

"How is this, Matilda," he asked; "after having travelled thus far into the heart of this disturbed district would you now leave me?"

"Major Montgomerie," she pursued, somewhat impatiently, "we are in the presence of strangers, to whom this discussion must be uninteresting—My mind is fully made up, and I avail myself of the British General's offer."

"Certainly, certainly," observed that officer, somewhat disconcerted by the scene; "and I can do it the more readily, as it is my intention to send an instant summons to the garrison of Detroit. Miss Montgomerie will, however, do well to consider before she decides. If the summons be not obeyed, another week will see our columns marching to the assault, and she must be prepared for all the horrors of such an extremity, aided, as I am compelled to be, (and he glanced at the groups of Indians who were standing around, but at some distance, looking silently yet eagerly at the prisoners,) by these wild and ungovernable warriors. Should she, on the contrary, decide on remaining here with her uncle, she will be perfectly safe."

"General," emphatically returned Miss Montgomerie, "were I certain that the columns to which you allude would not be repulsed whenever they may venture upon that assault, and were I as certain of perishing beneath the tomahawk and scalping knife of these savages"—and she looked fearlessly towards them—"still would my determination remain the same."

As she concluded, a hectic spot rose to either cheek, lingered there a moment, and then left it colorless as before.

"Be it so, Miss Montgomerie, my word is pledged and you shall go—Granting, I had intended sending one of my personal staff with the summons, but, on reflection, you shall be the bearer. As the captor of the lady, to you shall be awarded the charge of delivering her over to her friends."

"Friends!" involuntarily repeated the American, her cheek becoming even paler than before, and her lips compressed in a way to indicate some deep and painful emotion. Again she dropped her veil.

No other notice was taken of the interruption than what the surprised manner of Major Montgomerie manifested, and the General proceeded;

"I would ask you, Major Montgomerie, to become my guest while you remain with us, but I fear that, as a bachelor, I have but indifferent accommodation to offer to your niece."

"If Miss Montgomerie will accept it," said Colonel D'Egville, interposing, "I shall be most happy to afford her the accommodation of a home until she finally departs for the opposite shore. If the attention of a family of daughters," he continued, more immediately addressing himself to the young lady, "can render your temporary sojourn among us less tedious, you have but to command them."

So friendly an offer could not well be refused. Miss Montgomerie inclined her head in acquiescence, and Colonel D'Egville drew her arm within his own.

"It were unkind," remarked the general, good-humoredly, "to separate Major Montgomerie altogether from his niece. Either the young lady must partake of our rude fare, or we shall consider ourselves included in your dinner party."

"You could not confer on me a greater pleasure, General, and indeed I was about to solicit it. Commodore Barclay, may I hope that so short and unceremonious an invitation will be excused by the circumstances? Good, I shall expect you. But there is yet another to be included among our guests. Gerald, you will not fail to conduct this gentleman, whose name I have not yet had the pleasure of hearing"—and he looked at the latter, as if he expected him to announce himself.

"I fear, sir," observed the young officer, pointedly, "that your dinner party would be little honored by such an addition. Although he wears the uniform of an American officer, this person is wholly unworthy of it and of a seat at your table."

Every eye was turned with an expression of deep astonishment on the