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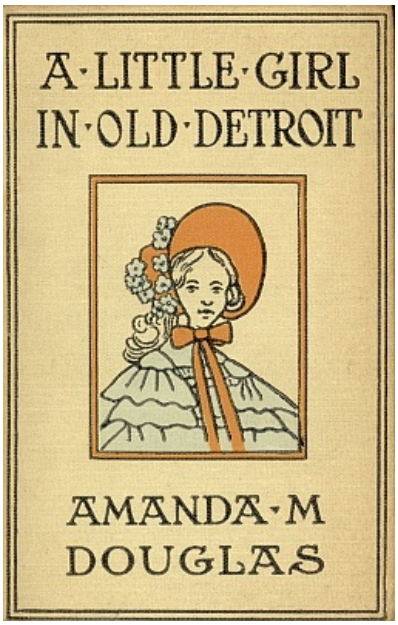

A LITTLE GIRL IN OLD DETROIT

By AMANDA M. DOUGLAS

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TO

MR. AND MRS. WALLACE R. LESSER

Time and space may divide and years bring changes, but remembrance is both dawn and evening and holds in its clasp the whole day.

A. M. D., Newark, N. J.

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[1]

A LITTLE GIRL IN OLD DETROIT.

CHAPTER I.

A HALF STORY.

When La Motte Cadillac first sailed up the Strait of Detroit he kept his impressions for after travelers and historians, by transcribing them in his journal. It was not only the romantic side, but the usefulness of the position that appealed to him, commanding the trade from Canada to the Lakes, "and a door by which we can go in and out to trade with all our allies." The magnificent scenery charmed the intrepid explorer. The living crystal waters of the lakes, the shores green with almost tropical profusion, the natural orchards bending their branches with fruit, albeit in a wild state, the bloom, the riotous, clinging vines trailing about, the great forests dense and dark with kingly trees where birds broke the silence with songs and chatter, and game of all kinds found a home; the rivers, sparkling with fish and thronged with swans and wild fowl, and blooms of a thousand kinds, made marvelous pictures. The Indian had roamed undisturbed, and built his temporary wigwam in some opening, and on moving away left the place again to solitude.

[2]

Beside its beauty was the prospect of its becoming a mart of commerce. But these old discoverers had much enthusiasm, if great ignorance of individual liberty for anyone except the chief rulers. There was a vigorous system of repression by both the King of France and the Church which hampered real advance. The brave men who fought Indians, who struggled against adverse fortunes, who explored the Mississippi valley and planted the nucleus of towns, died one after another. More than half a century later the English, holding the substantial theory of colonization, that a wider liberty was the true soil in which advancement progressed, after the conquest of Canada, opened the lake country to newcomers and abolished the restrictions the Jesuits and the king had laid upon religion.

The old fort at Detroit, all the lake country being ceded, the French relinquishing the magnificent territory that had cost them so much in precious lives already, took on new life. True, the French protested, and many of them went to the West and made new settlements. The most primitive methods were still in vogue. Canoes and row boats were the methods of transportation for the fur trade; there had been no printing press in all New France; the people had followed the

Indian expedients in most matters of household supplies. For years there were abortive plots and struggles to recover the country, affiliation with the Indians by both parties, the Pontiac war and numerous smaller skirmishes.

And toward the end of the century began the greatest struggle for liberty America had yet seen. After the war of the Revolution was ended all the country south of the Lakes was ceded to [3] the United Colonies. But for some years England seemed disposed to hold on to Detroit, disbelieving the colonies could ever establish a stable government. As the French had supposed they could reconquer, so the English looked forward to repossession. But Detroit was still largely a French town or settlement, for thus far it had been a military post of importance.

So it might justly be called old this afternoon, as almost two centuries had elapsed since the French had built their huts and made a point for the fur trade, that Jeanne Angelot sat outside the palisade, leaning against the Pani woman who for years had been a slave, from where she did not know herself, except that she had been a child up in the fur country. Madame De Longueil had gone back to France with her family and left the Indian woman to shift for herself in freedom. And then had come a new charge.

The morals of that day were not over-precise. But though the woman had had a husband and two sons, one boy had died in childhood, the other had been taken away by the husband who repudiated her. She was the more ready to mother this child dropped mysteriously into her lap one day by an Indian woman whose tongue she did not understand.

"Tell it over again," said Jeanne with an air of authority, a dainty imperiousness.

She was leaning against one knee, the woman's heels being drawn up close to her body, making a back to the seat of soft turf, and with her small hand thumping the woman's brown one [4] against the other knee.

"Mam'selle, you have heard it so many times you could tell it yourself in the dark."

"But perhaps I could not tell it in the daylight," said the girl, with mischievous laughter that sent musical ripples on the sunny air.

The woman looked amazed.

"Why should you be better able to do it at night?"

"O, you foolish Pani! Why, I might summon the *itabolays*—"

"Hush! hush! Do not call upon such things."

"And the *shil loups*, though they cannot talk. And the *windigoes*—"

"Mam'selle!" The Indian woman made as if she would rise in anger and crossed herself.

"O, Pani, tell the story. Why, it was night you always say. And so I ought to have some night-sight or knowledge. And you were feeling lonely and miserable, and—why, how do you know it was not a *windigo?*"

"Child! child! you set one crazy! It was flesh and blood, a squaw with a blanket about her and a great bundle in her arms. And I did not go in the palisade that night. I had come to love Madame and the children, and it was hard to be shoved out homeless, and with no one to care. There is fondness in the Indian blood, Mam'selle."

The Indian's voice grew forceful and held a certain dignity. The child patted her hand and pressed it up to her cheek with a caressing touch. [5]

"The De Bers wanted to buy me, but Madame said no. And Touchas, the Outawa woman, had bidden me to her wigwam. I heard the bell ring and the gates close, and I sat down under this very oak—"

"Yes, this is *my* tree!" interrupted the girl proudly.

"I thought it some poor soul who had lost her brave, and she came close up to me, so close I heard the beads and shells on her leggings shake with soft sound. But I could not understand what she said. And when I would have risen she pushed me back with her knee and dropped something heavy in my lap. I screamed, for I knew not what manner of evil spirit it might be. But she pressed it down with her two hands, and the child woke and cried, and reaching up flung its arms around my neck, while the woman flitted swiftly away. And I tried to hush the sobbing little thing, who almost strangled me with her soft arms."

"O Pani!" The girl sprang up and encircled her again.

"I felt bewitched. I did not know what to do, but the poor, trembling little thing was alive, though I did not know whether you were human or not, for there are strange shapes that come in the night, and when once they fasten on you—"

"They never let go," Jeanne laughed gayly. "And I shall never let go of you, Pani. If I had money I should buy you. Or if I were a man I would get the priest to marry us." [6]

"O Mam'selle, that is sinful! An old woman like me! And no one can be bought to-day."

Jeanne gave her another hug. "And you sat here and held me—" forwarding the story.

"I did not dare stir. It grew darker and all the air was sweet with falling dews and the river fragrance, and the leaves rustled together, the stars came out for there was no moon to check them. On the Beaufeit farm they were having a dance. Susanne Beaufeit had been married that noon in St. Anne. The sound of the fiddles came down like strange voices from out the woods and I was that frightened—"

"Poor Pani!" caressing the hand tenderly.

"Then you stopped sobbing but you had tight hold of my neck. Suddenly I gathered you up and ran with all my might to Touchas' hut. The curtain was up and the fire was burning, and I had grown stiff with cold and just stumbled on the floor, laying you down. Touchas was so amazed.

"'Whose child is that?' she said. 'Why, your eyes are like moons. Have you seen some evil thing?'"

"And you thought me an evil thing, Pani!" said the child reproachfully.

"One never can tell. There are strange things," and the woman shook her head. "And Touchas was so queer she would not touch you at first. I unrolled the torn piece of blanket and there you were, a pretty little child with rings of shining black hair, and fair like French babies, but not white like the English. And there was no sign of Indian about you. But you slept and slept. Then [7]
we undressed you. There was a name pinned to your clothes, and a locket and chain about your neck and a tiny ring on one finger. And on your thigh were two letters, 'J. A.,' which meant Jeanne Angelot, Father Rameau said. And oh, Mam'selle, *petite fille*, you slept in my arms all night and in the morning you were as hungry as some wild thing. At first you cried a little for *maman* and then you laughed with the children. For Touchas' boys were not grown-up men then, and White Fawn had not met her brave who took her up to St. Ignace."

"I might have dropped from the clouds," said the child mirthfully. "The Great Manitou could have sent me to you."

"But you talked French. Up in the above they will speak in Latin as the good fathers do. That is why they use it in their prayers."

Jeanne nodded with a curl of disbelief in her red-rose mouth.

"So then Touchas and I took you to Father Rameau and I told him the story. He has the clothes and the paper and the locket, which has two faces in it—we all thought they were your parents. The letters on it are all mixed up and no one can seem to make them out. And the ring. He thought some one would come to inquire. A party went out scouting, but they could find no trace of any encampment or any skirmish where there was likely to be some one killed, and they never found any trace. The English Commandant was here then and Madame was interested in you. [8]
Madame Bellestre would have you baptized in the old church to make sure, and because you were French she bade me bring you there and care for you. But she had to die and M. Bellestre had large interests in that wonderful Southern town, New Orleans, where it is said oranges and figs and strange things grow all the year round. Mademoiselle Bellestre was jealous, too, she did not like her father to make much of you. So he gave me the little house where we have lived ever since and twice he has sent by some traders to inquire about you, and it is he who sees that we want for nothing. Only you know the good priest advises that you should go in a retreat and become a sister."

"But I never shall, never!" with emphasis, as she suddenly sprang up. "To be praying all day in some dark little hole and sleep on a hard bed and count beads, and wear that ugly black gown! No, I told Father Rameau if anyone shut me up I should shout and cry and howl like a panther! And I would bang my head against the stones until it split open and let out my life."

"O Jeanne! Jeanne!" cried the horror-stricken woman. "That is wicked, and the good God hears you."

The girl's cheeks were scarlet and her eyes flashed like points of flame. They were not black, but of the darkest blue, with strange, steely lights in them that flashed and sparkled when she was roused in temper, which was often. [9]

"I think I will be English, or else like these new colonists that are taking possession of everything. I like their religion. You don't have to go in a convent and pray continually and be shut out of all beautiful things!"

"You are very naughty, Mam'selle. These English have spoiled so many people. There is but one God. And the good French fathers know what is right."

"We did well enough before the French people came, Pani," said a soft, rather guttural voice from the handsome half-breed stretched out lazily on the other side of the tree where the western sunshine could fall on him.

"You were not here," replied the woman, shortly. "And the French have been good to me. Their religion saves you from torment and teaches you to be brave. And it takes women to the happy grounds beyond the sky."

"Ah, they learned much of their bravery from the Indian, who can suffer tortures without a

groan or a line of pain in the face. Is there any better God than the great Manitou? Does he not speak in the thunder, in the roar of the mighty cataract, and is not his voice soft when he chants in the summer night wind? He gives a brave victory over his enemies, he makes the corn grow and fills the woods with game, the lakes with fish. He is good enough God for me."

"Why then did he let the French take your lands?" [10]

The man rose up on his elbow.

"Because we were cowards!" he cried fiercely. "Because the priests made us weak with their religion, made women of us, called us to their mumbling prayers instead of fighting our enemies! They and the English gave us their fire water to drink and stole away our senses! And now they are both going to be driven out by these pigs of Americans. It serves them right."

"And what will *you* do, Monsieur Marsac?" asked Pani with innocent irony.

"Oh, I do not care for their grounds nor their fights. I shall go up north again for furs, and now the way is open for a wider trade and a man can make more money. I take thrift from my French father, you see. But some day my people will rise again, and this time it will not be a Pontiac war. We have some great chiefs left. We will not be crowded out of everything. You will see."

Then he sprang up lithe and graceful. He was of medium size but so well proportioned that he might have been modeled from the old Greeks. His hair was black and straight but had a certain softness, and his skin was like fine bronze, while his features were clearly cut. Now and then some man of good birth had married an Indian woman by the rites of the Church, and this Hugh de Marsac had done. But of all their children only one remained, and now the elder De Marsac had a lucrative post at Michilimackinac, while his son went to and fro on business. Outside of the post in the country sections the mixed marriages were quite common, and the French made very [11] good husbands.

"Mam'selle Jeanne," he said with a low bow, "I admire your courage and taste. What one can see to adore in those stuffy old fathers puzzles me! As for praying in a cell, the whole wide heavens and earth that God has made lifts up one's soul to finer thoughts than mumbling over beads or worshiping a Christ on the cross. And you will be much too handsome, my brier rose, to shut yourself up in any Recollet house. There will be lovers suing for your pretty hand and your rosy lips."

Jeanne hid her face on Pani's shoulder. The admiring look did not suit her just now though in a certain fashion this young fellow had been her playmate and devoted attendant.

"Let us go back home," she exclaimed suddenly.

"Why hurry, Mam'selle? Let us go down to King's wharf and see the boats come in."

Her eyes lighted eagerly. She gave a hop on one foot and held out her hand to the woman, who rose slowly, then put the long, lean arm about the child's neck, who smiled up with a face of bloom to the wrinkled and withered one above her.

Louis Marsac frowned a little. What ailed the child to-day? She was generally ready enough to demand his attentions.

"Mam'selle, you brought your story to an abrupt termination. I thought you liked the accessories. The procession that marched up the aisle of St. Anne's, the shower of kisses bestowed upon you after possible evil had been exorcised by holy water; the being taken home in [12] Madame Bellestre's carriage—"

"If I wanted to hear it Pani could tell me. Walk behind, Louis, the path is narrow."

"I will go ahead and clear the way," he returned with dignified sarcasm, suiting his pace to the action.

"That is hardly polite, Monsieur."

"Why yes. If there was any danger, I would be here to face it. I am the advance guard."

"There never is any danger. And Pani is tall and strong. I am not afraid."

"Perhaps you would rather I would not go? Though I believe you accepted my invitation heartily."

Just then two half drunken men lurched into the path. Drunkenness was one of the vices of that early civilization. Marsac pushed them aside with such force that the nearer one toppling against the other, both went over.

"Thank you, Monsieur; it was good to have you."

Jeanne stretched herself up to her tallest and Marsac suddenly realized how she had grown, and that she was prettier than a year ago with some charm quite indescribable. If she were only a few years, older—

"A man is sometimes useful," he returned dryly, glancing at her with a half laugh.

After the English had possession of Detroit, partly from the spirit of the times, the push of the [13]

newcomers, and the many restrictions that were abolished, the Detroit river took on an aspect of business that amazed the inhabitants. Sailing vessels came up the river, merchantmen loaded with cargoes instead of the string of canoes. And here was one at the old King's wharf with busy hands, whites and Indians, running to and fro with bales and boxes, presenting a scene of activity not often witnessed. Others had come down to see it as well. Marsac found a little rise of ground occupied by some boys that he soon dispossessed and put the woman and child in their places, despite black looks and mutterings.

What a beautiful sight it all was, Jeanne thought. Up the Strait, as the river was often called, to the crystal clear lake of St. Clair and the opposite shore of Canada, with clumps of dense woods that seemed guarding the place, and irregular openings that gave vistas of the far away prospect. What was all that great outside world like? After St. Clair river, Lake Huron and Michilimackinac? There were a great mission station and some nuns, and a large store place for the fur trade. And then—Hudson Bay somewhere clear to the end of the world, she thought.

The men uttered a sort of caroling melody with their work. There were some strange faces she had never seen before, swarthy people with great gold hoops in their ears.

"Are they Americans?" she asked, her idea of Americans being that they were a sort of conglomerate.

"No—Spaniards, Portuguese, from the other side of the world. There are many strange peoples." [14]

Louis Marsac's knowledge was extremely limited, as education had not made much of an advance among ordinary people. But he was glad he knew this when he saw the look of awe that for an instant touched the rosy face.

There were some English uniforms on the scene. For though the boundaries had been determined the English Commandant made various excuses, and demanded every point of confirmation. There had been an acrimonious debate on conditions and much vexatious delay, as if he was individually loath to surrender his authority. In fact the English, as the French had before them, cherished dreams of recovering the territory, which would be in all time to come an important center of trade. No one had dreamed of railroads then.

The sun began to drop down behind the high hills with their timber-crowned tops. Pani turned.

"We must go home," she said, and Jeanne made no objections. She was a little tired and confused with a strange sensation, as if she had suddenly grown, and the bounds were too small.

Marsac made way for them, up the narrow, wretched street to the gateway. The streets were all narrow with no pretense at order. In some places were lanes where carriages could not pass each other. St. Louis street was better but irregularly built, with frame and hewn log houses. There was the old block house at either end, and the great, high palisades, and the citadel, which served for barracks' stores, and housed some of the troops. Here they passed St. Anne's street [15] with its old church and the military garden at the upper end; houses of one and two stories with peaked thatched roofs, and a few of more imposing aspect. On the west of the citadel near St. Joseph's street they paused before a small cottage with a little garden at the side, which was Pani's delight. There were only two rooms, but it was quite fine with some of the Bellestre furnishings. At one end a big fireplace and a seat each side of it. Opposite, the sleeping chamber with one narrow bed and a high one, covered with Indian blankets. Beds and pillows of pine and fir needles were renewed often enough to keep the place curiously fragrant.

"I will bid you good evening," exclaimed Marsac with a dignified bow. "Mam'selle, I hope you are not tired out. You look—"

A saucy smile went over her face. "Do I look very strange?" pertly. "And I am not tired, but half starved. Good night, Monsieur."

"Pani will soon remedy that."

The bell was clanging out its six strokes. That was the old signal for the Indians and whoever lived outside the palisades to retire.

He bowed again and walked up to the Fort and the Parade.

"Angelot," he said to himself, knitting his brow. "Where have I heard the name away from Detroit? She will be a pretty girl and I must keep an eye on her." [16]

CHAPTER II.

RAISING THE NEW FLAG.

Old Detroit had seemed roomy enough when Monsieur Cadillac planted the lilies of France and flung out the royal standard. And the hardy men slept cheerfully on their beds of fir twigs with blankets drawn over them, and the sky for a canopy, until the stockade was built and the rude fort made a place of shelter. But before the women came it had been rendered habitable and

more secure; streets were laid out, the chapel of St. Anne's built, and many houses put up inside the palisades. And there was gay, cheerful life, too, for French spirits and vivacity could not droop long in such exhilarating air.

Canoes and row boats went up and down the river with merry crews. And in May there was a pole put in what was to be the military garden, and from it floated the white flag of France. On the green there was a great concourse and much merriment and dancing, and not a little love making. For if a soldier asked a pretty Indian maid in marriage, the Commandant winked at it, and she soon acquired French and danced with the gayest of them.

Then there was a gala time when the furs came in and the sales were made, and the boats loaded and sent on to Montreal to be shipped across the sea; or the Dutch merchants came from the Mohawk valley or New Amsterdam to trade. The rollicking *coureurs des bois*, who came to be [17] almost a race by themselves, added their jollity and often carried it too far, ending in fighting and arrests.

But it was not all gayety. Up to this time there had been two terrible attacks on the fort, and many minor ones. Attempts had been made to burn it; sometimes the garrison almost starved in bad seasons. France, in all her seventy years of possession, never struck the secret of colonizing. The thrifty emigrant in want of a home where he could breathe a freer air than on his native soil was at once refused. The Jesuit rule was strict as to religion; the King of France would allow no laws but his own, and looked upon his colonies as sources of revenue if any could be squeezed out of them, sources of glory if not.

The downfall of Canada had been a sad blow. The French colonist felt it more keenly than the people thousands of miles away, occupied with many other things. And the bitterest of all protests was made by the Jesuits and the Church. They had been fervent and heroic laborers, and many a life had been bravely sacrificed for the furtherance of the work among the Indians.

True, there had not been a cordial sympathy between the Jesuits and the Recollets, but the latter had proved the greater favorites in Detroit. There was now the Recollet house near the church, where they were training young girls and teaching the catechism and the rules of the Church, as often orally as by book, as few could read. Here were some Indian girls from tribes [18] that had been almost decimated in the savage wars, some of whom were bound out afterward as servants. There were slaves, mostly of the old Pawnee tribe, some very old, indeed; others had married, but their children were under the ban of their parents.

With the coming of the English there was a wider liberty, a new atmosphere, and though the French protested bitterly and could not but believe the mother country would make some strenuous effort to recover the territory as they temporized with the Indians and held out vague hopes, yet, as the years passed on, they found themselves insensibly yielding to the sway, and compelled now and then to fight for their homes against a treacherous enemy. Mayor Gladwyn had been a hero to them in his bravery and perseverance.

