

build his dwelling, a kind of fort, in accordance with the custom of the day, to protect him against the attacks of the Iroquois. "These forts," says Charlevoix, "were merely extensive enclosures, surrounded by palisades and redoubts. The church and the house of the *seigneur* were within the enclosure, which was sufficiently large to admit, on an emergency, the women, children, and the farm cattle. One or two sentries mounted guard by day and by night, and with small field pieces, kept in check the skulking enemy, warning the settlers to arm and hasten to the rescue. These precautions were sufficient to prevent attack,"—not in all cases, however, as we shall soon see.

Taking advantage of the absence of M. de Verchères, the Iroquois drew stealthily round the fort, and set to climbing over the palisades; on hearing which, Marie Magdalenie Verchères, the youthful daughter of the laird of Verchères, seized a gun and fired it off. Alarmed, the marauders slunk away; but, finding they were not pursued, they soon returned and spent two days, hopelessly wandering round the fort without daring to enter, as, ever and anon, a bullet would strike them down at each attempt they made to escalate the wall. What increased their surprise, they could detect inside no living creature except a woman; but this female was so intrepid, so active, so ubiquitous, that she seemed to be everywhere at once. She never ceased to use her unerring fire-arms until the enemy had entirely disappeared. The dauntless defender of fort Verchères was M^{lle} de Verchères: the brave deed was done in 1690.

Two years subsequently, the Iroquois, having returned in larger force, had chosen the moment when the settlers were engaged in the fields with their duties of husbandry to pounce upon them, bind them with ropes, and secure them. M^{lle} Verchères, then aged nearly fourteen, was sauntering on the banks of the river. Noticing one of the savages aiming at her, she eluded his murderous intent by rushing towards the fort at the top of her speed; but, for swiftness of foot, the savage was a match for her, notwithstanding that terror added wings to her flight, and with tomahawk upraised he gradually closed on her as they were nearing the fort. Another bound, however, and she would be beyond his arm, when she felt the kerchief which covered her throat seized from behind. It is then all up with our resolute child;—but quick as thought, and while the exulting savage raises his hand for the fatal blow, the young heroine tears