

A DAUGHTER OF NEW FRANCE.

BY MARY CATHERINE CROWLEY.

CHAPTER XXV.

September was come. At the river edge Indian women were lading their canoes with peltries that had come in late to be sent to Montreal earlier, and making other preparations for a voyage down the lakes.

A convoy was to depart that day for Fort Frontenac and the St. Lawrence, with some score of voyageurs, who were being engaged to conduct a new party to Le Detroit after the winter, when the breaking up of the ice should again leave the way navigable.

Returning colonists, happily, there were none. The only passenger was to be Robert de Reaume, who had come as an escort of Madame Cadillac and the other ladies.

"You are resolved to go, Robert," I asked regretfully, as I walked with him upon the prairie that lies between the palisade of Fort Pontchartrain and the woods. "Since Monsieur de Cadillac has made you a grant of land, and fortune is like to offer a man better chances in a new country than in a town, where many are pushing and elbowing for preferment, why not decide to remain, even at the eleventh hour?"

De Reaume shook his head. "No, I must go," he replied. "Doubtless you surmise why I so readily accepted the responsibility of escort to the ladies in their journey hither. I indeed esteemed it an honor to be chosen for the duty by Madame Cadillac.

"Ah, Normand, your sister Therese is a noble woman! Often did I admire her fortitude during that voyage of over three hundred leagues in an open canoe, with Indians and rough voyagers; for notwithstanding that we wintered at Fort Frontenac, the spring travelling was most difficult, because of the winds and rains. Never shall I forget her answer to the dames of Quebec who came down to the Esplanade to bid her adieu when we set out.

"Turn back," they pleaded, "this arduous voyage might be braved if you were going to a pleasant country, where you would have the comforts of life and good company; but why should you go into a wilderness where you will be like to die of hunger?"

Madame Cadillac only laughed at their lamentations and answered with spirit: "Do not waste your pity upon me, my dear friends. I am more than content, I am anxious to go. A woman who loves her husband as she should, has no stronger attraction than his company, wherever he may be. Everything else should be a matter of indifference to her."

"Ah, Normand, it is the love of such a wife that inspires a man to great deeds. I do not wonder Monsieur de Cadillac finds his courage sustained through many ordeals. Nevertheless, glad as I was to render service to my noble cousin Therese, it was because of the fair Chateleine of Chateauguay I came to Le Detroit.

"You know well, I have long loved her. When she was but a young demoiselle, I asked her for her hand in marriage; but so distressed was she, so sweetly confused at having to give me pain by saying no nay, that I saw her heart was no longer her own to give. At first indeed, I thought it belonged to you, Normand, but I speedily discovered my mistake. For soon she wedded the Sieur de Chateauguay."

"All the world knows how she mourned the death of the noble young bridegroom called by a soldier's duty so cruelly from her side. Yet youth does not grieve forever. And when I heard she was bent upon continuing her life of seclusion by withdrawing into the wilderness with Madame Therese, I determined to come also, thinking I might give her aid and protection during the journey, and hoping the steadfastness of my affection might make an impression upon her in the end. I meant to be patient, to bide my time, and perhaps take up the grant of land that Monsieur de Cadillac so kindly bestowed upon me. It was impossible, however, for me to see and speak with her often and yet keep the same resolution.

"One day I went to the manor-house. Madame Cadillac was absent upon some errand of charity or kindness at the Huron village, but in the little salon I found Barbe. She was solitary, and her pretty eyes were dimmed by tears.

"Impetuously I told her again of my love; I begged her to marry me, and vowed I would do everything in my power to make her happy."

"But, no," she said to me gently, "it could not be. She thanked me, with an appreciation that was almost tender, for my devotion, yet added with firmness, I must put the thought of her out of my mind, she could never be my wife; and this answer she begged me to take as final and forget her."

"Still I protested, I must needs remember; whereat she prayed me to forgive her then for whatever disquietude she had unwittingly caused me, and to be as ever her good friend."

"What is there but for me to accept her decision? After what has passed, my presence here would only be an annoyance to her; and besides I could not stay, and be so near yet so apart from her."

"Much was I moved by this unexpected confession from De Reaume. When he ceased to speak, I laid a hand upon his shoulder in cordial affection, and said with warmth: "Yours was a noble devotion, my friend; but, thank Heaven! life holds other interests than those of making love. And were it not so, I have heard from Madame Cadillac that never did Quebec boast a fairer boy of young demoiselles than are the maids who finished their studies at the Ursulines last year."

