

THE CANADIAN PIONEERS.

FROM THE FRENCH OF M. L'ABBE CASGRAIN.

I.—DETROIT.

ARE you familiar with that fertile, laughing country, so rich in historical souvenirs, whose virgin soil was first trodden by our French ancestors? Are you familiar with these green and undulating prairies, watered by limpid streams, and shaded by maples, plane-trees, figs, and acacias, in the midst of which rises, brilliant in youth and prospective greatness, the flourishing city of Detroit? If you wish to enjoy fully the enchanting picture that this charming country presents—whose climate need not be envious of the Italian sun—ascend the Detroit River some fresh spring morning, when Aurora has shaken her dewy wings over these vast plains, and when the bright May sun has thrown its luminous rays through the transparent mists of morning. Nowhere is there a clearer sky or more ravishing nature. Nowhere are the wavy lines of the blue horizon more distinctly traced. Here are wild and uncultivated sites, romantic landscapes, little wooded islands, like baskets of verdure, all re-echoing the mocking laughter of multitudes of birds. Pretty promontories whose round arms encircle gulfs full of shadows and sunlight; whose waves, caressed by these warm breaths, deposit along the shore a fringe of silver foam. Hills and valleys, covered with luxuriant verdure, mirror themselves in the neighboring wave. On either side the shore stretches along, covered with pebbles or fine gray sand; sometimes embroidered

with a lace-like turf, or bristling with tall reeds, crowned with little tufts, among which the timid kingfishers perch, and take flight at the least noise. Here the fresh murmuring rivulets flow under the flowery arches of interlacing boughs; there tiny paths, edged with strawberries and forget-me-nots, wind over the brow of the hill; and, more distant, the fresh spring zephyr trembles on the green meadows, and perfumes the air with a delicious fragrance. The thousand confused noises of the water and the rustling foliage, the warbling of birds, the buzz of human voices, the lowing of herds, and the distant and silvery echo of the bells of the steamers that ply along the river, ascend from time to time through the air, and diffuse an indefinable charm in the soul and through the senses. At short distances apart, pretty little villages stretch along the shore, or group themselves on the banks of a stream, or again on the slope of a hill, or crowning its summit like a diadem. Finally you arrive at Detroit, with its steeples and roofs glittering in the sunlight. Hundreds of boats, engaged in commercial interests, are constantly arriving at or leaving its quays, furrowing the river in every direction. Were I a poet, I would compare this charming city to the superb swan of this country, which, on awakening in the midst of the rushes on the river's bank, shakes its white wings in taking flight, and showers around a rain of dew and down; or, better still, to the stately

magnolia growing on the banks of the stream, when, shaken by the aromatic breath of the morning breeze, it covers the wave in which it is mirrored with the fertile dust of its corolla.

II.—THE PIONEER.

Founded in the year 1700, by M. de la Mothe-Cadillac, Detroit remained for a long time under the Canadian government. It was taken by the English in 1760, and remained in their possession until the war of 1812. Then the United States became the happy possessor of this charming country, which F. Charlevoix has so justly called "the garden spot." "Detroit," says the Canadian historian, "has preserved, in spite of its many vicissitudes, the characteristics of its origin, and French is still the language of a large portion of its population. Like all the cities founded and settled by this great people—the monuments of whose genius are landmarks in America—Detroit is destined to become a great business centre, on account of its favorable situation between Lake Huron and Lake Erie."* Toward the year 1770 or 1780, Detroit was far from presenting the flourishing aspect which it offers to the stranger to-day. It was only a small fort surrounded by weak ramparts, and a stockade in which lived a few hundred Canadian colonists—a veritable tent in the wilderness. The fort was the advanced sentinel of the colony, and by consequence constantly exposed to the attacks of the Indians. Around the fortifications the colonists had cleared a few acres of land, which they could only cultivate at the risk of their lives, holding a pickaxe in one hand, and a gun in the other; while beyond, before, behind, to the

right, to the left, everywhere a wilderness, everywhere interminable forests, whose gloomy shades concealed multitudes of beings a thousand times more cruel, a thousand times more formidable and to be feared, than the wild beasts and reptiles which shared alike the tenebrious shelter.

