

"You have grazed his head, I will drive the ears of the blackgown into the stake."

The Mohawk aimed at Father Laval, who gazed upon him almost unconsciously. The moment was one of deep peril; no matter how skilful the aim, a sudden motion of the victim, an involuntary start would, instead of mutilation, bring death. It was a feat of nice and precise skill, and the Mohawk measured his distance carefully, and drew back his arm.

Suddenly the peal of a rifle broke upon the air, and then another and another, in quick succession, flashed from the forest, and a wild and exulting shout broke out. Down came the fierce Mohawk — another and another fell — whilst the whole northern circle of the forest seemed blazing with continuous flashes. Hushed was the voice of the warrior — mute the shrill tongue of woman — terror-stricken, they clustered together. Their rifles, and bows and arrows were in their cabins; there was a scattering in wild affright to obtain their arms; one figure alone sprung towards the bound prisoners, tomahawk in hand.