

beset with savages. What do you want more."

"Where is the canoe?"

"It is in the swamp," he replied, "at the foot of the old pine. It lets in water. Go."

Annette would have detained him; but, in a moment, he had crept out of sight. She retired cautiously by an obscure path and reached the fort in safety; but not unseen by the savages.

That evening Annette was on her way to carry up some refreshments to the guards on the bastions when her step aroused a woman, who, worn out by the continual alarms, was resting in a corner, her head enveloped in a cloak, leaning wearily back. "Oh Annette!" she cried as she started up, "what is it? Have the savages burst in? My house is gone, my husband, my blessed children. Shall we all be murdered?"

"Do not alarm yourself, Madam Dubord," Annette answered. "The savages are not here."

"But they are in the village," cried Madam Dubord. "Oh! where are all our people? We shall be tormented."

"Let us pray and trust that we shall be saved," said Annette.

"Oh, Annette! I have prayed day and night to the Holy Virgin and all the saints to preserve us."

"Pray to God," said Annette. "God is able to send us aid."

"Oh! Annette, you blessed girl, can you not do something for us? You say Lavigne is hid in the coppice. He will do anything for you. Ask him to get us help?"

"He will not," replied Annette; "but a thought has come into my mind, Madam Dubord. I will try this night to get to the canoe. I will go to Montreal and send you relief; but can you not take a short watch to-night?"

"Me!" cried the poor woman. "Oh, Annette! the savages will kill you."

"I will trust in God and make the attempt," she said. "God will preserve me, or, if I fall into the hands of the savages, He will take me to Himself. I will go."

Madam Dubord threw her arms around her. "Oh! Annette," she said, "how happy we shall be when you come back

safe;" then, with a shudder, as she thought they should feel as if in still greater danger when the brave Annette was gone, Madam Dubord drew her cloak closer and again leaned back.

It was with much difficulty that Made-moiselle De Verchères was persuaded to consent to the proposal of Annette; but, feeling that it was the only chance of procuring assistance, and overcome by Annette's earnest entreaties, she yielded, gave what instructions she could, and, drawing out her little monogram, entrusted it to Annette to be delivered with the message "from Marguerite De Verchères in the extremity of danger."

Night drew on; cold and changing heavy masses of vapor came sweeping from the west; sometimes charged with light showers of snow, again leaving the sky clear and serene. When gathering clouds at length obscured the moon, the gate of the fort was opened by Hélène, Annette stole forth, and Mademoiselle and her brothers, looking over the parapet, saw her glide rapidly away. A ray of hope, the first she had ventured to indulge through all these long, dreadful days, now illumined the breast of Marguerite, and she looked forward, almost with exultation, to the hope of soon living again in peace. The war-whoop of the savages dispelled this short-lived hope as, with horror, two Indians, with frightful yells, were seen pursuing, at full speed, the hapless Annette. The fugitive and her fierce assailants were dimly visible till they were lost in the shadow of the woods, when the shouts of the savages died away in the distance. Nothing could be done. There was no possibility of attempting to save her. Marguerite's self-reproaches for having allowed her to depart amounted almost to despair. The inmates of the fort watched for hours expecting to see the unfortunate girl dragged past in ferocious triumph; but the night wore away without further alarms.

CHAPTER IV.

Annette meantime, with fear and haste, rushed forwards, aware that grim death in its most hideous form was pursuing her. It had been her intention to gain the cedar