

deep recesses of the higher rocks, were glad to seek the friendly shelter of the spacious cave, upon whose cold floor they made their beds in silence and laid themselves wearily down to sleep. "Before the dawn," they said, "we will set out again, but in the meantime let us try to rest. We shall have need of all our strength to-morrow!" And so they slept and rested. Slept, though the swift canoes of their invincible pursuers bore down, with vengeance and death in their wake, upon them. Slept, even when the fiendish war-cry of the feared and hated tribe outnoised the angry storm, at the very threshold of their doomed retreat, to arouse them. Slept a terrible, pitiful sleep, nor awoke till the crafty Iroquois had made defence and escape impossible.

"*Kohe! Kohe! Kohe!*" They were awake now; men and women and children! The death-knell had stirred them at last, and O, how it froze the blood in their brave hearts, and smote them with horror and despair! Seizing their weapons madly, chieftains and warriors rushed to the mouth of the cave, but the storm and the darkness made their well-meant resistance vain; escape from the cruel and degrading death which menaced them on every side was clearly impossible! And now, above the demoniacal chorus of war-shouts, came the booming of fell explosives, whose lurid glare revealed to the bewildered Micmacs the savage exultation of the strong and merciless battalions below; torn asunder by the powerful combustibles, the great rocks tottered and fell, while the wails of the women and children rose piteously above the din and tumult of the awful hour. In their ungovernable frenzy, not a few of the veteran warriors rushed headlong down the cliffs to defy the hideous carnage, but the volleys of poisoned arrows aimed from the ambush of canoes below soon arrested their daring flight.

Driven at length by the intolerable heat to seek the mercy of the tomahawk and quiver, the remainder of the unhappy band forsook the cave, and went out boldly to a sure and cruel martyrdom. In scores they fell, under the showers of broken rock, or pierced by the unrelenting darts from below, their dying groans drowned by the blatant shrieks of their insatiate slaughterers, and the persistent roar and rumble of the storm. It was a busy night for the victorious red men, and well they did their fierce and fearful task. Sated at last with the lives of well-nigh two hundred victims, they turned their light canoes back towards their distant camp, leaving the lonely islet, now dimly discernible in the grey of the early dawn, to bear its own testimony to their unexampled cunning and cruelty. And a woeful one it bore, with blood dripping and trickling from its topmost crag to the water-lapped rocks beneath; there was blood, too, on the dark river's surface, and blood upon the drifting arrows and broken paddles that rode out to sea with the early morning tide; such a night of blood as it had been, no wonder that it stands rubric to this day among the records of the storied past!

There was unwonted glee in the victors' camp next day, but for every gory scalp that trophied the conquerors' belts there lay high and dry upon the lonely islet's naked rocks a grim and ghastly corpse. Out of the two hundred Micmacs who landed for shelter at its shores, five only are said to have survived the horrors of that fearful night, to hand down to posterity the harrowing story of the massacre they had witnessed with their own eyes.

From the crannies of the higher rocks, all stained and slippery with the warm blood of their slaughtered friends, the haggard and frightened survivors emerged at sunrise; around and about them everywhere, prone on the slopes of the stony isle, were heaped the mangled and bleeding bodies of their erstwhile hale and hearty band,

and trickling down in sluggish, sickly rivulets from stone to stone, were the clotted, crimson streams of their stolen life-blood. Speechless with pain and horror the poor bereaved survivors stood mournfully surveying the hideous spectacle; above them, a hot and pitiless sun—beneath them, the wide, indifferent river—around them, on every side, the fetid, reeking forms of murdered men and women. O, it was of all maddening and revolting conceptions, the very worst and awfulest!

Finding among the wreckage a couple of their own canoes, the little remnant of the martyred Micmac band launched them speedily and pulled for shore; hard and fast they worked the paddles with their nervous, feverish hands, eager to stretch the distance, at every stroke, between them and the blood-red charnel-islet, now swarming with hawks and carrion-crows, whose wild, uncanny rejoicings at the unexpected booty, fell like steel-barbed arrows on the stout hearts of the poor forlorn fugitives.

At last the shore was reached, and the dark tragedy of the awful night recounted to the sympathetic settlers on whose hospitality the sorrowing survivors were now thrown. Some of the more interested, doubting the truth of so harassing a tale, put out in boats to visit the uncanny spot, and returned only too sadly convinced of the reality—a massacre, indeed, had taken place—the weird and woeful evidences of it were only too mournfully visible all over the desecrated island.

Thus, the days and the years and the centuries came and went, and though the scarlet pools had vanished and the ghastly faces of the murdered Micmacs stared no longer at the rising sun, *L'Islet au Massacre*, shrouded in a lugubrious solitude, bore a lasting and solemn testimony to the unspeakable struggle which had strained her strong sinews on that eventful night; and, to this day, if one goes into the houses of the older villagers at Bic, when the family is grouped about the fireside on a wild wintry evening, he is told that years afterwards, when time had tempered the more revolting aspects of this fierce, foul deed, the stout-nerved settlers who had heard the story, would go down to the riverside on its mournful anniversaries, and there see the ghosts of the murdered red men wandering, in the pale, cold moonlight, along the silvery beach, and blending their hoarse, low sighs with the muffled moaning of the sea. Once or twice, too, they say, when ill-luck had come upon the redoubtable Iroquois, the giant spectres were seen to come trooping down the rocks from the cave above, each bearing in its fleshless hand a lighted torch, whose sickly flame, fanned by the damp midnight breeze from the river, revealed to the petrified watchers on the shore the grim faces of the ghostly procession as they wended their dismal way to the waters' brink. Here they danced with a horrid levity, rending the still night air with their unearthly howlings, and making of the ill-starred island a spot that even to this day is dreaded and avoided by many superstitious *habitants*, whose faith in their country folklore is unwavering and strong.

Some years ago, it is said, that in the corners and recesses of the cave there were found the dried and blanched bones of many of the unfortunates who perished there; and if, even now, one sees from the top of the hill some small white object nestling amid the lower rocks, he may believe that it not unlikely is a remnant of the calamitous night when, in a baptism of flowing human blood, this spot received its stirring and significant title of *L'Islet au Massacre*.

One of the many results of this fearful massacre was, that no Micmac ever again set foot upon the cursed isle, preferring to perish from cold and want, if benighted in its neighbourhood, rather than seek a refuge in the gloomy cavern above.