"I would there were no demoiselles or dames in the world!" interrupted Robert, passionately.

"That day he left us, and I remember still his hearty hand-clasp as he bade

me adieu. It was long ere we met again; but I may as well set down here that the spring after he said farewell to Le Detroit, he was married at Montreal to Elizabeth Brunet; the same who, as a little girl, so bravely entered the privations and perils of her flight with Madame Cadillac from Acadia. And I presume this blithe Elizabeth consoled him for his willow disappointment, for I have heard they lived most happily together. I understand, also, that two of his sons, Hyacinthe and Pierre, afterwards took up their residence at the strait upon the lands Sieur Cadillac had granted to him.

Of the homage which Miladi Barbe received from the officers of Fort Pontchartrain there was, besides myself, another witness, to whom the beauty of the young chateleine brought an unquiet heart.

Over all the region of Le Detroit was the glory of autumn. The tall trees about the fort mirrored me of the spirit of departed Indian warriors of heroic mould, arrayed in their blankets of scarlet and decked in gold color, amber and vermilion. Already the savages were preparing to withdraw farther into the forest for the hunting.

At the manor Therese was busied daily in superintending the conserving of wild grapes, pears, plums, and quinces into sweetmeats for winter use, and the needle of Miladi Barbe flew swiftly, as she helped to fashion the garments of bright-hued chitiz cloth which the ladies were accustomed to give as presents to the women of the Indian villages.

Barbe, with a shrinking from the dark faces of the savages, induced by the tragedy of her infancy, would never consent to visit these villages. Yet, with charity that, considering her antipathy partook of the heroic, she held, three times a week, in the outer kitchen of the manor house, a class in sewing for young Indian girls; and on Sunday taught the prayers of the church to the little red-skinned children, who loved her and named her, after their beneficent wood spirit, "la Dame Blanche" (the White Lady), because of the exquisite fairness of her complexion.

And she grew fond of them too. I know, and forgot the duskiness of their skins. For with Barbe all childhood was beautiful; and ever to this day, even in the most wretched and unlovely wail, she sees, I think, the image of the little Christ, as often when I behold her soothing some little one, she seems to me a picture of the sweet Madonna.

Of the girls who came to her for instruction in needlework there was one, a slight, fawn-like maiden, handsome, as the Indians esteem beauty; at least her eyes were flashing, her black hair glossy and luxuriant, and her teeth as white as white wampum shells. Like earnest though awkward at the task was this girl, that in teaching her the gentle chateleine took more care than with any of the others. Fawnelle, did I call her? Rather I should say, mayhap, she was graceful and pleasing as the sparrow-hawk, so admired for its bronze tinted plumage and the haunting beauty of its crest of scarlet and blue and its red-tipped wings. Like the sparrow hawk, too, Bright Bird she was named, or Ishkodah.

It was remembered afterwards, that whenever Barbe took up the rude handiwork of Ishkodah, to show her the better way to set a stitch or turn a seam, she was sure to sharply prick her finger; and more than once the beauty of Miladi's white hands was marred by a long angry scratch from the needle of the Indian.

If Barbe suspected that these trivial happenings had their origin in the pettiness of feminine malice rather than accident, she said nothing on the score to any one. Very sure am I that she did not for a moment dream of the cause, much less the extent, of the maiden's animosity to her.

One evening I had chatted long with Freze Constantin over our simple dinner. It was therefore later than usual when, leaving him to the reading of his breviary, I took my way to the manor to spend an hour or two.

From some distance off my steps were guided by the blaze from the hearthstone of the salon, or main apartment of the house. The night being warm for a fire and yet too damp without one, the shutters of the windows had been left open, to temper the air of the room to a pleasant balminess, there being, of course, no glass in the sashes.

Other illumination of the interior there was none, but as I drew near I could plainly see the occupants: Cadillac smoking before the chimney; opposite to him Therese, in the stately high-backed chair brought for her from Quebec, knitting in the frelight; and near by, on the settle, whose redness was concealed by beaver skins, gaudy blankets, and gay-colored cushions of swansdown, sat Barbe, a charming picture in her robe of sad colored satin, with its long pointed waist and high ruff, her hair dressed high and rolled back from her face, save for the short locks that curled about her brow and shell-like ears,—after the coiffure of the fashion dolt sent out from France, the which Therese showed me.

