

Original in MASSEY'S ILLUSTRATED.

Marie ; or, The Last of the Hurons.

BY WM. A. LAUGHLIN, CANNINGTON, ONT.

PART II.

CHAPTER III.—THE ITALIAN PLOTS.

THE Huron mission increased in prosperity, and the Jesuits redoubled their efforts to enlighten the indolent and unwarlike Hurons, and their efforts were rewarded by the large number who came each year to be baptized.

At this time—1648—the Hurons considered themselves secure from the treacherous Iroquois of New York State, hence they relaxed their watch and ward. After the French Governor, M. de Montmagny left Canada, the Iroquois lost respect for his successor, M. de Ailleboust, and they only kept in quietness till an opportunity might arrive for effective action. Their desire for war was fostered by a late arrival in their midst, an Italian, Manfred Gonzaga by name.

This Italian—whom the reader will recognize as Marie's lover—eloquently addressed the eager Iroquois. He told them that in his travels he had penetrated into the Huron country, and had been honored much by the Hurons, who rested in perfect security, as a result of the late treaty between themselves and the Iroquois. His oratory was studied and elaborate, and, at the same time, highly imaginative. All his ideas were expressed by figures addressed to the senses; the sun and stars, mountains and rivers, lakes and forests, hatchets of war and pipes of peace, fire and water, were employed as illustrations of his subject with almost oriental art and richness. His earnestness excited the sympathy of his audience, and his persuasive eloquence sank deep into their hearts. The Iroquois, although eager for blood, considered that they might not be successful after all; but the Italian told them that plunder, and scalps in plenty could be had. He falsely added that there were hundreds of French girls in the Huron forts, who would make good wives for the Iroquois braves. Thus did Manfred excite the fiends to war. The remainder of this story is truly sad to relate, as the Iroquois soon prepared an expedition to annihilate their kin—the Hurons.

CHAPTER IV.—THE MASSACRE.

IN the village of St. Joseph all was haste and excitement, for the Hurons were also preparing to go forth on an expedition. They mustered their full number, and left the village in the care of the feeble old men and women. They joyfully advanced on their route, and when Three Rivers was reached, they repulsed an attack of the Iroquois. The Hurons returned in triumph to St. Joseph, but no crowds of women and children flocked to welcome the warriors home. All was silence, and the Hurons knew that their bitter enemies, the Iroquois, had massacred their dear ones in cold blood.

One sweltering morning in July, the little chapel was crowded with devotees, when suddenly the alarm sounded, but too late, for the revengeful Iroquois soon slaughtered the defenceless women and children. The fiends, led by the Italian, next directed their attention to the priest, Father Daniel, who confronted them before the altar, but they remorselessly pierced his body with many arrows, and his corpse was consumed in the pyre of the burning chapel.

Thus was the mission of St. Joseph extirpated. The Italian monster was not yet satisfied, as all the missions were not levelled to earth. He offered to lead the Iroquois in their next expedition, and they consented, for he equalled any of their number in craft and cruelty.

Next year the Iroquois, after lurking in the woods

for some time, at last surprised the village of St. Ignace, and murdered the sleeping inhabitants. They stole by the gray dawn of morning upon St. Louis, and bursting through the palisades slaughtered the defenders, and burned the cabins. Here they found Father Breboeuf and Lallemant. Reserving them for future torture, Manfred sent them forward with an advance party. The flames of St. Louis warned the inhabitants of St. Marie of some dire calamity.

Marie was in the fort, and she urged its Huron defenders to fight till the last. Accordingly a party of Hurons threw themselves before the advancing tide of victorious warriors, and all day long the battle raged, and when night fell the yells of the combatants rose from the dark, pine woods.

Manfred is revenged, for he has Breboeuf in his

