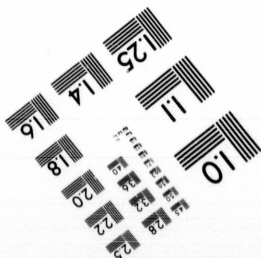
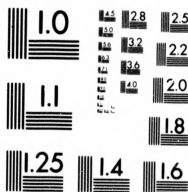
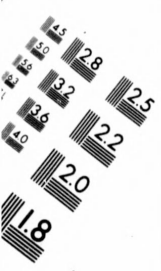


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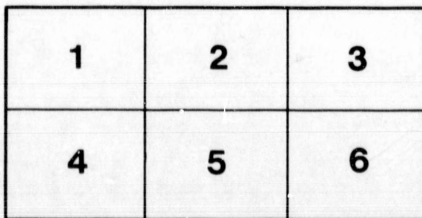
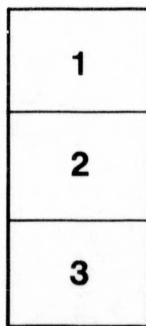
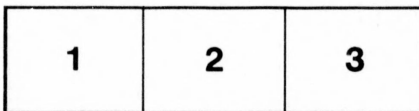
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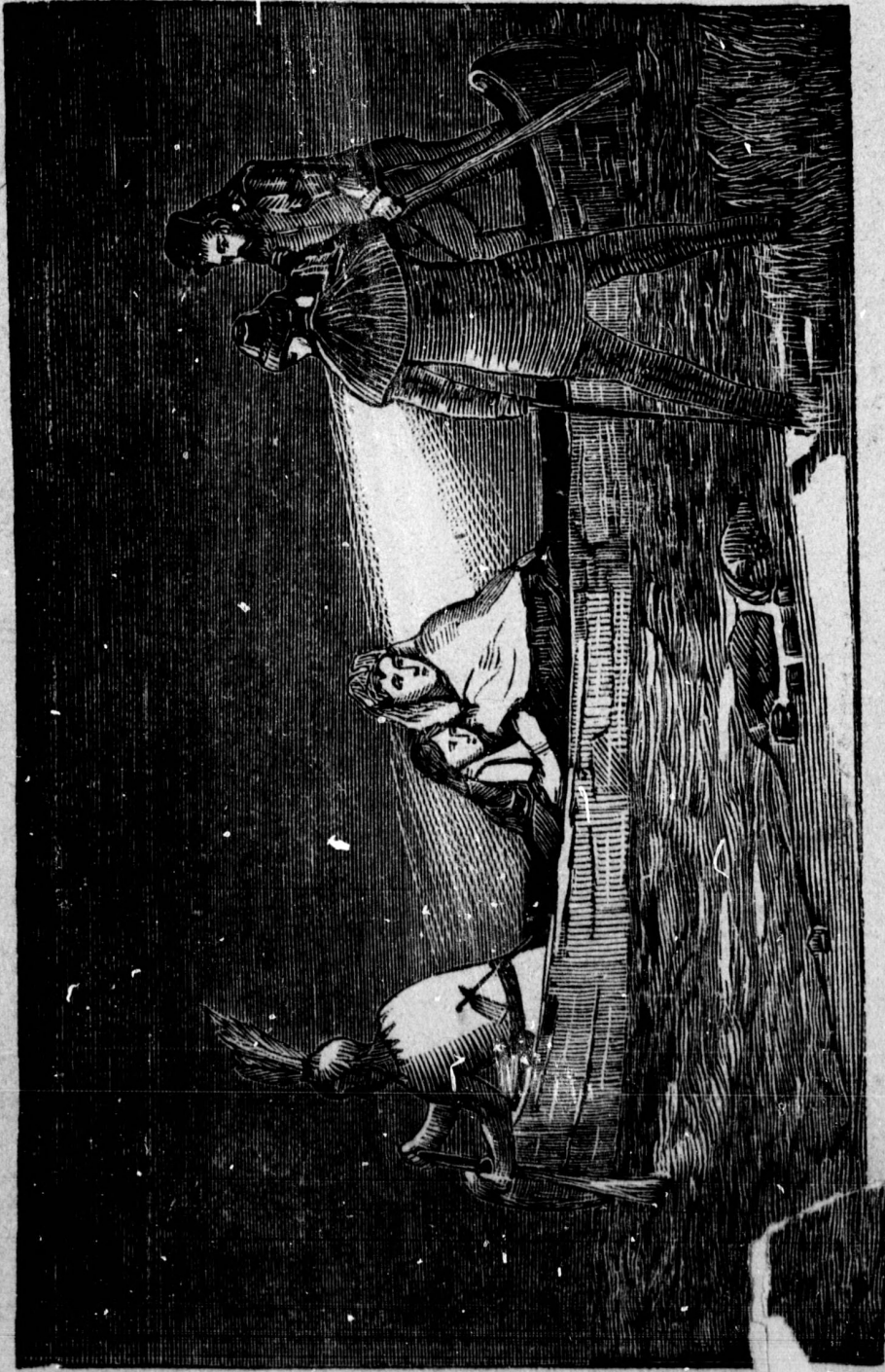
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THE WITCH.



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land of the shore, a man was standing, holding a dark lantern in his hand.

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On the land of the shore, a man was standing, holding a dark lantern in his hand.

THE WITCH

A CANADIAN LEGEND

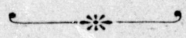
BY

ABBÉ H. R. CASGRAIN

Translated from the French

BY

A. W. L. GOMPERTZ.



MONTREAL

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1895

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C. O. BEAUCHEMIN & FILS,
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CASGRAIN, H. R.

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THE WITCH.

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1st PART.
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THE NIGHT-TRAVELLERS.

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It was an autumn night, dark and foggy.

A bark-canoe was being silently launched from the shore of Quebec, some paces from the part where the old church of the lower town rises.

On the sand of the shore, a man was standing, holding a dark lantern in his hand, whose luminous cone, directed towards the waves, threw a light on a canoe manned by four persons.

**

By means of the pale light which shone from the lantern, it was easy to see that he who was seated at the stern of the canoe, was a Canadian hunter.

He was clothed with a blue striped shirt of fine gray stuff, and wore on his head a beaver skin cap.

According to the invariable custom of *voyageurs*, he had taken care, previous to taking his seat on the narrow end of the canoe, to place under him his cap, carefully folded.

A red sash, whose fringes waved over his left leg, was tied round his loins.

His feet were shod with Indian boots, of which the overlap of sheepskin enveloped the bottom of his breeches, and fastened below the knee by thongs of eel-skin.

He was a man of dry temperament, but bony frame, and very tall.

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The sleeves of his waistcoat, turned up to the elbow, displayed muscles of steel, which revealed uncommon strength.

His arms, of excessive length, were covered with tatoosings representing different objects, amongst which was noticed the figure of a canoe.

The appearance of his face, burnt by the sun ; and of a remarkable regularity, seemed to have been carved in a block of Florentine bronze.

His beard was black, whilst his hair, which he had allowed to grow for a long time, fell negligently over his shoulders, was of a fair auburn color

A great appearance of kindness reflected itself over all his physiognomy.

His eyes, which he kept continually half closed, gave to him, at first, a dull appearance ; but they sparkled with a rare intelligence, enchased under their black and thick

eyebrows, when he was under the influence of a lively emotion.

Beyond this, there was nothing remarkable in his person, unless it was an appearance of apathy and carelessness, which the slowness of his movements led one naturally to suppose.

His extraordinary skilfulness in managing a canoe, caused to be given to him the name of "The Canoer."

The wavering light of the lantern illuminated at intervals another personage seated at the head of the canoe, whose dress was sufficient to designate as belonging to the race of redskins.

He was a splendid man, with the eye of an eagle, thin lips, and boldly curved, a high forehead, shining with intelligence and honesty, and such an irreproachable figure that Phideas or Canova might copy it with advantage, as a type of a man in a natural state.

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According to Indian custom, his hair was flattened down, with the exception of a tuft attached to the top of his head, with feathers of falcon, bustard and wild goose, which took the form of the crest of an ancient helmet.

He wore a sort of cloak, bordered with rose and lilac, made of caribou skin, orange-colour,* which the Indians alone know how to render so silken and soft.

Mocassins ornamented with glass beads and porcupine quills, coloured red and blue covered his feet.

The warriors of his tribe called him *Misti Ishinépiik*, † that is to say, " The Great

* The Indians obtained this colour, while passing the skins through the smoke of their cabins, and the white colour, by rubbing them with the animal's brains.

† This expression, as also the other words which we employ in the course of this story, belongs to the Chippewayan dialect, which is derived from the Algonican language.

Adder," on account of his extraordinary suppleness, and from the figure of that reptile tattooed on his body.

* * *

The purple reflections from the lantern also-showed the profiles of two other persons seated in the middle of the canoe.

It was that of a young woman, and child of from eight to ten years.

A deep melancholy, together with anxiety, showed itself on the countenance, full of energy, of Mrs Houel.

Thus was the young woman named.

The nobleness of her appearance and the elegance of her clothes revealed a person of distinction.

At the moment the canoe was crossing the shade cast forth by the light, she was occupied in spreading a shawl over the shoulders of her child, in order to preserve him from the humidity of the night.

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When the canoe had entirely disappeared in the darkness, the man with the lantern, slowly drew up his boat.

"The deuce!" murmured he to himself, "madam must have great courage to embark at such a night."

"I well know that Mr Houel has been seriously wounded."

"But what necessity was there to hasten and expose herself thus to an evident danger?"

"Could she not at least have waited until to morrow morning."

"But scarcely had she learned the fatal news, when she did not even take time to pack her trunks."

"Ah! I greatly fear that some misfortune will happen to her."

"And then this massacre of three men by a party of Iroquois. who came down, the

‘day before yesterday, into the Isle of Orleans, and scalped a woman and four children.’

‘They will be very fortunate, if they do not meet with some of those enraged devils.’

Whilst making those reflections, he disappeared behind the angle of a house, and returned to the darkness.

THE LAMP OF THE SANCTUARY

However, the frail skiff, driven forward by two vigorous paddles, was going down the river with rapidity.

Light as foam, it glides without noise, over the waves, leaving only a pale track behind its stern.

The travellers preserved silence for some time; and nothing was troubling the repose of nature around them, unless it was the

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rippling of the water against the sides of the light canoe, the monotonous song, and fall of the waves under the paddles.

Soon the darkness of night blended the vague tints of the various buildings of the town into a uniform shade; and they could no longer distinguish anything behind them, except a line undulating and cutting into darkness on the sky, the surrounding of Cape Diamond.

From one time to another, the rippling of the wave on the pebbles on the shore, or the grating of a weather-cock, agitated by the sudden force of the night wind, still reached their ears.

But soon, all these noises ceased.

* * *

It was the solemn hour of night, when everything in nature reposes, and carnivorous animals having returned from their nightly hunts, the birds hidden under the

leaf, and man fatigued with the care of daily labours.

The distant torrent even seems to subdue its sobs; and under the expiring breeze of night, the forest exhales from its immense organ only a feeble sigh.

In the mean time the young woman, her eyes turned towards the sleepy town, was attentively contemplating a glimmer, almost imperceptible and immoveable, on the coast.

One might say that she dreaded the moment when she would see it entirely disappear, there was in her looks such great anxiety.

It was not the light from the lantern, which had disappeared a long time since.

The faint light which had just sparkled on the edge of her eyelid, where a tear was trembling, was bursting out from a heart both mysterious as well as consoling.

