

you with a misfortune which has befallen my much esteemed friend Major Somers. Having been recently promoted to a majority, as a reward for distinguished conduct in the field, he was some days ago entrusted with the command of the Regiment to which he is attached, and ordered to join the division of Lieutenant General —. It was necessary that the march should be performed with great expedition and caution, and in his usual spirit of gallantry, Major Somers rode forward, accompanied by a small detachment, to reconnoitre the country through which it was necessary to pass. They had proceeded about three miles in advance of the main body, when they were arrested by a shower of rifle bullets from a wood directly in front, which very shortly before had been in possession of our own troops. He immediately drew his rein, and hastened back to join his regiment, and placing the artillery in front, hurried within range of the wood, with the intention of scouring it with large shot. The enemy were, however, drawn up in great and overpowering numbers, well flanked with artillery, directly in front, and after a protracted fire, during which, from the nature of the ground, neither party derived any material advantage, Major Somers determined on leading on in person his gallant fellows to decide the question by a charge. He was well seconded; but the enemy, desperate from being hemmed in on all sides, determined very wisely on endeavouring to break through on our weakest point, and received the charge with a steady discharge of musketry, and rifles, almost within the length of the muskets of our brave fellows. As a matter of course they were partially thrown into disorder, and the enemy gathering resolution, fought their way through, carrying off Major Somers, severely if not mortally wounded, a prisoner of war.

It is only necessary to conclude with the expression of the regret of the General commanding, for the loss, if even only temporary, of an officer so highly and justly esteemed as Major Somers; and he requests that you will accept his assurance that no exertion will be wanting to effect, as early as possible, an exchange with some prisoner of rank, several of whom are at present in the hands of his Majesty's forces.

With every consideration of esteem, I have the honour to be, &c.

F —. L —.

Captain and Acting Secretary.

The letter fell from the hands of poor Uncle Somers, who stood as one struck dumb.

"Ungrateful dog!" he at length exclaimed, "to leave their leader's fate a doubtful one, and in the hands of the enemy. By heavens I will myself go seek him in their very dens, and if I cannot save him, I will at least die by the side of my brother's son."

"Nonsense, man," said the trooper, helping himself freely to a goblet of burgundy that stood invitingly on the table; "his case is in better hands. The general will have him if man may, and as to you saving him or dying either, you would be only laughed at by the men who have him in their keeping. If he yet live he is safe, if not, he died as he has lived, brave and honoured, aye, and will be wept too by many an eye long a stranger to the tear;" and a big drop rolled over the war worn cheek of the burly trooper.

The evening was a lovely one, and Dr. Weldon, invited by its beauty, had walked from his own residence to that of Mr. Somers, accompanied by Agnes, and entered the room, unannounced, while the trooper was speaking.

With a woman's quick perception, she saw the whole at a single glance—the open letter—the stricken old man, and the agitated soldier—all conspired to rob her of the hope she had so fondly cherished, that Richard Somers would one day return to claim her love. Her eye, rivetted on the scroll, became fixed when it met the sentence which told of his falling into the foe's hand, a wounded prisoner, and she fell fainting into her father's arms.

It scarcely needed an explanation even to the more aged Doctor. The truth at once flashed upon his heart, and he wondered that he had not before felt that his daughter loved the gallant soldier. He wasted not a moment in useless questioning, but applied himself to the recovery of his daughter from the death-like swoons, which following closely on each other, seemed as if they would only close with her utter dissolution.

It were vain to dwell on the incoherent ravings of one so suddenly deprived of the dearest hope of a young and tender heart. Hers was passion in its torrent, and it swept before it all attempt at consolation, offered as it was without sincerity. She was borne to her father's house, to be laid on a fevered bed, and the thread of her young life was nearly rent in twain. Oh! it is sad, when the cherished dream of youth flies before the waking reality of dark despair, and the young heart bends beneath the weight of sorrow's iron rod. Let the lone one weep—her tears will lighten, if they cannot altogether wash away, the grinding load of the heart's deep anguish.

CHAPTER VI.

A stately mansion, on the margin of the Hudson, was the prison-house of Richard Somers. Tended with friendly care, a captive only in name, he had risen from what seemed a bed of death, and he sat at an open window, feeling the beauty of a scene, lovely as he had ever gazed on in the loved land of his youth, save that it was unblest with the presence