Beside her sat the handsomest man at the post, Dugue, and she was apparently giving him a lesson in music (as well as in love), for between his hands he held her guitar in an ungainly manner, and thumped upon the strings; whereat she laughed, and shook her head with a pretty affectation of a musico-master's despair over a dull pupil.

Now, though so picturesque, the scene was not to my liking; I paused as though stayed by the hand of fate, and stood without in the darkness, looking with moroseness upon the happiness and tranquil content within.

While I contemplated the tableau, feeling that I must have a moment to recover my equanimity before entering, I heard near me a faint sigh, and glancing sharply about, I saw, crouching beside a lilac bush close by, a blanketed figure.

My hand sought my rapier, but presently noiselessly dropped the sword back into its scabbard as I perceived the watcher was none other than Ishkodah, the Indian girl, the daughter of the chief Mawka, the Bear, and a

belle among the braves of her village. Ishkodah, the Bright Bird, but how changed! Never have I seen jealousy, anger and heart-breaking sorrow more clearly depicted than were these emotions portrayed upon the countenance of this dark maid of the forest as she remained motionless, her gaze riveted upon the beautiful white lady and the handsome lieutenant. And when at last the young chateleine in gay desperation caught up the guitar from the cavalier, and their hands for a second met, the agony that shook the frame of the unhappy Indian girl caused me almost to forget the thrill of pain it had sent through my own heart.

For there came to me the recollection of a story Dugue had told me the year before. One day upon the prairie, hearing a cry of terror, he had followed it, and found this girl striving to keep at bay a wild cat by the sheer force of her steady eye, while she screamed loudly for help.

Calling to her not to change her position, Dugue with a shot from his fuscine brought down the panther. Seeing it was indeed dead, the girl, in the reaction from her terror, caught the hand of her deliverer and pressed it to her heart, vowing eternal gratitude; then like a deer she sped away to the village above the fort.

At the time we had rallied Dugue much over the adventure, and hinted that he had best complete the romance by taking a dusky bride. For Cadillac would fain have the unmarried men of the settlement wed the daughters of the forest, hoping thus to render closer the friendship between the Indians and the French, and Freze Constantin was ever ready to bless these marriages in due form before the altar.

Vernon de Grand-Messil had, shortly before been hot to espouse the daughter of the Pottawatomee chief, Churlio, but her stern old pagan father would not hear of it, and spirited her away, to be mated to a warrior of a distant tribe.

Whether Dugue, in the loneliness of our isolation, would have succumbed to the charms of the maiden whom by his prowess he had saved from a cruel death, it is useless to surmise. Soon after this incident Madame Cadillac and her party reached Fort Pontchartrain, and at the first glimpse of the beautiful widow of the gallant Le Moyne, the lieutenant, I verily believe, promptly forgot the existence of the Bright Bird. With Ishkodah it was different, however. That she still treasured the remembrance of her deliverer was only too evident to me as he held her now. Doubtless because of the prompt response to her cry for succor, she had entrusted Dugue as the ideal warrior of her heart. For his sake perchance she had declined to take as a husband any brave of her tribe. She had seen one among her companions solemnly married in the church of the good Ste. Anne, a Frenchman; why might not a like happy future with the fair Manitou of whom Father Constantin told her people?

Thus no doubt had she cherished the day dream; therefore I pitied the girl. Still, I liked not the fierceness of her visage, as she looked in upon the cheeriness of that home room. She might dog the footsteps of Dugue and make life as miserable for him as she pleased, for all I cared; but I would not permit her by glance to rest longer on Barbe. Who could tell, mayhap she might cast upon Miladi the Evil Eye, or weave about her some uncanny spell of forest witchcraft!

Ah, had I not divined, had I so much as dimly suspected, the thoughts of vengeance that were taking form in the mind of the savage, what dire consequences might have been averted! But I saw only a girl, who was scarce more than a child, disappointed that the hero of her youthful fancy was charmed by the smile of la Dame Blanche.

So absorbed was she in watching the firelit scene, that ere she felt my proximity I leaped forward and grasped her arm.