It was the pale clearness of the lamp of the sanctuary of the old church, virginal

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sacrifice, the touching emblem of eternal prayer.

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While she was contemplating this chaste star, her mouth murmured a fervent prayer.

The prayer ! invisible vestal that watches unceasingly ; a star in front, in the temple, without blemish, of the pious soul.

The whole of her life seemed to have passed into her eyes, so much ardour was there in her glance ; and the mystical ray just running lightly over her eye-balls, with its golden wand, seemed like the glance of God concealed under the adorable masks, hearing favourably her petition, and casting forth a reflection of hope into her mournful mind.

Oh ! the poor woman, she had indeed great need of heavenly support, at the time of facing so many dangers among the ambushes of night !

At last the darkness invading the weak ridge of light, from all parts, extinguished it under a sheet of obscurity.

* * *

—“ Oh ! it is very dark,” the child says to his mother, in an undertone, after a long silence, “ I cannot even see your face.”

“ If I was not so near you, my dear little mamma, I believe that I should be afraid.”

“ Why did we set out so promptly ?

“ I was sleeping so comfortably in my bed, when you came to awaken me.”

“ Shall we soon arrive ? ”

And the child, seized with an involuntary trembling, instinctively drew near to his mother, as if to seek shelter from the phantoms which night caused to dance before the imagination of childhood.

* * *

The young woman uttered a sigh, and without replying to his questions:

"Lie down on my knees, Harold," said she to him, you need to go to sleep again."

"Take a good sleep, while it is dark, I will awaken you when it is day, and you will see the beautiful sun rise.

"Then you will no longer be afraid."

The child obeyed, without saying anything, and placed his head on his mother's knees.

"Mamma," murmured he in a low voice, after some minutes, "do you see down there, that great white woman who is walking on the water? She is advancing towards us, and making a sign for me to go to her."

"Do you hear, mamma, how she sings?"

"Do you understand what she says?"

And the child pointed with his finger, to the phantom which he believed he saw.

"Mamma," he continued in a trembling voice, "I am afraid! I am afraid! Let us return home. She is coming to take me away."

And the child hid his head on his mother's knees, wile stifling a sob.

"Sleep then, my child, fear nothing; there is not any danger."

"That great white spot which you see down there, is not a phantom, but the Falls of Montmorency."

"The noise which you hear, is that of the water falling from the mountain."

Sleep quietly; your mamma is watching near you."

* * *

"Ho-ho!" the Indian suddenly interrupted, uttering from his breast this guttural exclamation, common to Indians to express surprise and astonishment. "*Matsi Skouéou!*"

These words spoken in Indian language, pronounced in an undertone of voice, seemed to paralyze the arms of the Canadian hunter.

For some instants his paddle remained motionless in his hands.

Then, on a signal from the Indian, each commence to row vigorously, but with the lest possible noise.

HALLUCINATIONS.

—“Is your child now asleep?” asked the hunter at last, a long silence.

—“Yes,” replied Mrs Houel, “he is so tired from having been disturbed this night, that he went to sleep in a few seconds.”

—“Well ! madam, he replied in a solemn voice, with his habitual slowness, and bending forward, towards the middle of the canoe, so as to be able to speak lower, and

make himself heard, "now that I believe
"the danger is past, I must tell you that, by
"a happy chance, or special protection of
"Providence, we have just escaped from an
"enemy quite as dangerous as the bands of
"Iroquois, who have been roaming on our
"shores for some weeks past."

"If the circumstance had happened to
"any body but yourself, I would have care-
"fully avoided revealing this incident; but
"I know the firmness of your character,
"and your desire to have nothing concealed
"from you."

—"You are perfectly right," Canoer, "con-
tinue."

—"You believed perhaps that, for an
"instant, your child was the sport of a
"dream, when he pointed at that strange
"figure, of which we only got a glimpse in
"the darkness; but be well assured that it
"was not an illusion."

"Children sometimes penetrate secrets

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“ which we others, men, are incapable of diving into.

“ The innocence of that age brings it near to the world of spirits, and reveals to it often dangers which are invisible to our sight.”

“ If I had known, some hours ago, what the good angel of this child caused him to see and hear, I never would have ventured to go out this night.”

—“ How, ‘Canoer’ !” replied Mrs Houel, “ is it possible that you permit yourself to be trammelled by wretched superstition; you, an old hunter, who have passed all your life in the woods, and have braved so many dangers in the midst of Indians ?”

“ Truly, I no longer recognize you ; never should I have imagined that you could have been capable of such a weakness.”

“ This pretended phantom, has it not entirely a natural cause ? ”

—“ Madam,” replied the hunter, in a grave

tone, "did you believe, for a moment, that
"this apparition was merely the reflection
"of the falls, through the darkness?"

"Do you believe that at the distance we
"were from it, this sheet of water could be
"visible, on such a dark night?"

"Ah! trust to the experience of an old
"wood-ranger, whom the solitude and
"desert have taught a science which is not
"to be found in books."

"Since twenty years of age, I have led a
"life in the woods, I ought to have acquired
"some knowledge of the phenomena of
"nature."

"The noise of waters, winds, or wild ani-
"mals is not unknown to me; the thousand
"voices of the desert are familiar to me; and
"I can imitate them all, when I want to."

"Very often, at night time, in the bosom
"of forests, near lakes or rivers, sometimes
"during the winter-hunts, I have passed
"long hours in studying the different aspects

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“ of darkness and light, and the uncertain twinkling of the stars, by the flame of the wood-pile, by a bright moonlight, or indeed on a dark and foggy night like this one.”

“ There are but few objects, be it night or day-time, which can long deceive my eyesight, trained by long experience.”

“ Well ! madam, I tell you that this airy glimmer neither comes from heaven nor earth.”

—“ Might it not perhaps be the fire of some Indian camp covered by the mist ? ”

—“ You have never confounded the rays of your lamp with the clearness of the moon, is not so, madam ? ”

“ Well ! it would be just as difficult for me to confound this strange glimmer with the fire of an Indian encampment.”

—“ A superstitious fear has troubled your vision,” replied Mrs Houel, with a movement of impatience and incredulity.

* * *

This reproach piqued to the quick, the brave Canoer, who for a moment preserved silence.

Then, in a voice, trembling with emotion.

—“ Madam, a man who has passed half of
“ his life, exposed every day to be attacked
“ and scalped by fierce enemies, who has
“ served as a guide in ten expeditions
“ against the five cantons, who has killed
“ with his own hand, more than sixty Iro-
“ quois, who, in order to save his friend
“ *Mishi-Tshinepik*, has seen himself twice,
“ without trembling, fastened to a post,
“ ready to be burnt alive, who has heard the
“ the war-song whilst they pulled off two of
“ his fingers from their phalanxes, after
“ having smoked them for him in a pipe,
“ who laughed at the torments, when they
“ put round his neck a collar of red hot
“ hatchets, of which he still preserves the

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“scars, this man has a right to believe himself to be little accessible to fear.”

“But although you doubt my word,” question *Tshinepik*.

“You heard the exclamation of this Indian, at the same moment as your child pointed to that mysterious object, which only appeared to our eyes as a light vapour.”

“The words of the child have been for him a disclosure of light; and if you had understood the Indian language, the words ‘*Matshi Skouéou*’, which escaped from him, you would have had it all revealed to you, without having the necessity for offering a word; for you have, without doubt, heard speak of those whom the Whites call “The Lady with the flags”*.

* “The Lady with the flags (sedge). So called, from her having the repute of wearing a wreath of these leaves or flowers on her head.

“an^d whom the Indians know by the name
“of—“*Matshi Skouéou*,” that is to say, the
“bad woman, or the witch.

* * *

At this well known name, Mrs Houel, although gifted with a rare energy of character, could not restrain an involuntary shudder.

For it was at a period when superstition was so spread and lively, that educated people even, who did not believe the popular fictions, were unable, while listening to them, to help having a secret dread.

And in such a country as Canada was then, covered with immense unexplored forests, peopled by foreign races, and scarcely known, all was calculated to foster and foment superstitious ideas.

In fact, thought she, I have heard speak of this celebrated witch, who has acquired such a great influence over the Iroquois

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tribes, and of whom the missionary-fathers have related such marvellous things.

They do not doubt but that she has communications with the evil spirit, and that she works by its influence, inconceivable wonders. *

It is said that she came to raise up the

* There is hardly a doubt but that the jugglery practised among the Indians had a diabolical character. It is a fact which has often been proved by eye-witnesses worthy of belief. This is the manner in which the Rev. Father Arnaud, a missionary of Labrador, expresses himself: "By the power of their will" says he, "the cabin (of the jugglers) is put into motion as a turning table, and it answers by raps or jumps, the questions which are put to it." "Well! these beat all the inventors of table-turning and spirit-rapping! The jugglers of the infidel Indians can hold themselves as masters, and show more surprising things than those have ever known. All our great magnetizers would be equally surprised to see with what facility these jugglers use the magnetic fluid, to which I would here willingly give the name of diabolical fluid."

Five Nations against the colony, that the ambassadors last sent to the Governor, under the pretext of concluding peace, was only infamous treason plotted, in order to lull the colonists, and that they had a project, at that time, to massacre every French person, even to the last one.

Could it be true, as it is said, that at the head of a party of Iroquois, she roamed about, at the head of a party of Iroquois, to seize some important prisoner, and them to sacrifice him to their god, *Areskoui*; and thus propitiate him, in regard to the new war?

THE MIRAGE OF THE LAKE.

After having, for some instants, turned these reflections over in her mind :

“ *Canawish !* * said she, addressing the im-

* An Indian expression, similar in meaning to comrade.”

passionate Indian, who had listened to the previous conversation, without speaking a word, what do you say, as to the presages of the 'Canoer?'

The Indian seemed to pay no attention to this question, and did not make any reply.

"Why does not the 'Great Adder' answer, when the daughter of the pale-faces speaks to him?"

There was yet another moment of silence.

* * *

At last the Indian, in his language filled with metaphor, said :

"The 'Mirage of the Lake' which sleeps on the knees of the snow-drop is more beautiful than the white lily of the great waters."

"The lake, where the oats and reeds of the shore grow, is less limpid than his eyes, and his glance is more brilliant than the evening star."

“ His lips are two bunches of ripe strawberries, and his teeth are snow-flakes.

“ The twigs, in spring time, are less flexible than his hair.”

“ And so, when the ‘ Snow-drop ’ contemplates the young pale-face, the smile is on her lips, and her eyes are full of tears of tenderness.”

“ Could the ‘ Snow-drop ’ then be tired with the life of her child ? ”

“ Does she not know that, in order to evoke that which the young ear of the ‘ Mirage of the Lake ’ has heard, and what his eyes have seen, it suffices to pronounce its name ? ”

—“ Oh ! if there is nothing more than that to fear,” “ replied Mrs Houel, “ smiling, “ you can speak ; the ‘ Lady with the flags ’ is not a spirit, that she could hear, from the depth of the woods, the voice of ‘ The Great Adder,’ when his words scarcely reach the ear of ‘ Snow-drop.’ ”

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“Since my sister asks it replied the Indian, “the ‘Great Adder’ will speak; but “if his words bring forth the ‘*Matshi Skouéou*,’ “the ‘Snow-drop’ will only be able to “blame herself.”

—“The daughter of the pale-faces fears “nothing; her heart is as bold as that of “*Ishinépick!*”

—“When the ‘Snow-drop’ knows that the “‘*Matshi Skouéou* would be ready to set at “liberty all the white captives among the “Iroquois, in order to be able to place her “hand on the child of a chief of the pale “faces, such as the ‘Mirage of the Lake,’ “will her heart be equally brave?”

