

"Instantly, if your fatigue is not too great. She is all impatience. Horses will be in readiness within two hours; for before meeting the marquis, I will direct my servant to place them at your disposal."

The interview was here interrupted by the entrance of a soldier, who saluted, and said to Rouelle:

"General de Montcalm desires that you should visit his quarters instantly."

"I will attend him," replied Rouelle. "Father, I will meet you two hours hence at the residence of Colonel de Blonville. *Au revoir.*"

After the officer had departed, the priest sat at the table, and resting his forehead on his hand, seemed buried in thought, where, for a moment we will leave him.

Marie de Blonville was a Canadian by birth, her father having been sent to that country some twenty years before, with a lieutenant's commission, but at the time of the opening of our tale, he held the rank of colonel, and was then in command of Fort Jamonville.

Victor Rouelle had left the gay scenes of Paris in company with a large force, which, a few years previously, had been sent to Canada under the Marquis de Monneville, for the purpose of strengthening and extending the French possessions. He had risen by merit to his present rank, and had distinguished himself, by his gallantry, on several occasions, when fighting under De Blonville, upon whose personal staff he had been placed. Thus forming one of the military household of his commander, and being much about his person, Rouelle was frequently thrown into the society of Marie, the result of which was an attachment full of devotion on either side. Their vows had been plighted with the full sanction of Colonel de Blonville, and they had only awaited his recall from his post to consummate their union. During five years preceding this time, Father Ambrose had been the spiritual adviser of the beautiful girl, except during those periods when his duties as a negotiator and linguist had required him to be absent.

The priest had thus watched the unfolding beauties of Marie, as year by year the bloom of youth had given place to the rich ripeness of womanhood. As though her full, sweet lips the confessions of her derelictions had fallen on the Father's ears; as he saw her speaking, beautiful eyes, looking with the gaze of innocence into his, as she told of errors so slight that heaven itself would scarce require intercession for pardon; as she had knelt before him, and with her beautiful hands clasped together and eyes upraised to heaven, while her perfumed breath warmed his cheek, a fierce lust had entered the hollow heart of the Jesuit; and frequently, with a heated brain and pulse throbbing with an unholy passion, had the hypocrite in priestly garments passed from the presence of the pure being whose voluptuous beauties had nearly hurled guile and ambition from their thrones, and given to lust supremacy. A demon had entered the soul of the priest, but met no holy thoughts, no heaven-derived, chastening, sacred power, to exorcise it thence; all there was alike vile—alike unholy—alike at variance with all sacred feeling. As yet he had not dared to drop a hint or word which would indicate desire, though at times something akin to madness had seized his mind, and fearful of his lack of self-control, he had hurried from her presence.

Such were the feelings of the Jesuit when the request from the commander-in-chief, some months previous to this time, had sent him on his errand of negotiation with the Iroquois, and now, on his return when it needed only a sight of the object of his lust to raise his passions to