

## A Ladder of Swords

statements, the girl had sufficiently recovered to answer him composedly, and with a little glint of demure humor in her eyes. She loved another man; she did not care so much as a spark for this happy, swearing, swash-buckling gentleman; yet she saw he had meant to do her honor. He had treated her as courteously as was in him to do; he chose her out from all the ladies of his acquaintance to make her an honest offer of his hand—he had said nothing about his heart; he would, should she marry him, throw her scraps of good-humor, bearish tenderness, drink to her health among his fellows, and respect and admire her—even exalt her almost to the rank of a man in his own eyes; and he had the tolerance of the open-hearted and open-handed man. All these things were as much a compliment to her as though she were not a despised Huguenot, an exiled lady of no fortune. She looked at him a moment with an almost solemn intensity, so that he shifted his ground uneasily, but at once smiled encouragingly, to relieve her embarrassment at the unexpected honor