* * *

At this terrible menace, Mrs Houel trembled, and instinctively pressed to her heart the charming child, who unconscious of danger slept quietly on her knees.

He appeared not even to be aware of this sudden movement; for the contact of that soft hand was familiar to him.

And what is there to be feared, indeed, the child being in the sanctuary of maternal love?

Does the swallow in its nets, fear the wind or storm?

Is not the child between the arms of his mother, the fresh dew-drod hidden in the corolla of the lily?

Does it not seem that such innocence and purity ought to escape misfortune?

A SPIRIT.

Hardly had Mrs Houel yielded to this impulse, when she blushed at her weakness.

Ashamed of having given way to a superstitious idea, she added in a firm tone of voice:

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“ While near the ‘ Great Adder ’ and the
“ ‘ Canoer, ’ the ‘ Snow-drop ’ does not
“ tremble for the days of her child. My
“ brother may speak.”

—“ Your two friends are ready to give their
“ lives for you,” replied the Indian; “ they
“ will die, sooner than allow any enemy to
“ approach your child; but who could
“ struggle against that one who has com-
“ mand over spirits? ”

The Indian then recited everything that
was marvellous, with which the Indian
imagination surrounded the celebrated
witch.

Often the “ Canoer,” carried away by his
habit of talking, interrupted him, in order
to speak of fresh prodigies with which the
Whites embellished the Indian legend.

* * *

The “ *Matshi Skouéou*,” the popular tradi-
tions say, is in communication with the evil
spirits.

Her power equals that of the syren,
with twisted hair, which discloses on the
shores of the southern seas, the beds of
golden placers, and banks of pearls.

She has never been seen by day light.

They say that, in the dark, her sea-green
eye-balls sparkle like live coal, and that the
sinister and wan light which they dart forth,
fascinates like the serpent or the abyss.

A river of hair, as black as a crow's wing,
inundates her head, always crowned with
flags, and gushes out in cascades over her
shoulders.

Her copper-coloured complexion, her
scaly skin, the sardonic smile which
shrivels her violet lips, makes one shudder,
even to the marrow of the bones.

She raises up, at each movement, a dust
of bluish sparks which dance around her,
drawing in the shade, strange profiles.

An incombustible salamander, she moves
with impunity, through the flame of quick-

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clear fires, without the fire-brands daring even to catch the flaps of her dress.

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The nightly breeze, the passing cloud faithful messengers, bring to her, the sound of the voice of those who invoke her.

At her shriek, the owls awake, opening their sleepy eyes, going forth from crevices of rocks and ruins and answering to her call.

At the hour of midnight, she descends on a spinning star, or on a ray of the moon, and appears in the sheet of the cascades, in the shade of darkness, on the silent sand of the downs, or among the vapours of the valleys.

* * *

This is the hour which she chooses, in order to accomplish her mysteries, for it is the hour when the breeze lulls itself asleep on the summit of the trees, and when everything in nature reposes; this is the hour

when the wild fires dance on the pale grass of the prairies, in the glades, or upon the verdant waters of the swamps; it is the hour when the bats, in crowds, fly with their transparent wings, and cling with their slender claws, to the corners of rocks; it is the hour when one no longer hears any noise whatever, except the croaking of frogs and toads, with fixed eyes, and the mournful *hou hou* of the night-birds.

It is also the hour when the "Lady with the Flags" descends among the reeds of the river, on the banks of lagoons, to gather the flowers of the flag, with which she crowns her head, and to make her invocations to the Great Spirit.

Although not a breath of wind ruffles the air, there is seen to tremble the trunks of algas and alders, which she disturbs in order to plunge into the water of the river; and shortly her head is seen to appear, like a meteor, among the rushes and lilies.

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At the moment the new moon rises, airy and distant murmurs, mixed with the monotonous croaking of frogs, ascend from the bosom of aquatic plants.

Supernatural voices which seem to surge up from the bottom of the waters ; mysterious incantations, at first indistinct, then rising gradually, and extending over the waves melodiously, by turns, like the voices of children, or subdued like the evening breeze among the thickets ; but sometimes also loud and terrible, like the roaring of a wounded bear, a peal of thunder, or cataracts.

Sometimes also, when the equinoctial gale roars and twirls up the forest by its roots, she places her foot on the slope of the vapour, swifter than that of the driven mist, with which the mountain then surrounds its shoulder of stone.

It is said that, during these freaks of nature, she is seen to jump on the silver crest of the foamy waves, and that then the lightnings rend the sides of the clouds angrily, in order to twist into aureolas over her head.

“Children!” the old men say, “do not you go in the evening at the rising of the new moon, on the banks of the river.”

“Squatted down behind the green fringe of the reeds, the “Lady with the flags” watches for little children; and her songs fascinate and entrance, like the glance of the reptile fixed on its prey.”

“Oh! what a misfortune to him who falls into her hands!”

“The fate which is reserved for him, is more terrible than that of the prisoner garrotted at the post of punishment.”

“The tortures of fire, the flames of wood thrust into the flesh, the burning cinder on the scalped head, the necklace of red

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“ hot axes, do not frighten the brave hearted warrior.”

“ He sings his death song, when his enemies rend his flesh in flames.”

“ But the “ *Matshi Skoulou* ” invents tortures otherwise atrocious.”

“ It is in the midst of horrible agonies of fright and terror, that she causes the death of her prey.”

“ And while the victim’s heart trembles and palpitates like that of the timid hare, when his hair stands on end, his eyes dilate with terror, his palid lips tremble like the aspen-leaf, his teeth shake against each other, in his mouth, his bones creak with horror, and his limbs shake like the twigs of trees twisted by the tempest, the “ Lady with the flags ” is in ecstasy and she relishes, like a song, these lamentable groans ; for she hears the voice of the dark spirit which reveals to her its secrets, through the death-rattles and “ despair.”

LIKE AN IVORY LUTE.

After this recital, pronounced in a voice moved by a sort of religious enthusiasm, the Indian and "Canoer" preserved a moment of silence.

— That is indeed in reality what the missionaries state, thought Mrs Houel, with anxiety.

—"Heavens! if my dear Harold ever came to"—

"Oh my God! protect my child!

—"Well" rejoined the Indian, "is the heart of the "Snow-drop" as brave now?"

—"I shall have faith in all these mysteries when I have witnessed them", answered Mrs Houel, in a voice which sought in vain to reassure herself.

"You have never yet seen her, neither you, nor the "Canoer"; it is not so?"

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—“Madam,” replied the Canadian hunter, with his habitual slowness, and solemn tone, which denoted a profound conviction, “one evening, I was going up the Saguenay, I met”—

He suddenly stopped.

A hollow snorting, like the deep breathing of the porpoise, when he comes to the surface of the water to respire, was heard in front of the canoe.

A man who had not been accustomed to uncivilized life, would not have paid any attention to this noise.

But the experienced ear of the “Canoeer” could not mistake it.

It was indeed the voice of Tshinépik, who, in order to make known to him some danger, without giving the alarm, imitated the breathing of the porpoise.

* * *

The hunter listened an instant, and seemed to hear, in the distance, a strange and hollow sound, at first hardly perceptible, then approaching nearer, becoming more distinct, and extending over the waves, in soft undulations, then becoming distant, oscillating again, and ceasing, an instant after.

For a long time, these mysterious vibrations, which seemed sometimes to descend from the clouds, at other times to rise up from the depths of caverns in the sea, or escape from a large sea-shell, or pass through the opening of the woods, fluttered in intermittent notes, amidst the solemn silence of night; only reaching his ear at long intervals, and in weak scraps.

He at first believed it to be an illusion; but after some minutes of silence, the same odd melody, but more distinct and nearer..

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—“ Well ! madam,” whispered the “ Canoer,” “ do you hear ? ” Do you now believe “ the words of a man who has not learnt “ what he knows, in books ?.....

And continuing as if he was talking to himself: “ Midnight !..... this evening, the “ new moon and the “.....

“ Bah ! ” replied Mrs Houel, “ the cry of “ some seal on the rocks ” *

The “ Canoer ” shrugged his shoulders and waited, without answering.

—“ You were right,” at last replied Mrs Houel, after some time of silence, “ I now “ hear a voice very clearly ; but is it a “ voice ? I have never heard anything so “ extraordinary.”

“ I know that the Indians are renowned “ for the beauty of their voices, but these “ magic sounds have nothing human, yet

* It is said that the cry of the seal imitates exactly the crying of a child.

“they captivate and entrance with an irresistible attraction.”

* * *

In fact it was a sort of fantastic incantation, which borrowed from the sombre majesty of those solemn hours, and from its unknown origin, a singular character of the marvellous and supernatural; a sort of chant, sometimes plaintif and dreamy, drowned by mystery and melancoly, undulating over the surge, floating in the atmosphere and losing itself in the mist; endless sighs, echoes of angels' voices, dreams of children in the cradle, song of the curlews; or indeed lively and light, cut off in sharp accents of sound, rising and descending in aërial spirals, groups of frolicsome notes holding by the hand; and then suddenly sad and mournful, like the wind of autumn, which brays in the arbours, like the funeral hymn over the tombs; or an unheard of flourish of trumpets.

* * *

“I quite distinguish some words,” Mrs Houel said in a whisper, to the “Canoer,” “but of a language which is quite unknown to me.”

—“I understand them, but it is not possible for me to translate them to you; the meaning is more in the song, than in the words...”

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Two sudden flashes, followed by a double explosion, suddenly interrupted the evocations of the unknown sibyl; and at the same time, two bullets coming from the opposite side to that whence they heard this mysterious music, one of which passed through the bow of the canoe, a few inches only from the canoer whistled by the ears of the travellers.

A blast of terror seemed to roll in the

atmosphere, with the echo of the double explosion, repercussed by the clouds, and both banks of the river.

And then everything returned to a silence so deep, that one might have said that the river had always been completely a desert.

THE CHASE.

—"Seven Iroquois in the canoe," whispered the Tshinépik'; "I had time to count them by the light of the explosion."

"Comrade, we are going to be placed between two fires."

"On the right, the Iroquois; on the left, the "*Matshi Skouéou*" and her companions."

"There is only one way, replied the "Canoeer," with the presence of mind, and promptitude of decision which calmness and coolness give, the fruit of a long habit of

life in the midst of dangers ; “ it is by leading our enemies astray. ”

—“ *Scie*,* Tshinépik, we will go back for a time then we shall gain the bank by means of our paddles.

—“ Madam, restrain the crying of your child ; we must be silent, so as to conceal our course.”

—“ Lie down at the bottom of the canoe, you run less risk of being hit by the bullets.”

—“ Ah ! Iroquois, you, dogs ! ” murmured he between his teeth, “ it is very fortunate for you that the life of these two weak beings have been confided to my care ; or you would not see me thus retreat before you : a bitter experience ought to have taught you that such is not my custom.”

* A nautical term : “ scie ” means to “ back water,” so as to propel the canoe backward, instead of forward.

“What pleasure I might have in putting some lead into some of your skulls, to keep my hand in practice ! Truly I have a mind to do it, for it is already a long time since I have tried my musket against a redskin. But let matters rest, you lose nothing by waiting”

* * *

Fully occupied with these reflections, the “Canoer,” after having given a retrograde movement to the canoe, for some time, had turned the head of the light skiff towards the shore, and paddled vigorously in that direction.

—“Row, row, now as hard as you like, silly Iroquois,” said he in an under tone, with irony, “you will be sometime, I think, without reaching us, if you continue on that side.”

