

grinned while he grasped a strong woodman's axe and stole silently towards the barn.

Watching with a vigilant eye, listening with both ears, tip-toeing like a Huron on scout, he looked like a tiger seeking to surprise a timid fawn drinking the sweet water of a spring. Poor Elizabeth had no suspicion. She doubtless saw Tom, but paid no attention to his presence, unusual as it was at that hour of the day. Without interrupting her work she could see him, the lazy brother, advancing stealthily, a hand behind his back, as if hiding something; she was so accustomed to see the strange freaks of her brother that she was not surprised, and probably did not think it worth her while to stop work and talk with him.

Tom, hiding his axe, advanced towards his sister; he came almost upon her, and, watching a favorable moment, while the poor girl was stooping to pick up some small object on the earth, he straightened himself up, swinging his terrible instrument over the head of the unhappy girl, and with the arm of the woodman attacking a big tree, he struck the poor creature, killing her with a single blow.

Elizabeth died without a struggle; death was instantaneous. A deep cut, horrible to see, was gaping on the left side of the poor girl's neck.

Tom stared stoically at his dead sister for a few seconds; the frightful wound through which this young creature's life's blood was flowing, could not arouse a gleam of pity in the breast of this monster. On the contrary, it seemed to double his thirst for blood.

Gnashing his teeth, and foam oozing from his lips, the wild-eyed fratricide threw a glance at the shanties which formed part of the miserable farm, and wiping the cold sweat from his brow with his shirtsleeves he was starting towards the main building when his sister Annie, innocent girl, came to offer herself to his merciless blow.

The poor little one was advancing unsuspectingly towards the barn; she was coming to help her sister in her work.

Tom shuddered, but stiffening himself against any emotion that might turn him from his purpose, he hid behind the door, intending to destroy the poor child with one blow of his terrible axe.

The unhappy creature on reaching the door saw before her the lifeless body of Elizabeth, lying in a pool of blood; uttering a heart-rending shriek, she covered her eyes with her hands and fled.

This unforeseen flight only delayed her fate an instant longer. Realizing what a danger for him there was, should the child escape, Tom sprang like a tiger and ran after his victim.

In three steps he overtook Annie, still shrieking with horror and terror.

The deadly axe again came into play. Wielded by an arm, whose strength was increased by a maniacal fury, it described a large circle and fell on the poor child, almost severing the head from the body.