

with one arm on her stomach. The Widow Belisle was present. Catherine was already dead and cold. I remember asking Widow Belisle whether Catherine died in pain. She replied, that she placed her left hand on her stomach, and exclaimed, 'O my God, I am suffocating.' Widow Belisle slept with the deceased, and had given her a cup of ginger tea before going to bed. The next morning, Antoine, who had been absent, came to the house about half-past eight. He remarked, as he came out of the room, after looking at his wife, 'If I had staid at home, my wife would not be dead.' Widow Belisle answered, 'Is it not true that you asked me to come and stay with your wife? He replied in an angry manner, 'No.' He seemed much grieved. Widow Belisle again said to him, 'Did you not tell me to come and sleep with your wife?' He then said, 'If I did, I don't remember.' Doctors Prévost, Larocque and Desjardins made an examination of the body."

The next witness examined was a midwife of St. Jerome, named Adelaide Fortier. Her statement would appear to show that Widow Belisle did not bear a favorable character in the neighbourhood. She said:—

"About half-past twelve in the night of the 18th, Jean Baptiste Desforges came to my house, and asked me to come and see his brother's wife, who was dead. I inquired whether she died alone. He answered, 'No, Widow Belisle was there.' I then refused to have anything to do with the body till the doctors should arrive; because I did not like to hear that she had died while Mrs. Belisle was present."

So far, the evidence of the prisoners' guilt does not appear very conclusive. The circumstances were not irreconcilable with the supposition that Catherine Desforges had died a natural death, and the medical examination made at the time was slight and insufficient. Strong suspicions of violence or death by poison, however, existed among the people of the village. An enquiry was held by Mr. Scott, J.P., and the two brothers Desforges with Widow Belisle, were arrested on the charge of murder. We now come to certain statements or disclosures made by the female prisoner. These were sworn to by one Laurent Beauchamp as follows:—

"While the female prisoner was in jail, I transacted her business. I told her that she could not be bailed out till the doctors

had examined the stomach of deceased. Her reply was, 'They cannot find any poison, for there is none.' At the same time, she said to me, 'I will tell you how the matter happened, and then you will know all about it.' But I did not listen to her, and went home. About a fortnight afterwards, she resumed the subject, and told me that Catherine did not die naturally, but that she, Mrs. Belisle, was clear from the crime of causing her death. She then informed me that she had not committed the deed, but that she was sleeping by the side of deceased, when another person (whose name the witness was not allowed to state) put a pillow over Catherine's mouth, and sat on it for some time. After this person got off the pillow, deceased gasped a couple of times, and expired. Widow Belisle then went out and roused the neighbors."

The trial was resumed on the 17th of April, when J. B. Belisle, son of the female prisoner, made the following statement:—

"On the 17th of January, I was at the house of my mother, at St. Jerome. Saw there J. B. Desforges. He said he was going, about sunset, to do some little jobs for his brother, who was absent. My mother also informed me that she would sleep at Antoine's house that night. My father died in 1856. Before he died, there were difficulties between him and my mother, on account of Antoine Desforges, who frequently visited at the house. My mother has mentioned to me that it was not she that caused the death of Antoine's wife, but another person (not allowed to be named in Court, but evidently meaning J. B. Desforges.) This person, she said, put a pillow over Catherine's mouth, and sat upon it. My mother said, that while this person was sitting upon the pillow, she felt the limbs of deceased stiffen. My mother further told me, that when she became aware of what was going on, she started up in the bed, and said to the other person, 'O my God! what are you doing there?' The other replied, 'If you don't shut up, I will do the same to you.' My mother then got out of bed, and told the other to light a candle. Catherine then gasped twice, and expired."

Another son of Widow Belisle, Isidore Legault, deposed that he had received the same account from his mother, during a visit which he made to her in jail; and that she had not disclosed the facts sooner because she was in danger of her life. These disclosures confirmed the suspicions already excited and revealed the cause of death. There was also some