“You believe that a white man is as stupid as you and that he”—

The cry of a huard *, which rose at some distance, in front of the canoe, awakened his anxiety, and interrupted the course of his invectives, which he never spared, against his enemies, in the moment of danger.

“ I greatly deceive myself, if that was the cry of a huard ; there are sounds there which are not those of a huard.”

“ The infamous rogues ! have they perceived our movement, by chance ? ”

He had hardly uttered these words, when two flashes of fire tore the veil of the shades in front of them.

Fortunately for our travellers, the night was so dark, that the enemy could hardly see them.

The bullets, directed by an uncertain hand, bounded on the surface of the water, at some feet from the canoe.

* The name of a bird.

—“Our *ruse* is discovered!” exclaimed the “Canoer,” with bitterness.

And with one stroke of the paddle, he described an angle at the prow of the canoe so as to return to his former course.

—“It is useless to think of reaching the “shore,” continued he. “*Tshinepik*, now “is the time to show whether we understand “anything about handling the paddle.”

“They are seven against two; but their “canoe appears to be heavier than ours, “and I doubt whether they all have “paddles.”

“Madam, we shall be obliged to throw “your goods into the water, so as to lighten “our canoe as much as possible, and not “impede our course; for this will be a des- “perate race.”

—“Do so, do just as you like, so that you “snatch my child from the claws of these “tigers,” exclaimed Mrs Houel, with “anguish.

* * *

In the twinkling of an eye, the canoe was relieved of everything that could overburden it.

—“ Now *Tshinépiik*, let us paddle bravely, and in accord ! But before that, let us shout our war cry, to show these miscreants that we do not fear them any more than the fish which are swimming beneath our feet.”

* * *

Two horrible yells, capable of thrilling the hearts of the most intrepid, escaped all at once, from the breasts of the two warriors, and were prolonged afar off on the billows.

Mrs Houel closed her ears, from terror.

—“ ‘ The Canoeer ! ’ the ‘ Great Adder ’ ” the Iroquois repeated in chorus, recognizing the voices of the two heroes who had acquired such terrible celebrity in killing such a fearful number of their bravest warriors ;

and dreadful yells responded to their war-cry.

Then to this infernal harmony, succeeded a mournful and funeral silence, as if entire nature, frozen with horror, had suspended every noise.

* * *

There was heard nothing more except the bubbling up of the water under the strokes of the paddles, and the plashing of the waves against the sides of the light canoe, which bounded under the enormous strokes of the "Canoeer," aided by Tshinépiik, and flew over the surface of the river like detached feathers of birds' wings, which the strong sea-breeze carries away, as if sporting on the waves.

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The safety of the fugitives no longer depended on anything except the strength of the muscles of the two rowers,

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If weariness happened, a moment, to enervate and relax the steel of their muscles, it would be fatal to them, and their scalps would grow dry at the waists of the Iroquois.

Tshinépiik, it is true, was a skilful and powerful rower ; and the superiority of the "Canoer in managing a canoe, and handling the paddle, was unequalled.

His skill in this matter, was so well known throughout the whole colony, that even among the Indian tribes, it had gained for him the name of "Canoer."

Besides a long habit, acquired during a whole existence consecrated to Indian life, nature, in furnishing him with an extraordinary strength of muscle, and developing two long arms to an extreme extent, seemed to have formed him expressly for this sort of exercise.

Moreover, it is a fact worthy of notice, that the Whites, when once accustomed to the Indian manners and arts, soon surpass

them, not only in skill, but even in strength.

For, not to speak of their intellectual superiority, they also enjoy a more robust constitution.

* * *

But whatever were the personal advantages of the two rowers, they were too inferior in numbers to be able, apparently, to struggle for any length of time, with a chance of escaping.

And then a stray bullet might from one moment to another, break an arm or split a paddle.

However, these dangers so imminent, did not cause the "Canoeer" to lose his admirable coolness, and appeared to have no other effect than to loosen his tongue.

—"We must to show these dogs of "Iroquois that we are good judges of the "bark of the birch-tree, Tshinepik.

“ I do not deny that they possess some skill in building a canoe; but they do not know how, as we do, to choose the real bark.”

“ And then, have they ever learned the knack of gracefully raising up the two ends of a canoe so as to give it that light form which lends to ours such a coquettish appearance, when they dance over the surge.”

“ Don't speak to me either of a canoe badly gummed; it is necessary, in order that it may glide well on the water, that the coating of gum be put on with such care, that the sides are polished and glazed like the blade of a razor.”

“ Then it is no longer a canoe, it is a feather, a wing of a bird which swims in the air; it is a cloud chased by a hurricane; it is something aërial, winged, which flies like—like—we are now doing.”

* *

The "Canoeer" spoke the truth, for the light canoe, obedient to the gigantic strokes of the paddle, appeared scarcely to touch the waves.

It might have been mistaken for a teal, frightened by a sportman and shaving the crest of the swift waves.

—"Comrade, here are again two bullets "in our direction," interrupted *Tshinépik*, who until then had preserved that phlegmatic silence which characterises the Indian race, and which savages affect above all, in time of danger, so as to conceal all emotion; "the Iroquois already imagines that they "are ahead of us, for their shots have been "fired behind our canoe."

"But does not my brother perceive that "we have gained nothing, and that they "are always in line with us?"

—"You are right, it cannot last, replied

the "Canoer," shaking his head, "we shall never be able to leave them behind. They are too numerous against us."

THE TOMAHAWK.

There ensued a moment of mournful silence, full of terrible anxiety.

The "Canoer" sought in vain an outlet to escape from this bad strait.

—"Let us promise a mass in honour of the good St. Ann," said Mrs Houel, who had not ceased to pray, since the commencement of the struggle, "and I am sure that the good God will save us."

—"I well know it, madam..... There is no one but God who can enable us to escape..... As for me, I have exhausted all my resources But you, Tshinepik, have you any expedient to suggest?"

The Indian reflected.

* * *

—“ My brother is a great rower, the salmon which ascends the rapids, is not more skilful with his tail, than my brother with his paddle.”

“ At each stroke of his, *Tshinépiik* feels the canoe rise itself under him.”

“ But has my brother an arm strong enough to paddle alone by himself, like us too together, whilst *Tshinépiik* tries to knock over an Iroquois ? ”

—“ I will endeavour to do all that is possible for a man, with two good arms,” replied the “ Canoeer ” ; but I believe that it will be almost useless, for you can only shoot at random, by night, which it is now ; and then a shot from the gun would reveal exactly our position.”

—“ An arrow does not leave a flash of light behind it,” coolly replied the Indian ; and *Tshinépiik* will wait for the time when

“ the Iroquois fires, and will take aim by
“ the flash of the priming.* ”

“ Well thought of,” said the “ Canoeer,
with enthusiasm, beginning to row with
such prodigious strength, that it seemed
that so far, he had hardly dipped his paddle
into the water. “ I have always maintained
“ with reason, that there is indeed often
“ more sense in the head of an Indian, than
“ in that of a European.”

—“ Be ready, *Tshinépiik*, I just heard a
“ sharp sound, like that of a gun being
“ cocked ; I believe they are going to fire ”
An explosion interrupted his speech.

* * *

Immediately afterwards, a scream of death
resounded from the side of the enemy’s
canoe, and proved that the arrow of the
skilful Indian had not missed his aim.

* Flint-muskets were used in those days.

But at the same time, another cry, a cry of rage, replied to it.

It was the voice of the "Canoer."

A bullet had just split his paddle in two.

* * *

There are in the existence moments of mental suffering, that no torture, nor corporal punishment, not even death itself can equal.

It is the fatal moment when one sees standing before him the implacable phantom of certain death; when one feels the mortal grasp seize him with a firm hand.

It is then the paroxism of suffering.

Heroism alone is capable of facing it coolly.

Such was however the position in which the fugitives found themselves.

The "Canoer" had exhausted all the resources with which Indian genius and long experience could inspire him.

There remained nothing more than to wait for death.

* * *

There was already heard, some small distance in front of the canoe, the rippling of the water under the paddles of one of the enemy's canoes.

—"Is my brother ready to die?" said the "Canoeer" in a calm tone.

—*Tshinépiik* has ever been so."

And as if a sudden light had crossed his brain, he added some words in the Indian language and passed his paddle to the "Canoeer."

One might have then seen him leaning slowly over the bow of the canoe, gliding from it without noise, and then disappearing in the water.

The light canoe, suddenly relieved, rose up at the fore-part, whilst the "Canoeer" gave to it a retrograde movement, so as to avoid a collision with the enemy's canoe.

* * *

At this moment, the moon sent forth one of its rays through the rolling mist; and the pale eyelash of silver glancing upon the edge of a cloud less opaque, permitted to be observed, for an instant, the scene of the fight.

All of a sudden, the Iroquois canoe capsized, in the midst of dreadfull yells.

It was then a scene of indescribable confusion.

There was to be seen, during some instants, an arm armed with a tomahawk, striking terrible blows on the heads of the Iroquois who were struggling in the midst of the waves.

* * *

The attention of the "Canoeer," who remained at a short distance, so as to prevent the wrecked Iroquois from seizing his canoe, and who followed the different phases of the

struggle, in order to rescue in time his bold friend, was then arrested by a piercing shriek uttered by Mrs Houel.

—"The witch!"

At the same time he caught a glimpse of something like a black form, which seemed to rise from the 'waves, at the side of the canoe, and extend its hand, as if to seize the young child.

To discharge a vigorous blow with the paddle, on the indistinct object which he imagined he saw in the shade, was the affair of an instant; but his blow passed into a void, and only caused a gushing forth of spray.

* * *

The cry of a *pirouys** was then heard; and the "Canoeer," recognizing the signal agreed upon with the Indian, turned his

* A sort of game, also known by the name of "chevalier" the name "*pirouys*," which hunters give it, is an imitation of its cry.

canoe in the direction where the cry came from; and in an instant after, the triumphant "Tshinépic" got skilfully into the light canoe, holding in his hand a paddle.

With that presence of mind, which so eminently distinguishes savages, and which they preserve in the midst of the greatest dangers, the Indian, during the fight, had seized from the hands of an Iroquois, this paddle, of which they had absolute need, for their flight.

Whilst the other Iroquois canoe was hastening to the assistance of those wrecked, whom the tomahawk of the "Tshinépic" had not been able to reach, the fugitives profited by the profound darkness which then existed, from the dense clouds which were rolling heavily in the sky, and gained the shore, without their enemies having been able to perceive the direction which they had taken.

THE MOUNTAIN-ECHO.

The following day, the "Canoer" perceived, on awaking at day-break, the Indian occupied in dressing a large cut which he had received in the face, in the fight of the preceding day, and two deep wounds, one on the breast, and the other on the left arm.

The Indian had not even taken the trouble to mention a word about it to his friend.

—"My brother was badly hurt yesterday," said the "Canoer": "Five Iroquois corpses are now adrift, and will serve as food for the fishes. But my brother has been wounded?"

—"It is nothing; the Iroquois is a woman; and only makes little scratches."

—"My brother has lost much blood; he needs rest. But I will go into the wood, to kill some game for our breakfast."

On his return, the "Canoer" was seized with horror, at perceiving on the bank which he had recently quitted, a sea of blood, and three lifeless bodies extended.

One of them had its head scalped; and he recognized it, with unspeakable grief, as his faithful companion whom the Iroquois had surprised and massacred during his absence.

The two Iroquois dead bodies lying on the side, and two long courses of blood, which lost themselves over the edge of the bank, testified that he had sold his life dearly.

