

demand was made in terms indicating that a refusal would be attended with a thrust from a lance. Everything was given up instantly, even to the wearing apparel in actual use. This condescension was calculated to soften the mind, but an Indian's heart is not like the heart of ordinary men; you would fancy that Nature itself has intended it as the seat of inhumanity. A detachment of 400 French regulars arrived to protect the retreat of the British. The English fled off. Alas for those who could not follow, or lagged behind from the main body! Their corpses strewed the soil and the interior of the works. This butchery, which at first had been attempted by a few Indians only, was the signal on which all the rest became like so many infuriated wild beasts. They struck right and left with their war-axes at those within their reach. The massacre, however, was not so great, nor did it last as long, as their fury would make one fancy; it attained to some forty or fifty cases. The patience of the British, who contented themselves with bowing their heads under the hatchets of their executioners, appased it all at once, without bringing back reason and justice amongst them. Amidst incessant yells, the savages continued to make prisoners.

I arrived at that moment. It is more than man can do to possess insensibility in such heartrending scenes. The son wrested from a father's arms, the daughter violently separated from a mother's embrace, the husband dragged from his wife's bosom, officers despoiled of every garment except their shirt, without regard to their rank or to common decency: crowds of unfortunate beings rushing wildly, some towards the French tents, some towards the fort,—in fact filling up any place likely to afford shelter; such was the doleful spectacle which broke on my sight. In the meantime the French were neither idle nor indifferent spectators of the catastrophe. The Chevalier de Lévis hurried wherever the tumult was the greatest, with the courage dictated by clemency and natural to so illustrious a name. A thousand times he braved certain death, from which he would not have escaped, notwithstanding his rank and merit, without the interposition of a special Providence, which withheld the arm ready to strike. The French officers and the Canadians followed his example, with a zeal worthy of the humane treatment which has always characterized this nation, but the bulk of our forces, employed in guarding our batteries and the fort, was prevented by the distance from helping in this work. Of what avail could 400 men be against 1,500 infuriated savages who confounded us with the enemy? One of our sergeants who had actively resisted their cruelty, received a lance thrust which prostrated him. One of our French officers, in recompense of similar devotion, received a large wound which brought him to death's door: moreover, in those moments of alarm, no one knew which way to run. The measures seemingly the most judicious ended in a miserable failure. M. de Montcalm, who heard of these doings late, on account of the distance between his tent and the spot, as soon as informed of them, used such speed in coming there as proved the goodness and generosity of his heart. He seemed to be everywhere at once: prayers, threats, promises,—he tried everything; at last he resorted to force. The position and merit of Colonel Youn (Young) induced him to exert his authority and use violence to tear from the hands of a savage, (Colonel) Young's nephew. But, alas! the delivance of this young man cost the life to some prisoners, who were butchered on the spot, lest they too should be rescued alive. The tumult still continued, when some one thought of telling the British to march off "to the double quick." This plan succeeded. The savages, finding pursuit useless and having made some prisoners, desisted. The British continued unmolested their retreat on Fort Lydis, where they arrived, at first only three or four hundred strong. I cannot state the number of those who, having taken to the woods, succeeded in getting to the fort, guided by the report of the guns, which were, during several days, fired for their guidance.

The rest of the garrison had not, however, met with death, nor was it detained in captivity; several had saved themselves by retreating to the fort or to the French tents. It was at the latter place I went as soon as the tumult was over. A crowd of forlorn women bemoaning their fate, surrounded me; they threw themselves at my feet, kissed the skirt of my garment, uttering lamentations which were heartrending. Nor had I the power to remove the cause of their grief. They called aloud for their sons, their daughters and husbands, torn from them forever, as if I could restore them. An opportunity presented of lessening at least the number of these unfortunates. I eagerly availed myself of it. A French officer informed me that in his camp there was a Huron who had in his possession a child, six months' old, whom the savage would certainly put to death, unless I hastened to rescue it. I hurried to the savage's tent, and found him holding in his arms

the innocent victim, who was covering with kisses the hands of its executioner, and playing with some porcelain ornaments which hung about its person. This spectacle inflamed me with a new ardor. I commenced by awarding to the savage all the praise which was due to the bravery of his tribe. He saw through me at once.