There came in a wealthier class of citizens to settle, and officials were not wanting in showy attire. Black silk breeches and hose, enormous shoe buckles, stiff stocks, velvet and satin coats and beaver hats were often seen. Ladies rejoiced in new importations, and in winter went decked in costly furs. Even the French damsels relaxed their plain attire and made pictures with their bright kerchiefs tied coquettishly over curling hair, and they often smiled back at the garrison soldiers or the troops on parade. The military gardens were improved and became places of resort on pleasant afternoons, and the two hundred houses inside the pickets increased a little, encroaching more and more on the narrow streets. The officers' houses were a little grander; [19] some of the traders indulged in more show and their wives put on greater airs and finer gowns and gave parties. The Campeau house was venerable even then, built as it was on the site of Cadillac's headquarters and abounding in many strange legends, and there were rude pictures of the Canoe with Madame Cadillac, who had made the rough voyage with her ladies and come to a savage wilderness out of love for her husband; and the old, long, low Cass house that had sheltered so many in the Pontiac war, and the Governor's house on St. Anne's street, quite grand with its two stories and peaked roof, with the English colors always flying.

Many of the houses were plastered over the rough hewn cedar lath, others were just of the smaller size trees split in two and the interstices filled in. Many were lined with birch bark, with borders of beautiful ash and silver birch. Chimneys were used now, great wide spaces at one end filled in with seats. In winter furs were hung about and often dropped over the windows at night, which were always closed with tight board shutters as soon as dusk set in, which gave the streets a gloomy aspect and in nowise assisted a prowling enemy. A great solid oaken door, divided in the middle with locks and bars that bristled with resistance, was at the front.

But inside they were comfortable and full of cheer. Wooden benches and chairs, some of the former with an arm and a cushion of spruce twigs covered with a bear or wolf skin, though in the finer houses there were rush bottoms and curiously stained splints with much ornamental Indian [20] work. A dresser in the living room displayed not only Queen's ware, but such silver and pewter as the early colonists possessed, and there were pictures curiously framed, ornaments of wampum and shells and fine bead work. The family usually gathered here, and the large table standing in the middle of the floor had a hospitable look heightened by the savory smells which at that day seemed to offend no one.

The farms all lay without and stretched down the river and westward. The population outside

had increased much faster, for there was room to grow. There were little settlements of French, others of half-breeds, and not a few Indian wigwams. The squaws loved to shelter themselves under the wing of the Fort and the whites. Business of all kinds had increased since the coming of the English.

But now there had occurred another overturn. Detroit had been an important post during the Revolution, and though General Washington, Jefferson, and Clark had planned expeditions for its attack, it was, at the last, a bloodless capture, being included in the boundaries named in the Quebec Act. But the British counted on recapture, and the Indians were elated with false hopes until the splendid victories of General Wayne in northern Illinois against both Indians and English. By his eloquence and the announcement of the kindly intentions of the United States, the Chippewa nation made gifts of large tracts of land and relinquished all claims to Detroit and Mackinaw. [21]

The States had now two rather disaffected peoples. Many of the English prepared to return to Canada with the military companies. The French had grown accustomed to the rule and still believed in kings and state and various titles. But the majority of the poor scarcely cared, and would have grumbled at any rule.

For weeks Detroit was in a ferment with the moving out. There were sorrowful farewells. Many a damsel missed the lover to whom she had pinned her faith, many an irregular marriage was abruptly terminated. The good Recollet fathers had tried to impress the sacredness of family ties upon their flock, but since the coming of the English, the liberty allowed every one, and the Protestant form of worship, there had grown a certain laxness even in the town.

"It is going to be a great day!" declared Jeanne, as she sprang out of her little pallet. There were two beds in the room, a great, high-post carved bedstead of the Bellestre grandeur, and the cot Jacques Pallent, the carpenter, had made, which was four sawed posts, with a frame nailed to the top of them. It was placed in the corner, and so, out of sight, Pani felt that her charge was always safe. In the morning Jeanne generally turned a somersault that took her over to the edge of the big bed, from whence she slid down.

The English had abolished slavery in name, but most of the Pani servants remained. They seldom had any other than their tribal name. Since the departure of the Bellestres Jeanne's guardian had taken on a new dignity. She was a tall, grave woman, and much respected by all. [22] No one would have thought of interfering with her authority over the child.

"Hear the cannon at the Fort and the bells. And everybody will be out! Pani, give me some breakfast and let me go."

"Nay, nay, child. You cannot go alone in such a crowd as this will be. And I must set the house straight."

"But Marie De Ber and Pierre are to go. We planned it last night. Pierre is a big, strong boy, and he can pick his way through a crowd with his elbows. His mother says he always punches holes through his sleeves."

Jeanne laughed gayly. Pierre was a big, raw-boned fellow, a good guard anywhere.

"Nay, child, I shall go, too. It will not be long. And here is a choice bit of bread browned over the coals that you like so much, and the corn mush of last night fried to a turn."

"Let me run and see Marie a moment—"

"With that head looking as if thou hadst tumbled among the burrs, or some hen had scratched it up for a nest! And eyes full of dew webs that are spun in the grass by the spirits of night."

"Look, they are wide open!" She buried her face in a pail of water and splashed it around as a huge bird might, as she raised her beautiful laughing orbs, blue now as the midnight sky. And then she carelessly combed the tangled curls that fell about her like the spray of a waterfall. [23]

"Thou must have a coif like other French girls, Jeanne. Berthê Campeau puts up her hair."

"Berthê goes to the Recollets and prays and counts beads, and will run no more or shout, and sings only dreary things that take the life and gayety out of you. She will go to Montreal, where her aunt is in a convent, and her mother cries about it. If I had a mother I would not want to make her cry. Pani, what do you suppose happened to my mother? Sometimes I think I can remember her a little."

The face so gay and willful a moment before was suddenly touched with a sweet and tender gravity.

"She is dead this long time, *petite*. Children may leave their mothers, but mothers never give up their children unless they are taken from them."

"Pani, what if the Indian woman had stolen me?"

"But she said you had no mother. Come, little one, and eat your breakfast."

Jeanne was such a creature of moods and changes that she forgot her errand to Marie. She clasped her hands together and murmured her French blessing in a soft, reverent tone.

Maize was a staple production in the new world, when the fields were not destroyed by marauding parties. There were windmills that ground it coarsely and both cakes and porridge were made of it. The Indian women cracked and pounded it in a stone mortar and boiled it with fish or venison. The French brought in many new ways of cooking.

"Oh, hear the bells and the music from the Fort! Come, hurry, Pani, if you are going with us. Pani, are people slow when they get old?" [24]

"Much slower, little one."

"Then I don't want to be old. I want to run and jump and climb and swim. Marie knits, she has so many brothers and sisters. But I like leggings better in the winter. And they sew at the Recollet house."

"And thou must learn to sew, little one."

"Wait until I am big and old and have to sit in the chimney corner. There are no little ones—sometimes I am glad, sometimes sorry, but if they are not here one does not have to work for them."

She gave a bright laugh and was off like a flash. The Pani woman sighed. She wondered sometimes whether it would not have been better to give her up to the good father who took such an interest in her. But she was all the poor woman had to love. True she could be a servant in the house, but to have her wild, free darling bound down to rigid rules and made unhappy was more than she could stand. And had not Mr. Bellestre provided this home for them?

The woman had hardly put away the dishes, which were almost as much of an idol to her as the child, when Jeanne came flying back.

"Yes, hurry, hurry, Pani! They are all ready. And Madame De Ber said Marie should not go out on such a day unless you went too. She called me feather headed! As if I were an Indian chief with a great crown of feathers!"

The child laughed gayly. It was as natural to her as singing to a bird. [25]

Pani gathered up a few last things and looked to see that the fire was put out.

Already the streets were being crowded and presented a picturesque aspect. Inside the stockade the *chemin du ronde* extended nearly around the town and this had been widened by the necessity of military operations. Soldiers were pouring out of the Citadel and the Fort but the colonial costume looked queer to eyes accustomed to the white trimmings of the French and the red of the British. The latter had made a grander show many a time, both in numbers and attire. There were the old French habitans, gay under every new dispensation, in tanned leathern small clothes, made mostly of deer skin, and blue blouses, blue cap, with a red feather, some disporting themselves in unwonted finery kept for holiday occasions; pretty laughing demoiselles with bright kerchiefs or a scarf of open, knitted lace-like stuff with beads that sparkled with every coquettish turn of the head; there were Indians with belted tomahawks and much ornamented garments, gorgets and collars of rudely beaten copper or silver if they could afford to barter furs for them, half-breed dandies who were gorgeous in scarlet and jewelry of all sorts, squaws wrapped in blankets, looking on wonderingly, and the new possessors of Detroit who were at home everywhere.

The procession formed at the parade in front of the Fort. Some of the aristocracy of the place were out also, staid middle-aged men with powdered queues and velvet coats, elegant ladies in crimson silk petticoats and skirts drawn back, the train fastened up with a ribbon or chain which they carried on their arms as they minced along on their high heeled slippers, carrying enormous fans that were parasols as well, and wearing an immense bonnet, the fashion in France a dozen years before. [26]

"What is it all about?" asked one and another.

"They are to put up a new flag."

"For how long?" in derision. "The British will be back again in no time."

"Are there any more conquerors to come? We turn our coats at every one's bidding it seems."

The detachment was from General Wayne's command and great was the disappointment that the hero himself was not on hand to celebrate the occasion; but he had given orders that possession of the place should be signalized without him. Indeed, he did not reach Detroit until a month later.

On July 11, 1796, the American flag was raised above Detroit, and many who had never seen it gazed stupidly at it, as its red and white stripes waved on the summer air, and its blue field and white stars shone proudly from the flag staff, blown about triumphantly on the radiant air shimmering with golden sunshine.

Shouts went up like volleys. All the Michigan settlements were now a part of the United Colonies, that had so bravely won their freedom and were extending their borders over the cherished possessions of France and England.

The post was formally delivered up to the governor of the territory. Another flag was raised on [27]

the Citadel, which was for the accommodation of the general and his suite at present and whoever was commandant. It was quite spacious, with an esplanade in front, now filled by soldiers. There were the almost deafening salutes and the blare of the band.

"Why it looks like heaven at night!" cried Jeanne rapturously. "I shall be an American,—I like the stars better than the lilies of France, and the red cross is hateful. For stars *are* of heaven, you know, you cannot make them grow on earth."

A kindly, smiling, elderly man turned and caught sight of the eager, rosy face.

"And which, I wonder, is the brave General Wayne?"

"He is not here to-day unfortunately and cannot taste the sweets of his many victories. But he is well worth seeing, and quite as sorry not to be here as you are to miss him. But he is coming presently."

"Then it is not the man who is making a speech?—and see what a beautiful horse he has!"

"That is the governor, Major General St. Clair."

"And General Wayne, is he an American?"

The man gave an encouraging smile to the child's eager inquiry.

"An American? yes. But look you, child. The only proper Americans would be the Indians."

She frowned and looked puzzled.

"A little way back we came from England and France and Holland and Spain and Italy. We are so diverse that it is a wonder we can be harmonized. Only there seems something in this grand [28] air, these mighty forests, these immense lakes and rivers, that nurtures liberty and independence and breadth of thought and action. Who would have dreamed that clashing interests could have been united in that one aim, liberty, and that it could spread itself from the little nucleus, north, south, east, and west! The young generation will see a great country. And I suppose we will always be Americans."

He turned to the young man beside him, who seemed amused at the enthusiasm that rang in his voice and shone in his eyes of light, clear blue as he had smiled down on the child who scarcely understood, but took in the general trend and was moved by the warmth and glow.

"Monsieur, there are many countries beside England and France," she said thoughtfully.

"O yes, a world full of them. Countries on the other side of the globe of which we know very little."

"The other side?" Her eyes opened wide in surprise, and a little crease deepened in the sunny brow as she flung the curls aside. She wore no hat of any kind in summer.

"Yes, it is a round world with seas and oceans and land on both sides. And it keeps going round."

"But, Monsieur," as he made a motion with his hand to describe it, "why does not the water spill out and the ground slide off? What makes it—oh, how can it stick?" with a laugh of incredulity. [29]

"Because a wisdom greater than all of earth rules it. Are there no schools in Detroit?"

"The English have some and there is the Recollet house and the sisters. But they make you sit still, and presently you go to Montreal or Quebec and are a nun, and wear a long, black gown, and have your head tied up. Why, I should smother and I could not hear! That is so you cannot hear wicked talk and the drunken songs, but I love the birds and the wind blowing and the trees rustling and the river rushing and beating up in a foam. And I am not afraid of the Indians nor the *shil loups*," but she lowered her tone a trifle.

"Do not put too much trust in the Indians, Mam'selle. And there is the *loup garou*—"

"But I have seen real wolves, Monsieur, and when they bring in the furs there are so many beautiful ones. Madame De Ber says there is no such thing as a *loup garou*, that a person cannot be a man and a wolf at the same time. When the wolves and the panthers and the bears howl at night one's blood runs chilly. But we are safe in the stockade."

"There is much for thee to learn, little one," he said, after a pause. "There must be schools in the new country so that all shall not grow up in ignorance. Where is thy father?"

Jeanne Angelot stared straight before her seeing nothing. Her father? The De Bers had a father, many children had, she remembered. And her mother was dead.

The address ended and there was a thundering roll of drums, while cheers went up here and [30] there. Cautious French habitans and traders thought it wiser to wait and see how long this standard of stripes and stars would wave over them. They were used to battles and conquering and defeated armies, and this peace they could hardly understand. The English were rather sullen over it. Was this stripling of newfound liberty to possess the very earth?

The crowd surged about. Pani caught the arm of her young charge and drew her aside. She

was alarmed at the steady scrutiny the young man had given her, though it was chiefly as to some strange specimen.

"Thou art overbold, Jeanne, smiling up in a young man's face and puckering thy brows like some maid coquetting for a lover."

"A young man!" Jeanne laughed heartily. "Why he had a snowy beard like a white bear in winter. Where were your eyes, Pani? And he told me such curious things. Is the world round, Pani? And there are lands and lands and strange people—"

"It is a brave show," exclaimed Louis Marsac joining them. "I wonder how long it will last. There are to be some new treaties I hear about the fur trade. That man from the town called New York, a German or some such thing, gets more power every month. A messenger came this morning and I am to return to my father at once. Jeanne, I wish thou and Pani wert going to the upper lakes with me. If thou wert older—"

She turned away suddenly. Marie De Ber had a group of older girls about her and she plunged into them, as if she might be spirited away. [31]

Monsieur St. Armand had looked after his little friend but missed her in the crowd, and a shade of disappointment deepened his blue eyes.

"*Mon père*," began the young man beside him, "evidently thou wert born for a missionary to the young. I dare say you discovered untold possibilities in that saucy child who knows well how to flirt her curls and arch her eyebrows. She amused me. Was that half-breed her brother, I wonder!"

"She was not a half-breed, Laurent. There are curious things in this world, and something about her suggested—or puzzled. She has no Indian eyes, but the rarest dark blue I ever saw. And did Indian blood ever break out in curly hair?"

"I only noticed her swarthy skin. And there is such a mixed-up crew in this town! Come, the grand show is about over and now we are all reborn Americans up to the shores of Lake Superior. But we will presently be due at the Montdesert House. Are we to have no more titles and French nobility be on a level with the plainest, just Sieur and Madame?" with a little curl of the lips. The elder smiled good naturedly, nay, even indulgently.

"The demoiselles are more to thee than that splendid flag waving over a free country. Thou canst return—"

"But the dinner?"

"Ah, yes, then we will go together," he assented.

"If we can pick our way through this crowd. What beggarly narrow streets. Faugh! One can hardly get his breath. Our wilds are to be preferred." [32]

By much turning in and out they reached the upper end of St. Louis street, which at that period was quite an elevation and overlooked the river. [33]

CHAPTER III.

ON THE RIVER.

The remainder of the day was devoted to gayety, and with the male population carousing in too many instances, though there were restrictions against selling intoxicants to the Indians inside the stockade. The Frenchman drank a little and slowly, and was merry and vivacious. Groups up on the Parade were dancing to the inspiriting music, or in another corner two or three fiddles played the merriest of tunes.

Outside, and the larger part of the town was outside now, the farms stretched back with rude little houses not much more than cabins. There was not much call for solidity when a marauding band of Indians might put a torch to your house and lay it in ashes. But with the new peace was coming a greater feeling of security.

There were little booths here and there where squaws were cooking sagamite and selling it in queer dishes made of gourds. There were the little maize cakes well-browned, piles of maple sugar and wild summer plums just ripening. The De Ber children, with Jeanne and Pani, took their dinner here and there out of doors with much merriment. It was here Marsac joined them again, his hands full of fruit, which he gave to the children. [34]

"Come over to the Strait," he exclaimed. "That is a sight worth seeing. Everything is out."

"O yes," cried Jeanne, eagerly. "And, Louis, can you not get a boat or a canoe? Let us go out on the water. I'm tired of the heat and dust."

They threaded their way up to Merchants' wharf, for at King's wharf the crowd was great. At the dock yard, where, under the English, some fine vessels had been built, a few were flying

pennons of red and white, and some British ships that had not yet left flaunted their own colors. As for the river, that was simply alive with boats of every description; Indian rowers and canoers, with loads of happy people singing, shouting, laughing, or lovers, with heads close together, whispering soft endearments or promising betrothal.

"Stay here while I see if I can get a boat," said Louis, darting off, disappearing in the crowd.

They had been joined by another neighbor, Madame Ganeau and her daughter Delisse, and her daughter's lover, a gay young fellow.

"He will have hard work," declared Jacques. "I tried. Not a canoe or a pirogue or a flat boat. I wish him the joy of success."

"Then we will have to paddle ourselves," said Jeanne. "Or float, Marie. I can float beautifully when the tide is serene."

"I would not dare it for a hundred golden louis d'or," interposed Delisse.

"But Jeanne dares everything. Do you remember when she climbed the palisade? When one has a lover—" and Marie sighed a little. [35]

"One comes to her senses and is no longer a child," said Madame Ganeau with a touch of sharpness in her voice. "The saints alone know what will become of that wild thing. Marie, since your mother is so busy with her household, some one should look you up a lover. Thou art most fourteen if I remember rightly."

"Yes, Madame."

"Well, there is time to be sure. Delisse will be fifteen on her wedding day. That is plenty old enough. For you see the girl bows to her husband, which is as it should be. A girl well brought up should have no temper nor ways of her own and then she more easily drops into those of her husband, who is the head of the house."

"I have a temper!" laughed Jeanne. "And I do not want any husband to rule over me as if I were a squaw."

"He will rule thee in the end. And if thou triest him too far he may beat thee."

"If he struck me I should—I should kill him," and Jeanne's eyes flashed fire.

"Thou wilt have more sense, then. And if lovers are shy of thee thou wilt begin to long for them when thou art like a dried up autumn rose on its stem."

Jeanne bridled and flung up her chin.

Pierre took her soft hand in his rough one.

"Do not mind," he said in a whisper; "I would never beat you even if you did not have dinner ready. And I will bring you lovely furs and whatever you want. My father is willing to send me up [36] in the fur country next year."

Jeanne laughed, then turned to sudden gravity and gave back the pressure of the hand in repentance.

"You are so good to me, Pierre. But I do not want to marry in a long, long time, until I get tired of other things. And I want plenty of them and fun and liberty."

"Yes, yes, you are full of fun," approvingly.

Louis was coming up to them in a fine canoe and some Indian rowers. He waved his hand.

"Good luck, you see! Step in. Now for a glorious sail. Is it up or down?"

"Down," cried Jeanne hopping around on one foot, and still hanging to Pani.

They were soon settled within. The river was like a stream of golden fire, each ripple with a kind of phosphorescent gleam as the foam slipped away. For the oars were beating it up in every direction. The air was tensely clear. There was Lake St. Clair spread out in the distance, touching a sky of golden blue, if such colors fuse. And the opposite shore with its wealth of trees and shrubs and beginnings of Sandwich and Windsor and Fort Malden; Au Cochon and Fighting island, Grosse island in the far distance, and Bois Blanc.

"Sing," said the lover when they had gone down a little ways, for most of the crafts were given over to melody and laughter.

He had a fine voice. Singing was the great delight of those days, and nothing was more beguiling than the songs of the voyageurs. Delisse joined and Marie's soft voice was like a [37] lapping wave. Madame Ganeau talked low to Pani about the child.