It is easy from this to imagine what indomitable courage these hardy pioneers possessed who dared to come and plant the standard of civilization in the midst of these distant solitudes, in the face of such multitudinous perils. One of the grandest pictures that the history of the New World presents, after the sublime figure of the missionary, is that of the Canadian pioneer. He is the father of the strongest race that has been implanted on the American continent—the Canadian race; and the noblest blood that has ever flowed in human veins, flows through his—the French blood. Everywhere on the continent the Canadian pioneer is to be found, and everywhere can be traced by his blood. Travel through North America, from Hudson's Bay to the Gulf of Mexico, from Halifax to San Francisco, and on the snows of the North Pole and the golden sands of California, along the Atlantic strand, and on the moss-covered slopes of the Rocky Mountains, you will find the print of his footsteps. An insatiable activity consumes him. Onward! is his watchword, and he only rests when he has reached the goal of his ambition. But it is not alone the love of adventure nor the violent thirst for gold that stimulates him to action: a nobler ambition urges him on, a more legitimate instinct animates and guides him. He has a mission to accomplish—a mysterious apostleship. Turn for a moment to the pages of our history, and especially to the accounts of the Jesuits, and you will

* *Histoire du Canada*. Par M. F. X. Gar-
3007, ii. 23.

see the Canadian pioneer throughout animated by the most admirable zeal for the conversion of the savages, opening a way for the missionaries by the most heroic efforts, and frequently himself making the most wonderful conversions. We find united in him the three grandest types of manhood: priest, laborer, soldier. Priest!—by his ardent piety, his lively faith, his zeal for the salvation of vacillating souls and obdurate hearts, drawing to the faith entire settlements. Was there ever a more admirable priesthood? Laborer!—before his powerful axe the great forests fall with a crash around him, and his plough tracks, through the fallen trunks, the furrow where the green germ of the future harvest will soon begin to tremble. Soldier!—by years of mortal combat, he has conquered the soil that his hand cultivates. Ah! were I only an artist, to trace on canvas this noble figure in his triple character of priest, laborer, and soldier. In the background of the picture, immense forests, in all their savage grandeur; nearer, the waving grain, growing between the charred trunks. In the foreground, a portion of the great river, with its emerald waves sparkling in the sun. On one side, an angle of the old fort, with its ramparts and stockade, whence rises a modest little belfry surmounted by a cross. On the other side, a band of Indians flying toward the edge of the wood. The centre-piece would be my brave pioneer, his eyes flashing, his hair blown by the breeze, and his forehead bleeding from a ball which had just grazed it, near him his plough, and holding his gun, whose muzzle still smokes from a recent conflict. At the right, he would be pouring the water of baptism on the head of his vanquished and dying enemy, whom he had just con-

verted to the faith. Oh! how could I attempt to paint this vigorous figure in the various attitudes of a soldier-laborer, with his iron muscles, and the calm, serene strength of the man of the fields; the invincible courage of the soldier, and the sublime enthusiasm of the priest! Verily, this picture would not be unworthy of the pencil of a Rubens or a Michael Angelo. Faith, toil, courage; priest, laborer, soldier—this is the Canadian pioneer. It is Cincinnatus, the soldier-laborer, become a Christian. It is the Spartan warrior, who has passed through the Catacombs. The Canadian reader who peruses these lines can raise his head with noble pride, for the blood that flows through his veins is the blood of heroes. He can look attentively at the palm of his hand, and see there still the unction of earth, of powder, and of the priesthood. The pioneer has nobly filled his mission: yours remains to be accomplished. A people to whom God has given such ancestors is necessarily destined for something great, if it faithfully corresponds with the designs of divine Providence. But let us leave these teachings, which properly belong to venerable heads, and return to our story.

III.—EVENING

At the remote period which we describe, the fur trade of Detroit was immense; and the Indians, aided and encouraged by the facilities for reaching there, came in great numbers to sell the products of their hunting expeditions. There were representatives from the various tribes—Iroquois, Potawatamies, Illinois, Miamis, and a host of others. M. Jacques Du Perron Baby was at that time Indian superintendent at Detroit. This was an extremely important and responsible position at that period.

M. Baby had realized a handsome fortune there in a few years. Almost all the land on which the Detroit of to-day stands was then owned by him and a Mr. Macomb, the father of General Macomb, who commanded a portion of the American troops during the war of 1812. At the close of this war, the entire property of M. Baby was confiscated in consequence of his political opinions, which were declared in favor of Canada *versus* the United States. His fine mansion stood in the centre of the fort, surrounded by a beautiful garden. Having luxurious tastes, he embellished it with all the requirements of refined and cultivated life. The garden was on raised ground, surrounded by a sodded terrace; the house stood in the centre, half-concealed by a dense foliage of maple, pear, and acacia trees, which waved their branches coaxingly over its roof. A number of birds, sometimes hidden in the branches, sometimes flying through the air, crossing, pursuing each other, describing a thousand bewildering circles, abandoned themselves to joyous song, while the little *ramoneur*,* complaining on the chimney-top, mingled his shrill, harsh cry with their melodious voices. It was evening. The last rays of the setting sun colored with rose and saffron tints the tops of the forests. The heat had been intense throughout the day. The evening breeze, coquetting among the roses, dahlias, and flowering eglantine, refreshed exhausted nature deliciously, and perfumed the air with the most intoxicating fragrance. Tea was about being served in the garden, and the table was most invitingly covered with tempting viands and lovely flowers. The superintendent and his family were seated around; a young

officer who had been several months in Detroit had been invited to join the family party. Two colored servants waited most assiduously at the repast. "What a charming evening!" said the officer—he was a handsome young man, with light hair, noble and expressive features, and rather a high forehead. There was a proud, intelligent expression in his bright eyes, and yet at times something vague and dreamy. "Truly," he continued, "I have never seen anything in Italy more delightful than this; such a climate, and such ravishing scenery, such fine effects of light and shade! Look there along the horizon, and at those fleecy clouds which float through the azure sky; they resemble a superb scarf fringed with purple and gold."

