

haliards, his breast covered by the folds of the fallen flag, and behind her, as the bursting shell had killed and huddled it, the body of old Sergeant Bédard. Its bald scalp grinned at him from the corner of the battlements with a red wound like an open mouth.

Why she stood there, pistol in hand, he could partly guess. How these two corpses came here he could not guess at all. The Commandant, mortally wounded, had grasped at the falling flag, and with a dying effort had bent it upon the spare haliards and tried to hoist. It lay now, covering a wound which had torn his chest open, coat and flesh, and laid his ribs bare.

But John à Cleeve, kneeling upon the hatchway, understood nothing of this. What beat on his brain was the vision of a face below—the face of the officer commanding—turned upwards in blank astonishment at his shout of “Forty-sixth! This way, Forty-sixth!”

The Indians were battering the hatch with their musket-butts. The bolt shook. He pressed his weight down on the edge, keeping his head well back to be out of the way of bullets. Luckily the timbers of the hatch were stout, and moreover it had a leaden casing, but this would avail nothing when the Indians began to fire at the hinges—as they surely would.

He found himself saying aloud in French, “I won’t answer for the hinges. Run, mademoiselle!—call again to the red-coats! They will help.”

But still, while blow after blow shook the hatch, Diane crouched motionless, staring at him with wild eyes.

“They will help,” he repeated with the air of one striving to speak lucidly; then with a change of tone, “Give me your pistol, please.”

She held it out obediently at arm’s length, but as he took it she seemed to remember, and crept close. “Non—non!” she whispered. “C’est à moi—que tu le dois, enfin!”

From the staircase—not close beneath the hatch, but, as it