

"The harvest is gathered, to be sure; but no one at Boisveyrac can be trusted to finish the stacks. They are a good-for-nothing lot; and now Damase, the best thatcher among them, has, I hear, been sent up to Fort Frontenac along with Polyte Latulippe."

"By my orders."

Dominique bent his eyes on the ground.

"Monsieur's orders shall be obeyed. May I have his permission to return at once to Boisveyrac?—at least, as soon as we have discussed certain matters of business?"

"Business? But since it is not convenient just now——" It seemed to John that the old gentleman had suddenly grown uneasy.

"I speak only of certain small repairs; the matter of Legassé's holding, for example," said Dominique tranquilly. "The whole will not detain Monsieur above ten minutes."

"Ah, to be sure!" The Commandant's voice betrayed relief. "Come to my orderly-room, then. You will excuse me, M. à Clive?"

He turned to go and Dominique stepped aside to allow the girl to follow her father. But she made no sign. He shot a look at her and sullenly descended the terrace at his seigneur's heels.

Mademoiselle Diane's brow grew clear again as the sound of his footsteps died away, and presently she faced John with a smile so gay and frank that, although quite involuntarily he had been watching her, the change startled him. There was something in this girl at once innocently candid and curiously elusive; to begin with he could not decide whether to think of her as child or woman. Last night her eyes had rested on him with a child's open wonder, and a minute ago in Dominique's presence she had seemed to shrink close to her father with a child's timidity. Now, gaily as she smiled, her bearing had grown dignified and self-possessed.

"You are not to leave me, please, M. à Clive—seeing that I came expressly to find you."