

We will fight them for our country—we will fight them to the end.  
And the Lord is God of battle—He will help us to defend,  
He will strengthen us to dare."  
Thus spoke Madeleine Verchères.

Swift and stormy fell the gloom  
O'er the silent fields of doom,  
And there came a sound of marching from the bristling palisade,  
Where a tiny squadron followed on the footsteps of the maid:  
Age and youth arose to fight  
In the horror of the night;  
And the hands that gripped the musket feeble were, and very tender,  
For the children grew to warriors, and a girl was the defender  
When the redmen came to stare  
At the fortress of Verchères.

Still and starless crept the hours  
Where the slaughtered kissed the flowers  
Strewn amid the beaten harvest. In the shadows lay the foe,  
Heard the sentries fling their challenge, heard the footsteps come and  
Till the firm, unceasing tramp [go;  
Sounded like an armed camp,  
And the muskets' sudden flashing stabbed the darkened air with red  
Like a quick and angry question—an imperious voice that said:  
"Death is crouching everywhere  
On the bastions of Verchères."

Hour by hour the watch was kept,  
Night by night the challenge leapt,  
For the sword of France was naked and the soul of France beat high,  
And the redmen shrank from battle as the days went drifting by;  
While the glint of weapons broke  
From beneath each army cloak,  
As the women paced the ramparts with a martial step and steady,  
With the gaze of hooded falcons, with the musket priming ready,  
As a password to declare  
The defiance of Verchères.

Vengeful, thro' the forest glade,  
Came La Monnerai to aid.