

# The Saturday Reader.

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## CANADIAN BRIGANDS.

A THRILLING NARRATIVE  
Of the exploits of the  
NOTORIOUS GANG OF ROBBERS  
Who infested  
Q U E B E C  
In 1834 and 1835.

Translated for the SATURDAY READER from a  
French pamphlet published in 1837.

### CAMBRAY AND HIS ACCOMPLICES.

Waterworth made an involuntary bound, and, raising his head, his eyes met the face of his associate without, who was grinning and winking in a most significant manner.

"Well, good evening, little wife," said Cambrey; "try and be a little more reasonable." Then, turning to Waterworth: "I think it is time to turn in, if we wish to make an early start."

"Charles, Charles," interrupted his wife, by way of banishing her grief. "Charles, when are you going to give me the shawl you promised? it has not yet come."

"Make yourself easy; you'll get it to-morrow, for I hope to make a little money before daylight. Good bye."

Thus speaking, followed by his companion, he ascended a somewhat crooked flight of steps, and entered a low garret of about eight feet square, containing one miserable bed, here the two brigands, finding themselves alone, burst into a hearty fit of laughter.

"She's an innocent chicken," said Cambrey, "we'll give her time to get fast asleep, and then we can get out of the window. I have the ladder ready fastened."

"Are you there, friends?" whispered Cambrey.

"Here," replied a black and bloated looking phantom in a corner, "we all are, as trusty as the sword of state. I've had a good sleep already and the most charming of dreams—I dreamed we had settled for the old woman, frightened the servant, and pillaged and burnt the house."

"Charming indeed," said Cambrey—"but time presses—and you," addressing Lemire and Stewart, "you know that it's to Mrs. Montgomery's we're bound,—do you know the old woman?"

"To Mrs. Montgomery's," said Lemire, by my faith but that's funny; why, I had arranged with Gagnon to pay her a visit to-morrow—It's as good as a fortune to go there; will we break her head—assassinate?" "No, no—no useless severity," said Cambrey, "merely tie them up so that they won't be able to see; I'll undertake the pillage, come."

"The oath, the oath," said Waterworth, "our safety lies in that."

"Ah, yes, that's strictness, said Mathieu, "but with gentlemen of our reputation it is seldom necessary."

Cambrey however obliged them to take a horrible oath, by which they bound themselves, under the penalty of death, neither to back out of the undertaking, nor part with the secret. The ceremony over, they followed each other in silence through the street, and ascended to the Upper Town.

"Ah, here's the casket," said Mathieu, throwing himself forcibly against a little yard door which gave way to the blow, and through which he entered followed by the others.

"Look at Waterworth," continued he, "I was certain he would be the last to enter—he's always a coward on occasions like this."

"I would be so easily known," said Waterworth, "but let's see who will keep the secret longest."

Above their heads stood the kitchen window, open, and through it they got into the house.

By accident, in the lower kitchen they heard the barking of a small dog, and the flooring of the upper storey resounded to the footsteps of a person who had jumped suddenly out of bed. In a moment the burglars had hidden themselves in the four corners of the room, and there they remained as fixed and silent as marble statues.

In an upper apartment, a female in the decline of age, awoke suddenly, crying in a faltering voice to her servant:

"Elizabeth! Elizabeth! did you not hear a dull sort of a sound? What is the dog barking at? Listen! listen! don't you hear? Heavens if it should be robbers!"

"Yes, I hear it," replied the girl, "it's in the kitchen; perhaps it's the window shaking with the wind. No, something is walking about there; let us go down and see."

"No, no, in the name of God, don't be so bold," shrieked the old woman, nearly losing her senses. "Lock the door and listen. Oh! heaven help me, I'm choking."

"What is the matter, ma'am?" whispered a little boy of ten years old, who slept upon a sofa, and who had been awakened by the noise.

These were the only persons in the house.

The robbers, though somewhat alarmed, remained quiet, scarcely allowing themselves to breathe, and listening eagerly to every sound, in the hope of discovering how many people they had to contend against. Soon, however, the house relapsed once more into a deep and painful silence, broken only by the sobs of the women, the ticking of the clock, and the interrupted occasional barking of the dog, which rushed through the different apartments snapping at every obstacle in his way.