"It will not do for her to run wild much longer," she said with an air of authority. "She is growing so fast. Is there no one? Had not Father Rameau better write to M. Bellestre and see what his wishes are? And there is the Recollet house, though girls do not get much training for wives. Prayers and beads and penance are all well enough, some deserve them, but I take it girls were meant for wives, and those who can get no husbands or have lost them may be Saint

Catherine's maids."

"Yes," answered Pani with a quaking heart; "M. Bellestre would know."

"A thousand pities Madame should die. But I think there is wild blood in the child. You should have kept the Indian woman and made her tell her story."

"She disappeared so quickly, and Madame Bellestre was so good and kind. The orphan of *Le bon Dieu*, she called her. Yes, I will see the good father."

"And I will have a talk with him when Delisse goes to confession." Madame Ganeau gave a soft, relieved sigh. "My duty is done, almost, to my children. They will be well married, which is a great comfort to a mother. And now I can devote myself to my grandchildren. Antoine has two fine boys and Jeanne a little daughter. It is a pleasant time of life with a woman. And Jean is prospering. We need not worry about our old age unless these Americans overturn everything." [38]

Pani was a good listener and Madame Ganeau loved to talk when there was no one to advance startling ideas or contradict her. Her life had been prosperous and she took the credit to herself. Jean Ganeau had been a good husband, tolerably sober, too, and thrifty.

The two older girls chatted when they were not singing. It was seldom Marie had a holiday, and this was full of delight. Would she ever have a lover like Jacques Graumont, who would look at her with such adoring eyes and slyly snatch her hand when her mother was not looking?

Jeanne was full of enjoyment and capers. Every bird that flashed in and out of the trees, the swans and wild geese that squawked in terror and scuttled into little nooks along the shore edge as the boats passed them, the fish leaping up now and then, brought forth exclamations of delight. She found a stick with which she beat up the water and once leaned out so far that Louis caught her by the arm and pulled her back.

"Let go. You hurt me!" she exclaimed sharply.

"You will be over."

"As if I could not care for myself."

"You are the spirit of the river. Are your mates down there? What if they summon you?"

"Then why should I not go to them?" recklessly.

"Because I will not let you."

He looked steadily into her eyes. His were a little blurred and had an expression that did not please her. She turned away. [39]

"If I should go down and get the gold hidden under the sands—"

"But a serpent guards it."

"I am not afraid of a snake. I have killed more than one. And there are good spirits who will help you if you have the right charm."

"But you do not need to go. Some one will work for you. Some one will get the gold and treasure. If you will wait—"

"Well, I do not want the treasure. Pani and I have enough."

She tossed her head, still looking away.

"Do you know that I must go up to Micmac? I thought to stay all summer, but my father has sent."

"And men have to obey their fathers as girls do their mothers;" in an idly indifferent tone.

"It is best, Jeanne; I want to make a fortune."

"I hope you will;" but there was a curl to her lip.

"And I may come back next spring with the furs."

She nodded indifferently.

"My father has another secret, which may be worth a good deal."

She made no answer but beat up the water again. There was nothing but pleasure in her mind.

"Will you be glad to see me then? Will you miss me?"

"Why—of course. But I think I do not like you as well as I used," she cried frankly. [40]

"Not like me as well?" He was amazed. "Why, Jeanne?"

"You have grown so—so—" neither her thoughts nor her vocabulary were very extensive. "I do not think I like men until they are quite old and have beautiful white beards and voices that are like the water when it flows softly. Or the boys who can run and climb trees with you and laugh over everything. Men want so much—what shall I say?" puzzled to express herself.

"Concession. Agreement," he subjoined; "that is right," with a decisive nod. "I hate it," with a vicious swish in the water.

"But when your way is wrong—"

"My way is for myself," with dignity.

"But if you have a lover, Jeanne?"

"I shall never have one. Madame Ganeau says so. I am going to keep a wild little girl with no one but Pani until—until I am a very old woman and get aches and pains and perhaps die of a fever."

She was in a very willful mood and she was only a child. One or two years would make a difference. If his father made a great fortune, and after all no one knew where she came from—he could marry in very good families, girls in plenty had smiled on him during the past two months.

Was it watching these lovers that had stirred his blood? Why should he care for this child?

"Had we not better turn about?" said Jacques Graumont, glancing around.

There were purple shadows on one side of the river and high up on the distant hills and a soft yellow pink sheen on the water instead of the blaze of gold. A clear, high atmosphere that outlined everything on the Canadian shore as if it half derided its proud neighbor's jubilee. [41]

Other boats were returning. Songs that were so gay an hour ago took on a certain pensiveness, akin to the purple and dun stealing over the river. It moved Jeanne Angelot strangely; it gave her a sense of exaltation, as if she could fly like a bird to some strange country where a mother loved her and was waiting for her.

When Louis Marsac spoke next to her she could have struck him in childish wrath. She wanted no one but the fragrant loneliness and the voices of nature.

"Don't talk to me!" she cried impatiently. "I want to think. I like what is in my own mind better."

Then the anger went slowly out of her face and it settled in lovely lines. Her mouth was a scarlet blossom, and her hair clung mistlike about brow and throat, softened by the warmth.

They came grating against the dock after having waited for their turn. Marsac caught her arm and let the others go before her, and she, still in a half dream, waited. Then he put his arm about her, turned her one side, and pressed a long, hot kiss on her lips. His breath was still tainted with the brandy he had been drinking earlier in the day.

She was utterly amazed at the first moment. Then she doubled up her small hand and struck the mouth that had so profaned her. [42]

"Hah! knave," cried a voice beside her. "Let the child alone! And answer to me. What business had you with this canoe? Child, where are your friends?"

"My business with it was that I hired and paid for it," cried Marsac, angrily, and the next instant he felt for his knife.

"Paid for it?" repeated the other. "Then come and convict a man of falsehood. Put up your knife. Let us have fair play. I had hired the canoe in the morning and went up the river, and was to have it this afternoon, and he declared you took it without leave or license."

"That is a lie!" declared Marsac, passionately.

"Jeanne! Jeanne!" cried Pani in distress.

The stranger lifted her out. Jeanne looked back at Marsac, and then at the young man.

"You will not fight him?" she said to the stranger. Fights and brawls were no uncommon events.

"We shall have nothing to fight about if the man has lied to us both. But I wouldn't care to be in *his* skin. Come along, my man."

"I am not your man," said Marsac, furiously angry.

"Well—stranger, then. One can hardly say friend," in a dignified fashion that checked Marsac.

Pani caught the child. Pierre was on the other side of her. "What was it?" he asked. How good his stolid, rugged face looked! [43]

"A quarrel about the boat. Run and see how they settle it, Pierre."

"But you and Marie—and it is getting dark."

"Run, run! We are not afraid." She stamped her foot and Pierre obeyed.

Marie clung to her. People jostled them, but they made their way through the narrow, crowded street. The bells were ringing, more from long habit now. Soldiers in uniform were everywhere,

some as guards, caring for the noisier ones. Madame De Ber was leaning over her half door, and gave a cry of joy.

"Where hast thou been all day, and where is Pierre, my son?" she demanded.

The three tried to explain at once. They had had a lovely day, and Madame Ganeau, with her daughter and promised son-in-law, were along in the sail down the river. And Pierre had gone to see the result of a dispute—

"I sent him," cried Jeanne, frankly. "Oh, here he comes," as Pierre ran up breathless.

"O my son, thou art safe—"

"It was no quarrel of mine," said Pierre, "and if it had been I have two good fists and a foot that can kick. It was that Jogue who hired his boat twice over and pretended to forget. But he gave back the money. He had told a lie, however, for he said Marsac took the canoe without his knowledge, and then he declared he had been so mixed up—I think he was half drunk—that he could not remember. They were going to hand him over to the guard, but he begged so piteously [44] they let him off. Then he and Louis Marsac took another drink."

Jeanne suddenly snatched up her skirt and scrubbed her mouth vigorously.

"It has been a tiresome day," exclaimed Pani, "and thou must have a mouthful of supper, little one, and go to bed."

She put her arm over the child's shoulder, with a caress; and Jeanne pressed her rosy cheek on the hand.

"I do not want any supper but I will go to bed at once," she replied in a weary tone.

"It is said that at the eastward in the Colonies they keep just such a July day with flags and confusion and cannon firing and bells ringing. One such day in a lifetime is enough for me," declared Madame De Ber.

They kept the Fourth of July ever afterward, but this was really their national birthday.

Jeanne scrubbed her mouth again before she said her little prayer and in five minutes she was soundly asleep. But the man who had kissed her and who had been her childhood's friend staggered homeward after a roistering evening, never losing sight of the blow she had struck him.

"The tiger cat!" he said with what force he could summon. "She shall pay for this, if it is ten years! In three or four years I will marry her and then I will train her to know who is master. She shall get down on her knees to me if she is handsome as a princess, if she were a queen's daughter." [45]

Laurent St. Armand went home to his father a good deal amused after all his disappointment and vexation, for he had been compelled to take an inferior canoe.

"*Mon père*," he said, as his father sat contentedly smoking, stretched out in a most comfortable fashion, "I have seen your little gossip of the morning, and I came near being in a quarrel with a son of the trader De Marsac, but we settled it amicably and I should have had a much better opinion of him, if he had not stopped to drink Jogue's vile brandy. He's a handsome fellow, too."

"And is the little girl his sister?"

"O no, not in anyway related." Then Laurent told the story, guessing at the kiss from the blow that had followed.

"Good, I like that," declared St. Armand. "Whose child is it?"

"That I do not know, but she lives up near the Citadel and her name is Jeanne Angelot. Shall I find her for you to-morrow?"

"She is a brave little girl."

"I do not like Marsac."

"His mother was an Indian, the daughter of some chief, I believe. De Marsac is a shrewd fellow. He has great faith in the copper mines. Strange how much wealth lies hidden in the earth! But the quarrel?" with a gesture of interest.

"Oh, it was nothing serious and came about Jogue's lying. I rated him well for it, but he had been drinking and there was not much satisfaction. Well, it has been a grand day and now we [46] shall see who next rules the key to the Northwest. There is great agitation about the Mississippi river and the gulf at the South. It is a daring country, *mon père*."

The elder laughed with a softened approval.

Louis Marsac did not come near St. Joseph street the next day. He slept till noon, when he woke with a humiliating sense of having quite lost his balance, for he seldom gave way to excesses. It was late in the afternoon when he visited the old haunts and threw himself under Jeanne's oak. Was she very angry? Pouf! a child's anger. What a sweet mouth she had! And she was none the worse for her spirit. But she was a tempestuous little thing when you ran counter to

her ideas, or whims, rather.

Since she had neither birth nor wealth, and was a mere child, there would be no lovers for several years, he could rest content with that assurance. And if he wanted her then—he gave an indifferent nod.

Down at the Merchants' wharf, the following morning, he found the boats were to sail at once. He must make his adieus to several friends. Madame Ganeau must be congratulated on so fine a son-in-law, the De Bers must have an opportunity to wish him *bon voyage*.

Pani sat out on the cedar plank that made the door-sill, and she was cutting deerskin fringe for next winter's leggings. "Jeanne," she called, "Louis has come to say good-by."

Jeanne Angelot came out of the far room with a curious hesitation. Pani had been much [47]
worried for fear she was ill, but Jeanne said laughingly that she was only tired.

"Why, you run all day like a deer and never complain," was the troubled comment.

"Am I complaining, Pani?"

"No, Mam'selle. But I never knew you to want to lie on the cot in the daytime."

"But I often lie out under the oak with my head in your lap."

"To be sure."

"I'm not always running or climbing."

"No, little one;" with smiling assent.

The little one came forward now and leaned against Pani's shoulder.

"When I shall come back I do not know—in a year or two. I wonder if you will learn to talk English? We shall all have to be good Americans. And now you must wish me *bon voyage*. What shall I bring you when I come? Beaver or otter, or white fox—"

"Madame Reamaur hath a cape of beautiful silver fox, and when the wind blows through it there are curious dazzles on every tip."

"Surely thou hast grand ideas, Jeanne Angelot."

"I should not wear such a thing. I am only a little girl, and that is for great ladies. And Wenonah is making me a beautiful cape of feathers and quills, and the breast of wild ducks. She thinks Pani cured her little baby, and this is her offering. So I hardly want anything. But I wish thee good luck and prosperity, and a wife who will be meek and obedient, and study your [48]
pleasure in everything."

"Thank you a thousand times." He held out his hand. Pani pressed it cordially, but Jeanne did not touch it.

"The little termagant!" he said to himself. "She has not forgiven me. But girls forget. And in a year or two she will be longing for finery. Silver fox, forsooth! That would be a costly gift. Where does the child get her ideas? Not from her neighborhood nor the Indian women she consorts with. Nor even Madame Ganeau," with an abrupt laugh.

Jeanne was rather quiet all that day and did not go outside the palisade. But afterward she was her own irrepressible self. She climbed the highest trees, she swung from one limb to another, she rode astride saplings, she could manage a canoe and swim like a fish, and was the admiration of the children in her vicinity, though all of the southwestern end of the settlement knew her. She could whistle a bird to her and chatter with the squirrels, who looked out of beady eyes as if amazed and delighted that a human being belonging to the race of the destroyer understood their language. She had beaten Jacques Filion for robbing birds' nests, and she was a whole year younger, if anyone really knew how old she was.

"There will never be a brave good enough for you," said the woman Wenonah, who lived in a sort of wigwam outside the palisades and had learned many things from her white sisters that had rather unsettled her Indian faith in braves. She kept her house and little garden, made bead [49]
work and embroidery for the officers and official ladles, and cared for her little papooses with unwonted mother love. For Paspah spent most of his time stretched in the sunshine smoking his pipe, and often sold his game for a drink of rum. Several times he had been induced to go up north with the fur hunters, and Wenonah was happy and cheerful without him.

"I do not want a brave," Jeanne would fling out laughingly. "I shall be brave enough for myself."

"And thou art sensible, Red Rose!" nodding sagely. "There is no father to bargain thee away."

"Well, if fathers do that, then I am satisfied to be without one," returned the child gayly. [50]

CHAPTER IV.

There were many changes to make in the new government. Under the English there had been considerable emigration of better class people and more personal liberty. It was no longer everything for a king whose rigorous command was that there should be no thought of self-government, that every plan and edict must come from a court thousands of miles away, that knew nothing of the country.

The French peasants scattered around the posts still adored their priests, but they had grown more ambitious and thrifty. Amiable, merry, and contented they endured their privations cheerfully, built bark and log cottages, many of them surrounded by sharpened palisades. There were Indian wigwams as well, and the two nations affiliated quite readily. The French were largely agriculturists, though many inside the Fort traded carefully, but the English claimed much of this business afterward.

Captain Porter was very busy restoring order. Wells had been filled with stones, windows broken, fortifications destroyed. Arthur St. Clair had been appointed Governor of the Territory, which was then a part of Illinois, but the headquarters were at Marietta. Little attention was paid to Detroit further than to recognize it as a center of trade, while emigrants were pouring into the promising sites a little farther below. [51]

M. St. Armand had much business on hand with the new government, and was a most welcome guest in the better class families. The pretty demoiselles made much of Laurent and there were dinners and dances and card playing and sails on the river during the magnificent moonlight nights. The young American officers were glad of a little rest from the rude alarms of war that had been theirs so long, although they relaxed no vigilance. The Indians were hardly to be trusted in spite of their protestations, their pipes of peace, and exchange of wampum.

The vessel was coming gayly up the river flying the new flag. There was always a host of idle people and children about the wharf, and now they thronged to see this General Anthony Wayne, who had not only been victorious in battles, but had convinced Joseph Brant, Little Turtle, and Blue Jacket that they were mistaken in their hopes of a British re-conquest, and had gained by honorable treaty much of the country that had been claimed by the Indians. Each month the feeling was growing stronger that the United States was to be a positive and enduring power.

General Wayne stepped from the boat to the pier amid cheers, waving of flags and handkerchiefs. The soldiers were formed in line to escort him. He looked tired and worn, but there was a certain spirit in his fine, courageous eyes that answered the glances showered upon him, although his cordial words could only reach the immediate circle. [52]

Jeanne caught a glimpse of him and stood wondering. Her ideas of heroes were vague and limited. She had seen the English dignitaries in their scarlet and gold lace, their swords and trappings, and this man looked plain beside them. Yet he or some power behind him had turned the British soldiers out of Detroit. What curious kind of strength was it that made men heroes? Something stirred within Jeanne that had never been there before,—it seemed to rise in her throat and almost strangle her, to heat her brain, and make her heart throb; her first sense of admiration for the finer power that was not brute strength,—and she could not understand it. No one about her could explain mental growth.

Then another feeling of gladness rushed over her that made every pulse bound with delight.

"O Pani," and she clutched the woman's coarse gown, "there is the man who talked to me the day they put up the flag—don't you remember? And see—he smiles, yes, he nods to me, to me!"

She caught Pani's hand and gave it an exultant beat as if it had been a drum. It was near enough like parchment that had been beaten with many a drumstick. She was used to the child's vehemence.

"I wish he were this great general! Pani, did you ever see a king?"

"I have seen great chiefs in grand array. I saw Pontiac—"

"Pouf!" with a gesture that made her seem taller. "Madame Ganeau's mother saw a king once—Louis somebody—and he sat in a great chariot and bowed to people, and was magnificent. That is such a grand word. And it is the way this man looks. Suppose a king came and spoke to you—why, you would be glad all your life." [53]

Pani's age and her phlegmatic Indian blood precluded much enthusiasm, but she smiled down in the eager face.

The escort was moving on. The streets were too narrow to have any great throng of carriages, but General Wayne stepped into one. (The hospitable De Moirel House had been placed at his service until he could settle himself to his liking.) Madame Moirel and her two daughters, with Laurent St. Armand, were in the one that followed. Some of the officers and the chief citizens were on horseback.

Then the crowd began to disperse in the slow, leisurely fashion of people who have little to do. Some men took to their boats. It did not need much to make a holiday then, and many were glad of the excuse. A throng of idlers followed in the *chemin du ronde*.

Pani and her charge turned in the other direction. There was the thud of a horse, and Jeanne stepped half aside, then gave a gay, bright laugh as she shook the curls out of her eyes.

"So you have not forgotten me?" said the attractive voice that would have almost won one against his will.

"O no, M'sieu. I knew you in a moment. I could not forget you."

"Thank you, *ma fille*." The simple adoration touched him. Her eyes were full of the subtle glow of delight. [54]

"You know what we spoke of that day, and now General Wayne has come. Did you see him?"

"O yes, M'sieu. I looked sharp."

"And were you pleased?" Something in her expression led him to think she was not quite satisfied, yet he smiled.

"I think you are grander," she returned, simply.

Then he laughed, but it was such a tender sound no one could be offended at it.

"Monsieur," with a curious dignity, "did you ever see a king?"

"Yes, my child, two of them. The English king, and the poor French king who was put to death, and the great Napoleon, the Emperor."

"Were they very—I know one splendid word, M'sieu, *magnifique*, but I like best the way the English say it, magnificent. And were they—"

"They were and are common looking men. Your Washington here is a peer to them. My child, kings are of human clay like other men; not as good or as noble as many another one."

"I am sorry," she said, with quiet gravity, which betrayed her disappointment.

"And you do not like General Wayne?"

"O Monsieur, he has done great things for us. I hear them talk about him. Yes, you know I *must* like him, that is—I do not understand about likes and all that, why your heart suddenly goes out to one person and shuts up to another when neither of them may have done anything for you. I [55] have been thinking of so many things lately, since I saw you. And Pierre De Ber asked the good father, when he went to be catechised on Friday, if the world was really round. And Père Rameau said it was not a matter of salvation and that it made no difference whether it was round or square. Pierre is sure it must be a big, flat plain. You know we can go out ever so far on the prairies and it is quite level."

"You must go to school, little one. Knowledge will solve many doubts. There will be better schools and more of them. Where does your father live? I should like to see him. And who is this woman?" nodding to Jeanne's attendant.

"That is Pani. She has always cared for me. I have no father, Monsieur, and we cannot be sure about my mother. I haven't minded but I think now I would like to have some parents, if they did not beat me and make me work."

"Pani is an Indian?"

"Yes. She was Monsieur Bellestre's servant. And one day, under a great oak outside the palisade, some one, an Indian squaw, dropped me in her lap. Pani could not understand her language, but she said in French, 'Maman dead, dead.' And when M. Bellestre went away, far, far to the south on the great river, he had the little cottage fixed for Pani and me, and there we live."

St Armand beckoned the woman, who had been making desperate signs of disapprobation to Jeanne. [56]

"Tell me the story of this little girl," he said authoritatively.

"Monsieur, she is mine and M. Bellestre's. Even the priest has no right to take her away."