"It is indeed a magnificent evening," replied the superintendent. "We really enjoy a very fine climate in this section of country. I have never seen anywhere a clearer sky or more transparent atmosphere, and nature so grand; but, against all of this, we are deprived of nearly all of the luxuries and comforts of the old country, to say nothing of the constant dangers to which we are exposed from the Indians; for we are on the utmost limits of civilization. You, who have just left the civilized shores of Europe, can scarcely form any idea of the cruelty of these barbarians. Life is indeed very severe in this new country."

"Yes," said his wife, whose fine physiognomy indicated her great force of character; "it is only a few years ago that I was obliged to do sentinel duty, and stand at the entrance of the fort with a gun in my hand, while the men were occupied in cultivating the fields around it."*

The conversation was here interrupt-

* Chimney-swallow.

* Fact.

ed by one of the servants, who came to say that a stranger was waiting to see the superintendent and his wife. They all arose from the tea-table.

"You look very sad this evening, mademoiselle," said the officer, addressing a young girl of sixteen or eighteen years of age, and who, from a strong resemblance, could be easily recognized as the daughter of M. Baby. "What can have happened to cause such a shadow to fall on your fair brow; while all are smiling around you, your heart seems full of sorrow? It is almost impossible that any one could contemplate this lovely scene, and not experience a feeling of interior peace. Nothing so completely bewilders me like an evening of this kind. This graceful harmony of light and shade is for me full of a mysterious intoxication."

"Alas!" said the young girl, "a few days ago I too could have enjoyed this scene; but to-day, as it were, every object is covered with a funereal pall. This beautiful sky, these green fields, the flowers and fruit, these vermilion roses, which charm your sight, all make me shudder. I see blood everywhere."

"My God!" cried the officer, "what misfortune can have happened to you?"

"Oh! only a few hours ago, I witnessed such a distressing scene that it is impossible to imagine it. I cannot obliterate it from my mind, or distract my thoughts in the least from the shocking spectacle. But I ought not to distress you by this sorrowful recital. I had rather let you enjoy tranquilly these hours that afford you so much pleasure."

"Continue, continue," exclaimed he. "Relate to me this tragic story. Happiness is often so selfish, but we should always have our sympathies ready for the sorrows of others."

The young girl then continued:

"Day before yesterday evening, a party of Indians half intoxicated came into the fort to see my father; they brought with them a young girl, whom they had captured several days before. Oh! if you could only have seen the despair on her countenance! Poor child, her clothes were in rags, her hair hung in tangled masses, and her face was all scratched and bleeding. She did not utter a complaint, nor did she weep; but stood with fixed eyes, mute and immovable as a statue. We might have believed her dead but for a slight trembling of the lips that betrayed the life that was not visible. It was a fearful sight. I have never seen anything like it. Great misfortunes are like severe wounds; they dry up our tears as terrible and sudden wounds arrest the blood in our veins. Compassionating her distressed situation, my sister and myself made her come in and stay in our room through the night; but we did not deceive ourselves with the slightest hope that anything could be done for her rescue, for we knew too well the character of these savages. Nevertheless, we tried to sustain her with a little hope that something might possibly be done. Perhaps our father could succeed in inducing the Indians to let her go. At last she gradually recovered from her state of stupor, and told us her sad, sad story."

IV.—AGONY.

"I have lived for some time," said she, "near Fort Wayne with my married sister. One morning, while her husband was at work in the field, several Indians suddenly entered our house. 'Where is your husband?' they inquired roughly of my sister. 'He is at Fort Wayne,' she replied, frightened by their sinister aspect; and

