, and partaking of some refreshment."

The old lady mildly muttered thanks, while Jane was so bewildered, that she had no power to withdraw the arm which the young gallant had now forced under his own, and as her companion and him moved forward, Jane was compelled to keep them company.

Seated in the tavern, for hotel it could not be considered, the young man ordered some wine, one glass of which he handed to the old lady, which she finished in so scientific a manner, as to lead to the belief that this was not her first attempt. He could only allow Jane half a glass, as he knew it was not polite for young ladies to show off their accomplishments in this department, and also because he thought it was not altogether a good habit for that interesting portion of the community to indulge in. This consideration was so kind, and so frankly expressed, that Jane, out of compliment to the young gentleman, could not do less than partake of the portion allotted to her, as it was only on consideration that she was from home, that he offered it to her as a refreshment. Jane swallowed the liquid.

Ere this, the reader will have suspected the character of Jane's companion, whose vocation is one of the blackest that can disgrace society, and which consisted in seducing strange and inexperienced girls for the vilest of purposes. In the foregoing imperfect sketch it will be seen by what insidious and ensnaring means open-hearted and confiding young women are lured into the meshes of the snare which is set for their destruction, and that the attempt did not succeed in this instance, was no fault of the base and degraded parties who undertook the girl's ruin.

Jane had seldom, if ever, tasted wine, and although the little she had taken was followed by a sense of oppression, yet she did not account for this feeling otherwise than as the natural result of having drank the small quantity given her. Notwithstanding this, she became uneasy and anxious, nor would she rest, in spite of all remonstrances to the contrary, till they were once more on their way to the wharf. The boat had not left, nor was it intended that it should leave for some time, and although Jane did not perceive the imminent danger which hung over her, still she began to think that all was not right. This feeling increased as she felt a drowsiness creep over her, and she became shy of the attentions bestowed upon her by the old lady and the youth. They did all they could to get her withdrawn from the gaze of a few persons who were waiting for the sailing of the steamer, but Jane, while she retained consciousness, evaded their importunities. In spite of all her endeavours, the wish for sleep increased, and in this dilemma, she knew not how to act. Her fears were raised in proportion, as she became less able to withstand the drowsy influence, till at length she worked herself into a state bordering on despair. At this juncture, a lady and gentleman arrived on the wharf, and Jane, from some cause she could not describe, having lost all confidence in her companions, rushed forward to the two strangers, and in accents of the deepest distress, urged them to take her under their care, till they arrived in Montreal. The strangers