"No one will take her away, my good woman. Do not fear." For Pani's face was pale with terror and her whole form trembled. "Did you know nothing about this woman who brought her to you?"

Pani told the story with some hesitation. The Indian woman talked very fair French. To what tribe she had belonged, even the De Longueils had not known otherwise than that she had been sent to Detroit with some Pawnee prisoners.

"It is very curious," he commented. "I must go to the Recollet house and see these articles. And now tell me where I can find you—for I am due at the banquet given for General Wayne."

"It is in St. Joseph's street above the Citadel," said Jeanne. "Oh, will you come? And perhaps you will not mind if I ask you some questions about the things that puzzle me," and an eager light shone in her eyes.

"Oh, not at all. Good day, little one. I shall see you soon," and he waved his hand.

Jeanne gave a regretful smile. But then he would come. Oh, how proud he looked on his

handsome horse! She felt as if something had gone out of the day, but the sun was shining.

At the corner of old St. Louis street they paused. Here was M. De Ber's warehouse,—the close, unfragrant smell of left-over furs mingling with other smells and scenting the summer air. There [57] was almost everything in it, for it had great depth though not a very wide frontage: hardware of many kinds, firearms, rough clothing such as the boatmen and laborers wore, blankets, moccasins, and bunches of feathers, that were once in great demand by the Indians and were still called upon for dances, though they were hardly war dances now, only held in commemoration.

Pierre threw down the bundle he was shifting to the back of the place.

"Have you seen Marie this morning, Jeanne?"

There was a slow, indifferent shake of the head. The child's thoughts were elsewhere.

"Then you do not know?" The words came quick and tumbled out of his throat, as it were. He was so glad to tell Jeanne his bit of news first, just as he had been glad to find the first flowers of spring for her, to bring her the first fruits of the orchard and the first ripe grapes. How many times he had scoured the woods for them!

"What has happened?" The boy's eyes were shining and his face red to its utmost capacity, and Jeanne knew it was no harm.

"Madame Ganeau came to tea last night. Delisse is to be married next month. They are to get the house ready for her to go into. It is just out of St. Anne's street, not far from the Recollet house. It will be Delisse's birthday. And Marie is to be one of the maids." [58]

"Oh, that will be fine," cried Jeanne eagerly. "I hope I can go."

"Of course you will. I'll be sure of that," with an assumption of mannishness. "And a great boat load of finery comes in to Dupree's from Quebec. M. Ganeau has ordered many things. Oh, I wish I was old enough to be some one's lover!"

"I must go and see Marie. And oh, Pierre, I have seen the great general who fought the Indians and the British so bravely."

Pierre nodded. It made little difference to the lad who fought and who won so that they were kept safe inside of the stockade, and business was good, for then his father was better natured. On bad days Pierre often had a liberal dose of strap.

"Come, Pani, let us go to Madame De Ber's."

Marie was out on the doorstep tending the baby, who was teething and fretful. Madame was cooking some jam of sour plums and maple sugar that was a good appetizer in the winter. There was always a baby at the De Bers'.

"And Delisse is to be married! Pierre told me."

"Yes; I wanted to run up this morning, but Aurel has been so cross. And I am to be one of the maids. At first mother said that I had no frock, but Madame Ganeau said get her a new one and it will do for next summer. I have outgrown most of my clothes, so they will have to go to Rose. All the maids are to have pink sashes and shoulder knots and streamers. It will take a sight of ribbon. But it will be something for my courting time, and the May dance and Pentecost. O dear, [59] if I had a lover!"

"Thou foolish child!" declared her mother. "Girls are never satisfied to be girls. And the houseful of children that come afterward!"

Marie thought of all the children she had nursed, not her own. Yet she kissed little Aurel with a fond heart.

"And Delisse—" suggested Jeanne.

"Oh, Delisse is to wear the wedding gown her sisters had. It is long and has a beautiful train, some soft, shiny stuff over white silk, and lace that was on her *grand'mere's* gown in France, and satin slippers. They are a little tight, Delisse declares, and she will not dance in them, but they have beautiful buckles and great high heels. I should be afraid of tipping over. And then the housekeeping. All the maids go to drink tea the first Sunday, and turn their cups to see who gets the next lover."

Jeanne gave a shrug of disdain.

Marie bent over and whispered that she was sorry Louis Marsac had gone. He was so nice and amusing.

"Is he going to wait for you, Jeanne? You know you can marry whom you like, you have no father. And Louis will be rich."

"He will wait a long while then and tire of it. I do not like him any more." Her lips felt hot suddenly.

"Marie, do not talk such nonsense to Jeanne. She is only a child like Rose, here. You girls get crack-brained about lovers." [60]

"Come," said Pani. "Let us get a pail and go after wild plums. These smell so good."

"And, Pani, look if the grapes are not fit to preserve," said Madame De Ber. "I like the tart green taste, as well as the spice of the later ripeness."

Jeanne assented. She was so glad Louis Marsac had gone. Why, when she had liked him so very much and been proud to order him about, and make him lift her over the creeks, should she experience such a great revulsion of feeling? Two long years! and when he returned—

"I can take Pani and run away, for I shall be a big girl then," and she laughed over the plan.

What a day it was! The woods were full of fragrant odors, though here and there great patches had been cut and burned so as to afford no harbor to the Indians. Fruits grew wild, nuts abounded, and oh, the flowers! Jeanne liked these days in the woods, but what was there that she did not like? The river was an equal pleasure. Pani filled her pail with plums, Jeanne her arms with flowers.

The new house of Delisse Ganeau became a great source of interest. It had three rooms, which was considered quite grand for a young couple. Jacques Graumont had a bedstead, a table, and a dresser that had been his mother's, a pair of brass candlesticks and some dishes. Her mother looked over her own stores, but the thriftier kind of French people put away now and then some plenishing for their children. She was closely watched lest Delisse should fare better than the other girls. Sisters had sharp eyes. [61]

There was her confession to be made, and her instruction as to the duties of a wife, just as if she had not seen her mother's wifely life all her days!

"I like the Indian way best," cried Jeanne in a spirit of half contrariness. "Your husband takes you to his wigwam and you cook his meal, and it is all done with, and no fuss. Half Detroit is running wild."

"Oh, no," replied Pani, amused at the child's waywardness. "I dare say the soldiers know nothing about it. And your great general and the ladies who give dinners. After all it is just a few people. And, little one, the Church wants these things all right. Then the husbands cannot run away and leave the poor wives to sit and cry."

"I wouldn't cry," said the child with determination in her voice, and a color flaming up in her face.

Yet she had come very near crying over a man who was nothing to her. She was feeling hurt and neglected. One day out in her dainty canoe she had seen a pleasure party on the river and her hero was among them. There were ladies in beautiful garments and flying ribbons and laces. Oh, she could have told him among a thousand! And he sat there so grandly, smiling and talking. She went home with a throbbing heart and would eat no supper; crawled into her little bed and thrust her face down in the fragrant pillow, but her fist was doubled up as if she could strike some one. She would not let the tears steal through her lids but kept swallowing over a big lump in her throat. [62]

"Mam'selle," said the tailor's wife, who was their next door neighbor, "yesterday, no, it was the day before when you and Pani were out—you know you are out so much," and she sighed to think how busily she had to ply her needle to suit her severe taskmaster—"there came a gentleman down from the Fort who was dreadfully disappointed not to find you. He was grand looking, with a fine white beard, and his horse was all trapped off with shining brass. I can't recall his name but it had a Saint to it."

"St. Armand?" with a rapid breath.

"Yes, that was it. Mademoiselle, I did not know you had any such fine friends."

Jeanne did not mind the carping tone.

"Thank you. I must go and tell Pani," and she skipped away, knowing that Pani was not in the house, but she wanted to give vent to her joy.

She danced about the old room and her words had a delight that was like music. "He has not forgotten me! he has not forgotten me!" was her glad song. The disappointment that she had missed him came afterward.

For although Detroit was not very large at this time, one might have wandered about a good deal and not seen the one person it would have been a pleasure to meet. And Jeanne was much more at home outside the palisade. The business jostling and the soldiers gave her a slight sense of fear and the crowding was not to her taste. She liked the broad, free sweep outside. And whether she had inherited a peculiar pride and delicacy from the parents no one knew; certain it was she would put herself in no one's way. Others came to her, she felt then every one must. [63]

She could not have understood the many claims upon Monsieur St. Armand. There were days when he had to study his tablets to remember even a dinner engagement. He was called into council by General Wayne, he had to go over to the Canada side with some delicate negotiations about the upper part of the Territory, he was deeply interested in the opening and working of the copper mines, and in the American Fur Company, so it was hardly to be wondered at that he should forget about the little girl when there were so many important things.

The wedding was not half so tiresome then. And oh, what glorious weather it was, just enough sharpness at night to bring out all the fragrant dewy smells! The far-off forests glowed like gardens of wonderful bloom when the sun touched them with his marvelous brilliancy. And the river would have been a study for an artist or a fairy pen.

So one morning the bell of old St. Anne's rung out a cheerful peal. It had been rebuilt and enlarged once, but it had a quaintly venerable aspect. And up the aisle the troop of white clad maidens walked reverently and knelt before the high altar where the candles were burning and there was an odor of incense beside the spice of evergreens.

The priest made a very sacred ceremony of the marriage. Jeanne listened in half affright. All their lives long, in sickness and health, in misfortune, they must never cease to love, never allow any wavering fancies, but go on to old age, to death itself. [64]

Delisse looked very happy when her veil was thrown back. And then they had a gala time. Friends came to see the new house and drink the bride's health and wish the husband good luck. And the five bridesmaids and their five attendants came to tea. There was much anxiety when the cups were turned, and blushes and giggles and exclamations, as an old Indian woman, who had a great reputation for foretelling, and would surely have been hung in the Salem witchcraft, looked them over with an air of mystery, and found the figure of a man with an outstretched hand, in the bottom of Marie De Ber's cup.

"And she's the youngest. That isn't fair!" cried several of the girls, while Madelon Dace smiled serenely, for she knew when the next trappers came in her lover would be among them, and a speedy wedding follow. Marie had never walked from church with a young man.

Then the dance in the evening! That was out of doors under the stars, in the court at the back of the house. The Loisel brothers came with their fiddles, and there was great merriment in a simple, delightful fashion, and several of the maids had honeyed words said to them that meant a good deal, and held out promises of the future. For though they took their religion seriously in the services of the Church, they were gay and light hearted, pleasure loving when the time of leisure came, or at festivals and marriages. [65]

CHAPTER V.

AN UNKNOWN QUANTITY.

"There was a pretty wedding to-day in St. Anne's," said Madelon Fleury, glancing up at Laurent St. Armand, with soft, dark eyes. "I looked for you. I should have asked you formally," laughing and showing her pearly teeth, "but we had hardly thought of going. It was a sudden thing. And the bridesmaids were quite a sight."

"There is an old English proverb," began Madame Fleury—

"'Who changes her name and not the letter,
Marries for worse and not the better.'

and both names begin alike."

"But they are French," appended Lisa, brightly. "The prediction may have no effect."

"It is to be hoped it will not," commented Monsieur Fleury. "Jacques Graumont is a nice, industrious young fellow, and not given to drink. Now there will be business enough, and he is handy and expert at boat building, while the Ganeaus are thrifty people. M. Ganeau does a good business in provisioning the traders when they go north. Did you wish the young couple success, Madelon?"

The girl flushed. "I do not know her. We have met the mother occasionally. To tell the truth, I do not enjoy this mixing up of traders and workmen and—" she hesitated. [66]

"And quality," appended Lisa, with a mischievous glance at her sister.

"We are likely to have more of it than less," said her father, gravely. "These Americans have some curious ideas. While they are proud enough to trace their ancestry back to French or English or even Italian rank, they taboo titles except such as are won by merit. And it must be confessed they have had many brave men among them, heroes animated by broader views than the first conquerors of the country."

"Yes," exclaimed St. Armand, "France made a great mistake and has lost her splendid heritage. She insisted on continuing the old world policy of granting court favorites whatever they asked, without studying the conditions of the new world. Then England pinned her faith and plans to a military colonization that should emanate from a distant throne. It is true she gave a larger liberty, a religious liberty, and exploited the theory of homes instead of mere trading posts. The American has improved on all this. It is as if he said, 'I will conquer the new world by force of industry; there shall be equal rights to homes, to labor, to'—there is a curious and delightful sounding sentence in their Declaration, which is a sort of corner stone—'life, liberty, and pursuit

of happiness.' One man's idea of happiness is quite different from another's, however;" smiling.

"And there will be clashing. There is much to do, and time alone can tell whether they will work out the problem." [67]

"They seem to blend different peoples. There is the Puritan in the East, who is allowing his prejudices to soften; there are the Dutch, about the towns on the Hudson, the Friends in Pennsylvania, the proud old cavaliers in Virginia and Carolina."

"And the Indians, who will ever hate them! The French settlements at the West, up and down the mighty river, who will never forget La Salle, Tonti, Cadillac, and the De Bienvilles. There's a big work yet to do."

"I think they will do it," returned St. Armand, his eyes kindling. "With such men as your brave, conciliatory General Wayne, a path is opened for a more reasonable agreement."

"You cannot trust the Indians. I think the French have understood them better, and made them more friendly. In many respects they are children, in others almost giants where they consider themselves wronged. And it is a nice question, how much rights they have in the soil."

"It has been a question since the world began. Were not the children of Israel commanded to drive the Canaanites out of their own land? Did not the Romans carry conquests all over Europe? And the Spaniard here, who has been driven out for his cruelty and rapacity. The world question is a great tree at which many nations have a hack, and some of them get only the unripe fruit as the branches fall. But the fruit matures slowly, and some one will gather it in the end, that is certain."

"But has not the Indian a right to his happiness, to his liberty?" said Laurent, rather mischievously. He had been chaffing with the girls, yet listening to the talk of the elders. [68]

"In Indian ethics might makes right as elsewhere. They murder and destroy each other; some tribes have been almost wiped out and sold for slaves, as these Pawnee people. Depend upon it they will never take kindly to civilization. A few have intermarried, and though there is much romance about Rolfe and his Indian princess, St. Castin and his, they are more apt to affiliate with the Indians in the next generation."

"My young man who was so ready to fight was a half-breed, I heard," said Laurent. "His French father is quite an important fur trader, I learned. Yet the young fellow has been lounging round for the past three months, lying in the sun outside the stockade, flirting and making love alike to Indian and French maids, and haunting Jogue's place down on the river. Though, for that matter, it seems to be headquarters for fur traders. A handsome fellow, too. Why has he not the pride of the French?"

"Such marriages are a disgrace to the nation," said Madame Fleury, severely.

"And that recalls to my mind,—" St. Armand paused with a retrospective smile, thinking of the compliment his little friend had paid him,—"to inquire if you know anything about a child who lives not far from the lower citadel, in the care of an Indian woman. Her name is Jeanne Angelot." [69]

The girls glanced at each other with a little curl of the lip as St. Armand's eyes wandered around.

"My father met her at the flag-raising and was charmed with her eyes and her ignorance," said Laurent, rather flippantly.

"If I were going to become a citizen of Detroit I should interest myself in this subject of education. It is sinful to allow so many young people to grow up in ignorance," declared the elder St. Armand.

"Most of our girls of the better class are sent to Montreal or Quebec," exclaimed Madame Fleury. "The English have governesses. And there is the Recollet school; there may be places outside the stockade."

Monsieur Fleury shook his head uncertainly. "Angelot, Angelot," he repeated. "I do not know the name."

"Father Gilbert or Father Rameau might know. Are these Angelots Catholics?"

"There is only one little girl."

"Oh!" a light broke over Madame's face. "I think I can recall an event. Husband, you know the little child the Bellestres had?"

"I do not remember," shaking his head.

"It was found queerly. They had a slave who became its nurse. The Bellestres were Huguenots, but Madame had a leaning toward the Church and the child was baptized. Madame Bellestre, who was a lovely woman, deferred to her husband until she was dying, when Father Rameau was sent for and she acknowledged that she died in the holy faith. There was some talk about the child, but M. Bellestre claimed it and cares for it. Under the English reign, you know, the good fathers had not so much authority." [70]

"Where can I find this Father Rameau?"

"At the house beside the church. It is headquarters for the priests who come and go. A delightful old man is the father, though I could wish at times he would exercise a little more authority and make a stand for our rights. I sometimes fear we shall be quite pushed to the wall."

St. Armand had come of a long line of Huguenots more than one of whom had suffered for his faith. He was a liberal now, studying up religion from many points, but he was too gallant to discuss it with a lady and his hostess.

The young people were getting restive. It was just the night for delightful canoeing on the river and it had been broached in the afternoon. Marie the maid, quite a superior woman, was often intrusted with this kind of companionship. Before they were ready to start a young neighbor came in who joined them.

Monsieur Fleury invited his guest to an end porch shaded by a profusion of vines, notable among them the sweetbrier, that gave out a fragrant incense on the night air. Even here they could catch sounds of the music from the river parties, for the violin and a young French habitan were almost inseparable.

"Nay," he replied, "though a quiet smoke tempts the self-indulgent side of my nature. But I want to see the priest. I am curiously interested in this child." [71]

"There were some whispers about her, Monsieur, that one does not mention before young people. One was that she had Indian blood in her veins, and—" here Madame Fleury lowered her voice almost to a whisper,—"and that Madame Bellestre, who was very much of the *haute noblesse*, should be so ready to take in a strange child, and that M. Bellestre should keep his sort of guardianship over her and provide for her. Some of the talk comes back to me. There have been many questionable things done we older people know."

St. Armand gave an assenting nod. Then he asked himself what there was about the child that should interest one so much, recalling her pretty eager compliment that he resembled a king, or her vague idea of one.

His dinner dress set him off to a fine advantage. It was much in the old French fashion—the long waistcoat of flowered satin and velvet with its jeweled buttons; the ruffled shirt front, the high stock, the lace cuffs about the hand, the silken small clothes and stockings. And when he was dressed in furs with fringed deerskin leggings and a beaver cap above the waving brown hair, with his snowy beard and pink cheeks, and his blue eyes, he was a goodly picture as well.

The priest's house was easily found. The streets were full of people in the early evening, for in this pleasant weather it was much more refreshing out of door than in. The smells of furs and skins lingered in the atmosphere, and a few days of good strong wind was a godsend. The [72] doorways were full, women caressing their babies and chanting low lullabies; while elsewhere a pretty young girl hung over the lower half of the door and laughed with an admirer while her mother sat drowsing just within.

A tidy old woman, in coif and white apron over her black gown, bowed her head as she answered his question. The good father was in. Would the stranger walk this way?

Père Rameau was crossing the hall. In the dim light, a stone basin holding oil after the fashion of a Greek lamp, the wick floating on top, the priest glanced up at his visitor. Both had passed each other in the street and hardly needed an introduction.

"I hope I have not disturbed you in any way," began M. St. Armand in an attractive tone that gained a listener at once. "I have come to talk over a matter that has a curious interest for me, and I am told you have the key, if not to the mystery exactly, to some of the links. I hope you will not consider me intrusive."

"I shall be glad to give you any information that is possible. I am not a politician, Monsieur, and have been trained not to speak evil of those appointed to rule over us."

He was a tall, spare man with a face that even in the wrinkles and thinness of age, and perhaps a little asceticism, was sweet and calm, and the brown eyes were soft, entreating. Clean shaven, the chin showed narrow, but the mouth redeemed it. He wore the black cassock of the Recollets, [73] the waist girded by a cord from which was suspended a cross and a book of devotions.

"Then if it is a serious talk, come hither. There may be a little smoke in the air—"

"I am a smoker myself," said St. Armand cordially.

"Then you may not object to a pipe. I have some most excellent tobacco. I bethink me sometimes that it is not a habit of self-sacrifice, but the fragrance is delightful and it soothes the nerves."

The room was rather long, and somewhat narrow. At the far end there was a small altar and a *prie dieu*. A candle was burning and its light defined the ivory crucifix above. In the corner a curtained something that might be a confessional. Indeed, not a few startling confessions had been breathed there. An escritoire with some shelves above, curiously carved, that bespoke its journey across the sea, took a great wall space and seemed almost to divide the room. The window in the front end was quite wide, and the shutters were thrown open for air, though a coarse curtain fell in straight folds from the top. Here was a commodious desk accommodating papers and books, a small table with pipes and tobacco, two wooden chairs and a more

comfortable one which the priest proffered to the guest.

"Shall we have a light? Marcel, bring a candle."

"Nay," protested the visitor, "I enjoy this dimness. One seems more inclined to talk, though I think I have heard a most excellent reason educed for such a course;" and a mirthful twinkle [74] shone in his eyes.

