

had been slain. Endeavouring to inspire them with something of her own courage, she forced them to go in, and placed a barrier between herself and the dusky savages, who were swarming around.

Once inside, the little commander breathed more freely, although here, while in momentary safety, her real anxiety commenced. How to guard the fort with the slender resources at her command, against a troop of yelling Indians, might well have taxed the courage and energy of a soldier skilled in such warfare; but she proved herself equal to the emergencies of the hour. Her first care was to inspect the fort, which she found so unguarded that the enemy could easily have entered through the broken palisades, which she had forthwith restored to their places, carrying some of them with her own delicate hands. Then, when she had stopped all the breaches, she visited the blockhouse where the ammunition was kept, and where she found the two recreant soldiers, who had so gallantly scampered away on the first alarm of the advancing foe. One of the "braves" was hiding in a corner, and the other had a lighted match in his hand. To the enquiry of the energetic Castellan, as to what he intended to do with the match, he replied that he was going to light the powder and blow up the fortress and all that it contained. To this Mademoiselle answered that he was a miserable coward, and ordered him out of the place, and she spoke in such a resolute tone that he immediately obeyed. She then threw off her bonnet, put on a hat, and taking a gun in her hand, told her brothers that they were to fight to the death; that they were fighting for their country, and she reminded them that their fathers had taught them that gentlemen were born to shed their blood for the service of God and the king.

The brave brothers of their noble sister, ten and twelve years of age, respectively, assisted by the soldiers, who, seeing the determined attitude of their mistress, had plucked up some courage, commenced to fire from the loop-holes upon the savages, who, perhaps ignorant of the weakness of the garrison, showed some hesitation in attacking a fortified place, and occupied themselves in chasing and butchering the people in the adjacent fields. Madeleine then ordered a cannon to be fired, partly to deter the Iroquois from an assault and partly to warn some soldiers who were hunting in the surrounding woods.

While thus endeavouring with strained energies to keep the enemy at bay, her perplexity was considerably increased by seeing a canoe approaching the landing place. It arrived at a very inopportune moment, and was occupied by a settler named Fontaine and his family, who were on their way to seek the shelter of the fort. How to save them was a difficult question, as the enemy were all around, and Madeleine knew that unless some effort was made, they would assuredly be all massacred. But to decide and act with promptitude was with her the work of a moment. She appealed in vain to the two sol-

diers, but their valour was not equal to the attempt, so leaving the faithful Laviolette to keep watch at the gate, she boldly seized her gun and marched off to the landing place alone. She apprehended wisely enough that the savages would suspect that it was only a ruse to entice them towards the fort, in order to make a sortie on them, and her plan succeeded so well that she was enabled to save the family and make them all march to the fort before her in full sight of the enemy, and put such a bold face on that they thought they had more to fear than she had herself.

Strengthened by her little reinforcement, she redoubled her vigilance, ordered her guns to be fired whenever the enemy showed themselves, and was incessant in her watchfulness of the place so strangely committed to her care. The elements themselves fought against her. A terrible night came on, accompanied by snow and hail, and judging by the movements of the Iroquois, she feared that they would climb into the fort under cover of darkness. Accordingly she assembled her formidable garrison, consisting of six men, and told them that God had saved them so far from their enemies and that they should take care not to fall into their hands that night. As for herself, she would show them she was not afraid. She would take charge of the fort with an old man of eighty, and another who had never fired a gun. "And you," she said to Pierre Fontaine, "with La Bonte and Garchet, (the two heroic soldiers), will go to the blockhouse with the women and children, because that is the strongest place; but if I am taken, don't surrender even if I am cut to pieces and burned before your eyes. The enemy cannot hurt you in the blockhouse, if you make the least show of fight."

Having made these precautionary arrangements in anticipation of the horrors of the dark and stormy night and the onslaught of the foe, she placed her little brothers on two of the bastions, the old man on the third, while she took up her position on the fourth, and during all the excessive anxiety of that terrible night, in the teeth of the wind, the snow and the hail, the cries of "All's well" were kept up between the blockhouse and the fort, so that the place seemed guarded by a competent force. Thus amidst the alternations of hope and fear, slowly dragged along the hours and days of unceasing vigilance, while she awaited the longed-for relief.

Upon receiving their instructions to proceed as fast as possible to the relief of the beleaguered fortress, M. de la Monnerie and his forty men set out upon their perilous expedition. Travelling in Canada in 1690, through unbroken forests and along snow-covered trails, was somewhat different from the present mode of progression. The C.P.R. and its luxurious coaches were not in requisition, nor did the majestic steamer breast the waters of the broad St. Lawrence, so that as the lieutenant and his men trudged on hour after hour, they seemed to make but little progress and much fear was manifested amongst them that their expedition would be

rendered useless, and that the fort would have fallen and its few inmates been massacred before they could arrive. However, they marched on bravely, waveringly, hoping even against hope.

Arriving at nightfall at a place they thought suitable for pitching their camp they were horrified to find that a dismal tragedy had recently been enacted there, as the marks of the merciless tomahawk were too visible around. Stretched about the blackened remains of a camp fire were the scalpless forms of ten human beings, who had evidently been killed where they lay, and apparently by some practised hand. At their first approach their minds were filled with apprehension, lest their friends had been massacred, but a nearer view betrayed the fact that the dead bodies were those of Indians, and that some white scalpers had been at work, which indeed was the case. Some hours before the advent of the relieving party, this lonely spot was the scene of one of those barbaries too common in the annals of the times. Stretching in deep slumber around the smouldering camp fire were twelve Indians, and close by consulting together in whispers, were two white women and an English lad, who had been captured at Worcester. The women were Mrs. Dunstan and her nurse, Mary Neff. Some weeks before Mrs. Dunstan's house had been raided and burned by the Indians. Her husband succeeded in saving some of his children, but her newly-born babe was dashed against a tree, and she and her companions carried away, and were now in the hands of their captors to be reserved for a miserable fate. The two women and the boy were eagerly consulting together on the probabilities of escape that presented themselves in the recumbent forms of the sleeping savages, and the remorseless tomahawks which lay ready at hand. Revenge it was, and they determined to exercise it on their unconscious foes. Seizing each a hatchet, they crouched silently by the bare heads of the savages. Then they all struck at once, with blows so rapid and sure that ten of the twelve were killed ere they could awaken. One squaw ran into the forest, followed by a little boy whom they left unharmed; the rest slept the tranquil sleep of death. A weird watch they kept of the corpses till the break of day, when this Canadian amazon scalped them, and made her way back to the settlements with her ghastly trophies, which she received a bounty of the Government.

It was this gruesome spectacle that caught the eyes of M. de la Monnerie and his companions as they prepared camp for the night, but as such sights were only too common in those hunting days, finding they were the bodies of their friends, there was but little commiseration for the fate of the Indians. They slept as tranquilly as the surroundings would permit, with daylight pushed on in their some march.

Meanwhile the gallant young defender of the fortress was keeping watch and ward on her bastions, surrounded by a persevering foe, and ignorant of the succour that was providentially near.