

with other Wisconsin Indians eagerly flocked under the French banner, and in painted swarms appeared on the banks of the St. Lawrence, with no better result than to embarrass the French commissariat and thus unwittingly aid the ambitious English.

New France was tottering to her fall. The little garrison on Madelaine Island had been withdrawn from the frontier, with many another like it, to help in the defense of the lower country; and the Upper Lakes, no longer policed by the fur-trade monopoly, were free plunder for unlicensed traders, or *coureurs de bois*. Doubtless such were the party who encamped upon the island during the autumn of 1760. By the time winter had set in upon them, all had left for their wintering grounds in the forests of the far West and Northwest, save a clerk named Joseph, who remained in charge of the stores and the local traffic. With him were his little family,—his wife, who was from Montreal, his child, a small boy, and a man-servant, or *voyageur*. Traditions differ as to the cause of the servant's action,—some have it, a desire for wholesale plunder; others, the being detected in a series of petty thefts, which Joseph threatened to report; others, an unholy and unrequited passion for Joseph's wife. However that may be, the servant murdered first the clerk, and then the wife; and in a few days, stung by the piteous cries of the child, the lad himself. When the spring came, and the traders returned to Chequamegon, they inquired for Joseph and his family; but the servant's reply was unsatisfactory, and he finally confessed to his horrid deed. The story goes, that in horror the traders dismantled the old French fort as a thing accursed, sunk the cannon in a neighboring pool, and so destroyed the palisade that to-day certain mysterious grassy mounds alone remain to testify of the tragedy. Carrying their prisoner with them on their return voyage to Montreal, he is said to have escaped to the Hurons, among whom he boasted of his deed, only to be killed as too cruel a companion even for savages.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See the several versions of this tale, *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, viii., pp. 224 et