

Further conference was cut short by the hasty approach of a *coureur du bois*. The colonel approached as the man dismounted.

"Captain Stephens has been tried by le chef's court martial, and is condemned to be shot. Le chef has only a few braves and bois-brulés about him; and I could fetch you to the nest in an hour and a half by hard riding."

When the *coureur* learnt that the force had been dispatched he rode away again. And we shall likewise bid good-bye to the poet and the colonel, and join Browninge.

"Now, then, my good lad," the lieutenant said, "we have turned out a large force at your bidding to-day. Are you certain (a) that Captain Stephens is at Chapeau Rouge; (b), that Riel is there; (c), that there is such a stronghold at all?"

"Certainement, monsieur."

"It is well. Now, my men, keep in shelter of yonder bluff; for under cover of it only can we approach the den unperceived. We are now within three miles of the place." The men received the intelligence with enthusiasm, and put their horses at best speed.

When only fifteen minutes more remained to poor Stephens, the clergyman signed to the others to leave the room; and then, with his hands folded before him, asked the condemned man if he had any message to leave, or any peace to make with God.

No; he was not afraid to meet his God. He had wronged no man, and kept within the bounds of the laws set for his kind. But he had a message to leave—it was enclosed in a letter which he put into the hand of the minister.

"It is for Annette Marton. Oh, my God. We have been only two days betrothed. It is very hard to die."

"This doom was ordained for you, and you must try to meet it like a man."