Mrs Houel and her child had disappeared, but no trace on the sand indicated whither they had taken flight.

In raising his eyes towards the horizon, the "Canoer" noticed in the distance, two canoes loaded with Iroquois, who were descending the river by means of their paddles.

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Overcome with despair, he remained for a long time immoveable, his eyes fixed on the body of his faithful friend, as if grief had petrified all his limbs.

The first rays of the rising sun, which were then falling on the figure of the Indian, and illuminating it with a halo of opal, concealed for an instant the horrible fixeness of look which the last agony had imprinted.

And that last reflexion of its eyes seemed to bid him a last farewell.

Rousing himself at last from his lethargy, the "Canoer" bent slowly over the corpse of him whom he had so much loved, and who had shared for so many years, all his joys, griefs, triumphs and dangers, and taking him up gently in his arms, with the energy of despair, pressed it to his breast, as if he had desired, by this supreme embrace, to pass all his soul into that inanimate body.

A deep sigh then escaped from his breast, which rose up like a mountain.

This man of iron, whom neither dangers nor tortures had ever been able to affect, succumbed under the weight of grief.

Torrents of tears overflowed his cheeks.

* * *

—“Oh my friend! my well beloved friend!” he exclaimed at last, while sobbing, “I have then lost thee for ever.

“It is my fate; alone henceforth I must wander across these forests, and rivers where we have so often travelled together!”

“Henceforth in solitude I shall walk in the paths of life, without ever hearing your friendly voice!”

“Happy event, had death taken me off first!”

“You at least have a friend to render the last services; but as for me, no one at my

“ last hour, will come to throw a little earth
“ over my body.”

“ Oh “Tshinepik ”!..... “ Tshinepik ”!
“ farewell ! ”

* * *

The echo from the mountain repeated in
the distance, “ farewell ! ”

At this voice, the “ Canoeer ” trembled as
if he had heard that of his faithful compa-
nion uttering a last word of acknowledg-
ment.

* * *

At last, depositing his precious burden, he
dug a hole in the sand on the bank, and
there laid down the body.

After having covered it over, he plucked
a young sappling which grew at the head
of the grove and fixing on the trunk a
branch crosswise, made of it a cross.

Then scalping the two dead bodies of the

Iroquois lying on the shore, he fixed their scalps with "Tshinepik's" knife on the centre of the cross.

Strange and terrible trophy, but worthy of that hero of the woods.

PART II.

THE INDIAN SUMMER* AND THE GRINDERS.

Many years have passed since the event which we have just related.

It is again an autumn day, one of those beautiful rosy and sunny mornings which summer lets fall from its crown, in its flight before the chilly wind, which already begins to blow on the sun.

* The last fine days of autumn are generally known in Canada under the name of "Indian summer."

Already the morning dews, so tepid in july, crystalize in hoar frost, on the pent-houses, and blades of grass, which are becoming yellow.

It is the season of October, the melancholy time of dead leaves !

Resting yonder on the mountain, it casts forth a last smile full of intoxicating languor, at the harvester who is hastening to gather his sheaf in the meadows.

In the sky, some gray clouds in the more gloomy blue; in the calm air, the divine silence of nature which falls asleep; on the dome of the woods, the richest and most varied tints; red and crimson on the foliage of maple trees; straw-yellow on the aspen, birch and hazel trees; of a dark green on the spinets; lighter on the larch, and glittering twigs of fir-trees.

* * *

It is also the season of autumnal labours.
In the fields bearded with golden yellow,

on all sides are to be seen robust peasants tracing their furrow of the plough with a firm hand.

A loud voice, at times, raises itself, in the sonorous air: *hue! dia!* it is cry of the child who leads the oxen while his father holds the handles.

* * *

While the men are busy working in the fields, the women do not remain inactive; for it is also the time to bray the flax; and it is necessary to hasten to profit by the last fine days.

Canadian life does not offer more attractive rural scenes, fresher and more picturesque; but alas! the railroads, steamboats and civilization will have soon removed from us even the last vestiges of these delightful scenes of customs which give to our country its characteristic physiomy.

Let us hasten to collect some of it, and paint the smiling pictures, so that at least

these recollections of the past may poetize a little our future.

* * *

Do you remember those groups of women that one sometimes sees, in October, assembled on the border of the wood, on the side of some rock?

They are the flax-brayers.

They generally choose these places, so as to shelter themselves from the wind.

Two little walls of stone, three or four feet high are made to lean against the side of the rock, in such a manner as to form a sort of chimney, on which are placed cross-wise four or five sticks of hard wood, which serve for a clothes-horse for the flax.

A large log of wood placed on the ground, at the entrance of the chimney, prevents the fire from extending itself, and protects the stoker, who has to concentrate all her atten-

tion on the flax, in order to prevent it igniting.

For it would be a misfortune to her, if she happened to scorch it.

The laughter and jests of her companions await her, to make her expiate her awkwardness.

* * *

As soon as the flax is sufficiently dried, each person seizes a handful of it, and pounds it vigorously, while it is warm, between the two pieces of wood of the brayer, in order to remove from the flax its peel.

There is nothing so gay, nothing so poetic even, than the sharp and loud sound of the brayers striking, rising and falling in cadence, in the midst of cries, and joyous bursts of laughter from the children who dally under the colonade of the grove.*

* The pounder or brayer (le braye) is an instrument composed of two p'eces of wood held by one of the ends, enclosing one in the other, similar to a mortise.

It is near one of these groups, assembled at the foot of a rock, framed with branches of trees, and situated at a little distance from the River Ouelle, that the thread of our story is tied again.

A SOUL WHOSE BLOSSOM IS SHED.

—"Peter," said one of the women to her child, go and tell your father to come to dinner, it is nearly noon.

The sonorous and distant sounds of the *angelus*,* fell in vibrating cascades, from the old steeple of Rivière Ouelle, and turned their joyous undulations between the two banks of the valley, to announce the hour of noon, when the labourer arrived in the midst of his family.

* "*Angelus*," the name of a prayer said at noon, when the clock strikes that hour.

—“ The *angelus* ! my children, said he, in a grave tone of voice, while turning towards the steeple, and taking off his woollen cap.

Then, with his eyes towards heaven, he recited slowly the pious invocation.

Nowhere the ray of divinity is more visible than on the simple and serene face of the farm-labourer, when the Angel of piety thus comes to touch him with his wing.

* * *

—“ Papa ! ” exclaimed little Peter, when finishing the sign of the cross, “ there are “ two men down there yonder, who have “ just disembarked from a canoe at the end “ of the head-land.”

—“ Some officers of the porpoise-fishing “ company, who have just come on their “ round.* ”

* Formerly porpoise fishing in the River Ouelle, was carried on by a company of rich merchants of Quebec.

"Not so however, they are only two."

"Have you anything to give them for dinner, wife?"

"We will go and invite them."

"Good day, gentlemen," added he, an instant after the arrival of the two travellers, who were proceeding in a straight line towards the rock, as if they knew perfectly well the places which they were travelling over.

"Do you wish to take something?"

"You have still pretty far to go, before reaching the houses."

"A piece of bread does no harm, when one has rowed half a day."

—"Since, you are so obliging, we will not refuse, especially as we are not going any farther than here."

"How is that? Are you not going down to the houses?" said the brave peasant, quite puzzled, casting his eyes, in vain, around him, to find out what could be the object of their visit to this isolated rock.

The travellers looked at each other without replying ; and one of them, with a sad and broken-down manner, could not repress a sigh.

* * *

During their frugal repast, they replied politely to the questions which were addressed to them, but they were little communicative.

The elder was a tall bald man, who seemed to surround his companion with that respectful protection which a long devotedness authorizes to an inferior.

Easy manners, and an air of dignity, disclosed in the person who accompanied him, a higher birth ; and beneath the simplicity of his clothes, a careful education showed forth.

The freshness of his appearance indicated a man in the prime of life, but yet his hair was entirely white.

But to an observant eye, it was easy to see

that misfortune, more than age, had snowed his brow.

There might be noticed also on his physiomy, that particular formation of the muscles which takes place in the course of time, when the depth of the mind reflects unceasingly an image always sad ; and in his look, that melancholy mask which envelops and dims the eye-ball, a sad thought which continually rises from the heart to the eyes.

This sad look chilled everybody and froze the smile over the lips of every one.

However, the incarnation of sadness on his face had nothing repulsive ; on the contrary, this grief, entirely sympathetic, only excited compassion.

It was the crape of a noble mourning, and not the sinister cloud of remorse.

* * *

By degrees the noisy prattling of the children ceased before this eyelid, which

rose up slowly on them, sad and mournful, like the half open lid of a coffin, and from which came a glance that fell on their lips like the finger of death.

The manner of the stranger appeared to become visibly depressed, since his arrival, and his haggard eye fixed itself with such severity, upon the ground about him, that it seemed that each bit of earth recalled to him some broken hearted souvenir.

A constrained silence succeeded to the gaiety but lately so lively among the family.

The brave countryman greatly desired to know the object of their journey; but the two unknown persons did not seem willing to touch upon that subject.

At last he ventured to put some questions.

—“ You will perhaps think that I am
“ rather inquisitive,” said he, turning
“ towards the old man; but will you allow
“ me to ask you your name ?”

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—“ It would be almost useless for you to know it; for I am hardly known by my family-name.”

“ My ears even have forgotten it.”

“ For many years, I have never been called by any other name than the “Canoer.”

It was in fact our faithful guide.

But the brave hunter had become very old, since the day he had laid in the grave a part of himself, with the body of him whom he had loved more than life.

The wind of evil days had caused his head to become bald, and had only left on his temples, a few locks of white hair.

Alas! the forehead so rapidly loses its crown, when a coffin weighs heavily on the heart! The wrinkles which make the face look older, are not always deepened by the course of years; oftener they are the tombs of those who were dear to us!

* * *

The reader now surmises the name of the second personage.

It was no other than Mrs Houel's son, arrived at the prime of life.

—"Should I be indiscret, in asking you "the motive of your visit to this place?" continued the labourer, still addressing himself to the "Canoer."

The latter did not reply, but contented himself with casting a look of enquiry at his companion.

—"A very sad duty," at last said Mrs Houel's son, in a voice whose melancholy sound was in harmony with the sadness of his look.

"Have you never heard speak of a tragic event which happened here formerly?"

—"I have indeed heard something..... I "must tell you that it is not a long time "since I bought a piece of land near here

“ and I have never had the opportunity of becoming acquainted with this story.”

Yelding then to the desires of his hosts, Mrs Houel's son gave the recital of the events which the reader already knows.

THE VISIONS.

— “ After the Iroquois had made my mother and myself prisoners,” continued he, they bound our hands and feet strongly, placed us at the bottom of one of their canoes, and went away with precipitation.

“ For several days, they went down the river, always going along by the coast.

“ God alone knows of the unheard of tortures which we were made to suffer, during this almost interminable passage.

“ The straps, composed of very hard bark, which bound our limbs, were so tightened that our feet and hands became quite blue.

“ From time to time, the barbarians gave

“ themselves the pleasure of throwing water
“ over those straps, so as to increase our
“ sufferings.

“ Then the bands becoming tighter and
“ tighter, our pains became intolerable.

“ I did not cease to utter lamentable
“ groans, which rent the soul of my poor
“ mother.

“ As for her, insensible to her own suffer-
“ ings, she only had tears for me.

“ Alas! what torment for the heart of a
“ mother! feeling her child near her, seeing
“ his tears flowing, hearing his pitiable cries,
“ seeing him twist himself, in the agony of
“ despair, and being unable to relieve him.
“ Oh! for the soul of a mother what a pang!
“ what a martyrdom!