Only the instinctive caution of her nature could have checked the exclamation of alarm and surprise that sprang to her lips, but which she checked back, until it might have passed for the jote of a frightened wood-bird.

"What does Ishkodah here?" I demanded in a low tone, yet with quiet sternness. "How is it she is within the palisade when, according to the order of the Commandant, the gates were closed at nightfall and no Indian is permitted to remain inside the fort during the hours of her tribe."

The girl faced me with an air of defiance and said in the patois, half French, half aboriginal, by which we had learned to communicate with the savages and they with us.

"Ishkodah was kept waiting too long in the White Chief's kitchen. She had come to the fort of the French with a memento of wild grapes for the wife of the chief. When she set out to return home, it was already dark and the gates were fast barred."

"She had but to stand forth so that the light of the guard's lantern might fall upon her face and he would have opened the wicket for her to go out," I answered severely. "But, be this as it may, I will now set Ishkodah free, that she may return to the lodge of her mother as a bird to its nest."

The maiden laughed slyly but unmisgivingly: "The warrior of the Swan's Quill should know a young bird returns no more to the nest when once it has spread its wings; far more like is it to fall to the snare of the woodsman."

She responded bitterly. "Ishkodah will gladly be released from this cage of the white man; in its air she scarce can breathe; her heart is oppressed as by a heavy burden, she longs for the peace and forgetfulness of the forest."

"The Bright Bird will return to the kitchen then," I said. "She will ask one of the Pani women to go with her to the gate. If I find she has not departed within half an hour, I will have her locked in the prison."

The girl clenched her hands and tossed back her head proudly, but she

had no choice but to obey. Casting upon me a malignant look, and with a last glance through the window, she turned away towards the kitchen, while I, passing on to the gallery, entered the house by the main door.

Later, I made enquiry of Sergeant Jolicoeur after he had been the round of the sentries, and he told me he had himself opened the wicket in the palisade and let Ishkodah pass out, about nine of the clock. He volunteered the further information that she often brought fruit to the manor to exchange for some trifling article of feminine adornment, and was most eager to learn the most graceful industries of the white women.

This good account of the maid did much to dispel my uneasiness over the sullenness I had read in her face. Moreover, a day or two later, I encountered her at the door of the church, and she flashed upon me a smile of rare radiance, while saluting me with respect. So guileless did she appear, that I gave myself no further concern over the recent occurrence, beyond a resolution to note her general behavior toward the ladies. And I reflected it was indeed a pity so bright a creature should have lost her heart to Dugue, who bestowed not a thought upon her, although this was small won when he might haunt the sunlight of the presence of the loveliest lady in New France.

A week or more later, I was at work of a morning in the King's Storehouse, as it was called, though the goods stored therein, having been secured by our Sieur, belonged not to his Majesty, but to Cadillac.

I had the ledgers upon the counter and was making entries of the trade of the post, when La Mothe came in.

"Normand," he said, after making sure there were no eavesdroppers to carry away his words, "I have now proof that de Tonty is striving to ruin this settlement. He has planned to establish a fort on the river of the Miamas and to draw thither the Indians of this neighborhood, in order that Fort Pontchartrain must needs be abandoned. His pretext is that if the French do not seize upon the position, it will be speedily occupied by the English. Of this, however, there is not the slightest danger. His real object is to weaken my authority, that he may rule in my stead."

"On what treachery sometimes lurks under the mask of loyalty!" I ejaculated, throwing down my quill, for here was a more important matter than the adding up of accounts of peltries.

"Yes," continued my brother; he has carried on his negotiations with much williness, reporting to Quebec and Ville Marie and even to France, that the hands about the strait are unfriendly to the fishing boat, the hunting rapid falling off."

I broke into a laugh that any one should make statements so absurd.

"Ay," would be a subject of merriment, were not the consequences like to prove no laughing matter," returned our Sieur, grimly.

"But how did you learn of these schemes, Monsieur Chevalier?" I asked, intent upon the significance of what I had just been told.

"In the most direct way possible, yet one upon which the schemer never counted. A letter came to me from Count Pontchartrain himself, setting forth the charges against me and demanding an explanation. This I am only too glad of an opportunity to give, yet how can I refrain from taking occasion to the manner of the demand?"

"Alack, be moderate in wording your response, mon Sieur," I cried, "and thank Heaven the minister has shown you so great a mark of his good will. While you possess his favor you have the ear of the King."