The priest laughed softly. "It is hardly applicable here. I sat thinking. The sun has been so brilliant for days that the night brings comfort. You are a stranger here, Monsieur?"

"Yes, though it is not my first visit to Detroit. I have gone from New York to Michilimackinac several times, to Montreal, Quebec, to France and back, though I was born there. I am the guest of Monsieur Fleury."

The priest made an approving inclination of the head.

"One sees many strange things. You have a conglomerate, Père Rameau. And now a new—shall I say ruler?"

"That is the word, Monsieur. And I hope it may last as long as the English reign. We cannot pray for the success of La Belle France any more."

"France has her own hard battles to fight. Yet it makes one a little sad to think of the splendid heritage that has slipped from her hands, for which her own discoverers and priests gave up their lives. Still, she has been proved unworthy of her great trust. I, as a Frenchman, say it with sorrow."

"You are a churchman, Monsieur?"

"A Christian, I hope. For several generations we have been on the other side. But I am not unmindful of good works or good lives."

Père Rameau bowed his head.

"What I wished to talk about was a little girl," St. Armand began, after a pause. "Jeanne [75] Angelot, I have heard her called."

"Ah, Monsieur, you know something about her, then?" returned the priest, eagerly.

"No, I wish I did. I have crossed her path a time or two, though I can't tell just why she interests me. She is bright, vivacious, but curiously ignorant. Why does she live with this Indian woman and run wild?"

"I cannot tell any further than it seems M. Bellestre's strange whim. All I know of the child is Pani's story. The De Longueils went to France and the Bellestres took their house. Pani had been given her freedom, but remained with the new owners. She was a very useful woman, but subject to curious spells of longing for her olden friends. Sometimes she would disappear for days, spending the time among the Indian squaws outside the stockade. She was there one evening when this child was dropped in her lap by a young Indian woman. Touchas, the woman she was staying with, corroborates the story. The child was two years or more old, and talked French; cried at first for her 'maman.' Madame Bellestre insisted that Pani should bring the child to her. She had lost a little one by death about the same age. She supposed at first that some one would claim it, but no one ever did. Then she brought the child to me and had it christened by the name on the card, Jeanne Angelot. Madame had a longing for the ministrations of the Church, but her husband was opposed. In her last illness he consented. He loved her very dearly. I think he was [76] afraid of the influence of a priest, but he need not have been. She gave me all the things belonging to the child, and I promised to yield them up to the one who claimed her, or Jeanne herself when she was eighteen, or on her wedding day when she was married. Her husband promised to provide for the child as long as she needed it. He was very fond of her, too."

"And was there no suspicion?" St. Armand hesitated.

The pale face betrayed a little warmth and the slim fingers clasped each other.

"I understand, Monsieur. There was and I told him of it. With his hand on God's word he declared that he knew no more about her than Pani's story, and that he had loved his wife too well for his thoughts ever to stray elsewhere. He was an honest, upright man and I believe him. He planned at first to take the child to New Orleans, but Mademoiselle, who was about fourteen, objected strenuously. She *was* jealous of her father's love for the child. M. Bellestre was a large, fair man with auburn hair and hazel eyes, generous, kindly, good-tempered. The child is dark, and has a passionate nature, beats her playmates if they offend her, though it is generally through some cruel thing they have done. She has noble qualities but there never has been any training. Yet every one has a good word for her and a warm side. I do not think the child would tell a lie or take what did not belong to her. She would give all she had sooner." [77]

"You interest me greatly. But would it not be wiser for her to have a better home and different training? Does M. Bellestre consent to have her grow up in ignorance?"

"I have proposed she and Pani should come to the Recollet house. We have classes, you know, and there are orphan children. Several times we have coaxed her in, but it was disastrous. She set our classes in an uproar. The sister put her in a room by herself and she jumped out of the

window and threatened to run away to the woods if she were sent again. M. Bellestre thinks to come to Detroit sometime, when it will be settled no doubt. His daughter is married now. He may take Jeanne back with him."

"That would be a blessing. But she has an eager mind and now we are learning that a broader education is necessary. It seems a pity—"

"Monsieur, there are only two lines that seem important for a woman. One is the training to make her a good wife and mother, and in new countries this is much needed. It is simplicity and not worldly arrogance, obedience and not caviling; first as a daughter, then as a wife. To guide the house, prepare the meals, teach her children the holy truths of the Church, and this is all God will require of her. The other is to devote her whole life to God's work, but not every one has this gift. And she who bears children obeys God's mandate and will have her reward."

"Whether the world is round or square," thought the Sieur St. Armand, but he was too courteous even to smile. Jeanne Angelot would need a wider life than this, and, if unduly narrowed, would spring over the traces. [78]

"You think M. Bellestre means to come?"

"He has put it off to next year now. There is so much unrest and uncertainty all over the country, that at present he cannot leave his business."

St. Armand sighed softly, thinking of Jeanne.

"Would you show the clothes and the trinkets?"

"O yes, Monsieur, to a person like you, but not to the idly curious. Indeed, for that matter, they have been mostly forgotten. So many things have happened to distract attention."

He rose and went to the old escritoire. Unlocking a drawer he took out a parcel folded in a piece of cloth.

"The clothes she wore," he said, "even to the little shoes of deerskin. There is nothing special about them to denote that she was the child of a rich person."

That was very true, St. Armand saw, except that the little stockings were fine and bore the mark of imported goods. He mused over them.

The priest opened a small, oblong box that still had the scent of snuff about it. On it was the name of Bellestre. So that was no clew.

"Here is the necklet and the little ring and the paper with her name. Madame Bellestre placed these in my hand some time before she died."

The chain was slender and of gold, the locket small; inside two painted miniatures but very diminutive, and both of them young. One would hardly be able to identify a middle aged person from them. There was no mark or initials, save an undecipherable monogram. [79]

"It is a pity there are no more chances of identification," St. Armand said. "This and the stockings come from France. And if the poor mother was dead—"

"There are so many orphans, Monsieur. Kind people take them in. I know of some who have been restored to their families. It is my dream to gather them in one home and train them to useful lives. It may come if we have peace for a while."

"She has a trusty guardian in you."

"If I could decide her fate, Monsieur. Truly she is a child of the Church, but she is wild and would revolt at any abridgment of her liberty. We may win her by other means. Pani is a Christian woman though with many traits of Indian character, some of the best of them," smiling. "It cannot be that the good Father above will allow any of his examples to be of none effect. Pani watches over her closely and loves her with untiring devotion. She firmly upholds M. Bellestre's right and believes he will return. The money to support them is sent to M. Loisel, the notary, and he is not a churchman. It is a pity so many of out brave old fathers should die for the faith and the children not be gathered in one fold. In Father Bonaventure's time it was not so, but the English had not come." [80]

The good priest sighed and began folding up the articles.

"Father Gilbert believes in a stricter rule. But most of the people have years of habit that they put in the place of faith. Yet they are a good, kindly people, and they need some pleasures to compensate for their hard lives. They are gay and light-hearted as you have no doubt seen, but many of them are tinctured with Indian superstitions as well. Then for a month, when the fur traders come in, there is much drinking and disorder. There have been many deep-rooted prejudices. My nation cannot forgive the English for numberless wrongs. We could always have been friends with the Indians when they understood that we meant to deal fairly by them. And we were to blame for supplying them with fire water, justly so called. The fathers saw this and fought against it a century ago. Even the Sieur Cadillac tried to restrict them, though he did not approve the Jesuits. Monsieur, as you may have seen, the Frenchman drinks a little with the social tendency of his race, the Indian for the sake of wild expansion. He is a grand hero to himself, then, ready for a war dance, for fighting, cruelty, rapine, and revenge. I hope the new

nation will understand better how to deal with them. They are the true children of the forest and the wilderness. I suppose in time they would even destroy each other."

St. Armand admitted to himself that it was hard to push them farther to the cold, inhospitable north, which would soon be the only hunting ground left them unless the unknown West opened a future resource. [81]

"They are a strange race. Yet there have been many fierce peoples on our earth that have proved themselves amenable to civilization."

"Let us hope for better times and a more lasting peace. Prejudices die out in a few generations." Then he rose. "I thank you sincerely for your kindness, father, and hope you will be prospered in your good work, and in the oversight of the child."

"You are not to remain—"

St. Armand smiled. "I have much business on my hands. There are many treaty points to define and settle. I go to Washington; I may go to France. But I wish you all prosperity under the new government."

The priest bowed.

"And you will do your best for the child?"

"Whatever I am allowed to do, Monsieur."

There was still much soreness about religious matters. The English laxity had led to too much liberty, to doubting, even.

They bade each other a cordial adieu, with hopes of meeting again.

"Strange there should be so many interested in the child," St. Armand mused. "And she goes her own way serenely." [82]

CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH JEANNE BOWS HER HEAD.

General Anthony Wayne was a busy man for the next few weeks, though he was full of tireless activity to his finger tips. There was much to be done in the town that was old already and had seen three different régimes. English people were packing their worldly goods and starting for Canada. Some of the French were going to the farther western settlements. Barracks were overhauled, the palisades strengthened, the Fort put in a better state of defense. For there were threats that the English might return. There were roving bands of Indians to the north and west, ready to be roused to an attack by disaffected French or English.

But the industrious inhabitants plied their vocations unmindful of change of rulers. Boat loads of emigrants came in. Stores of all kinds were dumped upon the wharf. The red painted windmills flew like great birds in the air, though some of the habitans kept to their little home hand mill, whose two revolving stones needed a great expenditure of strength and ground but coarsely. You saw women spinning in doorways that they might nod to passers-by or chat with a neighbor who had time to spare.

The children played about largely on the outside of the palisade. There were waving fields of maize that farmers had watched with fear and trembling and now surveyed with pride. Other grains were being cultivated. Estates were staked out, new log houses were erected, some much more pretentious ones with great stone chimneys. [83]

Yet people found time for pleasure. There were canoe loads of merry girls going down or up the river, adroitly keeping out of the way of the larger craft and sending laughing replies to the chaff of the boatmen. And the evenings were mostly devoted to pleasure, with much music and singing. For it was not all work then.

Jeanne roamed at her own wayward will, oftenest within the inclosure with Pani by the hand. The repairs going on interested her. The new soldiers in their Continental blue and buff, most of it soiled and worn, presented quite a contrast to the red and gold of the English to which their eyes had become so accustomed. Now and then some one spoke respectfully to her; there was much outward deference paid to women even if the men were some of them tyrants within.

And Jeanne asked questions in her own fearless fashion. She had picked up some English and by dint of both languages could make herself understood.

"Well?" exclaimed a young lieutenant who had been overseeing some work and cleaning up at the barracks, turning a smiling and amused face towards her, "well, Mademoiselle, how do you like us—your new masters?" [84]

"Are you going to be masters here for long? Are you sure the English will not come back?"

She raised her head proudly and her eyes flashed.

"It looks as if we might stay," he answered.

"You will not be everybody's master. You will not be mine."

"Why, no. What I meant was the government. Individuals you know have always a certain liberty."

She wondered a little what individuals were. Ah, if one could know a good deal! Something was stirring within her and it gave her a sort of pain, perplexing her as well.

What a bright curious face it was with the big eyes that looked out so straightforwardly!

"You are French, Mam'selle, or—"

"Am I like an Indian?"

She stood up straight and seemed two or three inches taller. He turned a sudden scarlet as he studied the mop of black curling hair, the long lashes, through which her eyes glittered, the brown skin that was sun kissed rather than of a copper tint, the shapely figure, and small hands that looked as if they might grasp and hold on.

"No, Mam'selle, I think you are not." Then he looked at Pani. "You live here?"

"Oh, not far away. Pani is my—oh, I do not know what you call it—guard, nurse, but I am a big girl now and do not need a nurse. Monsieur, I think I am French. But I dropped from the clouds one evening and I can't remember the land before that."

The soldier stared, but not impertinently. [85]

"Mam'selle, I hope you will like us, since we have come to stay."

"Ah, do not feel too sure. The French drove out the Indians, the English conquered the French, and they went away—many of them. And you have driven out the English. Where will the next people come from?"

"The next people?" in surprise.

"The people to drive you out." She laughed softly.

"We will not be driven out."

"Are you as strong as that?"

"Mam'selle, we have conquered the English from Maine to the Carolinas, and to the Mississippi river. We shall do all the rest sometime."

"I think I shall be an American. I like people who are strong and can never be beaten."

"Of course you will have to be an American. And you must learn to speak English well."

"Monsieur," with much dignity, "if you are so grand why do you not have a language of your own?"

"Because"—he was about to say—"we were English in the beginning," but the sharp, satirical curves lurking around her mouth checked him. What an odd, piquant creature she was!

"Come away," and Pani pulled her hand. "You talk too much to people and make M'sieu idle."

"O Pani!" She gave an exultant cry and sprang away, then stopped short. For it was not only her friend, but a number of gentlemen in military attire and mounted on horses with gay trappings. [86]

Monsieur St. Armand waved his hand to her. She shrank back and caught Pani's gown.

"It is General Wayne," said the lieutenant, and paid him something more than the demands of superior rank, for admiration was in his eyes and Jeanne noticed it.

"My little friend," said St. Armand, leaning down toward Jeanne, "I am glad to see you again." He turned a trifle. The general and his aids were on a tour of inspection, and now the brave soldier leaped from the saddle, giving the child a glance.

"I have been coming to find you," began Monsieur. "I have many things to say to your attendant. Especially as in a few days I go away."

"O Monsieur, is it because you do not like—" her eyes followed the general's suite.

"It is because I like them so well. I go to their capital on some business, and then to France. But I shall return in a year, perhaps. A year is not very long."

"Just a winter and a summer. There are many of them to life?"

"To some lives, yes. I hope there will be to yours, happy ones."

"I am always happy when I can run about or sail on the river. There are so many delightful things when no one bothers you."

"And the bothers are, I suppose, when some one considers your way not the best for you. We all meet with such things in life."

"My own way is the best," she replied, willfully, a daring light shining in her eyes. "Do I not know what gives me the most pleasure? If I want to go out and sing with the birds or run mad races with the dogs, or play with the children outside, that is the thing which gives me joy and makes my blood rush warm and bright in my veins. Monsieur, I told you I did not like to be shut up." [87]

"Well, well. Remain in your little cottage this afternoon, and let me come and talk to you. I think I will not make you unhappy."

"Your voice is so sweet, Monsieur, but if you say disagreeable things, if you want me to learn to sew and to read—and to spin—the De Bers have just had a spinning wheel come. It is a queer thing and hums strangely. And Marie will learn to spin, her mother says. Then she will never be able to go in the woods for wild grapes and nuts. No, I cannot spend my time being so busy. And I do not care for stockings. Leggings are best for winter. And Touchas makes me moccasins."

Her feet and ankles were bare now. Dainty and shapely they were, and would have done for models.

"Monsieur, the soft grass and the warm sand is so pleasant to one's feet. I am glad I am not a grand lady to wear clumsy shoes. Why, I could not run."

St. Armand laughed. He had never seen such a free, wild, human thing rejoicing exultantly in its liberty. It seemed almost a shame to capture her—like caging a bird. But she could not always be a child. [88]

General Wayne had made his round and given some orders, and now he reappeared.

"I want to present you to this little girl of Detroit," began M. St. Armand, "so that in years to come, when she hears of all your exploits, she will be proud that she had the honor. Jeanne Angelot is the small maid's name. And this is our brave General Wayne, who has persuaded the Indians to peace and amity, and taught the English to keep their word. But he can fight as well as talk."

"Monsieur, when they gave you welcome, I did not think you looked grand enough for a great general. But when I come near by I see you are brave and strong and determined. I honor you, Monsieur. I am glad you are to rule Detroit."

"Thank you, my little maid. I hope Detroit will become a great city, and that you may live many years in it, and be very happy."

She made a courtesy with free, exquisite grace. General Wayne leaped into his saddle and waved his hand.

"What an odd and charming child," he remarked to St. Armand. "No woman of society could have been more graceful and less abashed, and few would own up change of opinion with such naïve sweetness. Of course she is a child of the people?"

"I am interested in learning who she really is;" and St. Armand repeated what he knew of her story.

"Her mother may have been killed by the Indians. There will be many a sad romance linked in with our early history, Sieur St. Armand." [89]

As for Jeanne Angelot, many a time in after years she recalled her meeting with the brave general, and no one dreamed then that his brilliant career was to end so soon. Until November he held the post, repairing fortifications, promulgating new laws, redressing abuses, soothing the disaffected and, as far as he could, studying the best interests of the town. In November he started for the East, but at Presque Isle was seized with a fatal malady which ended his useful and energetic career, and proved a great loss to the country.

Monsieur St. Armand was late in keeping his word. There had been many things pressing on his attention and consideration. Jeanne had been very restless. A hundred desires flew to her mind like birds on the wing. Never had there seemed so many charms outside of the walls. She ran down to see Marie at the new spinning wheel. Madame De Ber had not used one in a long time and was a little awkward.

"When I have Marie well trained I think I will take thee in hand," she said, rather severely. "Thou wilt soon be a big girl and then a maiden who should be laying by some garments and blankets and household gear. And thou canst not even knit."

"But why should I? There are no brothers and sisters, and Wenonah is glad to make garments for me. Though I think M. Bellestre's money pays for them. And Touchas sends such nice fur things."

"I should be ashamed to have other people work while I climbed trees and ran about with Indian children. Though it is half suspected they are kin to thee. But the French part should rule." [90]

Jeanne threw up her head with a proud gesture.

"I should not mind. I often feel that they must be. They like liberty, so do I. We are like birds and wild deer."

Then the child ran back before any reply could be made. Yet she was not as indifferent as she seemed. She had not minded it until lately, but now when it came in this sort of taunt she could not tell why a remembrance of Louis Marsac should rise before her. After all, what did a little Indian blood matter? Many a girl smiled on Louis Marsac, for they knew his father was a rich fur trader. Was it the riches that counted?

"He will not come," she said half angrily to Pani. "The big ladies are very proud to have him. They wear fine clothes that come from France, and they can smile and Madame Fleury has a harp her daughters play upon. But they might be content with the young men."

"It is not late yet," trying to console her darling.

"Pani, I shall go outside the gates. I am so tired. I want to run races to get my breath. It stops just as it does when the fog is in the air."

"No, child, stay here a little longer. It would be sad to miss him. And he is going away."

"Let him go. I think all men are a great trouble! You wait and wait for them. Then, if you go away they are sure to come."

Pani laughed. The child was brimming over with unreason. Yet her eyes were like stars, and in [91] an uncomprehended way the woman felt the charm of her beauty. No, she would never part with her.

"O Pani!" The child sprang up and executed a *pas seul* worthy of a larger audience. Her first impulse was to run to meet him. Then she suddenly subsided from some inexplicable cause, and a flush came to her cheek as she dropped down on a seat beside the doorway, made of the round of a log, and folded her hands demurely, looking out to the barracks.

Of course she turned when she heard the steps. There was a grave expression on her face, charming innocence that would have led anyone astray.

Pani rose and made an obeisance, and brought forward a chair.

"Or would Monsieur rather go in doors?" she inquired.

"O no. Little one—" he held out his hand.

"I thought you had forgotten. It is late," she said plaintively.

"I am a busy man, my child. I could wish for a little of the freedom that you rejoice in so exuberantly, though I dare say I shall have enough on my journey."

What a companion this gay, chattering child would be, going through new scenes!

"Mademoiselle, are you ever serious? Or are you too young to take thought of to-morrow?"

"I am always planning for to-morrow, am I not, Pani? And if it rains I do not mind, but go the [92] same, except that it is not always safe on the river, which sometimes seems as if the giant monster of the deep was sailing about in it."

"There is another kind of seriousness, my child, and a thought of the future that is not mere pleasure. You will outgrow this gay childhood. You may even find it necessary to go to some other country. There may be friends awaiting you that you know nothing of now. You would no doubt like to have them pleased with you, proud of you. And for this and true living you need some training. You must learn to read, to speak English, and you will find great pleasure in it. Then you will enjoy talking to older people. You see you will be older yourself."

His eyes were fixed steadily on hers and would not allow them to waver. She felt the power of the stronger mind.

"I have been talking with M. Bellestre's notary. He thinks you should go to school. There are to be some schools started as soon as the autumn opens. You know you wanted to learn why the world was round, and about the great continent of Europe and a hundred interesting subjects."

"But, Monsieur, it is mostly prayers. I do not so much mind Sunday, for then there are people to see. But to have it every day—and the same things over and over—"

She gave a yawn that was half ridiculous grimace.

