

of all the company last night at Madame de Grandmaison's. I have made the most particular inquiries of Varin and Deschenaux. They needed no asking, but burst out at once into praise and admiration of her gaiety and wit. It is certain she was not at Beaumanoir."

"You often boasted you knew women better than I, and I yielded the point in regard to Angelique," replied Cadet, refilling his pipe. "I did not profess to fathom the depths of that girl, but I thought you knew her. Egad! she has been too clever for you, Bigot! She has aimed to be the Lady Intendant, and is in a fair way to succeed! That girl has the spirit of a war-horse; she would carry any man round the world. I wish she would carry me. I would rule Versailles in six weeks, with that woman, Bigot!"

"The same thought has occurred to me, Cadet, and I might have been entrapped by it had not this cursed affair happened. La Pompadour is a simpleton beside Angelique des Meloises! My difficulty is to believe her so mad as to have ventured on this bold deed."

"'Tis not the boldness, only the uselessness of it, would stop Angelique!" answered Cadet, shutting one eye with an air of lazy comfort.

"But the deceitfulness of it, Cadet! A girl like her could not be so gay last night with such a bloody purpose on her soul. Could she, think you?"

"Couldn't she? Tut! Deceit is every woman's nature! Her wardrobe is not complete unless it contains as many lies for her occasions as ribbons for her adornment!"

"You believe she did it then? What makes you think so, Cadet?" asked Bigot eagerly, drawing near his companion.

"Why, she and you are the only persons on earth who had an interest in that girl's death. She to get a dangerous rival out of the way,—you to hide her from the search-warrants sent out by La Pompadour. You did not do it, I know: ergo, she did! Can any logic be plainer? That is the reason I think so, Bigot."

"But how has it been accomplished, Cadet? Have you any theory? She can not have done it with her own hand."

"Why, there is only one way that I can see. We know she did not do the murder herself, therefore she has done it by the hand of another. Here is proof of a confederate, Bigot,—I picked this up in the secret chamber." Cadet drew out of his pocket the fragment of the letter torn in pieces by La Corriveau. "Is this the handwriting of Angelique?" asked he.

Bigot seized the scrap of paper, read it, turned it over and scrutinized it, striving to find resemblances between the writing and that of every one known to him. His scrutiny was in vain.

"This writing is not Angelique's," said he. "It is utterly unknown to me. It is a woman's hand, but certainly not the hand of any woman of my acquaintance, and I have letters and billets from almost every lady in Quebec. It is proof of a confederate, however, for listen, Cadet! It arranges for an interview with Caroline, poor girl! It was thus she was betrayed to her death. It is torn, but enough remains to make the sense clear,—listen: 'At the arched door about midnight—if she pleased to admit her she would learn important matters concerning herself—the Intendant and the Baron de St. Castin—speedily arrive in the Colony.' That throws light upon the mystery, Cadet! A woman was to have an interview with Caroline at midnight! Good God, Cadet! not two hours before we arrived! And we deferred starting in order that we might rook the Seigneur de Port Neuf! Too late! too late! Oh cursed word that ever seals our fate when we propose a good deed!" and Bigot felt himself a man injured and neglected by Providence.

"Important matters relating to herself," repeated Bigot, reading again the scrap of writing. "The Intendant and the Baron de St. Castin—speedily to arrive in the Colony." No one knew but the sworn Councillors of the Governor that the Baron de St. Castin was coming out to the Colony. A woman has done the deed, and she has been informed of secrets spoken in Council by some Councillor present on that day at the Castle. Who was he? and who was she?" questioned Bigot, excitedly.

"The argument runs like water down hill, Bigot! but, par Dieu! I would not have believed that New France contained two women of such mettle as the one to contrive the other to execute, a masterpiece of devilment like that!"

"Since we find another hand in the dish, it may not have been Angelique after all," remarked Bigot. "It is hard to believe one so fair and free-spoken guilty of so dark and damnable a crime." Bigot would evidently be glad to find himself in error touching his suspicions.

