

pest. But hark ! mingling with the howlings of the March storm is another sound. There is the tread of one thousand warriors ; the waving of eagle feathers ; the mutter of suppressed voices ; and a clanking of tomahawks, spears, and war-clubs, as the dusky line of Iroquois move on to their bloody work—the surprise and massacre of the Hurons at Fort St. Ignace.

When they reached the fort all was still as the grave. But soon above the wail of the tempest came the cries of the panic-stricken inmates.

A few only escaped to St. Louis, a town nearer Ste. Marie. There they told the horrible tale. The inhabitants fled, except the decrepit, the sick, the priests and eighty warriors, who calmly waited the onset. Just after sunrise it came.

Twice were the assailants repulsed, but in the third attempt they managed to force the palisades and proceeded to massacre their victims. They then set fire to the town, burning with it all the old and infirm who were unable to escape from the houses.

Fort Ste. Marie stood guard all day and all night expecting an attack, but none came.

During the day the rain ceased ; the wind lulled itself to rest. Towards evening, the snow fell silently, softly down and covered the blackened ruins in a mantle of purity. In the morning the snow lay white and deep ; so deep, that Elinere standing by her father's grave under the snow-crowned hemlocks was unconscious of approaching footsteps till Eugène stood beside her.

"I have come to say good-bye, dear. Three hundred warriors have joined us from Ste. Madeline, and we are going to pay those assassins up for their foul work of yesterday morning.

"To-morrow was to have been the happiest day of my life, when I would have claimed my sweet young bride. But now—There, don't cry, darling.

All may yet be well. Good-bye again. God grant it may not be forever."

"Farewell, true heart."

Hand clasps hand, heart reads heart in an agony of sorrow, and they are parted. Who shall say when to meet again ?

The Hurons divided into bands, and surprised and defeated two hundred Iroquois who were advancing to make an attack on Fort Ste. Marie.

The Iroquois made for the ruined Fort of St. Louis. But the avenging Hurons gave them no quarter. They killed many, captured some, and put the remnant to flight.

News of the disaster was carried to the main body at St. Ignace, and a vengeful attack was made on the Hurons at St. Louis.

What words can describe the fearful battle which followed.

Foremost in the fight was Eugène. One thought was ever uppermost—if they should fail there, the consequences to Ste. Marie. And with the energy of despair he led on his followers.

Far into the night the fight lasted, but neither the valor of patriotism nor the energy of despair could avail the doomed defenders. The Iroquois at last forced the defences, but they took but twenty captives. All the rest had fought to the death. Nor was it vainly they had striven. The Iroquois had been so weakened that the intended attack on Ste. Marie was abandoned.

Father Brebœuf was stripped of his sacrificial vestments. His body was hacked with tomahawks and knives ; yet he uttered no word of complaint.

The other prisoners (except a few who were reserved to carry the baggage) were thrown into the burning buildings and the savages departed, laughing with demoniacal delight at the dying shrieks of their roasting victims.

IX.

The solemn silence of midnight enveloped the dwellings of the Iroquois. In a wigwam a little apart from the