

stories alone. But Canada is teeming with such suggestions — its picturesque French dwellers in remote valleys are to-day a hundred or two hundred years behind the rush of the age.


Adam Daulac, *Sieur des Ormeaux*, stands distinct against the background of two centuries and a quarter ago. His name and the names of his companions may yet be seen on the parish register of *Villemarie* — so its founders called *Montreal*. His exploit and its success are matters of history, as well authenticated as any event of our late civil war. While the story of *Thermopylæ* continues to be loved by men, the story of *Dollard* cannot die. It is that picture of stalwart heroism which all nations admire. It is the possible greatness of man — set in this instance in blue Canadian distances, with the somber and everlasting *Laurentines* for its witnesses. The phase is medieval, is clothed in the garb of religious chivalry; but the spirit is a part of the universal man.

MARY HARTWELL CATHERWOOD.

THE ROMANCE OF DOLLARD.

I.

A SHIP FROM FRANCE.

N April of the year 1660, on a morning when no rain drizzled above the humid rock of *Quebec*, two young men walked along the single street by the river. The houses of this *Lower Town* were a row of small buildings with stone gables, their cedar-shingled roofs curving upward at the eaves in Norman fashion. High in north air swelled the mighty natural fortress of rock, feebly crowned by the little fort of *St. Louis* displaying the lilies of France. Farther away the cathedral set its cross against the sky. And where now a tangle of streets, bisected by the city wall, climb steeply from *Lower* to *Upper Town*, then a rough path straggled.

The *St. Lawrence*, blue with Atlantic tide-water, spread like a sea betwixt its north shore and the high palisades of *Fort Levi* on the opposite bank. Sail-

boats and skiffs were ranged in a row at the water's edge. And where now the steamers of all nations may be seen resting at anchor, on that day one solitary ship from France discharged her cargo and was viewed with lingering interest by every colonist in Quebec. She had arrived the previous day, the first vessel of spring, and bore marks of rough weather during her voyage.

Even merchants' wives had gathered from their shops in Lower Town, and stood near the river's edge, watching the ship unload, their hands rolled in their aprons and their square head-covers flaring in the wind.

"How many did she bring over this time?" cried a woman to her neighbor in the teeth of the breeze.

"A hundred and fifty, my husband told me," the neighbor replied in the same nipped and provincialized French. And she produced one hand from her apron to bridge it over her eyes that she might more unreservedly absorb the ship. "Ah, to think these cables held her to French soil but two months ago! Whenever I hear the Iroquois are about Montreal or Ste. Anne's, my heart leaps out of my breast towards France."

"It is better here for us," returned the other, "who are common people. So another demoiselle was shipped with this load. The king is our father. But look you! even daughters of the nobles are glad to come to New France."

"And have you heard," the second exclaimed, "that she is of the house of Laval-Montmorency and cousin of the vicar-apostolic?"

"The cousin of our holy bishop? Then she comes to found some sisterhood for the comfort of Quebec. And that will be a thorn to Montreal."

"No, she comes to be the bride of the governor-general. We shall soon see her the Vicomtesse d'Argenson, spreading her pretintailles as she goes in to mass. Well would I like a look through her caskets at new court fashions. These Laval-Montmorencys are princes in France. *V'là, soldiers!*" the woman exclaimed, with that facile play of gesture which seems to expand all Canadian speech, as she indicated the two men from Montreal.

"Yes, every seigniory will be sending out its men to the wife market. If I could not marry without traveling three thousand miles for a husband, and then going to live with him in one of the river cotes, I would be a nun."

"Still, there must be wives for all these bachelors," the other woman argued. "And his Majesty bears the expense. The poor seasick girls, they looked so glad to come ashore!"

These chatting voices, blown by the east wind, dropped disjointed words on the passers' ears, but the passers were themselves busy in talk.

Both were young men, but the younger was evi-

dently his elder's feudal master. He was muscular and tall, with hazel eyes, and dark hair which clustered. His high features were cut in clear, sharp lines. He had the enthusiast's front, a face full of action, fire, and vision-seeing. He wore the dress of a French officer and carried his sword by his side.

"I think we have come in good time, Jacques," he said to his man, who stumped stolidly along at his left hand.

Jacques was a faithful-looking fellow, short and strong, with stiff black hair and somber black eyes. His lower garments looked home-spun, the breeches clasping a huge coarse stocking at the knee, while remnants of military glory clothed his upper person. Jacques was plainly a soldier settler, and if his spear had not become a pruning-hook it was because he had Indians yet to fight. His hereditary lord in France, his late commander and his present seignior under whom he held his grant of land, was walking with him up the rock of Quebec.

This Jacques was not the roaring, noisy type of soldier who usually came in droves to be married when Louis' ship-load of girls arrived. Besides, the painstaking creature had now a weight upon his soul. He answered:

"Yes, m'sieur. She will hardly be anchored twenty-four hours."

"In four hours we must turn our backs on Quebec



"You are deeply prejudiced against marriage?"

II.

LAVAL.

