

duced his 'utter ruin in his present situation.' Had Nelson, on landing from his boat, on that occasion, accomplished his ardent wishes, married the lady, and settled down in Quebec, his conduct would have amounted to desertion from the service, which, should his passion for nautical life have subsequently revived, would have placed an almost insurmountable obstacle between him and future employment in the British navy.

That Nelson had made a deep impression upon her heart may be inferred from several particulars. At that time Sir Frederick Haldimand was Governor at Quebec. His secretary and aid-de-camp, Major Matthews, was also a suitor for this lady's hand. After Nelson's departure, this officer renewed his attentions and pressed her to marry him. But she refused. Having been sought by a Post-Captain of the Royal Navy, she could not, she said, '*think of accepting any one belonging to the army whose rank was lower than that of Colonel.*'

Shortly afterwards Governor Haldimand went home, accompanied by Major Matthews. In process of time the latter became a colonel, and was appointed Governor of Chelsea Hospital. Some years had elapsed, and Miss Simpson had attained the age of 26 or 27 years, remaining still unmarried. This fact being ascertained by Colonel Matthews, he again renewed his suit, and was finally accepted: and they became engaged.

Mr. James Thompson, Jun., furnishes the following particulars:— 'Colonel Matthews' appointment in the Horse Guards not admitting of his return to Canada, to fulfil his engagements to Miss Simpson, she went to join him, and they were married in London, from whence she, as well as the colonel, maintained a close correspondence: the former, indeed, looked upon my father (Mr. James Thompson, Sen.) in the light of a parent.'

This then—Miss Mary Simpson—

so far as we have yet proceeded with our evidence—was the young lady whose description tallies with the words of Nelson's biographers in connection with the incident that occurred on the beach at Quebec, 'an amiable American lady, who was afterwards married and resided in London.'

We have before us a number of letters,* written by Col. and Mrs. Matthews. Her letters manifest the utmost kindness of heart, good sense, and mental cultivation. When Mr. Thompson's youngest son George was of age to profit by an admission into the Royal Academy of Woolwich, and knowing that it had always been the old man's earnest hope to procure it for one of his family, the Colonel made personal application to the great minister Pitt in his behalf. We have by us his original letter of application, in which he says under date Horse Guards, Nov. 26th, 1803, 'My Lord—Having no claim on your Lordship's attention, I feel much diffidence in taking this liberty, and have long hesitated to do it, yet my motives, I confidently hope, will excuse me. Consideration for and attachment to a very old and worthy servant of the Crown in your Lordship's department at Quebec, and who, at a very advanced period of life, is encumbered with a numerous family, one of whom, in his fifteenth year, has discovered a strong disposition for military science, in which he has received as much instruction as that country can afford, and his father's greatest ambition is that he should be admitted as a cadet at Woolwich. . . . I should not think myself at liberty to obtrude this solicitation, were I not to add that Mr. Thompson is a relation of my wife, and as a mark of attachment to her,

*We cite from the correspondence of the Thompson family, kindly placed in the writer's hands by Mr. Jas. T. Harrower, grandson of Mr. Thompson, sen. It affords information concerning the Colonel and his estimable lady and his family covering the period of from 1796 or 1797 to 1831, when Mrs. Matthews was still alive, although the Colonel had died some years before.