"Normand, you are a wise counsellor," replied De la Mothe, with less of excitement. "You shall write out at once the letter I send to France, and if the phrases grow too hot, I give you leave to tell me that I may temper them. Yes, the Italian will scarce supplant me in the confidence of the Count. Unfortunately a consequence of his acts menaces us nearer home. He has stirred up discontent among the Indians. I have noted many unfriendly looks from them of late; we must be ware of an attack. I think, however, he himself became a trifle alarmed, for last evening when I gave orders that the guard should be doubled and the garrison sleep under arms, he assented most readily."

"Nevertheless, this was not done," I declared, starting up.

"Not done!" cried Cadillac, astonished and in a rage. "How is that? Dugue and Chacornac heard my order as well as De Tonty. You know I retired early to my house to read this self-same letter, but it was reported to me duly that my commands were carried out."

"Mon Sieur, I have heard something of this," I said, "for it was commented upon. If you remember, Monsieur de Tonty warned you to be on the manor after you had left the barracks."

"Yes, and decanted upon how we had best conciliate the savages," rejoined my brother, with a nod.

"Exactly. But when he returned, he announced that you had countermanded the order you had before given. The guards were not doubled, there fore, and the garrison slept as usual. The report you received had reference to this supposed later order."

For the next few moments the air scintillated with the expression of Cadillac's wrath.

AN INTREPID MOTHER.

THE TERRORS OF A NIGHT.

The diligence from Paris to Chalons stopped one evening just before dark, some miles beyond the little town of Rouvray, to put down an English lady and her child, at a lonely roadside auberge. Mrs. Martin expected to find a carriage ready to take her to the Chateau de Senart, a distance of some leagues, whither she was repairing on a visit, but was told that it had not yet arrived. The landlady, a tall, coarse-looking woman who showed her into the vast hall that served as a sitting-room and kitchen, observed that the roads were so muddy and difficult at night that there was little chance of her friend arriving before morning.

"You had better, therefore," she said, "make up your mind to sleep here. We have a good room to offer you; and you will be more comfortable between a pair of clean, warm sheets than knocking around about in our rough country, especially as your dear child seems sickly."

Mrs. Martin, though much fatigued by her journey, hesitated. A good night's rest was certainly a tempting prospect, but she felt so confident that her friends would not neglect her that, after a moment, she replied: "I thank you, madam; I will sit up for an hour or so—it is not late, and the carriage may come, after all. Should it not I shall be glad to see you, which you may prepare for me at any rate."

The hostess, who seemed anxious that her guest should not remain in the great room, suggested that a fire might be made above, but Mrs. Martin found herself so comfortable where she was—a pile of fagots was blazing on the hearth—that she declined at first to move. Her daughter, though with her ears were listening anxiously for the roll of carriage wheels her eyes occasionally closed, and slumber began to make its insidious approaches.

In order to prevent herself from giving way, she endeavored to direct her attention to the objects about her. The apartment was vast, and lighted more by the glare of the fire than by the dim candle stuck into a filthy tin candlestick that stood on one of the long tables. Two or three huge beams stretched across halfway up the walls, leaving a space filled with fitting shadows above. From these descended a rusty gun or two, a sword, several bags, hanks of onions, cooking utensils, etc.

There were very few signs that the house was much visited, though a pair of empty wine bottles lay in one corner. The landlady sat at some distance from the fireplace with her two sons, who had their heads together and talked in whispers.

Mrs. Martin began to feel uneasy. The idea entered her mind that she had fallen into a resort of robbers; and the words "C'est elle!" (It is she,) which was all she heard of the whispered conversation, contributed to alarm her. The door leading to the road was left ajar; and for a moment she felt an inclination to start up and escape on foot. But she was far from any other inhabitant; and if the people of the house really entertained any evil design, her attempt would only precipitate the catastrophe. So she resolved on patience, but listened attentively for the approach of her friends.

The door creaked to alarm her. The whistling of the wind and the dashing of the rain, which had begun to fall just after her arrival.

About two hours passed in this uncomfortable way. At length the door was thrown open, and a man dripping wet came in. She breathed more freely; for this new comer might frustrate the evil designs of her hosts, if they entered. He was a red haired, jovial faced looking man, and inspired her with confidence by the frankness and ease of his manners.