How difficult it is to paint the sensations of the mind, to produce in truthful color, the suspense, the weariness, the suffering of the lover who waits in vain the coming of his mistress; his impatient heart overflowing with affection, with despair, and with jealousy, but however intense may be his feelings at such a moment, they are nothing, positively nothing, compared with the mental torture endured by the two poor women we have spoken of. Weak and unprotected, trembling and frightened almost to insensibility, every moment brought fresh horror to their imaginations, every moment brought them nearer the dreaded time, when their door would be forced in, and they would behold themselves in the presence of demons on a mission of destruction, perhaps of death, when the hand of the robber would be fastened upon their throats, and the pistol or the knife gleam savagely in the hands of a merciless and powerful foe. The night wind whistling through the crevice of a window; the cracking of a board; the buzzing of an insect, were to them noises pregnant with their coming fate, noises that chilled the very blood in their hearts, and petrified their frames with fear. To await danger in a state such as this, is to suffer a thousand deaths; it is to live beneath the millstone, and feel the crushing of your bones; to be exposed to the points of a thousand needles, and feel them entering your flesh, and tearing you to pieces; or to be present at a festival of spectres and feel their ghastly faces near your own; to behold them writhing in hideousness, and to be forced to listen to the frightful imprecations they pour into your ear. It is to endure all these at once till the

mind borders on insanity, the brain reels, and the body succumbs before the dread phantom of despair. Such was the trial these unfortunate creatures had to endure for nearly an hour, between their first alarm and their second."

"Elizabeth, I hope they are gone," said the old woman, faintly, coming gradually to her senses. "I will lie down again, but I do not think I shall be able to sleep; let us wait for a moment however."

During this interval, the robbers had changed neither place nor posture, nor were they free from all emotion, impatience, fear, vexation and covetousness vanquished them by turns; they too had their reflections, they too had their sufferings to endure. One moment their thoughts wandered amid danger and infamy, presenting fearful visions of the gallows and of death; the next they brightened into a golden future, mad revelry, lewdness and debauchery.

"I thought I heard the voice of a man," said one of them; "what do you say about going up stairs?"

"Wait, wait, for a moment longer." "No, no; I'm certain there are only women, come; lads, up we go; up we go."

At that instant, Cambrey struck a light, showing the way; breaking open the doors he rushed up stairs, followed by the others, and soon found himself at the chamber containing the women. Entering, Cambrey received a violent blow with an iron poker from the servant Elizabeth McLellan.

However, the three inmates were soon seized by their throats, tied up in blankets, and placed under the surveillance of three of the robbers, while the remaining two pillaged the house. Mrs. Montgomery was in a faint the greater part of the time, but, coming to herself, she implored the man watching her, in accents that might have melted the heart of a tiger: "You look like a good man," said she, "oh! have pity on me, and do not hurt me." "No, no, I'm not a good man. I'm a wicked man, a very wicked man. Mathieu, have you found anything yet?"

"Tut, tut; silence; hold your tongue." The robbers ransacked the whole house, emptied the cupboards, bureaux and trunks, tossing and mixing everything, appropriating a large quantity of silver and articles of value which they carried off with them, after having taken the cruel precaution of rolling and tying up the women and the boy in carpets, in such a way, that it was impossible for them to get out without great exertion.

It was daylight when they left the house, and as they passed through St. John's gate, laden with their spoils, they encountered the men of the watch, returning from their posts, who permitted them to pass unchallenged.

Cambrey and Mathieu were placed on trial for this crime (28th March, 1837), and upon the evidence of Waterworth, their accomplice, they were both found guilty. At the time, this took place, Lemire had been transported, and Stewart was dead.

### CHAPTER X.

An Expedition by Water—The Price of Indiscretion—A Critical Moment.

Some days after the robbery at Mrs. Montgomery's, two men might have been seen unrolling the sails of a small boat near the East India wharf; a third, standing on the wharf, said to one of them:

"Don't miss your chance, whatever you do; it's a matter of some consequence, as you know, and concerns our personal safety."

"Never fear, comrade, I'll do my share."

The sails were adjusted, and a moment after a light west wind carried the boat into the stream in the direction of the Island of Orleans.