they went out again. Full of anxiety, we followed them with our eyes for some time. 'O my God! sister,' exclaimed I, trembling, 'I am so frightened, so terrified. Let us fly; these savages appear to me to be meditating some dreadful act. I am convinced that they will return.' Without paying any attention to my words, she continued to watch them as they went off in the direction of Fort Wayne. The road which they took lay only a short distance from the place where her husband was quietly at work, not having the slightest idea of the danger that threatened him. Fortunately, a clump of trees hid him from their sight. We began to breathe more freely, for they had now gone beyond the field; but suddenly one of them happened to turn around. 'They have discovered him! they have discovered him!' shrieked my sister, almost fainting with terror. And really they had all stopped, and were looking in the direction where Joseph was stooping down, gathering up the branches of a tree which he had just cut down. He had no suspicion of danger. The Indians, concealed by the trees, were now only a short distance off. Suddenly we heard the report of a gun, and Joseph fell to the ground. Believing him dead, they advanced boldly; but the ball had only grazed his head, and he was stunned for the moment. He quickly recovered himself, and, making a breastwork of the branches of the felled tree, seized his gun, and in an instant two of them were stretched stiff corpses on the ground. The others, alarmed, made a precipitate retreat toward the edge of the woods, and then a quick firing commenced on both sides. Joseph was a fine marksman; at each shot, he disabled an enemy. Three had already fallen. We

awaited, in an agony of apprehension, the result of the mortal combat, which would not have been doubtful had it been only an ordinary enemy that the savages had to contend with. But Joseph was a formidable adversary. He fired rapidly, reloading his gun with the most perfect coolness, while the balls were whistling all around him. Placing the muzzle of his gun between the branches, he made the sign of the cross on his breast at the moment of taking aim; then, pulling the trigger, we counted another Indian less. Every time I saw a new victim fall, I could not repress a tremor of delight. Joseph's unerring ball had just struck a fourth enemy. We began to hope, when we discovered one of the savages creeping along on the ground behind him. No serpent could have advanced with more cunning or address. Without shaking a pebble or disturbing a leaf, he approached slowly; at one time concealing himself behind a little knoll, then under a thicket of brambles, only exposing himself when he saw Joseph busy taking aim. Finally he arrived within two steps of him without being seen. Then, stopping, he waited until Joseph had reloaded his gun. Without suspecting the danger behind him, he raised his gun to his shoulder to take aim; then we saw him lower it quickly, and look around. He had heard a slight noise in the bushes near him. He raised his head and listened an instant, then leaned toward the right, and then toward the left, without perceiving anything; for the savage was lying flat on the ground, behind a pile of branches. Feeling entirely reassured, he again raised his gun to take aim. At the same moment, the Indian, with an infernal smile, raised himself from the earth, and, just as Joseph was preparing to immolate

another enemy, he brandished his knife. A last shot was heard, a last Indian fell; but Joseph had also fallen, struck to the heart by the cowardly fiend. The wretch then proceeded to scalp him, after which he plundered him of his clothes, in which he arrayed himself.

V.—LAMENTATION.

“Paralyzed with horror and fright, we thought no longer of saving ourselves. My sister, in her despair, pressed her baby to her heart, and threw herself at the foot of a crucifix, which she seized in her hands, and mutely covered it with tears and kisses, while I, too, utterly overcome, threw myself on my knees beside her, and mingled my tears and prayers with hers. Poor mother! she did not tremble for herself, but for her child—that dear little angel, whom she loved so tenderly, whom she so adored. It was indeed a beautiful babe, scarcely eighteen months old, and had already begun to lisp ‘Mamma.’ ‘O my God!’ cried my sister between her sobs, ‘if I must die, I willingly give up my life; but save, oh! save my child!’ Then, embracing it, and bathing it in her tears, she clasped it to her heart, and sank to the floor insensible. Although more dead than alive myself, I tried to sustain her, and had her in my arms, when Joseph’s murderer entered, followed by his cruel companions. Without uttering a word, he advanced toward us, and violently snatched the child from its mother. She had not heard them enter the room, but, when they tore the child away from her, she shuddered and suddenly recovered her consciousness. The savages, exasperated at having lost seven of their comrades, now only thought of blood and vengeance. The assassin of Joseph, holding the child at arm’s length, looked at it with the diabolical

expression of a serpent charming his victim before striking him. It was an angel in the grasp of a demon. The monster smiled—Satan alone could have laughed as he did. The baby, as if to supplicate his pity, smiled also, with that angelic expression of innocence that would have moved the most hardened and obdurate of hearts. But he, seizing it by the leg, whirled it round for an instant, and then—oh! horror!—dashed its head against the heavy edge of the huge stove. Its brains splattered over its mother’s face. Like a tiger she sprang at the murderer of her child. Maternal love gave her superhuman strength, and, seizing him by the throat, she buried her fingers in his flesh. He tottered; his face turned black, and he fell heavily to the floor, suffocated by the strength of her desperate grasp. She would have undoubtedly strangled him, had not another savage at that instant struck her a blow on the head with his hatchet. My poor sister! her death was indeed a cruel one, but her agony only lasted a moment—her troubles are ended, and she is now in heaven. But I—what will become of me? You see the condition that I am in. O my God, my God! have pity on me.”