"A fine night for walking!" cried he, shaking himself like a dog who has scrambled out of a pond. "What have you to give? I am wet to the skin. Hope I disturb nobody. Give me a bottle of wine."

The hostess, in a surly, sleepy tone, told her eldest son to serve the gentleman, and then, addressing Mrs. Martin, said: "You see your friends will not come and you are keeping us up to no purpose. You had better go to bed."

"I will wait a little longer," was the reply, which elicited a shrug of contempt.

The red haired man finished his bottle of wine, and said: "Show me in a roof, good woman—I shall sleep there to-night."

Mrs. Martin thought that as he pronounced these words he cast a protesting glance toward her and she felt less repugnance to the idea of passing the night in the house. When, therefore, the red-haired man, after a polite bow, went up stairs, she said that, as her friends had not arrived they might as well show her to her room.

"I thought it would come to that at last," said the landlady. "Here, Pierre, take the lady's trunk upstairs."

In a few minutes Mrs. Martin found herself in a spacious room, with a large fire burning on the hearth. Her first care, after putting the child to bed, was to examine the door. It closed only by a latch. There was no bolt inside. She looked around for something to barricade it with, and perceived a heavy chest of drawers. Feargave her strength. She half lifted, half pushed it against the door. Not content with this, she seized a table, to increase the strength of her defence. The leg was broken, and when she touched it fell with a crash to the floor. A long echo went sounding through the house, and her heart sank within her. But the echo died away, and no one came; so she piled up the fragments of the table upon the chest of drawers. Satisfied in this direction, she proceeded to examine the windows. They were well protected with iron bars. The walls were papered, and after careful examination, appeared to contain no sign of a secret door.

Mrs. Martin now sank down into a chair to reflect on her position. As was natural, after having taken these

precautions, the idea suggested itself that they might be superfluous, and she smiled at the thought of what her friends would say when she related to them the terrors of the night. Her child was sleeping tranquilly, its rosy cheeks half buried in the pillow. The fire had blazed up into a bright flame while the unsmoked candle burned dimly. The room was full of pale, trembling shadows, but she had no suspicious fears. Something positive could alone raise her alarm. She listened attentively, but could hear nothing but the howling of the wind over the roof and the pattering of the rain against the window-panes. As her excitement diminished, the fatigue—which had been forgotten—began again to make itself felt, and she resolved to address and go to bed. Her heart leaped into her throat.

For a moment she seemed perfectly paralyzed. She had undressed and put out the candle, when she accidentally dropped her watch. Stooping to pick it up, her eyes involuntarily glanced toward the bed. A great mass of red hair, a hand, and a gleaming knife were revealed by the light of the fire. After the first moment of terrible alarm, her presence of mind returned. She felt that she had herself cut off all means of escape by the door, and was left entirely to her own resources. Without uttering a cry, but trembling in every limb, the poor woman got into bed by the side of her child. An idea—a plan—had suggested itself. It had flashed through her brain like lightning. It was the only chance left.

Her bed was so disposed that the robber could only get from beneath it by a narrow aperture at the head withered making a noise; and it was probable that he would choose, from prudence, this means of exit. There were no curtains in the way, so Mrs. Martin, with terrible decision and noiseless energy, made a running knot in her silk scarf, and held it poised over the aperture by which her enemy was to make his appearance. She did not resolve to struggle in defence of her own life and that of her little child.

The position was an awful one; and probably, had she been able to direct her attention to the surrounding circumstances, she might have given way to fears, and endeavored to raise the house by screams. The fire on the hearth—unattended to—had fallen abroad, and now gave only a dull, sullen light, with an occasional bright gleam. Every object in the vast apartment showed dimly and uncertainly, and seemed to be endowed with a restless motion. Now and then a mouse advanced stealthily along the floor, but startled by some movement under the bed, went scurrying back in terror to his hole. The child breathed steadily in its unconscious repose; the mother also endeavored to imitate sleep, but the man under the bed, uneasy in his position, could not avoid occasionally making a slight noise.

Mrs. Martin was occupied with only two ideas. First, she reflected on the extraordinary delusion by which she had been led to see enemies in the people of the house and a friend in the red-haired man; and secondly, it struck her that, as he could fear no resistance from a woman, he might push aside the chairs that were in the way, regardless of the noise, and thus avoid the snare that was laid for him. Once even she thought that, with her attention so strongly directed to one spot, he had made his exit, and was leaning over her; but she was deceived by a flickering shadow on the opposite wall. In reality there was no danger that he would compromise the success of his sanguinary enterprise; the shrieks of a victim, put on its guard, might alarm the household.