"Fairest without is often foulest within, Bigot," answered Cadet, doggedly. "Open speech in a woman is often an open trap to catch fools! Angelique des Meloises is free-spoken and open-handed enough to deceive a conclave of cardinals; but she has the lightest heels in the city. Would you not like to see her dance a ballet de triomphe on the broad flagstone I laid over the grave of that poor girl? If you would you have only to marry her, and she will give a ball in the secret chamber!"

"Be still, Cadet! I could take you by the throat for suggesting it! But I will make her prove herself innocent!" exclaimed Bigot, angry at the cool persistence of Cadet.

"I hope you will not try it to-day, Bigot," Cadet spoke gravely now. "Let the dead sleep, and let all sleeping dogs and bitches lie still. Zounds! we are in greater danger than she is! you cannot stir in this matter without putting yourself in her power. Angelique has got hold of the secret of Caroline and of the Baron de St. Castin; what if she clear herself by accusing you? The King would put you in the Bastille for the magnificent lie you told the Governor, and La Pompadour would send you to the Place de Greve when the Baron de St. Castin returned with

the bones of his daughter, dug up in your Chateau!"

"It is a cursed dilemma!" Bigot fairly writhed with perplexity. "Dark as the bottomless pit, turn which way we will. Angelique knows too much, that is clear; it were a charity, if it were a safe thing, to kill her too, Cadet!"

"Not to be thought of, Bigot; she is too much in every man's eye, and cannot be stowed away in a secret corner like her poor victim. A dead silence on every point of this cursed business is our only policy, our only safety." Cadet had plenty of common sense in the rough, and Bigot was able to appreciate it.

The Intendant strode up and down the room, clenching his hands in a fury. "If I were sure! sure! she did it, I would kill her, by God! such a damnable cruel deed as this would justify any measure of vengeance!" exclaimed he, savagely.

"Pshaw! not when it would all rebound upon yourself. Besides, if you want vengeance, take a man's revenge upon a woman; you can do that! It will be better than killing her, much more pleasant, and quite as effectual."

Bigot looked as Cadet said this and laughed: "You would send her to the Parc aux cerfs, eh, Cadet? Par Dieu! she would sit on the throne in six months!"

"No, I do not mean the Parc aux cerfs, but the Chateau of Beaumanoir. But you are in too ill humor to joke to-day, Bigot." Cadet resumed his pipe with an air of nonchalance.

"I never was in a worse humor in my life, Cadet! I feel that I have a padlock upon every one of my five senses; and I cannot move hand or foot in this business."

"Right, Bigot, do not move hand or foot, eye or tongue, in it. I tell you

the slightest whisper of Caroline's life or death in your house, reaching the ears of Philibert or La Corne St. Luc, will bring them to Beaumanoir with warrants to search for her. They will pick the Chateau to pieces stone by stone. They will drag Caroline out of her grave, and the whole country will swear you murdered her, and that I helped you, and with appearances so strong against us that the mothers who bore us would not believe in our innocence! Damn the women! The burying of that girl was the best deed I did for one of the sex in my life, but it will be the worst if you breath one word of it to Angelique des Meloises, or to any other person living. I am not ready to lose my head yet, Bigot, for the sake of any woman, or even for you!"

The Intendant was staggered by the vehemence of Cadet, and impressed by the force of his remarks. It was hard to sit down quietly and condone such a crime, but he saw clearly the danger of pushing inquiry in any direction without turning suspicion upon himself. He boiled with indignation. He fumed and swore than his wont when angry, but Cadet looked on quietly, smoking his pipe, waiting for the storm to calm down.

"You were never in a woman's clutches so tight before, Bigot," continued Cadet. "If you let La Pompadour suspect one hair of your head in this matter, she will spin a cart-ropo out of it that will drag you to the Place de Greve."

"Reason tells me that what you say is true, Cadet," replied Bigot, gloomily. "To be sure; but is not Angelique a clever witch to bind Francois Bigot neck and heels in that way, after fairly outwitting and running him down?"

Cadet's cool comments drove Bigot beside himself. "I will not stand it;

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