THE convent of the Ursulines had received and infolded the lambs sent out by Louis XIV. to help stock his wilderness. This convent, though substantially built of stone, was too small for all the purposes of the importation, and a larger structure, not far from it, had been prepared as a bazar in which to sort and arrange the ship-load.

The good nuns, while they waited on their crowd of miscellaneous guests, took no notice of that profane building; and only their superior, Mother Mary of the Incarnation, accompanied and marshaled future brides to the marriage market.

Squads began to cross the court soon after matins. The girls were rested by one night's sleep upon land, the balsam odor of pines, and the clear air on Quebec

heights. They must begin taking husbands at once. The spring sowing was near. Time and the chemistry of nature wait on no woman's caprices. And in general there was little coyness among these girls. They had come to New France to settle themselves, and naturally wished to make a good bargain of it. Some faces wore the stamp of vice, but these were the exceptions. A stolid herd of peasantry, varying in shape and complexion but little, were there to mother posterity in Canada. Some delicate outlines and auburn tresses offset the monotony of somber black eyes and stout waists. Clucking all the way across the court her gentle instructions and repressions, Mother Mary led squad after squad.

There were hilarious girls, girls staring with large interest at the oddities of this new world while they remarked in provincial French, and girls folding their hands about their crucifixes and looking down. The coquettish had arrayed themselves coquettishly, and the sober had folded their shoulder-collars quite high about their throats.

"But," dropped Mother Mary into the ear of Madame Bourdon, who stood at the mouth of the matrimonial pen, receiving and placing each squad, "these are mixed goods!" To which frolicsome remark from a strict devotee Madame Bourdon replied with assenting shrug.

The minds of both, however, quite separated the goods on display from one item of the cargo then standing in the convent parlor before the real bishop of Canada. This item was a slim young girl, very high-bred in appearance, richly plain in apparel. She held a long, dull-colored cloak around her with hands so soft and white of flesh that one's eye traced over and over the flexible curve of wrist and finger. Her eyes were darkly brown, yet they had a tendency towards topaz lights which gave them moments of absolute yellowness; while her hair had a dazzling white quality that the powders of a later period could not impart. Bits of it straying from her high roll of curls suggested a nimbus around the forehead. Her lower face was full, the lips most delicately round. Courage and tears stood forth in her face and encountered the bishop.

François Xavier de Laval-Montmorency, then vicar-apostolic of the province, with the power rather than name of bishop, was a tall noble, priestly through entire length of rusty cassock and height of intellectual temples. He regarded the girl with bloodless patience. He had a large nose, which drooped towards a mouth cut in human granite; his lean, fine hands, wasted by self-abasement and voluntary privations, were smaller than a woman's. Though not yet forty, he looked old, and his little black skull-cup aged him

more. The clear Montmorency eye had in him gained, from asceticism and rigid devotion, a brightness which penetrated.

His young relative's presence and distress annoyed him. For her soul's salvation, he would have borne unstinted agony; for any human happiness she craved, he was not prepared to lift a little finger.

"Reverend father," the girl began their interview, "I have come to New France."

"Strangely escorted," said Laval.

"The reverend father cannot be thinking of Madame Bourdon: Madame Bourdon was the best of duennas on the voyage."

Laval shook his chin, and for reply rested a glance upon his cousin's attendant as a type of the company she had kept on ship-board. The attendant was a sedate and pretty young girl, whose black hair looked pinched so tightly in her cap as to draw her eyebrows up, while modesty hung upon her lashes and drew her lids down. The result was an unusual expanse of veined eyelid.

"If you mean Louise Bibelot," the young lady responded, "she is my foster-sister. Her mother nursed me. Louise bears papers from the curé of her parish to strangers, but she should hardly need such passports to the head of our house."

"In brief, daughter," said Laval, passing to the point, "what brings you to this savage country — fit enough to be the arena of young men, or of those who

lay self upon the altar of the Church, but most unfit for females tenderly brought up to enjoy the pleasures of the world?"

"Has my bringing-up been so tender, reverend father? I have passed nearly all my years an orphan in a convent."

"But what brings you to New France?"

"I came to appeal against your successor in the estates."

"My successor in the estates has nothing to do with you."

"He has to marry me, reverend father."

"Well, and has he not made a suitable marriage for you?"

Her face burned hotly.

"I do not wish him to make any marriage for me. I refused all the suitors he selected, and that is what determined him to marry me to the last one."

"You are deeply prejudiced against marriage?"

"Yes, reverend father."

"Against any marriage?"

"Yes, reverend father."

"This must be why you come with the king's girls to the marriage market."

Her face burned in deeper flames.

"The court of Louis," pursued Laval, "would furnish a better mate for you than any wild coureur de bois on the St. Lawrence."

"I have not come to any marriage market," she stammered.

"You are in the marriage market, Mademoiselle Laval. His Majesty, in his care for New France, sends out these girls to mate with soldiers and peasants here. It is good, and will confirm the true faith upon the soil. What I cannot understand is your presence among them."

Her face sank upon her breast.

"I did not know what to do."

