

to the ladies, and then, followed by the other gentlemen, he led the way to the saloon.

"I'm going to make the most of my opportunity," said Stuart to Marie with a laugh, as the door closed upon the last man, "for Sir Francis says that I may be sent for before their session is over."

"Possibly they may want to intrust you with state secrets," replied Marie, carelessly; "I suppose gentlemen enjoy such things."

"Some do," was the rejoinder, "but it is the intervening hour that I prize. They won't want to discuss matters of importance with a subaltern."

"Still you might have something to communicate."

"Perhaps the incidents of the journey from the ocean westward," he replied.

"You came up the St. Lawrence?" said Marie, her interest increasing.

"Yes, by Prescott and Kingston and the Thousand Isles."

"The Thousand Isles! One of them is my home."

"Which one has that honor, Miss Mac-Alpine, may I ask?"

"Fingal's Notch," was her prompt answer.

"Fingal's Notch!" he exclaimed, in a tone of astonishment.

"What of it? Does it surprise you?" she asked, turning her eyes enquiringly upon him.

"Rather—well—not exactly," he returned, gathering himself together again. "There are so many of them—and all so picturesque—you can scarcely tell one from another."