

THE SPAN O' LIFE

The little company were shocked beyond expression. The priest stood before them tall, commanding, his figure full of life and vigour, his eye bright and unfaltering, but his face lighted with a mysterious solemnity that forbade questioning.

"At midnight the bell of the chapel will sound. You may come then, but do not touch my body. To-morrow you will seek M. Compain, the curé of the Isle aux Coudres, and he will prepare my body for burial."

He withdrew, leaving the company in affrighted silence; ten, eleven struck, and at midnight the bell of the chapel began to toll. They arose, awe-stricken, and took their way to the little church.

By the dim light before the sanctuary they caught sight of the robe of the priest. He was lying on the ground motionless, his face covered by his hands as if in prayer on the first steps of the altar.

That same night the bells of all the churches along the river, at la Mal Baie, at Les Eboulements, at the Isle aux Coudres, at la Baie St. Paul, and up through every parish to Quebec, rang without the touch of mortal hands, and soon the wondering faithful knew that the passing soul for which they rang was that of la père Jean, the missionary to the Indians, once known as Jean Marie Gaston de Caldegues, Vicomte de Trincardel.

"Happy the people who still believe these sweet and holy legends."