"Prayers, are very good, Mam'selle. While I am away I want you to pray for me that sometime God will bring me back safe and allow me to see you again. And I shall say when I see the sun [93] rising on the other side of the world, 'It is night now in old Detroit and there is a little girl praying for me.'"

"O Monsieur, would you be glad?" Her eyes were suffused with a mistlike joy. "Then I will pray for you. That is so different from praying for people you don't know anything about, and to—to saints. I don't know them either. I feel as if they sat in long rows and just nodded to you."

"Pray to the good God, my child," he returned gravely. "And if you learn to read and write you might send me a letter."

Her eyes opened wide in amazement. "Oh, I could never learn enough for that!" she cried despairingly.

"Yes, you can, you will. M. Loisel will arrange it for you. And twice a week you will go to the sisters, I have promised Father Rameau. There will be plenty of time to run and play besides."

Jeanne Angelot looked steadily down on the ground. A caterpillar was dragging its length along and she touched it with her foot.

"It was once a butterfly. It will spin itself up in a web and hang somewhere all winter, and in the spring turn to a butterfly again."

"That ugly thing!" in intense surprise.

"And how the trees drop their leaves in the autumn and their buds are done up in a brown sheath until the spring sunshine softens it and the tiny green leaf comes out, and why the birds go to warmer countries, because they cannot stand snow and sleet, and return again; why the [94] bee shuts himself up in the hollow tree and sleeps, and a hundred beautiful things. And when I come back we will talk them over."

"O Monsieur!" Her rose lips quivered and the dimple in her chin deepened as she drew a long breath that stirred every pulse of her being.

He had touched the right chord, awakened a new life within her. There was a struggle, yet he liked her the better for not giving up her individuality in a moment.

"Monsieur," she exclaimed with a new humility, "I will try—indeed I will."

"That is a brave girl. M. Loisel will attend to the matter. And you will be very happy after a while. It will come hard at first, but you must be courageous and persevering. And now I must say good-by for a long while. Pani I know will take excellent care of you."

He rose and shook hands with the woman, whose eyes were full of love for the child of her adoption. Then he took both of Jeanne's little brown hands in his and pressed them warmly.

She watched him as he threaded his way through the narrow street and turned the corner. Then she rushed into the house and threw herself on the small pallet, sobbing as if her heart would break. No one for whom she cared had ever gone out of her life before. With Pani there was complete ownership, but Monsieur St. Armand was a new experience. Neither had she really loved her playmates, she had found them all so different from herself. Next to Pani stood [95] Wenonah and the grave brown-faced babies who tumbled about the floor when they were not fastened to their birch bark canoe cradle with a flat end balancing it against the wall. She sometimes kissed them, they were so quaint and funny.

"*Ma mie, ma mie*, let me take thee to my bosom," Pani pleaded. "He will return again as he said, for he keeps his word. And thou wilt be a big girl and know many things, and he will be proud of thee. And M. Bellestre may come."

Jeanne's sobs grew less. She had been thrust so suddenly into a new world of tender emotion that she was frightened. She did not want to go out again, and sat watching Pani as she made some delicious broth out of fresh green corn, that was always a great treat to the child.

It was true there was a new stir in the atmosphere of old Detroit. For General Wayne with the prescience of an able and far-sighted patriot had said, "To make good citizens they must learn the English language and there must be schools. Education will be the corner stone of this new country."

Governor St. Clair had a wide territory to look after. There were many unsettled questions about land and boundaries and proper laws. New settlements were projected, but Detroit was left to adjust many questions for itself. A school was organized where English and various simple branches should be taught. It was opposed by Father Gilbert, who insisted that all the French Catholics should be sent to the Recollet house, and trained in Church lore exclusively. But the [96] wider knowledge was necessary since there were so many who could not read, and the laws and courts would be English.

The school session was half a day. The better class people had a few select schools, and sometimes several families joined and had their children taught at the house of some parent and shared expenses.

Jeanne felt like a wild thing caught and thrust into a cage. There were disputes and quarrels, but she soon established a standing for herself. The boys called her Indian, and a name that had been flung at her more than once—tiger cat.

"You will see that I can scratch," she rejoined, threateningly.

"I will learn English, Pani, and no one shall interfere. M. Loisel said if I went to the sisters on Wednesday and Friday afternoons that Father Rameau would be satisfied. He is nice and kindly, but I hate Father Gilbert. And," laughingly, "I think they are all afraid of M. Bellestre. Do you suppose he will take me home with him when he comes? I do not want to leave Detroit."

Pani sighed. She liked the old town as well.

Jeanne flew to the woods when school was over. She did envy the Indian girls their freedom for they were not trained in useful arts as were the French girls. Oh, the frolics in the woods, the hunting of berries and grapes, the loads of beautiful birch and ash bark, the wild flowers that bloomed until frost came! and the fields turning golden with the ripening corn, secure from [97] Indian raids! The thrifty French farmers watched it with delight.

Marie De Ber had been kept very busy since the spinning began. Madame thought schooling shortsighted business except for boys who would be traders by and by, and must learn how to reckon correctly and do a little writing.

They went after the last gleaning of berries one afternoon, when the autumn sunshine turned all to gold.

"O Marie," cried Jeanne, "here is a harvest! Come at once, and if you want them don't shout to anyone."

"O Jeanne, how good you are! For you might have called Susanne, who goes to school, and I have thought you liked her better than you do me."

"No, I do not like her now. She pinched little Jacques Moet until he cried out and then she laid it to Pierre Dessau, who was well thrashed for it, and I called her a coward. I am afraid girls are not brave."

"Come nearer and let us hide in this thicket. For if I do not get a big lot of berries mother will send Rose next time, she threatened."

"You can have some of mine. Pani will not care; for she never scolds at such a thing."

"Pani is very good to you. Mother complains that she spoils you and that you are being brought up like a rich girl."

Jeanne laughed. "Pani never struck me in my life. She isn't quite like a mother, you see, but she loves me, loves me!" with emphasis. [98]

"There are so many for mother to love," and the girl sighed.

"Jeanne," she began presently, "I want to tell you something. Mother said I must not mention it until it was quite settled. There is—some one—he has been at father's shop and—and is coming on Sunday to see mother—"

Jeanne stood up suddenly. "It is Martin Lavosse," she said. "You danced with him. He is so gay. O Marie!" and her face was alight.

"No, it is not Martin. I would not mind if it were. But he is so young, only eighteen."

"You are young, too."

Marie sighed again. "You have not seen him. It is Antoine Beeson. He is a boat builder, and has been buying some of the newly surveyed land down at the southern end. Father has known him quite a long while. His sister has married and gone to Frenchtown. He is lonely and wants a wife."

"But there are many girls looking for husbands," hesitated Jeanne, not knowing whether to approve or oppose; and Marie's husband was such a new idea.

"So father says. And we have five girls, you know. Rose is as tall as I and has a prettier face and dances like a sprite. And there are so many of the fur hunters and traders who drink and spend their money, and sometimes beat their wives. Margot Beeson picked out a wife for him, but he said she was too old. It was Lise Moet."

Jeanne laughed. "I should not want to live with her, her voice goes through your head like a knife. She is little Jacques' aunt and the children are all afraid of her. How old is Antoine?" [99]

"Twenty-eight!" in a low, protesting tone.

"Just twice as old as you!" said Jeanne with a little calculation.

"Yes, I can't help but think of it. And when I am thirty he will be an old man sixty years old, bent down and wrinkled and cross, maybe."

"O no, Marie," cried Jeanne, eagerly. "It is not that way one reckons. Everything does not double up so fast. He is fourteen years older than you, and when you are thirty he can only be fourteen years older than you. Count up on your ten fingers—that makes forty, and four more, he will be forty-four."

Marie's mouth and eyes opened in surprise. "Are you quite sure?" with an indrawn breath.

"O yes, sure as that the river runs to the lake. It is what they teach at school. And though it is a great trouble to make yourself remember, and you wonder what it is all about, then at other times you can use the knowledge and are happy and glad over it. There are so many queer things," smiling a little. "And they are not in the catechism or the prayers. The sisters shake their heads over them."

"But can they be quite right?" asked Marie in a kind of awesome tone.

"Why they seem right for the men to know," laughed Jeanne. "How else could they be bartering and counting money? And it is said that Madame Ganeau goes over her husband's books every week since they found Jules Froment was a thief, and kept wrong accounts, putting the money in his own pocket." [100]

Jeanne raised her voice triumphantly.

"Oh, here they are!" cried Cecile followed by a string of girls. "And look, they have found a harvest, their pails are almost full. You mean, selfish things!"

"Why you had the same right to be hunting everywhere," declared Jeanne stoutly. "We found a good place and we picked—that is all there is of it."

"But you might have called us."

Jeanne laughed in a tantalizing manner.

"O Jeanne Angelot, you think yourself some great things because you live inside the stockade and go to a school where they teach all manner of lies to the children. Your place is out in some Indian wigwam. You're half Indian, anyhow."

"Look at us!" Jeanne made a sudden bound and placed herself beside Cecile, whose complexion was swarthy, her hair straight, black, and rather coarse, and her dark eyes had a yellowish tinge, even to the whites. "Perhaps I am the descendant of some Indian princess—I should be proud of it, for the Indians once held all this great new world; and the French and English could not hold it."

There was a titter among the girls. Never had Jeanne looked prouder or handsomer, and Cecile's broad nose distended with anger while her lips were purple. She was larger but she did not dare attack Jeanne, for she knew the nature and the prowess of the tiger cat. [101]

"Let us go home; it gets late," cried one of the girls, turning her companion about.

"O Jeanne," whispered Marie, "how splendid you are! No husband would ever dare beat you."

"I should tear out his eyes if he did." [102]

CHAPTER VII.

LOVERS AND LOVERS.

There were days when Jeanne Angelot thought she should smother in the stuffy school, and the din of the voices went through her head like the rushing noise of a whirlwind. She had stolen out of the room once or twice and had not been called to an account for it. Then one day she saw a boy whipped severely for the same thing. Children were so often beaten in those days, and yet the French habitans were very fond of their offspring.

Jeanne lingered after the children made their clumsy bows and shuffled out.

"Well, what is it?" asked the gruff master.

"Monsieur, you whipped the Dorien boy for running away from school."

"Yes, and I'll do it again. I'll break up the bad practice. Their parents send them to school. They do a mean, dishonest thing and then they lie about it. Don't come sniveling to me about Dorien."

"Monsieur, I was not going to snivel for anybody. You were right to keep your word. If you had promised a holiday and not given it to us we should have felt that you were mean and not of your word. So what is right for one side is right for the other."

He looked over the tops of his glasses, and he made deep wrinkles in his forehead to do it. His eyes were keen and sharp and disconcerted Jeanne a little. [103]

"Upon my word!" he ejaculated.

Jeanne drew a long breath and was almost afraid to go on with her confession. Only she should not feel clean inside until she had uttered it.

"There'd be no trouble teaching school if the pupils could see that. There'd be little trouble in the world if the people could see it. It is the good on my side, the bad shoved off on yours. Who taught you such a sense of fairness, of honesty?"

If he could have gotten his grim face into smiling lines he would have done it. As it was it softened.

"Monsieur, I wanted to tell you that I had not been fair. I ran out of school the second day. It was like daggers going through my head and there were stars before my eyes and such a ringing in my ears! So I ran out of doors, clear out to the woods and stayed there up in a high tree where the birds sang to me and the wind made music among the leaves and one could almost look

through the blue sky where the white boats went sailing. I thought I would not come to school any more."

"Well—you did though." He was trying to think who this strange child was.

"You see I had promised. And I wanted to learn English and many other things that are not down in the prayers and counting beads. Pani said it was wrong. So I came back. You did not know I had run away, Monsieur." [104]

"No, but there was no rule then. I should have been glad if half of them had run away."

He gave a chuckle and a funny gleam shone out of his eye, and there was a curl in his lip as if the amusement could not get out.

Jeanne wanted to smile. She should never be afraid of him again.

"And there was another time—"

"How many more?"

"No more. For Pani said, 'Would you like to tell Monsieur St. Armand?'—and I knew I should be ashamed."

A delicate flush stole over her face, going up to the tangle of rings on her forehead. What a pretty child she was!

"Monsieur St. Armand?" inquiringly.

"He was here in the summer. He has gone to Paris. And he wanted me to study. It is hard and sometimes foolishness, but then people are so much nicer who know a great many things."

"Oh," he said thoughtfully, "you live with an Indian woman up by the barracks? It is Monsieur Loisel's protégée?" and he gave her an inquiring look.

"Monsieur, I would like to know what a protégée is," with a puzzled look.

"Some one, generally a child, in whom you take an interest."

She gave a thoughtful nod, then a quick joy flamed up in her face. She was Monsieur St. Armand's protégée and she was very glad.

"You are a courageous child. I wish the boys were as brave. I hate lying;" the man said after a [105] pause.

"O M'sieu, there are a great many cowardly people—do you not think so?" she returned naïvely.

He really smiled then, and gave several emphatic nods at her youthful discrimination.

"And you think you will not run away any more?"

"No, Monsieur, because—it is wrong."

"Then we must excuse you."

"Thank you, Monsieur. I wanted you to know. Now I can feel light hearted."

She made a pretty courtesy and half turned.

"If you did not mind I should like to hear something about your Monsieur St. Armand, that is, if you are not in a hurry to get home to your dinner."

"Oh, Pani will wait."

She told her story eagerly, and he saw the wish to please this friend who had shown such an interest in her was a strong incentive. But she had a desire for knowledge beside that. So many of the children were stupid and hated study. He would watch over her and see that she progressed. This, no doubt, was the friend M. Loisel had spoken of.

"You have been very good to me, M'sieu," she said with another courtesy as she turned away.

Several days had elapsed before she saw Marie again, for Madame De Ber rather discountenanced the intimacy now. She had not much opinion of the school; the sisters and the priests could teach all that was necessary. And Jeanne still ran about like a wild deer, while Marie was a woman. [106]

On Sunday Antoine Beeson came to pay his respects to Madame, the mamma. He surely could not be considered a young girl's ideal,—short, stout, red-faced from exposure to wind and water and sun, his thick brown hair rather long, though he had been clean shaven the evening before. He wore his best deerskin breeches, his gray sort of blouse with a red belt, and low, clumsy shoes with his father's buckles that had come from France, and he was duly proud of them. His gay bordered handkerchief and his necktie were new for the occasion.

Monsieur De Ber had satisfied himself that he would make a good son-in-law.

"For you see there is the house all ready, and now the servant has no head and is idle and

wasteful. I cannot stand such work. I wish your daughter was two or three years older, since I cannot go back myself," the admirer exclaimed rather regretfully.

"Marie will be fifteen in the spring. She has been well trained, being the eldest girl, and Madame is a thrifty and excellent housekeeper. Then we all mend of youth. You will have a strong, healthy woman to care for you in your old age, instead of a decrepit body to be a burthen to you."

"That is well thought of, De Ber;" and the suitor gave a short chuckle. There was wisdom in the idea.

Madame had sent Marie and Rose out to walk with the children. She knew she should accept the suitor, for her husband had said:—

"It is quite a piece of luck, since there are five girls to marry off. And there's many a one who would jump at the chance. Then we shall not have to give Marie much dowry beside her setting [107] out. It is not like young people beginning from the very hearthstone."

She met the suitor with a friendly greeting as if he were an ordinary visitor, and they talked of the impending changes in the town, the coming of the Americans, the stir in business prospects, M. Beeson was not much of a waster of words, and he came to the point presently.

"It will be hard to spare Marie," she said with an accent of regret. "Being the eldest she has had a great deal of experience. She is like a mother to the younger ones. She has not been spending her time in fooling around idly and dancing and being out on the river, like so many girls. Rose is not worth half of Marie, and I do not see how I shall ever get the trifler trained to take Marie's place. But there need be no immediate haste."

"O Madame, we can do our courting afterward. I can take Mam'selle out to the booths Saturday night, and we can look at the dancing. There will be all day Sunday when I am at liberty. But you see there is the house going to wrack, the servant spending my money, and the discomfort. I miss my sister so much. And I thought we would not make a long story. Dear Madame, you must see the need."

"It is sad to be sure. But you see Marie being so young and kept rather close, not having any admirers, it takes us suddenly. And the wedding gear—"

"Mam'selle always looks tidy. But I suppose a girl wants some show at the church and the [108] maids. Well, one doesn't get married many times in one's life. But I would like it to be by Christmas. It will be a little dull with me no doubt, and toward spring it is all hurry and drive, Antoine here and Antoine there. New boats and boats to be patched and canoes and dugouts. Then the big ships are up for repairs. I have worked moonlight nights, Madame. And Christmas is a pleasurable time."

"Yes, a pleasant time for a girl to remember. I was married at Pentecost. And there was the great procession. Dear! dear! It is not much over seventeen years ago and we have nine children."

"Pierre is a big lad, Madame, and a great help to his father. Children are a pleasure and comfort in one's old age if they do well. And thine are being well brought up. Marie is so good and steady. It is not wisdom for a man like me to choose a flighty girl."

"Marie will make a good wife," returned Madame, confidently.

And so when Marie returned it was all settled and Antoine had been invited to tea. Marie was in a desperate flutter. Of course there was nothing for her to say and she would not have had the courage to say it if there had been. But she could not help comparing him with Martin Lavosse, and some of the young men who greeted her at church. If his face were not quite so red, and his figure so clumsy! His hands, too, were broad with stubby ends to the fingers. She looked at her own; they were quite shapely, for youth has a way of throwing off the marks of toil that are ready [109] enough to come back in later life.

"*Ma fille*," said her mother when the lover had wished them all good night, rather awkwardly, and her father had gone out to walk with him; "*ma fille*, Monsieur Beeson has done us the honor to ask for thy hand. He is a good, steady, well-to-do man with a nice home to take thee to. He does not carouse nor spend his money foolishly, but will always stay at home with thee, and make thee happy. Many a girl will envy thy lot. He wants the wedding about Christmas time, so the betrothal will be soon, in a week or so. Heaven bless and prosper thee, my child! A good daughter will not make an ill wife. Thy father is very proud."

Rose and Marie looked unutterable things at each other when they went to bed. There were little pitchers in the trundle-bed, and their parents in the next room.

"If he were not so old!" whispered Rose.

"And if he could dance! But with that figure!"

"Like a buffalo!" Marie's protest forced its way up from her heart. "And I have just begun to think of things that make one happy. There will be dances at Christmastide."

"I wonder if one is sure to love one's husband," commented Rose.

"It would be wicked not to. But how does one begin? I am so afraid of his loud voice."

"Girls, cease whispering and go to sleep. The night will be none too long," called their mother. [110]

Marie wiped some tears from her eyes. But it was a great comfort to her when she was going to church the next Sunday and walking behind the Bronelle girls to hear Hortense say:—

"I have my cap set for Tony Beeson. His sister has kept close watch of him, but now he is free. I was down to the dock on Friday, and he was very cordial and sent a boy over the river with me in a canoe and would take no pay. Think of that! I shall make him walk home with me if I can."

Marie De Ber flushed. Some one would be glad to have him. At first she half wished he had chosen Hortense, then a bit of jealousy and a bit of triumph surged through her slow pulses.

Antoine Beeson walked home on the side of M. De Ber. The children old enough to go to church were ranged in a procession behind. Pierre guarded his sisters. Jeanne was on the other side of the street with Pani, but the distance was so small that she glanced across with questioning eyes. Marie held her head up proudly.

"I do believe," began Jeanne when they had turned out of St Anne's street, "that Marie De Ber is going to be betrothed to that rough boat builder who walks beside her father."

"Antoine Beeson has a good record, and she will do well," returned Pani briefly.

"But I think it would not be easy to love him," protested Jeanne.

"Child, you are too young to talk about love. It is the parents who decide such matters." [111]

"And I have none. You could not make me marry anyone, Pani. And I do not like these common men."

"Heaven forbid! but I might advise."

"I am not going to marry, you know. After all, maybe when I get old I will be a sister. It won't be hard to wear a black gown then. But I shall wait until I am *very* old. Pani, did you ever dream of what might happen to you?"

"The good God sends what is best for us, child."

"But—Monsieur Bellestre might come. And if he took me away then Monsieur St. Armand might come. Pani, is Monsieur Bellestre as nice as Monsieur St. Armand? I cannot seem to remember him."

"Little maids should not be thinking of men so often. Think of thy prayers, Jeanne."

Sunday was a great time to walk on the parade ground, the young men attired in their best, the demoiselles gay as butterflies with a mother or married sister to guard them from too great familiarity. But there was much decorous coquetting on both sides, for even at that period many a young fellow was caught by a pair of smiling eyes.

