

Lucie, with deep feeling, "and am moved by no idle or romantic impulse. I am persuaded that wealth and worldly distinctions are at best but empty substitutes for happiness, and that the humblest lot is rich in true enjoyment, when shared with one whose love can brighten the darkest hour, and scatter roses over the roughest path of life. I had rather," she added with a glowing cheek, "far rather trust my humble bark to the guidance of affection, on the placid current of domestic joy, than launch it on the troubled waters of ambition, with pleasure at the helm, and freighted with vain hopes and desires, which can bring back no return, but disappointment and vexation, and weariness of heart."

"This is a pretty dream of idle romance," said Madame la Tour; "but many a one as fair as this, has proved fallacious, when tested by the bitter lessons of experience."

"Well, here is Annette's cottage," said Lucie, "and so, dear aunt, we will suspend our discussion, if you please. I am inclined for a longer walk, and will return and call for you, when I think you are rested from your fatigue."

Madame la Tour assented, and Lucie, without asking herself wherefore, directed her steps to a wooded bank which overhung the river,—the very place where she had last parted from Arthur Stanhope. The sun was setting with unwonted splendor, and the reflection of his golden beams glanced upon the rippling waters, and tinged the sky with a thousand rich and varied hues; from the deep purple, blending with crimson rays, to the pale amber and cerulean tint, which melted into almost fleecy whiteness. The earth glowed beneath this gorgeous canopy, and the trees that skirted the border of the bay, threw their long shadows on the glassy waves, which broke upon the pebbly shore, as if murmuring their vespers at the close of day.

As Lucie stood on the very spot where she had bid farewell to Stanhope—truly but a short time before, though very long it seemed, by love's chronicle, every leaf that trembled around her, recalled some cherished remembrance, and the breeze, sighing through the foliage, was soft as the voice of whispered love. But painful conjectures, respecting his present situation, chased all other thoughts from her mind, and the recollections of happiness and dreams of hope, were vily upon her. She involuntarily glanced across the bay as if expecting some messenger would approach with tidings, and with joyful surprise she observed a vessel at that moment, approach the anchorage, and directly the sails were furled, and an anchor cast into the waves. Her heart

throbbed audibly, for as she gazed, a small boat left the ship's side, and with two persons in it, rowed towards the fort; one of them was father Gilbert, for the dark, flowing garments of the priest, could not be mistaken. And who was the other? Love, it is said, though notoriously blind in the main, is quick-sighted on some occasions; and a glance sufficed to assure Lucie, that the companion of father Gilbert, who plied the oars so vigorously, was no other than Arthur Stanhope. The little boat glided swiftly on its course, and soon neared the shore, and Lucie screened herself behind a clump of trees, when she saw it entering a cove, hard by, which formed a sheltered harbour for such light vessels.

As the keel touched the strand, Arthur dropped the oars, and sprang lightly on shore, while Father Gilbert followed more leisurely, and proceeded alone to the fort. As soon as the priest was out of sight, and Stanhope, with hasty steps, began to tread the well remembered path, Lucie bounded from her concealment, and, like a bright vision, threw herself before him. An exclamation of joyful surprise, a fond embrace, which prudery might not disclaim, and some brief words, which lovers only speak, filled up a few happy moments, when Miss de Courcy said:

"You must now satisfy my curiosity, Arthur, and tell me how you have escaped from storms, and shipwreck, and captivity, and all the dangers, which we heard, I fear too truly, have befallen you?"

"Report, I perceive, has multiplied my misfortunes," he answered smiling; "at least I have been in no danger from sword or prison, and though the tempest treated my poor vessel roughly, thanks to its mercy! we all escaped with life, and therefore should be ungrateful to complain of lighter evils."

"What a dreadful night," said Lucie, "when you would leave on such a fool-hardy voyage! Did I not tell you, Stanhope, that a storm was gathering? and when we stood together on this very spot, and I pointed to the heavy clouds, and sullen waves, you only smiled at my fears, and took no heed of my predictions!"

"I knew not then that you were so skilled in reading the mystery of the clouds," he answered; "and if I had known it, dear Lucie, the voyage could not have been delayed, even to gratify the wish which you urged with so sweet a grace, and an interest so flattering."

"Well, let it pass," she replied; "you are safe again, and we need not the tempest's aid, to enhance the sunshine of this moment. And now tell me where you have left M. la Tour, and De Valette, and all those who went out with you, in