* * *

“ When the Iroquois were tired, they
“ unbound our hands, and without regard
“ to the delicate health of my mother, or the
“ weakness of my age (I was scarcely ten

“ years old then), they forced us to row, in
“ their place.”

“ We could hardly hold the paddles, our
“ fingers were so benumbed by the cords.

“ Then they overwhelmed us with blows,
“ so that at last we redoubled our painful
“ efforts, rendered still more oppressive,
“ from want of practice.

“ Some remnants of game, or putrid scraps
“ of moose meat which a ferocious pity
“ threw to us, formed all our nourishment

“ During this long voyage, we did not
“ once see the wich, who kept herself (at
“ least such was our conviction) in the other
“ canoe, always well in front of ours.”

“ All the orders seemed to emanate from
“ her; from her came the evolutions of the
“ little army.

* * *

“ Every evening, at night-fall, after having
“ lighted their fire on the bank, and finished

“ their repast, they diverted themselves by
“ inventing new tortures for us; and when
“ we were entirely exhausted, they left us
“ for dead, stretched on the ground, bound
“ and exposed to the frozen humidity of
“ night.

“ The fever which our bruises caused,
“ rendered us more sensitive to cold, and
“ we passed entire nights quite chilled,
without being able to close our eyes.

“ Another subject of anguish still in-
“ creased the horror of those almost eternal
“ hours, which formed long years of endless
“ nights : it was fear.

“ In the midst of torpor and agitated
“ sleep, which at last caused prostration of
“ the forces of nature, a thousand dazzlings,
“ a thousand false lights, a thousand
“ grinning phantoms, with livid eyes and
“ grinding teeth, that the nervous exci-
“ tement caused by the fever, rushed over

“my heated brain made me start on my
“frozen couch.

“And then that invisible witch attached
“to our steps like an evil genius was
“setting up continually its vampire-spectre
“before our inflamed imagination.

“Then, whilst a cold sweat streamed over
“my brow, as my hair bristled up on
“my head, when a shuddering of dread
“passed over my skin, while my teeth
“chattered in my mouth, I half raised
“myself up, and my eyes fixed and gaping,
“I endeavoured to repel the gestures and
“threatening contortions of those impal-
“pable beings which the infernal vision had
“raised up.

“One night during one of these night-
“mares, I experienced on my body, a hor-
“rible sensation ; something cold and
“humid brushed itself along my cheek.

“Was it the sepulchral finger of the dia-
“bolical witch ?

“ I bounded on the ground, uttering, a
“ cry which awoke the camp

“ It was the glutinous and cold body of a
“ snake, which had just glided near me, and
“ passed over my body !

GAZELLES AND TIGERS.

“ At last we disembarked, one evening, at
“ the creeks which you see down yonder,
“ and where you noticed us land, some
“ instants ago.

“ The passage which we had just made,
“ could have been accomplished in a short
“ space of time, but our voyage was much
“ retarded by strong gales of wind from the
“ north-east.

“ The Iroquois made us carry their canoes
“ on land, and came to encamp here, at the
“ foot of this rock.

“ Although it was not yet very late, the

“ shade of evening had already penetrated
“ under the arch of the grove ; for it was the
“ the time of autumn.

“ After we had heaped up, near their fire,
“ a supply of wood for the night, and they
“ had stretched themselves some time, on
“ the grass, to rest, after their repast, they
“ rose up suddenly together, without
“ uttering a word, and assembled in coun-
“ cil, under this clump of trees, which still
“ rise up, some paces from here.

“ This spontaneous move led me to believe
“ it was due to an invisible order from the
“ witch whom, either by effect of hallucina-
“ tion or in reality, I thought I saw walking
“ every night with a step as light as that of a
“ spirit on the border of the shade produced
“ by the flame of the wood fire.”

“ The mysterious manner which they had
“ affected, during the whole day, the prepar-
“ ations of the evening, and this extraordi-
“ nary council, caused us to have a presen-

“ timent that the formidable hour had arrived, when our fate would be decided.

* * *

“ Having knelt down with my mother, near a maple-tree, on the trunk of which she had hung up a little figure of the holy virgin, which she carried always with her, I joined my trembling prayer with hers, and following her ardent look, fixed on the sacred image, which the reflection of the clear fire encircled with a purple halo, ineffable symbol of the celestial ray which emitted, at that moment a last spark of hope, in the midst of the agonies of our hearts.

“ At intervals, my restless eyes cast themselves again involuntarily on the group of Indians, whose unintelligible words we were able to hear, brought by the nightly breeze, and to catch a glimpse, confusedly, of their expressive pantomime, through the shades.

“ After they had all spoken and seated themselves, each one in his turn, a shadow stood up in the centre of the council, and posed on the opaque veil of night its wavering profile, which absorbed at a distance, the intermittent redness of the hearth ; and a voice, of which my terrified ear seemed to recognise the strange sound, resounded in the silence.

“ It was (at least so I then believed), the voice of the witch.

“ For a long time she spoke and gesticulated, as if she desired to urge advice which found but little response in the minds of her wild auditors.

“ At last, the hand of the unknown being indicated with a gesture the two prisoners, and the council terminated.

“ All the Indians rose up together.

“ This was the fatal hour.

“ At this thought alone, all my limbs tremble again with terror !..... My breathing stops !..... I choke with horror !

“—Oh my God! murmured my mother,
“ in an undertone, thinking that I did not
“ hear her, and pressing me to her heart,
“ with her two hands, which only trembled
“ for me: Oh my God! My child!..... Let
“ them do to me what they like! I am
“ ready to endure all their tortures; but
“ my dear Harold! Ah! pity, my God!....
“ pity for this tender lamb!... pity for my
“ poor child!...

“ And all sobbing, she clasped me with
“ that desperate embrace of maternal love,
“ transfigured by the heart-rending ecstasy
“ of the supreme sacrifice.

“ She did not even think of imploring for
“ mercy from those heartless monsters.

“ Does the tiger, moved with pity, spare
“ the innocent sheep?

“ Her soul, shut out from all hope, no
“ longer turned toward any one but God,
“ from whom alone succour could come.

“ Ah! my mother! heaven heard your

“ prayer, and your sacrifice was accepted ;
“ but at what price, great God !..

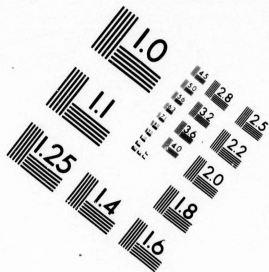
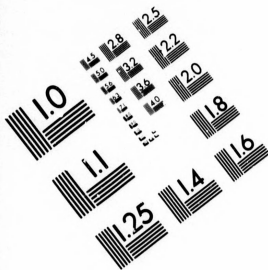
* * *

“ One of the Iroquois, holding in his hand
“ a long splinter of thin wood, approached
“ me, and putting it into my hands, made
“ sign to me with that caressing and
“ ironical manner which Indians love to do
“ in exercising their cruelties, to thrust it
“ into my mother’s arm, which he had just
“ seized by the wrist.”

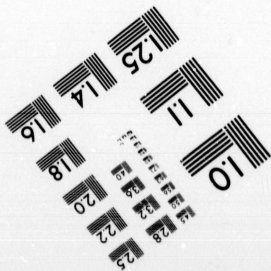
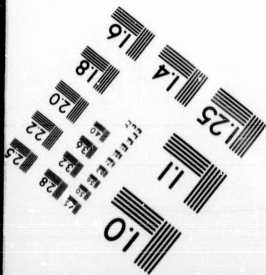
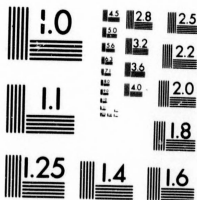
“ Petrified with horror at this atrocious
“ proposition, I pretended not to under-
“ stand ; but after some attempts, seeing
“ my persistence, he threatened me with his
“ tomahawk,

“ Then, in order to escape from the hor-
“ rible punishment of being myself the
“ executioner of my mother, I threw the
“ the rod far away from me, in the hope of
“ making him kill me.





**IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (MT-3)**



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2.0 3.2
3.6 4.5
5.0 6.3
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“ Alas ! why did I not then have the
“ good fortune to terminate my wretched
“ existence ?

“ I should not have been condemned to
“ suffer all at once all the agonies, without
“ dying.

“ Mamma ! mamma ! I cried out and
“ throwing myself into her arms, whilst the
“ irritated Indian raised his tomahawk to
“ strike a blow at my head ; mamma ! let
“ him kill me, if he likes, I prefer death to
“ causing you to suffer.

* * *

“ During all this time, that one whom I
“ loved, glad to see the fury of our enemies
“ turned against herself, became motion-
“ less, ready to submit to all their tortures.

“ She stooped over me, so as to cover me
“ with her body.

“ The Indian was brandishing his weapon

“in order to strike, when a hand held him
“back.

“Was it that of the witch?...

“Alas! far from being inspired by pity,
“this movement only proceeded from a
“ferocious design.

“I did not discover it till some moments
“later.

“The horror which I evinced at the idea
“of being myself the tormentor of my
“mother, was as a flash of light which
“appeared to reveal to the Indian ferocity,
“a refinement of diabolical cruelty.

* * *

“The Indian threw aside his tomahawk,
“snatched me violently from my mother’s
“arms, and bound me to a tree.

“Then acting always under the inspiration
“of the witch, he climbed up one of these
“large pine trees which you see there, and
“crawled along one of its branches, to the

“ extremity of which he attached two long strap which he carried in his hands.

“ Another Indian beneath him, then seized one of the cords and stretching it out, made a circuit round the trunk of a neighbouring tree, whilst his companion caused the branch to bend, by the weight of his body.

“ It only required a light effort to prevent the cord thus rolled round the tree, from slipping, and set the branch free.

“ Full of anxiety, and trembling all over, I followed with my eyes, all these preparations, without being able to understand the end.

“ The Indian approached me, placed in my hands the end of the cord rolled round the tree, and ordered me not to loosen it.”

“ The other Iroquois descended from his tree, and after having driven my mother under the bent branch he set to fastening the other cord round her neck.

“ A cry of terror and despair escaped from
“ my breast, and I let go the rope.

“ Then I understood their horrible
“ design !

“ My God ! to be myself the executioner
“ of my mother !

* * *

“ Foaming with rage, one of the Iroquois
“ flung his hatchet at me, which unfortu-
“ nately only stained my head with the
“ blood flowing from the skin of my skull,
“ and remained driven into a tree.

“ Believing me to be mortally wounded,
“ my mother snatched herself from the
“ hands of the executioner, and precipitated
“ herself towards me.”

—“ Harold ! she cried out in a stifled
“ voice,

—“ Mamma !... it is nothing !

“ And I burst into tears.

“ She seized my head between her two
“ hands and pressed her lips on my brow,
“ covered wit blood.

“ Her tears wet my face all over.

“ Oh my mother ! this was your last
“ caress to your poor child !

“ Ah ! since that moment, how bitter
“ have been the days of your unfortunate
“ son !

“ Ah ! if you had known her !... An angel
“ in mortal form ! heaven was reflected in
“ her eyes, tabernacle of her soul ! and her
“ soul was more beautiful than her look.

“ All the treasures of Christian tender-
“ ness ! a seraphic serenity ! a courage, de-
“ votedness and abnegation incomparable!...

“ And I embraced her for the last time !

“ And I was never again to clasp her in my
“ arms !