"Here," said he civilly to me; "do you see this child? I have not stolen him; I found him stowed away in a hedge. You want him, but you shall not get him."

In vain I tried to convince him how useless it would be for him to attempt to retain the infant as his prisoner, as, from the want of proper nourishment, it was sure to die.

He produced some tallow to feed it with, adding: "That even if the child did die, he could always find a corner to bury it in; and that thou, I might, if I choose, give it my blessing."

I replied by offering him for his little captive a tolerably large sum of money. He declined; but consented in the end, if I would give him in exchange another British prisoner. I had made up my mind to seeing the negotiation end by the death of the child, when I noticed the Huron converse in the Indian dialect with another savage. Our dialogue had heretofore been carried on in French. This gave me fresh hope: nor was I disappointed. The result was that the child would be mine, if I gave in exchange the scalp of an enemy.

"You shall have it very shortly," said I, "if you will keep to your bargain." I ran to the Abnauis camp and asked the first savage I met, if he owned any scalps, and if so, that I would consider it a favor to be presented with one. He immediately, with much kindness, untied his wallet and allowed me the pick of scalps. Possessed with one of these barbarous trophies, I carried it triumphantly, followed by a crowd of French and Canadians, who were curious to see the end of this singular adventure.

Joy lent me wings: I ran in an instant to my Huron friend: "Here," said I, "here is your pay."

"You are right," said he; "it is really a British scalp; the hair is red!" (Red hair often distinguished the British colonist.) "Take the boy; he is yours."

I did not allow him time for a second thought, and seized hold of the child, who was mostly naked, wrapping him up in the folds of my robe. The little fellow was not accustomed to be so roughly handled, and uttered cries, which indicated as much awkwardness in me as pain with him. I consoled myself with the hope that he would soon be confided to more experienced hands. I arrived at the fort. The infant's wailings caused all the women to rush towards me; all hoped to find a lost child. They examined him eagerly, but neither their hearts nor their eyes could discover a son. They withdrew to vent again their grief in loud lamentations. My embarrassment was great to find myself with my charge, some forty or fifty leagues from any French settlement. How could I provide for so young an infant?

I was overwhelmed with my thoughts, when I happened to see passing by a British officer who spoke French fluently. "Sir," said I, "I have just rescued this child from captivity, but he is certainly doomed to die, unless you order some of these women to nurse it, until I find means to provide for him. The French officers present backed my prayer.

The British officer then spoke to the women. One offered to nurse the child if I would guarantee her life and that of her husband, and have them conducted safe to Boston via Montreal. I accepted these terms, and asked Mr. de Bourlamarque to allow me three grenadiers to escort the English to the camp of the Canadians, where I hoped to find means to fulfil my engagements. This worthy officer acceded to my proposal.

I was just in the act of leaving the fort, when the child's father turned up: he had been struck by a snell, and lay quite helpless; he entirely concurred in what had been planned to save the life of his child. I started with my English friends (1), escorted by the three grenadiers. After a fatiguing but successful march of two hours, we arrived at the quarters of the Canadians. I shall not pretend to portray the crowning feat of my undertaking: there are some things which are beyond the power of words. We had scarcely arrived in the neighborhood of the camp, when a loud exclamation caught my ears. Was it from grief? was it from joy? It proceeded from all this, and from more. It was the voice of a mother. From afar, the piercing eye of the parent had recognized her darling boy; who can deceive a mother? She rushed wildly towards the English lady who held the child, tearing it from her arms frantically, as if she feared to lose it a second time. One can imagine her transports on finding again her child, and on being

(1) The English woman who had consented to take charge of the infant, and her husband.