Have you ever stood, hour after hour, with your fishing-rod in hand, waiting with the ferocious patience of an angler for a nibble? If you have, you have some faint idea of the state of mind in which Mrs. Martin—with far other interests at stake—passed the time, until an old clock on the chimney piece told one hour after midnight. Another source of anxiety now presented itself—the fire had nearly burnt out. Her dizzy eyes could scarcely see the floor, as she beat with fearful attention over the head of the bed—the terrible noise hanging, like the sword of Damocles, above the gloomy aperture.

"What," she thought, "if he delay his appearance until the light has completely died away. Will it then be possible for me to adjust the scarf—to do the deed—to kill the assassin—to save myself and my child? O, God! deliver him into my hands, I beseech Thee!"

A cautious movement below—the dragging of hands and knees along the floor—heavy, suppressed breathing—announced that the supreme moment was near at hand. Her white arms were bared to the shoulder; her hair fell widely around her face, like the mane of a lioness about to leap down upon its prey; the distended orbits of her eyes glared down on the spot where the question of life and death was so soon to be decided. Time seemed immeasurably lengthened out—every second assumed the proportions of an hour. But at last—just as all lines and forms began to float before her sight through a medium of blended light and darkness—a black mass interposed between her eyes and the floor. Suspense being over the time of action having arrived, everything seemed to pass with magical rapidity. The robber thrust his head cautiously forward. Mrs. Martin bent down. There was a half-choked cry—the sound of a knife falling on the floor—a convulsive struggle. Pull! pull! Mrs. Martin heard nothing—saw nothing but the scarf passing over the head of the bed between her two naked feet. She had half turned herself back, and holding her scarf with both her hands, pulled with desperate energy for her life. The conflict had begun, and one or the other must perish. The robber was a powerful man, and made furious efforts to get loose; but in vain. Not a sound escaped from his lips—not a sound from hers. The dreadful tragedy was enacted in silence.

"Well, Mother Gerard!" cried a young man, leaping out of a carriage that stopped before the door of the auberge the next morning; "what news

have you f...  
rived?"  
"In it...  
landlady...  
humored a...  
is a lady...  
friends; and...  
easily, and...  
We could...  
to bed."  
Show m...  
running in...  
They so...  
"Mothe...  
received m...  
"The e...  
have no...  
country."  
The dr...  
was the...  
from und...  
ing tongu...  
Mrs. Mar...  
her. She...  
hands at...  
child was...  
her moth...  
brought...  
weeps la...  
usual hea...  
CAT...  
SHE WHO...  
THOUGH...  
FIRST...  
Cathol...  
man the...  
to the...  
sex, not...  
sibility...  
portunity...  
an unk...  
to her d...  
table th...  
Cathol...  
with du...  
only in...  
possibil...  
All the...  
religion...  
basis of...  
of the...  
graces...  
above r...  
But the...  
sheer fo...  
filled in...  
instigat...  
to reali...  
sion is...  
rotten i...  
ception...  
tive, an...  
laxity m...  
she be...  
scandal...  
of Cath...  
ious an...  
lic prac...  
cyclical...  
vicious...  
prevail...  
conven...  
her sup...  
the ide...  
part of...  
Intellig...  
and met...  
of the...  
bricly h...  
has no...  
deep a...  
is the...  
public...  
to co...  
desert...  
call th...  
repres...  
challe...  
desire...  
Yet...  
Cathol...  
pomp...  
Intellig...  
folly...  
palle...  
manit...  
when...  
"Va...  
true...  
whom...  
that...  
said...  
of Lig...  
socia...  
her p...  
hood...  
In...  
only...  
Cath...  
to the...  
Blea...  
Cret...  
pew...  
and...  
sista...  
peas...  
sing...  
able...  
O...  
won...  
of th...  
of pi...  
wel...  
com...  
mot...  
in...  
tab...  
dis...  
ore...  
no...  
The...  
"s...  
eq...  
Th...  
in...  
fail...  
ro...  
fly...  
you...  
in...  
th...  
pi...  
G...  
G...