And the young girl, wringing her hands in despair, threw herself sobbing into my arms, pressed me to her heart, and implored me not to abandon her into the hands of these brutal savages. But, oh! what is more heart-breaking than to witness misfortune without the power of alleviating it! We spent the night in weeping and trying to encourage her, but I could not help feeling at the time that it was cruel to inspire her with a confidence that I had not; for I knew these savages too well. I knew that the monsters never abandoned their victims. The next day, my father

tried in every way to conciliate them, and then interceded in behalf of the young captive. He offered any amount of ransom for her, but in vain; nothing would tempt them. The effects of the liquor had not entirely worn off, and they were sullen and obstinate. My father used in turn prayers and threats to move them; but neither presents, prayers, nor threats could rescue her from their merciless hands. The wretched girl threw herself at their feet, and, embracing their knees, besought them to listen to her supplications; but the monsters only replied to her entreaties by bursts of laughter; and, in spite of her prayers, and sobs, and supplications, they carried her off with them.*

"Alas!" said Mlle. Baby, looking sorrowfully at the young officer, "are you surprised now at my sadness, and that I could not smile and be gay after having witnessed such a scene?"

"The demons!" exclaimed the officer, stamping his foot in horror and indignation. "This infamous, blood-thirsty race should be exterminated—exterminated to the last man. Why did I not know this sooner? Yesterday, a Potawatamie came to my quarters to sell some furs. He asked three times as much as they were worth, and I declined buying them. He hung around for some time, annoying me very much, until I finally ordered him to leave. He refused to do so; then, losing all patience with the fellow, I rose from my seat, and, leading him to the door, I kicked him out. He went away muttering, and threatening me with his knife. I had a stick in my hand, and I now regret that I did not knock him down."

"How imprudent!" said the young girl. "You ought not to have provok-

ed that Indian; don't you know that a savage never forgets an injury? He may wander around the fort for a year, spying all of your movements, watching your footsteps, tracking you everywhere, hiding in the woods and among the rushes in the river, until an opportunity offers, and he will approach with all the *finesse* and cunning of a serpent, spring upon you like a tiger, and strike you a death-blow, when you least expect it. I see that you go every day out of the fort to fish on the banks of the river. I advise you not to go any more; it is not safe, and something terrible might happen to you."

"Pshaw!" said the young officer, "you are too timid. I saw the fellow leave this morning with a number of warriors belonging to his tribe; they were going to Quebec to sell the furs, which they could not dispose of here."

VI.—THE DREAM.

The clock in the *salon* had just struck one. Mme. Baby and her daughter were seated sewing in the deep recess of an open window, with a little work-table in front of them. M. Baby had gone away that morning, to look after some land that he had just bought on the other side of the river. The streets were deserted; nearly all the inhabitants of the fort were at work in the fields in the vicinity. The heat was intense. Not a breath agitated the trees in the garden, whose motionless branches drooped languidly toward the earth, as if imploring a refreshing breath or a drop of dew. A negro servant was spreading some linen out to dry on the bushes, and put to flight, in her perambulations, some chickens that were panting with the heat under the sheltering foliage of the trees and shrubs. The silence was only broken by the buzzing of insects,

* A fact. She was never heard of afterwards.

and the noisy whirr of the grasshopper as it danced through the sunlight. The open window, filled with bouquets, looked into the garden, and the pale, melancholy face of Mlle. Baby could be seen between them, bending over an open flower which imaged her loveliness in its fragrant corolla. "Mamma," said she at last, raising her head, "do you think papa will be away a long time?"

"I think he will be back in four or five days at the latest," replied her mother. "But why do you ask such a question?"

"Oh! because I am so anxious to have him back again. I want him to take us immediately to Quebec, instead of waiting until next month. The trip will divert my thoughts; for, since those Indians were here the other day with that poor girl they had captured, I have not had a moment's piece of mind. She is always before my eyes. I see her everywhere; she follows me everywhere. I even saw her in my dream last night. I thought I was sitting in the midst of a gloomy and immense forest, near a wild, rushing river that dashed over a precipice into a bottomless chasm a few steps from me. On the opposite bank, which was covered with flowers, and charming to behold, stood the young captive, pale and tranquil, in a halo of soft, transparent light. She seemed to be in another world. She held in her hands an open book, and, bending towards me, she slowly turned over the leaves. She turned at least sixteen; then she stopped and looked at me with an expression of the greatest sorrow and distress, and made a sign to some one, who then seemed to be standing near me, to cross the torrent. At the signal, all his limbs trembled; his knees knocked together, and his eyes dilated, his mouth gasped with terror,

