

as a noble, honorable gentleman, but I do not love him as a husband should be loved. Indeed, sometimes, I think I fear the Colonel; he is so grand, so lofty, so stern. Oh! dearest Aunt, do not press me on that subject; let me go on as I am, loving you, my kind benefactress, and admiring, respecting, liking very much, my cousin Charles."

"All very well, my dear Marie, very pretty, sentimental, and all that, but not at all practical," said the old Lady. "But, do you never intend to be a wife?"

"No, never! dearest Aunt," replied Marie, with deep emphasis and much dignity of manner. "Never! unless I can give my heart with my hand. My heart is yours now, dear Auntie, and when you have done with it, it shall belong to God and the Sisters of the Convent, and to good Father Legros, who is now in heaven."

CHAPTER X.

From the conversation in the foregoing chapter between the two ladies, the reader will no doubt have recognized the elder as Mrs. Hartinger and the younger one as Marie La Montagne, the orphaned daughter of the Huron Chief Jouskoha. Placed by the good old Priest of St. Regis in the Convent of the Sacred Heart at Montreal, the kind old man did not only confine himself to a simple recommendation of his ward to the care of the Sisters of the Convent, but he also enlisted the sympathies of several pious ladies of rank in her behalf, acquainting them of her connexion with the Huron tribe, of her bereavement and total helplessness and dependence. But he carefully suppressed the Adirondack episode, and everything connected with Ralph Edwards and her infatuation for the young officer, nor did he ever avail himself of Ralph's permission to draw upon him for money, knowing full well that with the kind sisterhood Marie was safe, and that the Christian ladies whom he had enlisted in her favor would look after her welfare.

Thus Marie became an inmate of the Convent, where she proved tractable, loving and studious. She soon perfected herself in the French language, and in less than three years had mastered the English tongue so that she conversed fluently in that language; also, in drawing and painting, dancing and calisthenics, she was above mediocrity, and in music she excelled, so that when Madame Hartinger, who had long loved the girl, took her to her heart and home, she not only became the household pet and enfant chérie, but also the life and charm of their immediate circle of friends, and at the time of the earnest and important conversation alluded to in the preceding chapter, Miss Marie La Montagne was the *Belle par excellence* of the *Haute Société* of Montreal.

"Belle Cousine," said Colonel Hartinger, meeting Marie on the terrace, the morning after her conversation with her aunt, a title by which she always addressed Mrs. Hartinger by that lady's express command, "I have told my groom to bring round my new purchase, Latona, for you after breakfast. I want you to take the conceit out of her. She is perfectly safe, but very fresh and somewhat frisky. We'll take a gallop round the mountain—*en vrai cousins*," he added *sotto-voce*.

"With pleasure, Charles," replied Miss La Montagne, "provided you ride the grey, for she, Latona, may run away with me, and then—and then, ma Belle! Why, I might lose my companion," said she archly.

"Oh! you're in for a race, are you? Very well! A pair of gloves against a pipe?" "If you please, Charles." "All right. A briar, mind?"

So the two walked, arm-in-arm, into the breakfast-room, kissed the old lady and took their seats, a happy and very handsome trio.

After breakfast, the horses were brought round, and the Colonel having seated his fair companion on Latona, mounted the grey, a splendid steed-chaser, the well-known winner of several races. Both horses were fresh and Latona was particularly frisky, plunged a good deal, and seemed very much inclined to have her own way,

but ere the equestrians had arrived at the turn which led to the mountain road, the spirited mare had subsided into a very sedate and respectable gait under the management of her rider.

Thus the two, so called cousins, rode in silence until they entered a shady grove of maples, when the Colonel, riding close up to Marie, and looking intently into her brilliant dark eyes, suddenly said, "I say, Marie! you must think me a beast and hate me like poison." "Hate you, Charles. For what?" "Why for having behaved like a cad by going to mother like a whipped school-boy to tell her of your rejection of me. But, then, I never dreamt of her bothering you about my disappointment."

"Such a feeling as disappointment can never exist between you and me, dear Charles. You know that I love you very dearly, as a cousin, as a brother, admire you." "And fear me," interrupted the Colonel; "you see mother has told me every thing. And—well! the truth is that I have coaxed you out here to tell you that I am very glad you refused me. Yes! Glad for your own sake, charming cousin. I am not at all suited to you. In the first place, I am too old; in the second, I am too fond of myself. In the third—" "And lastly," archly interrupted Marie. "Well! Lastly, then; I think I am too good a fellow to inflict myself on a woman who does not love me. But, Marie! You shan't be a nun with a poke bonnet and a great string of beads; nor an old maid who wears gold spectacles and pulls up her petticoats at every street crossing to show her antiquated ankles.—By Jove! that would be a go. *Sœur Marie* or *Miss Dorcas La Montagne* taking snuff. No, *ma belle*, we must find you a dashing husband, who is a good fellow into the bargain. *Allons cousin!* Now for my pipe."

(To be continued.)

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