Others went to walk in the woods outside the farms or sailing on the river, since there was no Puritan strictness. They did their duty by the morning mass and service, and the rest of the day was given over to simple pleasure. There was a kind of half religious hilarity in the very air.

And the autumn was so magnificently beautiful. The great hillsides with their tracts of timber that looked as if they fenced in the world when the sun dropped down behind them, but if one [112] threaded one's way through the dark aisles and came out on the other side there were wonderful pictures,—small prairies or levels that suggested lakes and then a sort of avenue stretching out until another was visible, undulating surfaces, groves of pine, burr oak, and great stalwart hickories, then another woody ridge, and so on and on through interminable tangles and over rivers until Lake Michigan was reached. But not many of the habitans, or even the English, for that matter, had traveled to the other side of the state. The business journeys called them northward. There were Indian settlements about that were not over friendly.

Jeanne liked the outside world better. She was not old enough for smiles and smirks or an interest in fine clothes. So when she said, "Come, Pani," the woman rose and followed.

"To the tree?" she asked as they halted a little.

"To the big woods," smilingly.

The cottages were many of them framed in with vines and high pickets, and pear and apple orchards surrounded them, whose seed and, in some instances, cuttings had been brought from France; roses, too, whose ancestors had blossomed for kings and queens. Here and there was an oak turned ruddy, a hickory hanging out slender yellow leaves, or a maple flaunting a branch of wondrous scarlet. The people had learned to protect and defend themselves from murderous Indian raids, or in this vicinity the red men had proved more friendly. [113]

Pierre De Ber came shambling along. He had grown rapidly and seemed loose jointed, but he had a kindly, honest face where ignorance really was simplicity.

"You fly over the ground, Jeanne!" he exclaimed out of breath. The day was very warm for September. "Here I have been trying to catch up to you—"

"Yes, Mam'selle, I am tired myself. Let us sit down somewhere and rest," said Pani.

"Just to this little hillock. Pani, it would make a hut with the clearing inside and the soft mosses. If you drew the branches of the trees together it would make thatching for the roof. One could live here."

"O Mam'selle,—the Indians!" cried Pierre.

Jeanne laughed. "The Indians are going farther and farther away. Now, Pani, sit down here. Then lean back against this tree. And now you may take a good long rest. I am going to talk to the chipmunks and the birds, and find flowers."

Pani drew up her knees, resting on her feet as a brace. The soft air had made her sleepy as well, and she closed her eyes.

"It is so beautiful," sighed Jeanne. "Something rises within me and I want to fly. I want to know what strange lands there are beyond the clouds. And over there, far, farther than one can think, is a big ocean no one has ever seen. It is on the map. And this way," inclining her head eastward, "is another. That is where you go to France."

"But I shall never go to France," said the literal youth. "I want to go up to Michilimackinac, and [114]
there is the great Lake Huron. That is enough for me. If the ocean is any bigger I do not want to see it."

"It is, oh, miles and hundreds of miles bigger! And it takes more than a month to go. The master showed me on a map."

"Well, I don't care for that," pulling the leaves off a branch he had used for a switch.

The rough, rugged, and sometimes cross face of the master was better, because his eyes had a wonderful light in them. What made people so different? Apples and pears and ears of corn generally grew one like the other. And pigs—she smiled to herself. And the few sheep she had seen. But people could think. What gave one the thinking power? In the brain the master said. Did every one have brains?

"Jeanne, I have something wonderful to tell you."

"Oh, I think I know it! Marie has a lover."

He looked disappointed. "Who told you?"

"No one really told me. I saw Monsieur Beeson walking home with your father. And Marie was afraid—"

"Afraid!" the boy gave a derisive laugh. "Well, she is no longer afraid. They are going to be betrothed on Michaelmas eve. Tony is a good fellow."

"Then if Marie is—satisfied—"

"Why shouldn't she be satisfied? Father says it is a great chance, for you see she can really have no dowry, there are so many of us. We must all wait for our share until father has gone."

"Gone? Where?" She looked up in surprise. [115]

"Why, when he is dead. Everybody has to die, you know. And then the money they leave is divided."

Jeanne nodded. It shocked her in a vague sort of fashion, and she was glad Pani had no money.

"And Tony Beeson has a good house and a good business. I like him," the boy said, doggedly.

"Yes," assentingly. "But Marie is to marry him."

"Oh, the idea!" Pierre laughed immoderately. "Why a man always marries a woman."

"But your liking wouldn't help Marie."

"Oh, Marie is all right. She will like him fast enough. And it will be gay to have a wedding. That is to be about Christmas."

Jeanne was looking down the little slant to the cottages and the wigwams, and speculating upon the queerness of marriage.

"I wish I had made as much fortune as Tony Beeson. But then I'm only a little past sixteen, and in five years I shall be twenty-one. Then I am going to have a wife and house of my own."

"O Pierre!" Jeanne broke into a soft laugh.

"Yes, Jeanne—" turning very red.

The girl was looking at him in a mirthful fashion and it rather disconcerted him.

"You won't mind waiting, Jeanne—"

"I shan't mind waiting, but if you mean—" her cheeks turned a deeper scarlet and she made a little pause—"if you mean marrying I should mind that a good deal;" in a decisive tone. [116]

"But not to marry me? You have known me always."

"I should mind marrying anyone. I shouldn't want to sweep the house, and cook the meals, and wash, and tend babies. I want to go and come as I like. I hated school at first, but now I like learning and I must crack the shell to get at the kernel, so you see that is why I make myself agree with it."

"You cannot go to school always. And while you are there I shall be up to the Mich making some money."

"Oh," with a vexed crease in her forehead, "I told you once before not to talk of this—the day we were all out in the boat, you remember. And if you go on I shall hate you; yes, I shall."

"I shall go on," said the persistent fellow. "Not very often, perhaps, but I thought if you were one of the maids at Marie's wedding and I could wait on you—"

"I shall not be one of the maids." She rose and stamped her foot on the ground. "Your mother does not like me any more. She never asks me to come in to tea. She thinks the school wicked. And you must marry to please her, as Marie is doing. So it will not be me;" she declared with emphasis.

"Oh, I know. That Louis Marsac will come back and you will marry him."

The boy's eyes flamed with jealousy and his whole face gloomed over with cruelty. "And then I shall kill him. I couldn't stand it," he continued. [117]

"I hate Louis Marsac! I hate you, Pierre De Ber!" she cried vehemently.

The boy fell at her feet and kissed the hem of her frock, for she snatched away her hands.

"No, don't hate me. I'm glad to have you hate him."

"Get up, or I shall kick you," she said viciously.

"O Jeanne, don't be angry! I'll wait and wait. I thought you had forgotten, or changed somehow. You have been so pleasant. And you smiled so at me this morning. I know you have liked me—"

"If ever you say another word—" raising her hand.

"I won't unless you let me. You see you are not grown up yet, but sometimes people are betrothed when they are little children—"

She put her fingers in her ears and spun round and round, going down the little decline. Then she remembered Pani, who had fallen asleep. She motioned to Pierre.

"Go home," she commanded as he came toward her. "And if you ever talk about this to me again I shall tell your father. I am not for anybody. I shall not mind if I am one of St. Catherine's maids."

"Jeanne—"

"Go!" She made an imperative motion with her hand.

He walked slowly away. She started like a mad thing and ran through the woods at the top of her speed until her anger had vanished.

"Poor Pierre," she said. "This talk of marriage has set him crazy. But I could never like him, [118] and Madame Mère just hates me."

She went slowly back to Pani and sat down by her side. How tired she looked!

"And I dragged her way up here," she thought remorsefully. "I'm glad she didn't wake up."

So she sat there patiently and let the woman finish her nap. But her beautiful thoughts were gone and her mind was shadowed by something grave and strange that she shrank from. Then Pani stirred.

"O child, I've been sleeping stupidly and you have not gathered a flower—" looking at the empty hands. "Have you been here all the time?"

"No matter. Pani, am I a tyrant dragging you everywhere?" Her voice was touching with regret.

"No, *cherie*. But sometimes I feel old. I've lived a great many years."

"How many?"

"Oh, I cannot count them up. But I am rested now. Shall we walk about a little and get my knees limber? Where is Pierre?"

"He went home. Pani, it is true Marie is to be betrothed to M'sieu Beeson, and married at Christmastide."

"And if the sign holds good Madame De Ber will be fortunate in marrying off her girls, for, if the first hangs on, it is bad for the rest. Rose will be much prettier, and no doubt have lovers in

plenty. But it is not always the prettiest that make the best wives. Marie is sensible. They will have a grand time." [119]

"And I shall not be counted in," the child said proudly.

"Jeanne, little one—" in surprise.

"Madame does not like me because I go to the heretic school. And—I do not sew nor spin, nor sweep the house—"

"There is no need," interrupted Pani.

"No, since I do not mean to have a husband."

And yet—how amusing it was—a boy and a man were ready to quarrel over her. Did ever any little girl have two lovers?

"Ah, little one, smile over it now, but thou wilt change presently when the right bird whistles through the forest."

"I will not come for any man's whistle."

"That is only a saying, dear."

They walked down the hill. Cheerful greetings met them and Pani was loaded with fruit. At the hut of Wenonah, the mistress insisted upon their coming in to supper and Jeanne consented for them both. For, although the bell rang, the gates were no longer closed at six.

Marie De Ber made several efforts to see her friend, but her mother's watchful eye nipped them in the bud. One Friday afternoon they met. Wednesday following was to be the betrothal.

"I wanted to explain—" Marie flushed and hesitated. "There have been many guests asked, and they are mostly older people—"

"Yes, I know. I am only a child, and your mother does not approve. Then I go to the heretic school." [120]

"She thinks the school a bad thing. And about the maids—"

"I could not be one of them," Jeanne said stiffly.

"Mother has chosen them, I had no say. She manages everything. When I have my own home I shall do as I like and invite whom I choose. Mother thinks I do not know anything and have no mind, but, Jeanne, I love you, and I am not afraid of what you learn at school. Monsieur Beeson said it was a good thing. And you will not be angry with me?"

"No, no, Marie." The child's heart was touched.

"We will be friends afterward. I shall tell M'sieu Beeson how long we have cared for each other."

"You—like him?" hesitatingly.

"He is very kind. And girls cannot choose. I wish he were younger, but it will be gay at Christmastide, and my own home will be much to me. Yes, we will wait until then. Jeanne, kiss me for good luck. You are quite sure you are not angry?"

"Oh, very sure."

The two girls kissed each other and Jeanne cried, "Good luck! good luck!" But all the same she felt Marie was going out of her life and it would leave a curious vacancy. [121]

CHAPTER VIII.

A TOUCH OF FRIENDSHIP.

How softly the bells rang out for the service of St. Michael and All Angels! The river flowing so tranquilly seemed to carry on the melody and then bring back a faint echo. It was a great holiday with the French. The early mass was thronged, somehow the virtue seemed greater if one went to that. Then there was a procession that marched to the little chapels outside, which were hardly more than shrines.

Pani went out early and alone. And though the good priest had said to her, "The child is old enough and should be confirmed," since M. Bellestre had some objections and insisted that Jeanne should not be hurried into any sacred promises, and the child herself seemed to have no desire, they waited.

"But you peril the salvation of her soul. Since she has been baptized she should be confirmed," said Father Rameau. "She is a child of the Church. And if she should die!"

"She will not die," said Pani with a strange confidence, "and she is to decide for herself."

"What can a child know!"

"Then if she cannot know she must be blameless. Monsieur Bellestre was a very good man. And, M'sieu, some who come to mass, to their shame be it said, cheat their neighbors and get drunk, and tempt others to drink." [122]

"Most true, but that doesn't lessen our duty."

M. Bellestre had not come yet. This time a long illness had intervened.

Jeanne went out in the procession and sang in the hymns and the rosary. And she heard about the betrothal. The house had been crowded with guests and Marie had on a white frock and a beautiful sash, and her hair was curled.

In spite of her protests Jeanne did feel deeply hurt that she should be left out. Marie had made a timid plea for her friend.

"We cannot ask all the children in the town," said her mother emphatically. "And no one knows whether she has any real position. She is a foundling, and no company for you."

Pani went down the river with her in the afternoon. She was gayety itself, singing little songs and laughing over everything so that she quite misled her nurse into thinking that she really did not care. Then she made Pani tell some old legends of the spirits who haunted the lakes and rivers, and she added to them some she had heard Wenonah relate.

"I should like to live down in some depths, one of the beautiful caves where there are gems and all lovely things," said the child.

"As if there were not lovely things in the forests. There are no birds in the waters. And fishes are not as bright and merry as squirrels."

"That is true enough. I'll stay on the earth a little while longer," laughingly. "But look at the lovely colors. O Pani, how many beautiful things there are! And yet Berthê Campeau is going to Quebec to become a nun and be shut out of it. How can you praise God for things you do not see and cannot enjoy? And is it such a good thing to suffer? Does God rejoice in the pain that he doesn't send and that you take upon yourself? Her poor mother will die and she will not be here to comfort her." [123]

Pani shook her head. The child had queer thoughts.

"Pani, we must go and see Madame Campeau afterward. She will be very lonely. You would not be happy if I went away?"

"O child!" with a quick cry.

"So I am not going. If Monsieur Bellestre wants me he will take you, too."

Pani nodded.

They noted as they went down that a tree growing imprudently near the water's edge had fallen in. There was a little bend in the river, and it really was dangerous. So coming back they gave it a sensibly wide berth.

A canoe with a young man in it came flying up. The sun had gone down and there were purple shadows about like troops of spirits.

"Monsieur," the child cried, "do not hug the shore so much. There is danger."

A gay laugh came back to them and he flashed on, his paddle poised at a most graceful angle.

"O Monsieur!" with eager warning. [124]

The paddle caught. The dainty canoe turned over and floated out of reach with a slight gust of wind.

"Monsieur"—Jeanne came nearer—"it was a fallen tree. It was so dusk I knew you could not see it."

He was swimming toward them. "I wonder if you can help me recover my boat."

"Monsieur, swim in to the shore and I will bring the canoe there." She was afraid to risk taking him in hers. "Just down below to escape the tree."

"Oh, thank you. Yes, that will be best."

His strokes were fine and strong even if he was encumbered by his clothing. Jeanne propelled her canoe along and drove the other in to shore, then caught it with a rope. He emerged from his bath and shook himself.

"You have been very kind. I should have heeded your warning or asked you what it meant. And now—I have lost my paddle."

"I have an extra one, Monsieur."

"You are a godsend certainly. Lend it to me."

He waded out, rescued his canoe and leaped adroitly into it. She was interested in the ease and grace.

"That tree is a dangerous thing," he exclaimed.

"They will remove it, Monsieur. It must have recently fallen in. The tide has washed the ground away."

"It was quite a mishap, but owing to your quick thought I am not much the worse;" and he laughed. "I do not mind a wetting. As for the lost paddle that will break no one's heart. But I shall [125] remember you with gratitude. May I ask your name?"

"It is Jeanne Angelot," she said simply.

"Oh, then I ought to know you—do know you a little. My father is the Sieur St. Armand."

"Oh!" Jeanne gave a little cry of delight.

"And I have a message for you. I was coming to find you to-morrow."

"Monsieur may take cold in his wet clothes, Jeanne. We ought to go a little faster," said Pani. "The air is getting chilly here on the river."

"If you do not mind I will hasten on. And to-morrow I shall be glad to come and thank you again and deliver my message."

"Adieu," responded Jeanne, with a delicious gayety.

He was off like a bird and soon out of sight. Jeanne drew her canoe up to a quiet part of the town, below the gate. The day was ending, as holidays often did, in a sort of carouse. Men were playing on fiddles, crowds of men and boys were dancing. By some flaring light others were playing cards or dominoes. The two threaded their way quickly along, Jeanne with her head and face nearly hidden by the big kerchief that was like a shawl.

"How queer it was, Pani!" and she laughed. Her eyes were like stars in their pleasure. "And to think Monsieur St. Armand has sent me a message! Do you suppose he is in France? I asked the master to show me France—he has a map of these strange countries." [126]

"A map!" gasped Pani, as if it were an evil spirit.

"Why, it is like a picture with lines all about it. This is France. This is Spain. And England, where the English come from. I should think they would—it is such a little place. Ever so many other countries as well. But after all I don't understand about their going round—"

"Come and have some supper."

"We should have seen him anyhow if he had not fallen into the river. And it was funny! If he had heeded what I said—it was lucky we saw the tree as we went down."

"He will give due notice of it, no doubt. The water is so clear that it can easily be seen in the daytime. Otherwise I should feel troubled."

Jeanne nodded with gay affirmation. She was in exuberant spirits, and could hardly eat.

Then they sat out in the doorway, shaded somewhat by the clinging vines. From below there was a sound of music. Up at the Fort the band was playing. There was no moon, but the stars were bright and glittering in strange tints. Now and then a party rather merry with wine and whisky trolled out a noisy stave that had been imported from the mother country years ago about Jacques and his loves and his good wine.

Presently the great bell clanged out. That was a signal for booths to shut, for deerhide curtains to be drawn. Some obstreperous soldiers were marched to the guardhouse. Some drunken revelers crept into a nook beside a storage box or hid in a tangle of vines to sleep until morning. [127]

But in many of the better class houses merriment and gayety went on while the outside decorousness was observed. There was a certain respect paid to law and the new rulers were not so arbitrary as the English had been. Also French prejudices were wearing slowly away while the real characteristics of the race remained.

"I shall not go to school to-day," said Jeanne the next morning. "I will tell the master how it was, and he will pardon me. And I will get two lessons to-morrow, so the children will see that he does not favor me. I think they are sometimes jealous."

She laughed brightly and went dancing about singing whatever sounds entered her mind. Now it was a call of birds, then a sharp high cry, anon a merry whistle that one might fancy came from the woods. She ran out and in, she looked up and down the narrow street with its crooks that had never been smoothed out, and with some houses standing in the very road as it were. Everything was crowded in the business part.

Rose De Ber spied her out and came running up to greet her; tossing her head consequentially.

"We had a gay time last night. I wish you could have peeped in the windows. But you know it was not for children, only grown people. Martin Lavosse danced ever so many times with me, but he moaned about Marie, and I said, 'By the time thou art old enough to marry she will have a

houseful of babies, perhaps she will give you her first daughter,' and he replied, 'I shall not wait that length of time. There are still good fish in the lakes and rivers, but I am sorry to see her wed [128] before she has had a taste of true life and pleasure.' And, Jeanne, I have resolved that mother shall not marry me off to the first comer."

Jeanne nodded approval.

"I do not see what has come over Pierre," she went on. "He was grumpy as a wounded bear last night and only a day or two ago he made such a mistake in reckoning that father beat him. And Monsieur Beeson and mother nearly quarreled over the kind of learning girls should have. He said every one should know how to read and write and figure a little so that she could overlook her husband's affairs if he should be ill. Marie is going to learn to read afterward, and she is greatly pleased."

It was true that ignorance prevailed largely among the common people. The children were taught prayers and parts of the service and catechism orally, since that was all that concerned their souls' salvation, and it kept a wider distinction between the classes. But the jolly, merry Frenchman, used to the tradition of royalty, cared little. His place was at the end of the line and he enjoyed the freedom. He would not have exchanged his rough, comfortable dress for all the satin waistcoats, velvet small clothes and lace ruffles in the world. Like the Indian he had come to love his liberty and the absence of troublesome restrictions.

But the English had brought in new methods, although education with them was only for the few. The colonist from New England made this a specialty. As soon as possible in a new [129] settlement schools were established, but there were other restrictions before them and learning of most kinds had to fight its way.

Jeanne saw her visitor coming up the street just as her patience was almost exhausted. She was struck with a sudden awe at the sight of the well dressed young man.

"Did you think I would not keep my word?" he asked gayly.

"But your father did," she answered gravely.

"Ah, I am afraid I shall never make so fine a man. I have seen no one like him, Mam'selle, though there are many courageous and honorable men in the world. But you know I have not met everybody," laughing and showing white, even teeth between the red lips. "Good day!" to Pani, who invited him in into the room where she had set a chair for him.

"I want to ask your pardon for my rudeness yesterday," bowing to the child and the woman. "Perhaps my handling of the canoe did not impress you with the idea of superior knowledge, but I have been used to it from boyhood, and have shot rapids, been caught in gales, oh, almost everything!"

"It was not that, Monsieur. We had seen the tree with its branches like so many clinging arms, and it was getting purple and dun as you came up, so we thought it best to warn."