"So, being at a loss, you took shipping to the ends of the earth?"

"Other women of good families have come out here."

"As holy missionaries: as good women should come. Do you intend leading such a life of self-sacrifice? Is that your purpose?" said Laval, penetrating her with his glance.

Her angelic beauty, drowned in red shame, could not move him. "Rash" and "froward" were the terms to be applied to her. She had no defense except the murmur:

"I thought of devoting myself to a holy life. Everybody was then willing to help me escape the marriage."

"Were there, then, no convents in France able to bound your zeal? Did you feel pushed to make this perilous voyage and to take up the hard life of saintly women here?"

"I am myself a Laval-Montmorency," said mademoiselle, rearing her neck in her last stronghold. "The Bishop of Petraea* may not have inherited all the heroism of the present generation."

He smiled slowly; his mouth was not facile at relaxing.

"In your convent they failed to curb the tongue. This step that you have taken is, I fear, a very rash one, my daughter."

"Reverend father, I am a young girl without parents, but with fortune enough to make suitors troublesome. How can I take none but wise steps? I want to be let alone to think my thoughts, and that was not permitted me in France."

"We will have further talk to-morrow and next week," concluded the bishop. "We will see how your resolution holds out. At this hour I go to the governor's council. Receive my benediction."

He abruptly lifted his hands and placed them above her bowed head for an instant's articulation of Latin, then left the room. As long as his elastic, quick tread could be heard, Mademoiselle Laval stood still. It died away. She turned around and faced her companion with a long breath.

"That is over! Louise, do you think after fifteen years of convent life I shall cease to have blood in me?"

"Not at all, Mademoiselle Claire," responded Louise literally. "As long as we live we have blood."

*Another of Laval's titles.

"He is terrible."

"He is such a holy man, mademoiselle; how can he help being terrible? You know Madame Bourdon told us he ate rotten meat to mortify his flesh, and his servant has orders never to make his bed or pick the fleas out of it. I myself have no vocation to be holy, mademoiselle. I so much like being comfortable and clean."

Claire sat down upon the only bench which furnished ease to this convent parlor. Louise was leaning against the stone wall near her. Such luxuries as came out from France at that date were not for nuns or missionary priests, though the Church was then laying deep foundations in vast grants of land which have enriched it.

"I do not love the dirty side of holiness myself," said Claire. "They must pick the fleas out of my bed if I endow this convent. And I do not like trotting, fussy nuns who tell tales of each other and interfere with one. But, O Louise! how I could adore a saint—a saint who would lead me in some high act which I could perform!"

"The best thing next to a live saint," remarked Louise, "is a dead saint's bone which will heal maladies. But, mademoiselle,—the Virgin forgive me!—I would rather see my own mother this day than any saint, alive or dead."

"The good Marguerite! How strange it must seem to her that you and I have been driven this long journey—if the dead know anything about us."

"She would be glad I was in the ship to wait upon you, mademoiselle. And I must have done poorly for myself in Rouen. Our curé said great matches were made out here."

"Now, tell me, Louise, have you the courage for this?"

"I am here and must do my duty, mademoiselle."

"But can you marry a strange man this evening or to-morrow morning and go off with him to his strange home, to bear whatever he may inflict on you?"

"My mother told me," imparted Louise, gazing at the floor, where lay two or three rugs made by the nuns themselves, "that the worst thing about a man is his relatives. And if he lives by himself in the woods, these drawbacks will be away."

"You have no terror of the man himself?"

"Yes, mademoiselle. I can hardly tell at sight whether a man is inclined to be thrifty or not. It would be cruel to come so far and then fare worse than at Rouen. But since my mother is not here to make the marriage, I must do the best I can."

"Hé, Louise! Never will you see me bending my neck to the yoke!"

"It is not necessary for you to marry, mademoiselle. You are not poor Louise Bibelot."

"I meant nothing of the kind. We played together, my child. Why should you accuse me of a taunt?—me who have so little command of my own fortune that I cannot lay down a dozen gold pieces to your dower. No! I have passed the ordeal of meeting the bishop. My spirits rise. I am glad to dip in this new experience. Do you know that if they send me back it cannot be for many months? One who comes to this colony may only return by permission of the king. The bishop himself would be powerless there. And now I shall hear no more about husbands!"

"Louise Bibelot," summoned Mother Mary, appearing at the door, "come now to the hall. Mademoiselle Laval will dispense with thee. The young men are going about making their selections. Come and get thee a good honest husband."

III.

THE KING'S DEMOISELLE.

BETRAYING in her face some disposition to pry into the customs of the New World, Claire inquired:

"What is this marriage market like, reverend mother?"

"It is too much like an unholy fair," answered Mother Mary of the Incarnation, with mild severity. "The gallants stalk about and gaze when they should be closing contracts. The girls clatter with their tongues; they seem not to know what a charm lies in silence."

Mademoiselle Laval stood up and closed her cloak.

"With your permission, reverend mother, I will walk through the fair with you."

"Not *you*, mademoiselle!"

"Why not?"