

A Ladder of Swords

prehended the plain fact that he had been declined.

"You send me packing!" he blurted out, getting red in the face.

"Ah, no! Say that is my misfortune that I cannot give myself the great honor," she said, in her tone a little disdainful dryness, a little pity, a little feeling that here was a good friend lost.

"It's not because of the French soldier that was with Montgomery at Domfront?—I've heard that story. But he's gone to heaven, and 'tis vain crying for last year's breath," he said, with proud philosophy.

"He is not dead. And if he were," she added, "do you think, monsieur, that we should find it easier to cross the gulf between us?"

"Tut! tut! that bugbear love!" he said, shortly. "And so you'd lose a good friend for a dead lover? I' faith, I'd befriend thee well if thou wert my wife, ma'm'selle."

"It is hard for those who need friends to lose them," she answered, sadly.

The sorrow of her position crept in upon