

In the second case, if the spark lighted upon a matter not easily set on fire, as for example upon wood, it must have been extinguished immediately, for every one knows that a spark of this kind is extinguished as soon as it comes in contact with a substance either unflammable or which does not easily take fire. Experience shows us, besides, that it is more than probable that sparks of this kind set fire neither to wood nor shavings, nor even straw, because these substances are not sufficiently inflammable. It might be otherwise in the case of a spark falling upon dry linen, because linen then is like tinder. If a spark fall from a pipe, the case is different again, because such a spark is but a quantity more or less considerable, of burning tobacco, which continues to burn after its descent according to the laws of gravitation upon the bodies which are beneath it. The particle of tobacco, nourishing the fire it contains, not only preserves its vigour but even forms a species of focus, by contact with which a substance not easily inflammable, as for instance, wool, might take fire.

If then, to continue the supposition, a spark escaping from the lantern set fire to the Speaker's Room, the fire must have made some progress when twenty minutes afterwards, the Nuns, on their return, passed in front of or near this room. If the door of the room were open they would either have seen the light produced by the flames among the shavings, or have perceived the strong and peculiar smell of the smoke of wood which is being consumed before flames are produced, and the Nun tells us, as do also those who accompanied her, that they neither saw any light nor perceived the smoke.

If the door of the Speaker's Room was shut when the Nuns passed this room on their return, it is evident that this same door was opened after the departure of the Nuns. For, supposing it to have been closed, how was it possible for the watchman Rousseau who first of all perceived the light of the fire, to have seen it in Richelieu Street, that is to say in the Street opposite to St. Olivier Street, upon which the Speaker's Room fronted?

Looking at the plan, it will be seen that the Speaker's Room fronted upon St. Olivier Street; that this room was separated from the Chapel by a corridor upon which the door of the Speaker's Room opened, opposite to a door leading to the chapel traversing the width of this corridor. This was the only place through which Rousseau, looking across the chapel could see into the Speaker's Room. He expresses himself thus, (Deposition No. 11, page 26), "About a quarter or twenty minutes after nine, in returning from St. Olivier Street, after having examined, in passing, the front of the building, where I perceived no light, and as I arrived at the corner of Richelieu Street, after having come up Côte-à-Coton, I perceived a light in one of the North East windows of the chapel. I did not pay much attention to it, thinking it was the light carried by the Nuns in going their rounds. I then went as far as the door of the Chapel and a few steps farther. Then I turned round to see if this light was that which the Nuns might be carrying. Perceiving a great light by the window to the North East of the door, I got up on a pile of wood and discovered that the fire was in a heap of shavings in one of the rooms to the right, behind the Chapel, and the doors of which were open." (This room has been proved by other witnesses examined to have been the Speaker's Room). The door, then, was open; it was opened, then, after the departure of the Nuns, by some one in the building, and it was that person who removed the piece of wood placed above the latch of the entrance gate in St. Olivier Street; it was the same person who a second time unbarred this door and left it open three or four inches, according to the statement of Rousseau; and lastly, it was this same person who set fire to the building and who escaped by the door which was left ajar. For, unless this explanation be accepted, how can we account for this strange opening and closing of the doors on two different occasions, which occurred in the building in the course of the evening in question. (See the depositions Nos. 11, and No. 3 page 13.)