

but the miller, a poor man, with a family, entreated the officer not to destroy his mill, as it was all he depended upon for bread. The officer hesitated, both from humanity to the miller, and from the natural unwillingness of a Frenchman to give to his brother soldiers so unwelcome a signal. The parley caused by this simple circumstance afforded those few minutes of time, during which fate chose to wave her omnipotent wand to the entire changing of the destiny of the Battle of Fontenoy!

"From some extraordinary infatuation or incapacity, the Duke of Cumberland, at this time far in the rear of the victorious column, stood looking on, unsuspectingly, at the empty powder-firing from the French redoubts, and never sent one of his reserve squadrons,—either of infantry, to take the village, now exhausted of ammunition,—or of cavalry, or other support, to that brave body of British soldiers who were gaining him the battle! The front line of the great square, seeing themselves in the middle of the French position, therefore, halted, and began to imagine that they had proceeded too far. Looking frequently behind for a sight of their own dragoons to aid them against the incessant attacks of the French troopers,—the officers receiving no orders,—and the victorious soldiers no support, they began to look at each other with a blank uncertainty, nearly five thousand of those who originally crossed the ravine being, by this time, dead on the field behind them.

"At this moment, while Marshal Saxe looked impatiently towards the mill for the concerted signal, and suffered the utmost apprehensions, lest he should not only lose the battle, but lest the Royal hopes of France themselves should fall into the hands of their enemies, the Duke of Richelieu, a familiar favourite of the King's, proposed to His Majesty to try the effect of four of the field-pieces, then coming in from the front, upon the angle of the great English square: '*for,*' said he, '*should we be able to break the columns there, and throw the square into any disorder, if we come upon it vigorously with your Majesty's household troops, and attack simultaneously on other places, I'll lay my life that the day is our own still.*'

"In a short time the four cannon were brought to the proper spot, and, being pointed with accuracy, completely shot away