and a cold perspiration stood upon his forehead. He tried to draw back, but an invincible power drew him toward the abyss. He turned toward me, and besought my help most piteously. I experienced the greatest commiseration for him, and tried in vain to extend my hands to help him; invisible cords bound all my limbs, and prevented any movement whatsoever. Vainly he tried to cling to the cliffs along the shore; a relentless force impelled him towards the abyss. He had already reached the middle of the stream, whose deep and foaming waters rared around him, as if impatient to swallow him up. He tottered at every step, and came near losing his equilibrium; but, rallying his strength, he struggled on. At last a great wave broke over him, and he lost his balance. His feet slipped; he looked toward me with a glance of the most inexpressible anguish, and fell. In an instant, he was borne to the brink of the precipice; he threw out his hands, and grasped at a piece of rock that jutted out of the water, burying his fingers in the green and slimy moss which covered it. For an instant, he hung on with the strength of despair; his body, stopped suddenly in its precipitate course, appeared for an instant above the waves. The foam and spray enveloped it like a cloud, and the wind from the fall blew through his dank and dripping hair. His dilated eyes were fastened on the rock, which little by little receded from his convulsive grasp. Finally, with a terrible shriek, he disappeared in the yawning gulf below. Transfixed with agony and horror, I looked across at the young captive; but she, without uttering a word, wiped away a tear, and silently pointed to the last page in the book, which seemed to me to be covered with blood. I screamed

aloud with fright, and awoke with a start. My God! will it be a page in my life?"

VII.—BLOOD.

Scarcely had Mlle. Baby finished speaking, when the sound of hasty footsteps was heard at the door, and a man, covered with blood, and with a terrified look, rushed in. It was the young officer. His right arm was broken, and hanging at his side.

"Hide me quickly," cried he. "I am pursued by the Indians."

"Up in the attic, quick," said Mme. Baby to him, "and do not stir for your life."

In another moment, the savages had entered the room; but, before they could say a word, Mme. Baby pointed to the next street, and they went out again quickly, believing that the officer had escaped in that direction. The admirable composure of Mme. Baby had completely deceived them. Not a muscle of her face betrayed her excessive agitation, and, happily, they did not have time to notice the mortal pallor of the young girl, who, still leaning among the flowers on the window-sill, had almost fainted away. It was one of those moments of inexpressible anguish when a chill like death strikes the heart. Mme. Baby hoped that the savages, fearing the superintendent, would not dare to force themselves into the house; and yet, who could stop them if they did, or who could foresee what these barbarians, once having tasted blood, might do? She hoped that their fruitless efforts might induce them to abandon their search, or, if they persisted, that she would have sufficient time to obtain help, in case they again entered the house. Making a sign to a servant who was at work in the garden, she ordered him

to run as fast as he could, and notify some men belonging to the fort of the danger which threatened them. Some anxious minutes elapsed, but the savages did not return. "Do you think they have really gone?" asked the young girl, in a low tone. A faint glimmer of hope appeared in her countenance.

"Even if they should return," answered Mme. Baby, "they would not dare . . ."

She did not finish, but leaning toward the window, she tried to catch the sound of human voices which were heard in the distance. Was it the help that she expected, or was it the voices of the Indians coming back? She could not distinguish. The sound drew nearer and nearer, and became more distinct as it approached. "They are our men," exclaimed Mlle. Baby. "Don't you hear the barking of our dog?" And she drew a long breath of relief, as if an immense weight had been taken from her heart.

Mme. Baby did not reply; a faint smile played over her lips. She, too, had heard the dogs barking; but another noise that she knew only too well had also reached her ears. Very soon the voices became so distinct that it was impossible to be deceived any longer. "Here they are, here they are!" shrieked the young girl, sinking into a seat near the window, as the different-colored feathers with which the savages decorated their heads appeared between the trees.

"Don't tremble so," said Mme. Baby in a quiet voice to her daughter, "or you will betray us. Look out of the window, and don't let them perceive your emotion."

Courage and coolness at a critical moment are always admirable, but when a woman possesses these qualities, they are sublime. Calm and

impassive, without even rising from her seat, Mme. Baby tranquilly continued her work. The most practised eye could not have detected the smallest trace of emotion, the least feverish excitement or agitation, on her commanding and noble countenance. A heroine's heart beat in her woman's breast, and it was thus that she awaited the arrival of the savages. "Tell us where you have concealed the white warrior," cried the first one who entered the room. It was the Potawatamie whom the young officer had so imprudently offended. He was dripping with perspiration, and out of breath with his long and fatiguing quest. You could see the rage and exasperation of his disappointment in his ferocious glances, his scowling brow, and the excitement that made every feature quiver.

"Comrade," replied Mme. Baby, in a tranquil tone of voice, "you know the superintendent well; and, if you have the misfortune to misbehave in his house, you will get into trouble."

The Indian hesitated a moment, then said, in a feigned mildness of voice, "My white sister knows that the Potawatamie loves peace, and that he never makes the first attack. The white warrior is on the war-path, or the Potawatamie would not have pursued."

"I have not hidden the white warrior," answered Mme. Baby. "It is useless to search here; you had better look elsewhere, or he will escape you."

