

left the port on the morning of that day; and their departure relieved the garrison from a degree of restraint, to which they were wholly unaccustomed.

La Tour remained conversing with Arthur Stanhope, after the page, who was soon followed by De Valette, had left them, till a message from his lady requested their presence in her apartment. The scene without was threatening to become one of noisy revelry. Many of the soldiers gathered around a huge bonfire, amusing themselves with a variety of games; and at a little distance, a few females, their wives and daughters, were collected on a plot of grass, and dancing with the young men to the sound of a violin.

The shrill fife, the deep toned drum and noisy bag-pipe, occasionally swelled the concert; though the monotonous strains of the latter instrument, by which a few sturdy Scots performed their national dance, were not always in unison with the gay notes of the light-hearted Frenchmen. Here and there, a gloomy presbyterian, or stern Hugonot, was observed standing alone at a cautious distance from these cheerful groups, on which he cast an eye of distrust, as if afraid to venture within the circle of such unlawful pleasures.

"Keep a sharp eye on these mad fellows, Ronald," said La Tour, stepping aside to speak with the sentinel on duty, "and if there is any disturbance, let me know it, and beshrew me! if they have another holiday to make merry in!"

"Your honor shall be obeyed," he replied in a surly tone.

"See you to it then," continued La Tour, "and have a care," lowering his voice, "that none of those English enter the gates to-night. And be sure that you do not neglect my orders, when your own hour of merriment arrives."

"I have no lot nor portion in such things," said Ronald gruffly, "for as the Scripture saith—"

"Have done with your texts, Ronald," interrupted La Tour sharply; "you Scots are for ever preaching, when you ought to practice; your duty is to hear and obey, and I require nothing more of you."

So saying he turned away, leaving the guard to the solitary indulgence of his own thoughts, which the amusements of that evening had disturbed in no ordinary degree.

In the commandant's house were assembled the bridal party, with a few of their chosen friends, for whom Madame La Tour had prepared a hospitable entertainment. They were dancing gaily, when M. La Tour entered with Mr. Stanhope, and a little apart from them, Madame La Tour was conversing with De Valette,

and a lovely girl, to whom the gallant courtesy of the young cavalier seemed particularly addressed.

"I bring you a friend, to whose services we are much indebted," said La Tour to his lady; "and I must entreat your best endeavors, to make this dreary place agreeable to him."

"I shall do all in my power, from selfish motives," returned the lady, "independently of our personal obligations to Mr. Stanhope; and I trust we need not assure him that we shall be most happy to retain him as our guest, as long as he can find it agreeable to remain."

Stanhope returned a courteous answer to these civilities; but his thoughts were abstracted, and his eyes continually turned towards the young lady, whose blushing face was animated by an arch smile of peculiar meaning. La Tour observed them, and hastened to relieve their slight embarrassment, which he attributed to the late *mal-a-propos* disclosure.

"Allow me, Mr. Stanhope," he said, "to present you to my fair ward, Miss de Courcy, whom I perceive you have already identified with the priest and page, who acted so conspicuous a part this evening."

"My acquaintance with Mr. Stanhope dates much farther back than the brief rencontre of this evening," she said smiling, at the same time offering him her hand with an air of frankness, which however could not disguise a certain consciousness, that sent the tell-tale blood to her cheeks.

"It is far too well remembered," said Stanhope, his countenance glowing with delight, "to suffer me to be deceived by a slight disguise, though nothing could be more unexpected than the happiness of meeting with you here."

"My aunt looks very inquisitive," said the young lady, withdrawing her hand, and, turning to Madame La Tour, she continued, "I have been so fortunate as to recognise an old friend in Mr. Stanhope; one with whose family my aunt Ronville was on terms of the strictest intimacy, during our short residence in England."

"My sister's friends are always doubly welcome to me," said Madame La Tour, "and Mr. Stanhope's arrival must be esteemed particularly fortunate to us."

"It is indeed singular that you should meet so very unexpectedly in this obscure corner of the earth," said De Valette, with forced gaiety. "Pray, how can you account for it, Lucie?"

"I am not philosopher enough to resolve difficult questions," she answered smiling; "but yonder are the musicians, waiting to inspire us with the melody of sweet sounds, and we must all join the dance in honor of Antoinette's bridal; so, here is my hand, if you will look a little more in