

The British officers—one of them was the General himself, the other his messenger, Captain Muspratt—bared their heads. M. Etienne, checked in the midst of an harangue, stepped to Diane and took her hand tenderly.

She gazed slowly around on the group of battered men. There was no reproach in her look—had she not failed as miserably as they?—and yet it held a world of injustice. She could not know that for her sake they carried these wounds. And Dominique Guyon, the one man who could have answered her thoughts, stared savagely at the ground, offering no defence.

“Dominique Guyon,” commanded M. Etienne, “four of you will relieve these *messieurs* of their burden. Carry your master to the chapel, where you will find Father Launoy or Father Joly.”

“But pardon me, monsieur,” interposed Amherst politely, “my soldiers will be proud to bear so gallant a foe.”

“I thank you”—M. Etienne’s bow was stiff and obstinate—“but I assert again that I still command this fortress, and the bearers shall be of my choosing.”

Diane laid a hand on her uncle’s arm. “He is dead,” said she. “What matters it?” She did not understand this dispute. “Perhaps if I promise M. le Général that these men shall return to him when they have laid my father in the chapel——”

The General—a tall, lean, horse-faced man with a shrewd and not unkindly eye—yielded the point at once. “Willingly, mademoiselle, and with all the respect an enemy may pay to your sorrow.” He ordered the men to give place to the new bearers.

In the chapel Diane sank on her knees, but not to pray—rather to escape the consolations of the two priests and be alone with her thoughts. And her thoughts were not of her father. The stroke had fallen; but not yet could she feel the pain. He was happy; he alone of them all had kept his quiet vow, and died disdaining defeat; whereas she—ah, there lay