The Indian did not reply, but, looking at Mme. Baby with a smile, he pointed to a little stain on the floor that no one but an Indian would have discovered. But the sharp eye of the savage had detected there a trace of his enemy. It was a drop of blood, which Mme. Baby had taken the precaution to wipe away

most carefully. "My sister has told the truth," said the Indian, in an ironical tone. "The white warrior has not passed this way; that drop of blood, I suppose, she put there to persuade the Indian that she had concealed the white warrior." Then, assuming a more serious tone, he continued: "My sister, know well that the Potawatamie will do the white warrior no harm; only show us where he is hidden, and we will go away; we only want to take him pris . . ." He stopped, and, bending his head forward, looked through an open window at the other end of the apartment; then, giving a hideous yell, he rushed across the room, and leaped out of the window that opened into the garden. His ferocious companions followed him, howling like a troop of demons. Without seeing what had happened, Mme. Baby understood all. The young officer, hearing the Indians return, and believing himself lost, had the imprudence to jump out of one of the windows into the garden. He ran toward a covered fountain in the centre of the *parterre* to hide, when the Indian perceived him. How can I describe the scene which followed? The pen drops from my hand. In two bounds, they had reached him, and one of the savages, striking him a terrible blow with his fist, sent him reeling to the ground. He fell on his broken arm, and the excruciating pain caused him to utter a deep groan. They then seized hold of him, and bound his hands and feet. Poor young man! what resistance could he make to his cruel enemies, with a broken arm, and totally disabled and weakened by the loss of blood. He called for help, but the echoes in the garden only answered his cries, and redoubled the horror of the scene. Mme. Baby, bereft of her senses, threw herself at

her mother's feet, and, hiding her face on her knees, she covered her ears with her hands, to shut out, if possible, from sight and hearing the frightful tragedy. While the rest of the savages were tying their victim down, the Potawatamie drew out his knife, and deliberately commenced to sharpen it on a stone. His face betrayed no excitement whatever; not even the horrible pleasure of gratifying his vengeance, which caused his heart to palpitate with an infernal joy, could change his stoical countenance. "My brother the white warrior," said he, continuing to whet his knife with the utmost coolness, "knows very well that he can insult the Potawatamie with impunity, because the Potawatamie is a coward, and would rather run than fight. . . . Does my brother now wish to make peace with his friend, the Potawatamie? He can speak if he wishes, and name his terms, for he is free." Then, suddenly assuming a ferocious air, he straightened himself up, and, fixing his inflamed eyes on the young officer, said: "My brother the white warrior can now chant his death-song, because he must die." And brandishing his knife, he plunged it into his throat, while another of these monsters caught the blood in a little copper kettle. The rest of the savages then kicked and stamped upon the body with the most infernal yells and contortions. The death-rattle of the poor victim, mingling with these howls, reached the ears of the young girl, and she shook in a convulsion of horror. At last it all ceased. The victim had been immolated. Pushing aside the corpse with his foot, the Potawatamie, followed by his companions, came again toward the house. "Ha! ha! so you would not tell us where your friend, the white warrior, was?" cried the Indian, as he entered the room.

"Very well, since you love him so much, you shall drink his blood." Mme. Baby, pale as a marble statue, drew herself up firmly. "You can kill me," said she, "but you can never make me drink it!" The young girl had fainted, and was lying at her mother's feet. They seized hold of Mme. Baby, and tried to force open her mouth; but failing in their efforts, they threw the contents of the vessel in her face, and left the house.*

VIII.—THE SERPENT.

Several months had elapsed since the events had taken place which we have just narrated. It was night. In the centre of the garden, a simple black cross had been erected on the spot where the unfortunate young man had been massacred. No inscription revealed to the passer-by either the name of the victim or the fatal circumstances of his death. Alas! it was written for ever in characters of blood on the hearts of the family. Every evening, the superintendent, with his wife, children, and servants, assembled at the foot of this cross, to pray for the repose of the soul of his unfortunate friend. On this especial evening, all the family had as usual visited the grave, and returned to the house, except the young girl, who, dressed in deep mourning, still remained kneeling at the foot of the sombre monument. She was very pale, and there was an expression of the most ineffable sadness on her face. The evening dew had almost entirely uncurled her long ringlets, which now hung in disorder around her cheeks. You might have mistaken her for a statue of grief. From the clear, high heaven above, the moon poured floods of melancholy light. Its dreamy rays fell on the sod at the

* Horrible as this scene is, it is nevertheless perfectly true, even in minutest detail.

