

island. With a swift and vigorous movement she thrust at her companion with all her might. For a moment he hung on the curving edge of the bluff, clinging grimly to a root of fern; then it gave way in his grasp and he splashed heavily into the water.

Without looking after him, the Countess of Vane scrambled down the landward side of the bluff, and ran breathless and stumbling through the gloomy woodland to the bushes where the canoe was hidden. Well enough she knew that in a few minutes at most her persecutor would have swum ashore and be in furious pursuit. But if once she could launch the canoe, then with ten seconds' start she would be free!

Twice in her mad flight she fell to the ground, but she reached the canoe. Frail craft as it was, it was heavy work dragging it for a girl's unaided arms, and there were things in it which she dared not stay to remove. Frantically Marjorie dragged at the birch-bark shell. She got it clear of the bushes, she pushed it down the strand to the very water's edge. Already she heard the crackling of brushwood in the gloom, and the hard breathing of Michel as he ran.

Panic took possession of the girl. She thrust the canoe into the water, and as he ran towards her from the trees she stepped in.

Alas! In her reckless haste the thin bark had struck some obstacle, some jagged branch or sharp-edged stone. The water was pouring through its side, and already the canoe was partly filled.

Even so she would have trusted herself to it sooner than retreat, but ere she could clear the beach Michel rushed down. Splashing knee-deep into the water beside her, he seized her in his arms without a word, and she felt his breath hot in her face as he turned again to breast the slope of the island shore.

He carried her up through some brushwood, and set