THE INFERNAL ORCHESTRA.

“ In an instant, the branch is bent again,
“ and the cord wound round the tree ; but
“ this time, the wretches, previously to
“ putting it into my hands, take care to
“ to fasten the other cord round the neck of
“ my poor mother, after having tied her
“ hands behind her back.

“ Then they present to me the cord.

“ I refused to take it, and they let it
“ quietly slip away, with a diabolical laugh,
“ till at last, seeing the branch raise itself
“ up, and tighten the cord which held my
“ mother, from despair, I am obliged to take
“ hold of it.

“ Torture inspired by all the genii of
“ hell ! The monsters relish by anticipation,
“ with ecstasy, all the horrors of the tor-
“ tures which they have just invented.

“ Weakened from fatigue, after long days
“ of unheard of sufferings, it is impossible I
“ can bear up long.

“ The savages have well foreseen it.

“ They know that nature will soon be
“ conquered, and the crime consummated.

“ What a night ! what hours ! wrestling
“ without hope against all the faintings of
“ nature !

“ What a gulf of atrocities ! all the pains,
“ all the terrors, all the distresses of mind
“ and body ! all the pangs of death, without
“ the prospect of the eternal rest ’

* * *

“ The infernal band removed themselves
“ some paces, and with yells at the top of
“ their voices, howlings, and contortions of
“ demons, executed on the sandy shore,
“ senseless dances the prelude of jugglery.”

“ Their naked limbs, reddened by the
“ crimson tongues of fire which the night-
“ wind caused to burst forth from the
“ hearth, might make them to be taken for
“ a troop of sorcerers or necromancers es-
“ caped from hell.

“ Their round glittering whirl was like a
“ hurricane.”

“ In the midst of their shoutings, a voice,
“ always the same, a funeral knell, which
“ still tingles in my ears, distinguished itself
“ and regulated their steps.

“ The owls, screech-owls, and other night-
“ birds, attracted by the flame, and those
“ unusual noises which disturb the silence
“ of their watching, hop from tree to tree,
“ mixing their frightful cries with the
“ roaring of the forest, with the sea-surf on
“ the sides of the cliff, and the chuckling of
“ the orgie.”

* * *

“ Farewell to the last hope !

“ All is ended !

“ It is hell !

“ Around me a network of blood ; the
“ abyss beneath my feet ; over my head the
“ roaring of the tempest, mourning and

“funerals in my mind ; everywhere, within
“and without, dizziness, darkness, despair
“and death !

“Alone !... alone !... one glimmer, one
“ray of light !... the sweet voice of my
“mother ; the sighs from her heart,
“through which I still have a glimpse of
“heaven... What ! heaven !... so near hell !
“The angel at... the side of demons !

* * *

“In a trembling, but calm voice, calm as
her soul, which no longer belongs to earth :

—“Harold ! my child, why weep ?...

“Stop your tears !

“We must part. God calls me to him, my
“troubles are going to cease !... Be happy !

“Up above there, I will pray to God for
“for you !... In heaven I shall love you
“better than on earth !...

“Mamma ! mamma !... oh !... no, you
“are not dying !

“ No, my child, one does not die when going to heaven !

“ I have offered my life for you, God has accepted it. You will live, my son ; but when I shall be no longer near you, remember always the lessons of your mother.

“ Ah ! when you feel that your faith is near giving way, think much of the good God, and... a little of your mother...

“ Harold ! let us pray together ; let us pray for our enemies, let us pray for the female-sinner !

* * *

“ Mamma ! what have we done to them, that they make us suffer so much ?

“ Has the good God abandoned us ?

“ Oh no, my child, it is the hour of darkness, look to heaven and pray with me !...

“ The unfortunate people ! they know
“ not what they do.

“ Lord, pity for these poor tribes lying
“ under the shadow of death.

“ Will they then never see the light of
“ the holy Gospel shine upon them ?

“ The blood of our apostle-martyres cries
“ out to you.

“ Hear the groans of those sacrificed
“ victims who stand before your throne !

“ Oh mother of griefs ! by the sword
“ which pierced thy soul on Calvary, cast
“ down one look of pity on my poor child,
“ nailed like thine, upon the cross.

“ Contemplate the affliction and agonies
“ of a mother, and save my child !

“ Harold !... I bless you !... Farewell !...

* * *

—“ Ah me ! ah me ! help ! I already
“ feel my arm becoming numb, and my
“ fingers stiff ! Mamma ! Ah !..... I am

“going to kill you !... Will you pardon
“me ?... I wish to die, I wish to die !...
“Shall I be able to live without remorse ?
“my God ! a cloud passes over my sight !...
“I can no longer see... I can no longer
“hear... nothing !... I am dying !...

* * *

“All of a sudden, in the midst of my
“swoon, I think I feel that my benumbed
“fingers open ; the fatal cord slips between
“my hands, it is grating round the tree,
“and... it escapes from me !

“An extreme start awake me from my
“swoon ; I rush forward, and fortunately
“get to the strap to again catch hold of it.

“But it is in vain ; nature is exhausted ;
“I struggle some time longer ; my strength
“abandons me ; my head falls heavily on
“my breast. A fresh swoon...

“Suddenly, frightful yells arouse me from
“my lethargy ; my hair stands on end, my
“God ! I have killed my mother !...

“ An exclamation of horror breaks forth
“ from my bosom.

“ Between the earth and sky, the dead
“ body, which swings from the branches,
“ by the force of the wind, is there.

“ Dizziness and stupor freeze the blood
“ in my veins.

“ Everything appear to turn around me !

“ A funeral crape passes over my sight.

“ I feel the claw of death biting me to
“ heart.

*
* * *

“ From that instant, until the moment of
“ losing all feeling of existence, all my
“ ideas were disconcerted, and became con-
“ fused in my memory.

“ Some pallid glimpses of recollection,
“ as if in a dream: the grating noise of the
“ cord on the fatal branch, the wind weeps
“ sadly over my head, and sighs the chant
“ of death ; at the approach of day-break,

“ there is the croaking of a crow that has
“ just perched upon the branch.

“ It approaches nearer and nearer, in
“ order to scent the corpse, brushes it lightly
“ with its wing, whilst hopping, and then
“ uttering a cry, suddenly flies away.

* * *

“ Across the veil of death which covers my
“ eyes, I fancy that I see, oh horror!... a
“ frightful face, and how green and spark-
“ ling eye-balls, a sphinx, the colour of
“ blood, which passes and repasses, at two
“ fingers' distance from my face, with a
“ hellish chuckling!... The ghost of the
“ witch!...

“ Does it come to gloat over its prey, to
“ insult its victim?... Oh! it thrusts its
“ claws into my heart!...

“ A convulsive trembling... a deadly short
“ chill in all my limbs... the blood flies to
“ my head... sparks skip in my brain... a

“ a buzzing in my ears... a last indefinite
“ pressure, dim, without horizon... a last
“ crispation, then everything is eclipsed, and
“ loses itself in the gloomy lake of nothing-
“ ness.

THE ORPHAN.

“ On awaking from my long swoon, I was
“ stretched out on a bed of fir-tree branches,
“ in the midst of a forest of maple-trees.

“ A pallid day-light filtered through the
“ trellice of the foliage ; and large dark
“ clouds, seen through an opening of the
“ trees in a piece of the sky, distilled a
“ cold rain.

“ How sad were these numerous drops of
“ rain, which fell with a little monotonous
“ noise, on each reddened leaf, and trembled
“ at their points in tears of blood, which
“ dropped on the ground !

“ And yet there was more of sadness and
“ of tears in my heart.

“ Alas! why did I awake from that long
“ insensibility ?

“ I could sleep the sleep of peace, at the
“ bottom of the tomb, at the side of that
“ one whom I shall never see any more !

“ Since that unfortunate day, that internal
“ sun has become veiled for ever.

“ The surf of years, in breaking over my
“ heart, brings always to me the remains of
“ a coffin; for me the earth has become a
“ valley of wormwood, where I drag on a
“ life, under the cross, crowned with thorns.

* * *

“ On his knees near me, under the shelter
“ which he had fixed above me, the brave
“ Canoer ” supported my head with one
“ hand, and with the other, bathed my
“ temples with fresh water.

“ You remember, my well beloved, with what an inexpressible embrace I threw my childish arms around your neck when I recognized you, and saw big tears streaming over your cheeks !

“ How long we remained embraced in that dumb effusion of our grief !....

“ Tell us now with what intrepid boldness you managed to effect my deliverance.

The “ Canoeer ” did not reply ; choked by his sobbings, speech expired on his lips.

Mrs Houel’s son could not then restrain the ocean of bitterness with which his soul was watered.

Several times, during this lamentable recital, the witnesses of this scene, moved by so many sufferings and misfortunes, mixed tears with theirs.

But it was then an explosion of unspeakable emotion, to which succeeded one of those solemn silences which the majesty of a great grief imposes and of which no

human word could equal the mute eloquence : unheard language of minds which heartily sympathize with, and understand it !

* * *

After a long pause, the "Canoeer" began to speak :

— "When I had rendered the last services to the 'Tshinepik', the incomparable friend, for whom I shall never cease to weep, I hastened to repair the canoe, which the Iroquois, previous to leaving the shore, had taken care to pierce with several blows of the hatchet, and I went in their pursuit.

"Unfortunately the boat had been much damaged, and it was not until after several hours' work, that I was able to put her again afloat.

"This delay gave the Iroquois a long start of me, and was the reason that, in spite of all my diligence, I was not able to

“rejoin them till several days later, when they had just camped here.

“Overcome by fatigue, after those long days of superhuman efforts, I began, even on that night, to despair of being able to overtake them, when, through the darkness, I perceived their fire on the shore.

“It was already very late, when I landed at the Point ; but the dreadful uproar of their jugglery, rendered it very easy for me to approach their camp.

“In vain I sought to distinguish the two prisoners ; the underwood which grew at the edge of the wood, interrupted my view.

“I glided along and creeping to where their canoes were overturned on the sand, I found there all their guns loaded, ready to fire.

“After having put a second ball into each of the guns, and renewed the priming, I ascended some paces on the bank, and

“concealed myself behind a flat rock, on
“which I placed the guns in a row, all
“loaded.

“The Iroquois were eight in number ;
“consequently it was necessary for me to
“exercise all my skill, so as not to lose any
“chance ; for if I had the misfortune to
“to commit the least blunder, I was lost.

“It behoved me then to wait quietly for
“a time.

“For a long time, my finger on the
“trigger, I followed with the muzzle of my
“gun the frantic movements of the orgie
“without being able to aim with cer-
“tainty.

“At last, I was able to aim at two
“Iroquois’ heads ; the shot was fired, and
“two Iroquois fell stone dead.

“Profiting immediately by the moment
“of disturbance and stupor which this
“unexpected attack produced among them,
“I seized a second gun, and fired.

“ A third Indian fell, never to rise again,
“ and another grievously wounded, after
“ having made three or four tumbles, on
“ the sand, took to flight towards the border
“ of the wood.

“ The four other Iroquois hastened
“ towards the canoes, in the hope of there
“ finding their arms, but anticipating this
“ movement, I had taken the precaution of
“ going some paces away from the place of
“ landing.

“ Whilst they were stooping around their
“ canoes, looking for their guns, I had time
“ to knock over yet two others.

“ Howling and foaming with rage, the two
“ last rushed towards me, tomahawk in hand.

“ I still hoped to be able to overthrow
“ them, before they could come up to me ;
“ but ill luck, my gun missed fire.

“ The struggle was becoming unequal ;
“ my two assailants were not more than a
“ few paces off.