foot of the cross and on the face of the young girl like a thought from beyond the tomb—like a silent and grateful sigh from the innocent victim whose memory had left so tender and anguishing an impression in her soul. Her lips moved in ardent prayer—prayer, that celestial solace of the grief-stricken heart, the smile of the angels through the tears of earth. For a long time she thus silently held communion with her God, breathing out her prayers with sighs and tears, as she knelt at the foot of this cross, on the sod still damp with the victim's blood. At last she rose, and was about to leave, when, raising her eyes for a moment, she thought she saw a shadow moving across an opening in the wall of a shed near by. A cloud, at that moment passing over the moon, prevented her from distinguishing what the object was. She waited a moment until the cloud had passed over, when what was her astonishment to see a human face in the aperture! It must be a robber, she thought, and yet she knew positively that the gate was well secured. "He will find himself nicely caught when the servants come to lock up," said she to herself. By degrees, however, the head was pushed more and more through the air-hole, and gradually emerged from the obscurity. At the same moment, the moonlight fell clear and full on the face. The young girl actually shivered. She recognized it but too well; it was impossible to be mistaken. It was he; she recognized perfectly his copper skin, his hard, ferocious features, and his yellowish eyes, rolling in their sockets. It was indeed the Potawatamie, the murderer of the young officer.*

Her first thought was flight, but an invincible curiosity fastened her

to the spot. The Indian continued to work through the aperture; one arm was already out, and he held something in his hand which she could not discern. He tried for a long time to get through the air-hole, which was too small for his body. Finally, while making a last effort, he suddenly turned his head, and fixed his eyes with a very uneasy expression on a little bush near him. He seemed undecided what to do; then, letting go the object, he rested his hand on the ground, and, pushing it against the earth with all his strength, tried to force himself back again through the hole. But his broad shoulders, compressed on both sides by the wall, held him like a vice, and he could neither move one way nor another. Then his uneasiness increased, and he looked again anxiously toward the bushes. A slight rustling of the leaves was then perceptible, and a small head emerged slowly from the shadow of the branches, and extended itself toward the savage. It was a rattlesnake.* Immovable and with fixed eyes, the Indian watched the least movement of the reptile, which advanced softly and cautiously, as if aware of the strength and power of his redoubtable adversary. When within a few feet of the savage, it stopped, raised itself up, and, throwing out its forked tongue, sprang toward his face; but, before he could touch him, the Indian, as quick

* These reptiles were still so numerous in this part of the country not many years ago that it was extremely dangerous to leave the windows open in the evening. My mother related that, while she was living at Sandwich with her father, one of the domestics was imprudent enough to leave a window open. During the evening, they had occasion to move a sideboard which stood against the wall, and a large snake was discovered behind it fast asleep. Another day, when playing truant, a snake sprang upon her, and tried to bite her waist; but happily her clothes were so thick that its fangs could not penetrate them. While she ran in great terror, her companions called to her to untie her skirt. And that advice saved her life.—AUTHOR.

* Persons familiar with the Indian character well know their thieving propensities.

as thought, gave him a violent blow with the hand that was free, and the reptile fell a short distance from him. Then he began again to make every effort to disengage himself; but in vain. The snake, now furious, advanced a second time to recommence the attack, but with more caution than before. Approaching still nearer to his enemy, he threw himself forward with much greater violence, but without success; for the hand of the savage sent him rebounding further off than before. The Potawatamie then gathered all his strength for a final effort of liberation, but of no avail: he remained fast in the opening of the air-hole. Quick as lightning, the reptile, now foaming at the mouth, with blazing eyes, and jaws swollen with rage, his forked tongue extended, sprang with renewed strength toward his prey. His scaly skin glistened and sparkled in the silvery light of the moon, and the slight noise made by his rattles resembled the rustling of parchment, and alone broke the silence of the night. This mortal combat in the stillness of night, between a serpent and a savage more subtle than the serpent, had an indescribable fascination; it was more like a contest between two evil spirits, in the shadow of night, over some unfortunate victim. The serpent now approached so near the Indian that he could almost have seized him with his hand; he raised himself a last time, and, throwing back his head, sprang forward. The

savage, guarding himself carefully with his one hand, had followed with his eyes the least movement of the writhing body. It was plain to see that the final fight had begun, and could only terminate in the total vanquishment of one or the other of the combatants. At the instant that the snake sprang like an arrow upon his enemy, the Indian raised his hand; but this time the attack of the reptile had been so rapid and instantaneous that, before he could strike him a blow, his fangs had entered his cheek. A hoarse cry died away in the throat of the savage, who, seizing the serpent with his hand before he could escape, raised him to his mouth, and in his rage tore him to pieces with his teeth. A vain reprisal—the blow had been struck. A short time after, the most horrible cries and fearful convulsions announced that the mortal venom had entered his veins. The victim writhed with despair in the midst of his excruciating agony. It was thought at first that he had finally succeeded in getting out; but subsequently they found the body, enormously swollen, still held in the aperture of the air-hole. His blood-shot eyes were starting from their sockets, his face as black as ink, while his gaping mouth revealed two rows of white teeth, to which still clung the fragments of the reptile's skin, and flakes of bloody foam. Providence had indeed terribly avenged the assassination of the young officer.