

band that Remi had placed on her finger, on the great day when (according to custom) he had taken her down to Quebec to be gagée. Eucharist Sanschagrin had gone *too* far, she said to herself, and Remi should be told that very night, when they should sit together on the big "Coffre bleu."

But no Remi came that night, nor on the next. A long week passed, and yet he did not come. Then a month passed away, and for little Belline the light of the world had passed away too; and she began to think that he would never come. When anybody asked her what was wrong between them, she always said: "*Perhaps Rémi was not satisfied.*" Never one reproachful word was she heard to say of him; not even when one evening she met him on the village street, and he passed her without a look of recognition,—as many of her old friends were beginning to do now. At last came Christmas Eve, (they were to have been married at New Year's), the old father had gone to Midnight Mass, and little Belline was alone at home, preparing the midnight feast or *reveillon* of the traditional boiled pig's-head, which is always partaken of by the family and friends after Midnight Mass, to which all go fasting to Communicate. Little Belline had set the table in the kitchen, and was sitting rocking her chair slowly back and forth in the corner near the big stove, her knitting lying unheeded in her lap, as she watched the fire's reflection flickering on the wall, and wondered wistfully—poor little broken-hearted Belline—*why Rémi was not satisfied.*

Suddenly, without a sound of warning, the kitchen-door opened, and there stood Eucharist Sanschagrin! He stood there as though in hesitation, holding the open door with one hand, and a gust of wind, sweeping through the open porch, whirled the snow on to the floor where he stood. Little Belline looked up at him wearily, and then down at the snow, but she did not say anything; and then Eucharist shut the door quietly and went over to where she sat.

"Beline," he said, in a low voice, "I have long been wishing to speak to you, and to-night I have made up my mind to wait no longer! You know all is over between you and Remi Lapierre,—he saw us that day I kissed you, and you were so quiet he could but believe you were willing. I *swore* I should win you, and, right or wrong, I have taken good care to let others know why you and Remi are

estranged. Accept me now as your fiancé, and that will set you right at once; the friends you have lost will then return to you—do you *understand*? It is the one thing left for you to do, and it is what you will have to do; for in a quarrel I had with Remi about it, I gave him to understand that that was not the first kiss you had given me. I tried to win you by kindness, but in vain; you drove me to this, and it rests with you to spare yourself disgrace!"

He stopped, breathless, looking down into the poor little dazed white face, and then he bent his head quickly towards her. Belline sprang up and crossed the room, still with that terrible fixed stare—for she understood only too well. He followed her, but she turned upon him, and warding him off with her out-stretched hands, she walked backwards till she reached the table; then she could go no farther, and he was so near, with his blood-shot eyes peering into hers.

"Come, little one," he sneered, "its no use fooling! Even Rémi would be more "*satisfied*," to know you were my wife, that to think, as now, that you are—" they were the last words he ever spoke!

"Yes!" almost shrieked poor tortured Belline, "*Rémi shall be satisfied*"—and seizing the huge carving knife off the table she plunged it up to the handle in his chest. He staggered backwards and fell, his head lying in the snow-drift on the floor, and Belline stood leaning against the table, and watching him, watching him all the time with the same horrid fixed look in her eyes. Minutes went by; an hour passed; and still she stood there, staring at the corpse. The fire burned low, and went out. The wind roared through the stove-pipes; Belline never moved. The songs of the happy peasants coming home from mid-night mass were heard in the distance; but little Belline heard nothing whatever, and all she saw was the dead man lying near the door, the hair on his forehead stirred by the wind that stole under it.

And thus they found Belline on Christmas Eve.

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Forty years penitentiary; that was her sentence; and she had much to be thankful for, they told her; for the verdict, of course, was "Guilty"; but she had been strongly recommended to mercy. Many looking at her shook their heads, and said that long before an eighth of her sentence was served her troubles would