“ Without losing an instant I threw my
“ gun aside, and seizing my knife by the
“ blade, I threw it with all the strength of
“ my arm, at the heart of one of the Iro-
“ quois.

“ The murderous weapon caught him
“ right in the chest, and the Indian, mor-
“ tally wounded, bounded up, while
“ uttering a war-cry, and sank down.

“ At the same time, the last Iroquois was
“ about to beat his tomahawk down my
“ head.

“ This man was a colossus, whose despair
“ and rage increased his strength and bold-
“ ness a hundred-fold.

“ I had only time to parry the blow with
“ my axe, which broke against that of the
“ Indian, and flew into splinters.

“ The violence of the shock was such, that
“ the Indian's tomahawk slipped from his
“ fingers, and fell at several feet distant.

“ There I was, without a weapon, facing
“ this giant.

“ One plan alone of safety still offered
“ itself: it was to seize the knife which hung
“ at his side.

“ With one hand I clutch the Iroquois by
“ by the throat, and with the other, I try to
“ seize his knife.

“ Our hands meet at his waist; his al-
“ ready holds the end of the handle, and I
“ scarcely have time to clasp the middle of
“ the knife, at the junction of the handle
“ and blade.

“ A terrible struggle takes place.

“ We both roll over on the sand.

“ Unfortunately the knife wounds me in
“ the hand.

“ It is going to escape from me.

“ By a supreme effort, I force my fingers
“ into his throat, so as to choke him, but
“ he does not yield.

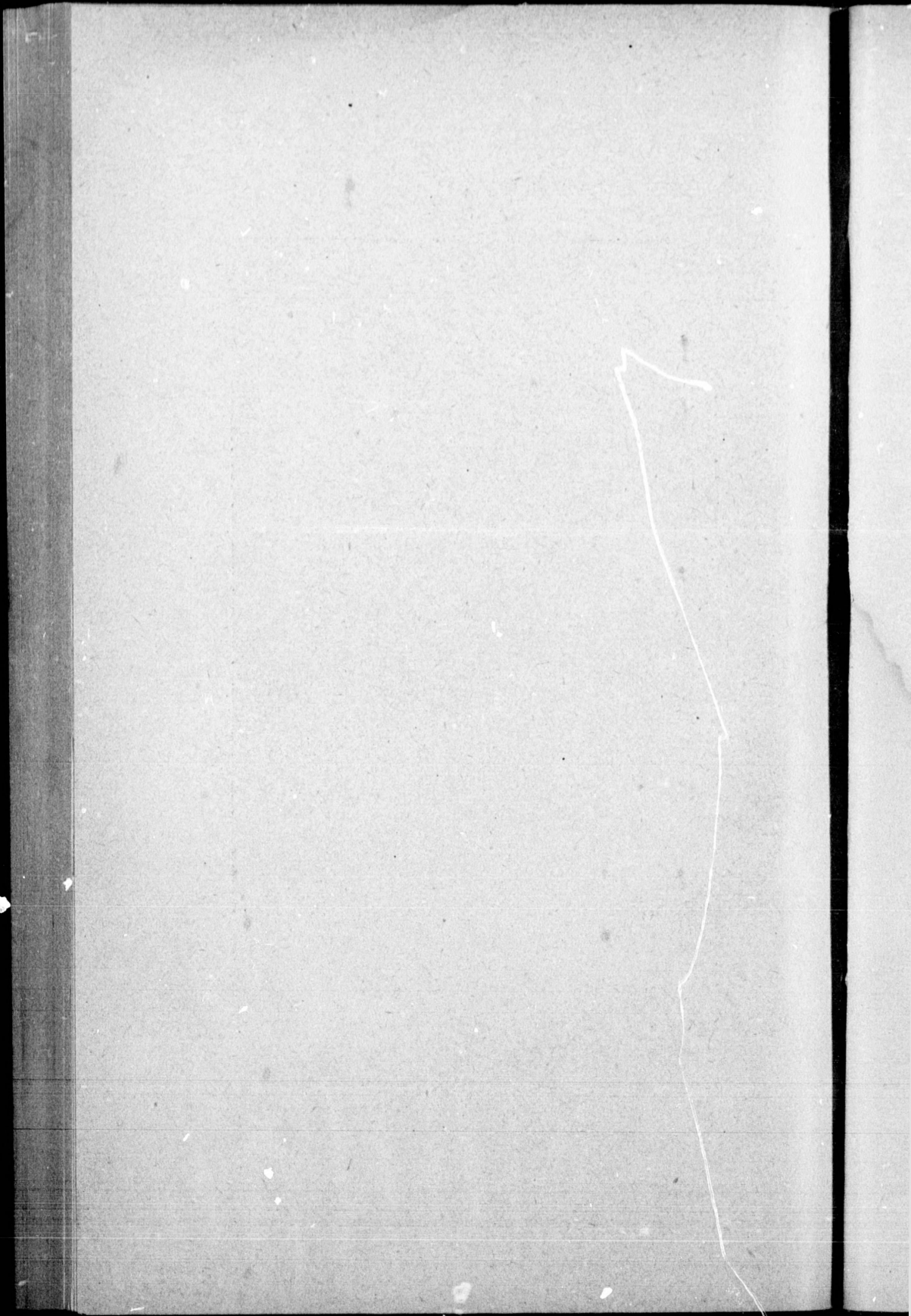
“ In fine, after a last shake, the knife falls
“ from his hand.

“ In an instant I drove the fatal weapon
“ into his body, he stirred no more.

THE WITCH.



Alas! what a terrible spectacle offers itself
to my view. (V. p. 113).



* * *

“ The two prisoners were then saved !
“ I hasten toward the wood-pile ; I enter
“ the border of the wood.

“ Alas ! what a terrible spectacle offers
“ itself to my view !

“ The dead body of Mrs Houel is suspend-
“ ed at the end of a rope, the violet-coloured
“ figure and its limbs hanging in the immo-
“ veability of death.

“ A single motion still agitates the corpse :
“ it is that of the branch shaken by the wind,
“ which causes it to rise and fall, giving a
“ slight undulation to its vestments.

* * *

“ At some paces farther off, is the child’s
“ body, fastened to the trunk of a tree, the
“ head stained with blood, hanging down
“ on his breast, deprived of feeling.

“ I believed him to be without life.

“ Poor little flower, scarcely detached from
“ the maternal tie, and already ripe for death!

“ I remained cast down, as if struck by a
“ thunder-bolt.

* * *

“ After having cut the cords, I placed the
“ two bodies, one on the side of the other.

“ I then remarked, with terror, that the
“ child’s hair, whose curls had but lately
“ glittered with such a beautiful black, had
“ become completely white!

“ Had he died then of fright, sooner than
“ from his wounds?

“ I crossed his two motionless arms on
“ his breast, and after having placed the
“ arms of Mrs Howel around his neck, I
“ caused his body, pale and white as ivory,
“ to rest on his mother’s heart.

“ You have watched over him in his life-
“ time, oh tender and unfortunate mother,
“ watch again over him in death!

* * *

“ Before thinking of consigning these
“ inanimate remains to the earth, I remem-
“ bered that several of the Iroquois had
“ only been wounded ; and in order to
“ reassure myself, I lighted a bark torch,
“ and went to examine them carefully.

“ All were dead, with the exception of
“ two, who could hardly breathe, and had
“ only a few hours to live.

“ But the principal author of so many
“ crimes and desasters, was not among the
“ number of the victims.

“ The witch had disappeared.

“ Was she then wounded by one of my
“ bullets, had she fled towards the wood ?

“ I followed, for some time, traces of
“ blood through the forest, but soon every
“ mark disappeared, and I was obliged to
“ abandon a useless search.

* * *

“ On my return to the place of the catastrophe, I perceived that the child’s wound was but slight, and that he was again breathing.

“ I lavished on him then, all the care of which I was capable ; but he did not revive and become sensible, until several hours later.

“ It was during that interval that I transported him to the shelter of a neighbouring maple-tree, after having dug the grave of his unfortunate mother.

“ It is even here, under this hillock, that she rests, and the purpose of our journey, delayed a long time by the absence of Mr Houel from the colony, is to bring back her remains, and reunite them with the ashes of her family.

*
*
*

On the evening of the same day, the brave peasant alone, near the rock, was leaning on a spade, some paces from a heap of freshly removed earth, and looking with a pensive eye, at a canoe which was going away slowly from the shore.

It was Mrs Houel's son, accompanied by the faithful "Canoeer," who was carrying away the sacred remains of his mother.

The two travellers waved their hands, as a last sign of farewell to their host, to which he replied, wiping away with the other side of his rough hand, a tear which fell, in spite of him, down his cheek.

His emotional glances followed the canoe, without being detached an instant from it, until at last it had disappeared, in doubling the extremity of the River Ouelle Point.

EPILOGUE.

The remembrance of this tragic legend, is not yet effaced from the memories of the old storytellers of the coast, although the details differ, and the variations which multiply, threaten it, like all our other traditions, with the winding sheet of oblivion.

Already the twilight sets in around all these old recollections, the outlines fade, and soon darkness will invade them on all sides, so we hasten to light the torch, and arrest the darkness where it deepens.

* * *

The story of *The Witch* was related to us for the first time, by a canadian hunter, an old fisherman of the gulf, old in years, very superstitious, versed in all the traditions of the country.

“As an historical monument which consecrates this event, a point, situated at a short distance from the rock, a witness of this bloody tragedy, still bears the name of “The Iroquois Point.”

Moreover, this shore, from all time, has been in evil repute, and the name of “The Devil’s Cape,” given to a promontory which extends into the sea, some miles lower down, is not a stranger to the memory of the terrible witch

* * *

The charm and the marvellous, with which popular superstition has surrounded this mysterious being, are not yet extinct; and many pretend that the snow-shoes, which may yet be seen incrustated on one of the rocks on the shore, were imprinted by her steps.*

* These singular impressions are still perfectly distinct, although the sea-water and rain are gra-

The people of the River Ouelle Point, whose love of marvellous stories is well known, affirm that they have often seen, during the evening, lights moving about here and there, over the sandy shore, and large white phantoms which are decidedly not caused by the revulsion of the sea, wander, during certain times, over the rocks, on the edge of the water.

Moreover, they are quite sure of having heard cries and groans, during stormy nights; so much so, that there is not a man amongst them who would run the risks of

dually altering and effacing them. These traces of snow-shoes are indented on the sloping side of a rock, which the waves bathe, during the strong winds and high water. There was also to have been seen, some years ago, on the same rock, the impression, very visible on the front part, of two feet, also of the extremities of two hands situated near, similar to traces which would be left on the sand by a man supporting himself on his hands and feet; but at the present time, the traces of snow-shoes are alone visible.

going to sleep alone, at the end of "The Point," in the old house which affords shelter to the porpoise-fishermen.

* * *

As to the place and circumstances of the death of the terrible heroine, nothing is known positively.

Some pretend that she was burned by a party of hostile Indians.

Others state that, one day, a missionary was called to the bedside of an Iroquois witch who they say was her.

What passed between the man of God and the wild Indian woman, nobody knows.

Did God hear favourably the dying prayer of Mrs Houel?

These funeral sound, add the chroniclers, are always heard at night-time; they fascinate or freeze with terror, like the incantations of former times.

Every one is then silent, and listens, while trembling.

These are the cries of the "The Witch," they say, who asks for prayers. Let us say for her an *Ave Maria*.

(FINIS.)

Quebec, May, 1861.

listens,

Witch,"

us say

