

had drawn her furred cloak closely around her person, and half-reclined and half-sat upon a skin which had been spread upon the floor. Surprise, grief and anger, intermingled, were depicted on her face, as she sat with compressed lips and distended nostrils—her full, flashing eye dauntlessly fixed upon the priest.

"It has been thus," said he, speaking rapidly, "since you first became a woman. I loved you with a love deep and devoted, which might then have been suppressed by absence and want of communication. It grew with your growth and the development of your beauties, and now has such complete mastery over me, that all else, every passion, every feeling within me are its slaves, and I am yours!"

"You have had my answer, Father," replied Marie, with dignity, "and I charge you never to return to this unwelcome and unholy theme again. Think! you a priest of God, from whose lips have fallen such holy teachings—you, whom I have deemed of Heaven, to insult me thus."

"Your own stubborn will stands between you and happiness," resumed the priest, in a tone of voice more loud and energetic. "Have I not offered to renounce all—my calling, my hopes, my ambitions—to go far from this place, to be, as it were, dead to all I have heretofore cherished, except the passion for you, which so fiercely burns within me, which will consume me? Oh! listen to me! turn not away!"

"Again, Father!" she said, with lofty scorn.

"Yes, again! ever!" said the priest, with impetuosity, as his eyes flashed with fierce passion; "lawfully or unlawfully, you shall be mine! Mine before you leave this spot! No fear of what is here, or may come hereafter, shall stay my purpose!"

A wild shriek rang through the hovel—a cry for mercy, for succor, in accents of despair, burst from her lips. In another instant Putnam sprang over the sledge, or sleigh, which half barricaded the doorway, made a single stride, and gripped the wretch by the throat.

"Die, dog!" said he, in a voice of thunder.

In an instant, and before the priest could draw the large knife at his girdle, a pistol shot broke upon the air, and the scattered brains of the Jesuit fell upon the garments of Marie, and upon the stalwart arm which had been interposed to rescue her from harm.

The priest writhed for a few moments in agony, as the thick blood oozed from his nostrils. A rattling sound came from his throat, there was a convulsion of the limbs, a long drawn sigh followed, and he was clay.

Marie, filled with terror and surprise, had retreated to the most remote corner of the hovel, and there shudderingly knelt, with her face covered by her hands, as if to shut out the horrible spectacle. The scene was too dreadful for her weak nature to bear, and with a groan she fainted and fell prostrate, as the priest's last respiration rendered to God his polluted soul.

The rough soldier knelt, and pillowed her head on his breast; and as he gazed with pity on her pale face, pressed upon her forehead and temples the snow which the crevices had permitted to enter the hovel. She soon revived, and gazing about in terror, her eyes fell upon the corpse of the Jesuit; with a shudder she turned away, saying, in a voice which trembled with strong emotion: