

**TOO STRANGE NOT TO
BE TRUE: A TALE. IN
THREE VOLUMES, VOL. II**

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Too Strange Not to Be True: A Tale. In Three Volumes, Vol. II by Georgiana Charlotte Fullerton

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GEORGIANA CHARLOTTE FULLERTON

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VOL. II.

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TOO STRANGE NOT TO BE TRUE.

A TALE.

BY

LADY GEORGINA FULLERTON,

AUTHOR OF

'ELLEN MIDDLETON,' 'LADYBERD,' ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



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TOO STRANGE NOT TO BE TRUE.

PART I.—*Continued.*

CHAPTER IX.

All was ended now; the joy, and the fear, and the sorrow;
All the aching of heart, the restless unsatisfied longing;
All the dull deep pain and constant anguish of patience.

Longfellow.

As are our hearts, our way is one,
And cannot be divided. Strong affection
Contentends with all things, and o'ercometh all things.
Will I not live with thee? Will I not cheer thee?
Wouldst thou be lonely then? Wouldst thou be sad?

Joanna Baillie.

At last, one morning, the rain ceased; the heavy clouds rolled away towards the West, and hung in heavy masses over the distant hills; the birds began to sing; the hares and rabbits emerged from their holes, and ran once more over the greensward. The buffaloes came trooping down from the mountains to the prairies, and a hoary bison swam across the river, and looked out upon the

world from one of the flowery islands on its bosom, like a conqueror taking possession of a kingdom. A burst of glorious sunshine gladdened the expanse of wood and water around St. Agathe, and the herbage and the flowers, and living things without number, seemed to exult in its light. The brightness of that first fine morning, after weeks of incessant rain, was like the first return of joy to a heart long oppressed by grief. It felt almost like a presage of approaching change in the lives of its inhabitants. It was a Sunday morning, too, and d'Auban, who heard that Madame de Moldau had been longing to get to church, brought his horse ready saddled for her to the door of the pavilion, and prepared to conduct her in this way to the village. She consented; he took the bridle in his hand, and the Indian servant and the Negro boy followed them on foot. They crossed the wood between them and the river, which was sometimes traversed in a boat and sometimes by means of a series of small islets forming a kind of natural bridge, the spaces between being filled up with a network of floating verdure. Their

progress was slow, for the ground, saturated with wet, was in some places almost impassable. D'Auban kept a little in advance of the horse, and tried at each step the firmness of their footing. The dripping branches over their heads rained upon them as they went along. But the scents were delicious, and the air very reviving to those who had been long confined within the house. For the first time for many weeks Madame de Moldau was in good spirits: she murmured the first words of the service of the Mass—‘ I shall go to the altar of God, of God who renews my youth,’ and a sort of youthful happiness beamed in her face; she made nosegays of the wild flowers which her attendants plucked for her, from the banks and from the boughs through which they threaded their way. But the flowers were not to adorn the altar, nor the little party, on its way to the church, to hear Mass that day. The sound of the gong, which served as a bell, came booming over the water, but its summons was to sound in vain for them; they were about to be stopped on their road.

D'Auban was just examining whether it

would be possible to cross the river on the island bridge, or to get the boat, when a cry reached their ears—a low, feeble, and yet piercing cry.

‘Did you hear?’ they all exclaimed at the same time. The boy shuddered, and said it was one of the water-spirits that had cried out. The Indian shaded her eyes with her hand, and with the long-sightedness common amongst her race, discerned a speck in the distance, which she declared was a boat.

‘But it is a phantom boat!’ she added. ‘There is no one in it, and it is coming towards us very slowly; but it advances, and against the stream.’ Madame de Moldau turned pale. She was prone to believe in the marvellous, and easily credited stories of ghosts and apparitions. They all gazed curiously, and then anxiously, at the little boat as it approached.

‘There is somebody in it, after all!’ the Indian exclaimed.

‘Of course there is,’ said d’Auban, with a smile; ‘but it is a child, I think; a small creature, quite alone.’

‘It is Simonette,’ cried the Indian. ‘Good