

**THE CHASE OF SAINT-
CASTIN AND OTHER
STORIES OF THE FRENCH
IN THE NEW WORLD**

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The chase of Saint-Castin and other stories of the French in the New World by Mary Hartwell
Catherwood

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MARY HARTWELL CATHERWOOD

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By Mary Hartwell Catherwood.

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BY

MARY HARTWELL CATHERWOOD



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THE CHASE OF SAINT-CASTIN.

THE waiting April woods, sensitive in every leafless twig to spring, stood in silence and dim nightfall around a lodge. Wherever a human dwelling is set in the wilderness, it becomes, by the very humility of its proportions, a prominent and aggressive point. But this lodge of bark and poles was the color of the woods, and nearly escaped intruding as man's work. A glow lighted the top, revealing the faint azure of smoke which rose straight upward in the cool, clear air.

Such a habitation usually resounded at nightfall with Indian noises, especially if the day's hunting had been good. The mossy rocks lying around were not more silent than the inmates of this lodge. You could hear the Penobscot River foaming

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along its uneasy bed half a mile eastward. The poles showed freshly cut disks of yellow at the top; and though the bark coverings were such movables as any Indian household carried, they were newly fastened to their present support. This was plainly the night encampment of a traveling party, and two French hunters and their attendant Abenakis recognized that, as it barred their trail to the river. An odor of roasted meat was wafted out like an invitation to them.

"Excellent, Saint-Castin," pronounced the older Frenchman. "Here is another of your wilderness surprises. No wonder you prefer an enchanted land to the rough mountains around Béarn. I shall never go back to France myself."

"Stop, La Hontan!" The young man restrained his guest from plunging into the wigwam with a headlong gesture recently learned and practiced with delight. "I never saw this lodge before."

"Did you not have it set up here for the night?"