"And I obstinately ran right into danger, which shows how much good advice is thrown away. You see the paddle caught and over I went. But the first thing this morning some boatmen went [130] down and removed it. However, I did not mind the wetting. It was not the first time."

"And Monsieur did not take cold? The nights are chilly now along the river's edge. The sun slips down suddenly," was Pani's anxious comment.

"Oh, no. I am inured to such things. I have been a traveler, too. It was a gay day yesterday, Mam'selle."

"Yes," answered Jeanne. Yet she had felt strangely solitary. "Your father, Monsieur, is in France. I have been learning about that country."

"Oh, no, not yet. There was some business in Washington. To-morrow I leave Detroit to rejoin him in New York, from which place we set sail, though the journey is a somewhat dangerous one now, what with pirate ships and England claiming a right of search. But we shall trust a good Providence."

"You go also," she said with a touch of disappointment. It gave a bewitching gravity to her countenance.

"Oh, yes. My father and I are never long apart. We are very fond of each other."

"And your mother—" she asked hesitatingly.

"I do not remember her, for I was an infant when she died. But my father keeps her in mind always. And I must give you his message."

He took out a beautifully embossed leathern case with silver mountings and ran over the letters.

"Ah—here. 'I want you to see my little friend, Jeanne Angelot, and report her progress to me. I [131] hope the school has not frightened her. Tell her there are little girls in other cities and towns who are learning many wonderful things and will some day grow up into charming women such as men like for companions. It will be hard and tiresome, but she must persevere and learn to write

so that she can send me a letter, which I shall prize very highly. Give her my blessing and say she must become a true American and honor the country of which we are all going to feel very proud in years to come. But with all this she must never outgrow her love for her foster mother, to whom I send respect, nor her faith in the good God who watches over and will keep her from all harm if she puts her trust in him.'"

Jeanne gave a long sigh. "O Monsieur, it is wonderful that people can talk this way on paper. I have tried, but the master could not help laughing and I laughed, too. It was like a snail crawling about and the pen would go twenty ways as if there was an evil sprite in my fingers. But I shall keep on although it is very tiresome and I have such a longing to be out in the fields and woods, chasing squirrels and singing to the birds, which sometimes light on my shoulder. And I know a good many English words, but the reading looks so funny, as if there were no sense to it!"

"But there is a great deal. You will be very glad some day. Then I may take a good account to him and tell him you are trying to obey his wishes?" [132]

"Yes, Monsieur, I shall be very glad to. And he will write me the letter that he promised?"

"Indeed he will. He always keeps his promises. And I shall tell him you are happy and glad as a bird soaring through the air?"

"Not always glad. Sometimes a big shadow falls over me and my breath throbs in my throat. I cannot tell what makes the strange feeling. It does not come often, and perhaps when I have learned more it will vanish, for then I can read books and have something for my thoughts. But I am glad a good deal of the time."

"I don't wonder my father was interested in her," Laurent St. Armand thought. He studied the beautiful eyes with their frank innocence, the dainty mouth and chin, the proud, uplifted expression that indicated nobleness and no self-consciousness.

"And now I must bid thee good-by with my own and my father's blessing. We shall return to America and find you again. You will hardly go away from Detroit?"

She was quite ready at that moment to give up M. Bellestre's plans for her future.

He took her hand. Then he pressed his lips upon it with the grave courtesy of a gentleman.

"Adieu," he said softly. "Pani, watch well over her."

The woman bowed her head with a deeper feeling than mere assent.

Jeanne sat down on the doorstep, leaning her elbow on her knee and her chin in her hand. Grave thoughts were stirring within her, the awakening of a new life on the side she had seen, [133] but never known. The beautiful young women quite different from the gay, chattering demoiselles, their proudly held heads, their dignity, their soft voices, their air of elegance and refinement, all this Jeanne Angelot felt but could not have put into words, not even into thought. And this young man was over on that side. Oh, all Detroit must lie between, from the river out to the farms! Could she ever cross the great gulf? What was it made the difference—education? Then she would study more assiduously than ever. Was this why Monsieur St. Armand was so earnest about her trying?

She glanced down at her little brown hand. Oh, how soft and warm his lips had been, what a gentle touch! She pressed her own lips to it, and a delicious sensation sped through her small body.

"What art thou dreaming about, Jeanne? Come to thy dinner."

She glanced up with a smile. In a vague way she had known before there were many things Pani could not understand; now she felt the keen, far-reaching difference between them, between her and the De Bers, and Louis Marsac, and all the people she had ever known. But her mother, who could tell most about her, was dead.

It was not possible for a glad young thing to keep in a strained mood that would have no answering comprehension, and Jeanne's love of nature was so overwhelming. Then the autumn at the West was so glowing, so full of richness that it stirred her immeasurably. She could hardly [134] endure the confinement on some days.

"What makes you so restless?" asked the master one noon when he was dismissing some scholars kept in until their slow wits had mastered their tasks. She, too, had been inattentive and willful.

"I am part of the woods to-day, a chipmunk running about, a cricket which dares not chirp," and she glanced up into the stern eyes with a merry light, "a grasshopper who takes long strides, a bee who goes buzzing, a glad, gay bird who says to his mate, 'Come, let us go to the unknown land and spend a winter in idleness, with no nest to build, no hungry, crying babies to feed, nothing but just to swing in the trees and laugh with the sunshine.'"

"Thou art a queer child. Come, say thy lesson well and we will spend the whole afternoon in the woods. Thou shalt consort with thy brethren the birds, for thou art brimming over."

The others were dismissed with some added punishment. The master took out his luncheon. He was not overpaid, he had no family and lived by himself, sleeping in the loft over the school.

"Oh, come home with me!" the child cried. "Pani's cakes of maize are so good, and no one cooks fish with such a taste and smell. It would make one rise in the middle of the night."

"Will the tall Indian woman give me a welcome?"

"Oh, Pani likes whomever I like;" with gay assurance. [135]

"And dost thou like me, child?"

"Yes, yes." She caught his hand in both of hers. "Sometimes you are cross and make ugly frowns, and often I pity the poor children you beat, but I know, too, they deserve it. And you speak so sharp! I used to jump when I heard it, but now I only give a little start, and sometimes just smile within, lest the children should see it and be worse. It is a queer little laugh that runs down inside of one. Come, Pani will be waiting."

She took his hand as they picked their way through the narrow streets, having to turn out now and then for a loaded wheelbarrow, or two men carrying a big plank on their shoulders, or a heavy burthen, one at each end. For there were some streets not even a wagon and two horses could get through.

To the master's surprise Pani did not even seem put out as Jeanne explained the waiting. Had fish toasted before the coals ever tasted so good? The sagamite he had learned to tolerate, but the maize cakes were so excellent it seemed as if he could never get enough of them.

The golden October sun lay warm everywhere and was tinting the hills and forests with richness that glowed and glinted as if full of life. Afar, one could see the shine of the river, the distant lake, the undulations where the tall trees did not cut it off. Crows were chattering and scolding. A great flock of wild geese passed over with their hoarse, mysterious cry, and shaped like two immense wings each side of their leader. [136]

"Now you shall tell me about the other countries where you have been," and Jeanne dropped on the soft turf, motioning him to be seated.

In all his journeying through the eastern part of the now United Colonies, he thought he had never seen a fairer sight than this. It warmed and cheered his old heart. And sure he had never had a more enraptured listener.

But in a brief while the glory of wood and field was gone. The shriveled leaves were blown from the trees by the fierce gusts. The beeches stood like bare, trembling ghosts, the pines and firs with their rough dark tops were like great Indian wigwams and were enough to terrify the beholder. Sharp, shrill cries at night of fox and wolf, the rustle of the deer and the slow, clumsy tread of the bear, the parties of Indians drawing nearer civilization, braves who had roamed all summer in idleness returning to patient squaws, told of the approach of winter.

New pickets were set about barns and houses, and coverings of skin made added warmth. The small flocks were carefully sheltered from marauding Indians. Doors and windows were hung with curtains of deer skins, floors were covered with buffalo or bear hide, and winter garments were brought out. Even inside the palisade one could see a great change in apparel and adornment. The booths were no longer invitingly open, but here and there were inns and places of evening resort where the air was not only enough to stifle one, but so blue with smoke you could hardly see your neighbor's face. No merry parties sang songs upon the river nor went up to [137] the lake in picnic fashion.

Still there was no lack of hearty good cheer. On the farms one and another gave a dance to celebrate some special occasion. There was husking corn and shelling it, there were meats and fish to be salted, some of it dried, for now the inhabitants within and without knew that winter was long and cold.

They had sincerely mourned General Wayne. A new commandant had been sent, but the general government was poor and deeply in debt and there were many vexed questions to settle. So old Detroit changed very little under the new régime. There was some delightful social life around the older or, rather, more aristocratic part of the town, where several titled English people still remained. Fortnightly balls were given, dinners, small social dances, for in that time dancing was the amusement of the young as card playing was of the older ones.

Then came days of whirling, blinding snow when one could hardly stir out, succeeded by sunshine of such brilliance that Detroit seemed a dazzle of gems. Parties had merry games of snowballing, there were sledging, swift traveling on skates and snowshoes, and if the days were short the long evenings were full of good cheer, though many a gruesome story was told of Pontiac's time, and the many evil times before that, and of the heroic explorers and the brave fathers who had gone to plant the cross and the lilies of France in the wilderness.

Jeanne wondered that she should care so little for the defection of the De Bers. Pierre passed [138] her with a sullen nod when he met her face to face and sometimes did not notice her at all. Marie was very important when she recovered from the surprise that a man should want to marry her, and that she should be the first of Delisse Graumont's maids to marry, she who was the youngest of them all.

"I had a beau in my cup at the tea drinking, and he was holding out his hand, which was a sign that he would come soon. And, Rose, I mean to have a tea drinking. I hope you will get the beau."

"I am in no hurry," and Rose tossed her pretty head.

Marie and her mother went down to the Beeson house to see what plenishings were needed. It was below the inclosure, quite a farm, in the new part running down to the river, where there was a dock and a rough sort of basin, quite a boat yard, for Antoine Beeson had not yet aspired to anything very grand in ship building. They pulled out the great fur rugs and hangings and put the one up and the other down, and Antoine coming in was so delighted with the homelikeness that he caught his betrothed about the waist and whirled her round and round.

"Really, I think some day I shall learn to dance," and he gave his broad, hearty laugh that Marie had grown quite accustomed to.

Madame De Ber looked amazed and severe. [139]

CHAPTER IX.

CHRISTMAS AND A CONFESSION.

Ah, how the bells rang out on Christmas morning! A soft, muffled sound coming through the roofs of white snow that looked like peaked army tents, the old Latin melody that had rejoiced many a heart and carried the good news round the world.

It was still dark when Jeanne heard Pani stirring, and she sprang out of bed.

"I am going to church with you, Pani," she declared in a tone that left no demur.

"Ah, child, if thou hadst listened to the good father and been confirmed, then thou mightst have partaken of the mass."

Jeanne almost wished she had. But the schoolmaster had strengthened her opposition, or rather her dread, a little, quite unknowingly, and yet he had given her more reverence and a longing for real faith.

"But I shall be thinking of the shepherds and the glad tidings. I watched the stars last night, they were so beautiful. 'And they came and stood over the place,' the schoolmaster read it to me. That was way over the other side of the world, Pani."

The Indian woman shook her head. She was afraid of this strange knowledge, and she had a vague idea that it must have happened here in Detroit, since the Christ was born anew every year. [140]

The stars were not all gone out of the sky. The crisp snow crunched under their feet, although the moccasins were soft and warm; and everybody was muffled in furs, even to hoods and pointed caps. Some people were carrying lanterns, but they could find their way, straight along St. Anne's street. The bell kept on until they stood in the church porch.

"Thou wilt sit here, child."

Jeanne made no protest. She rather liked being hidden here in the darkness.

There were the De Bers, then Marie and her lover, then Rose and Pierre. How much did dull Pierre believe and understand? The master's faith seemed simpler to her.

A little later was the regular Christmas service with the altar decked in white and gold and the two fathers in their beautiful robes of rejoicing, the candlesticks that had been sent from France a century before, burnished to their brightest and the candles lighted. Behind the screen the sisters and the children sang hymns, and some in the congregation joined, though the men were much more at home in the music of the violins and in the jollity.

Jeanne felt strangely serious, and half wished she was among the children. It was the fear of having to become a nun that deterred her. She could not understand how Berthê Campeau could leave her ailing mother and go to Montreal for religion's sake. Madame Campeau was not able to stand the journey even if she had wanted to go, but she and her sister had had some differences, and, since Berthê would go, her son's wife had kindly offered to care for her. [141]

"And what there is left thou shalt have, Catherine," she said to her daughter-in-law. "None of my money shall go to Montreal. It would be only such a little while for Berthê to wait. I cannot last long."

So she had said for three years and Berthê had grown tired of waiting. Her imagination fed on the life of devotion and exaltation that her aunt wrote about.

At noon Marie De Ber was married. She shivered a little in her white gown, for the church was cold. Her veil fell all over her and no one could see whether her face was joyful or not. Truth to tell, she was sadly frightened, but everybody was merry, and her husband wrapped her in a fur cloak and packed her in his sledge. A procession followed, most of them on foot, for there was to be a great dinner at Tony Beeson's.

Then, although the morning had been so lovely, the sky clouded over with leaden gray and the wind came in great sullen gusts from Lake Huron. You could hear it miles away, a fierce roar such as the droves of bisons made, as if they were breaking in at your very door. Pani hung the bearskin against the door and let down the fur curtains over the windows. There was a bright log fire and Jeanne curled up on one side in a wolfskin, resting her head on a cushion of cedar twigs that gave out a pleasant fragrance. Pani sat quietly on the other side. There was no light but the blaze. Neither was the Indian woman used to the small industries some of the French took up [142] when they had passed girlhood. In a slow, phlegmatic fashion she used to go over her past life, raising up from their graves, as it were, Madame de Longueil, Madame Bellestre, and then Monsieur, though he never came from the shadowy grave, but a garden that bore strange fruit, and where it was summer all the year round. She had the gift of obedient faith, so she was a good Catholic, as far as her own soul was concerned, but her duty toward the child often troubled her.

Jeanne watched the blaze in a strange mood, her heart hot and angry at one moment, proud and indifferent at the next. She said a dozen times a day to herself that she didn't care a dead leaf for Marie, who had grown so consequential and haughty, and Rose, who was full of her own pleasure. It seemed as if other children had dropped out as well, but then in this cold weather she could not run out to the farms or lead a group of eager young people to see her do amazing feats. For she could walk out on the limb of a tree and laugh while it swung up and down with her weight, and then catch the limb of the next tree and fling herself over, amid their shouts. No boy dared climb higher. She had caught little owls who blinked at her with yellow eyes, but she always put them back in the trees again.

"You wouldn't like to be carried away by fierce Indians," she said when the children begged they might keep them. "They like their homes and their mothers." [143]

"As if an owl could tell who its mother was!" laughed a boy disdainfully.

She had hardly known the feeling of loneliness. What did she do last winter, she wondered? O yes, she played with the De Ber children, and there were the Pallents, whom she seldom went to visit now, they seemed so very ignorant. Ah—if it would come summer again!

"For the trees and the flowers and the birds are better than most people," she ruminated. It must be because everybody had gone out of her life that it appeared wide and strange. After all she did not care for the De Bers and yet it seemed as if she had been stabbed to the heart. Pierre and Marie had pretended to care so much for her. Then, in spite of her sadness, she laughed.

"What is it amuses thee so, little one?" asked the Indian woman.

"I am not old enough to have a lover, Pani, am I?" and she looked out of her furry wrap.

"No, child, no. What folly! Marie's wedding has set thee astray."

"And Pierre is a slow, stupid fellow."

"Pierre would be no match for thee, and I doubt if the De Bers would countenance such a thing if he were older. That is nonsense."

"Pierre asked me to be his wife. He said twice that he wanted to marry me—at the raising of the flag, when we were on the water, and one Sunday in the autumn. I am not as old as Rose De Ber, even, so Marie need not feel set upon a pinnacle because Tony Beeson marries her when she [144] is barely fifteen."

"Jeanne!" Pani's tone was horror stricken. "And it will make no end of trouble. Madame De Ber is none too pleasant now."

"It will make no trouble. I said 'no' and 'no' and 'no,' until it was like this mighty wind rushing through the forest, and he was very angry. So I should not go to the De Bers any more. And, Pani, if I had a father who would make me marry him when I was older, I should go and throw myself into the Strait."

"His father sends him up in the fur country in the spring."

"What makes people run crazy when weddings are talked of? But if I wanted to hold my head high and boast—"

"Oh, child, you could not be so silly!"

"No, Pani. And I shall be glad to have him go away. I do not want any lovers."

The woman was utterly amazed, and then consoled herself with the thought that it was merely child's play. They both lapsed into silence again. But Jeanne's thoughts ran on. There was Louis Marsac. What if he returned next summer and tormented her? A perplexing mood, half pride, half disgust, filled her, and a serious elation at her own power which thrills young feminine things when they first discover it; as well as the shrinking into a new self-appropriation that thrusts out all such matters. But she did not laugh over Louis Marsac. She felt afraid of him, and she [145] scrubbed her mouth where he had once kissed it.

There was another kiss on her hand. She held it up in the firelight. Ah, if she had a father like M. St. Armand, and a brother like the young man!

She was seized with an awful pang as if a swift, dark current was bearing her away from every

one but Pani. Why had her father and mother been wrenched out of her life? She had seen a plant or a young shrub swept out of its rightful place and tossed to and fro until some stronger wave threw it upon the sandy edge, to droop and die. Was she like that? Where had she been torn from? She had been thrown into Pani's lap. She had never minded the little jeers before when the children had called her a wild Indian. Was she nobody's child?

She had an impulse to jump about and storm around the room, to drag some secret out of Pani, to grasp the world in her small hands and compel it to disclose its knowledge. She looked steadily into the red fire and her heart seemed bursting with the breath that could not find an outlet.

The bells began to ring again. "Come," "come," they said. Had she better not go to the sisters and live with them? The Church would be father and mother.

She bent down her head and cried very softly, for it seemed as if all joy had gone out of her life. Pani fell asleep and snored.

But the next morning the world was lovelier than ever with the new fallen snow. Men were shoveling it away from doorways and stamping it down in the streets with their great boots, the [146] soles being wooden and the legs of fur. And they snowballed each other. The children joined and rolled in the snow. Now and then a daring young fellow caught a demoiselle and rubbed roses into her cheeks.

All the rest of the week was given over to holiday life. There were great doings at the Citadel and in some of the grand houses. There were dances and dinners, and weddings so brilliant that Marie De Ber's was only a little rushlight in comparison.

The master went down to Marietta for a visit. Jeanne seemed like a pendulum swinging this way and that. She was lonely and miserable. One day the Church seemed a refuge, the next she shrank with a sort of terror and longed for spring, as a drowning man longs for everything that promises succor.

One morning Monsieur Loisel, the notary, came in with a grave and solemn mien.

"I have news for thee, Pani and Mam'selle, a great word of sorrow, and it grieves me to be the bearer of it. Yet the good Lord has a right to his own, for I cannot doubt but that Madame Bellestre's intercession has been of some avail. And Monsieur Bellestre was an upright, honorable, kindly man."

"Monsieur Bellestre is dead," said Pani with the shock of a sudden revelation.

Jeanne stood motionless. Then he could never come back! And, oh, what if Monsieur St. Armand never came back!

"Yes. Heaven rest his soul, say I, and so does the good Father Rameau. For his gift to the [147] Church seems an act of faith."

"And Jeanne?" inquired the woman tremblingly.

"It is about the child I have come to talk. Monsieur Bellestre has made some provision for her, queerly worded, too."

"Oh, he does not take her away from me!" cried the foster mother in anguish.

"No. He had some strange notions not in accord with the Church, we all know, that liberty to follow one's opinion is a good thing. It is not always so in worldly affairs even, but of late years it has come largely in vogue in religious matters. And here is the part of his will that pertains to her. You would not understand the preamble, so I will tell it in plain words. To you, Pani, is given the house and a sum of money each year. To the child is left a yearly portion until she is sixteen, then, if she becomes a Catholic and chooses the lot of a sister, it ceases. Otherwise it is continued until she is married, when she is given a sum for a dowry. And at your death your income reverts to the Bellestre estate."

"Monsieur Bellestre did not want me to become a nun, then?"

Jeanne asked the question gravely as a woman.

"It seems not, Mam'selle. He thinks some one may come to claim you, but that is hardly probable after all these years;" and there was a dryness in the notary's tone. "You are to be educated, but I think the sisters know better what is needful for a girl. There are no restrictions, however. I am to see that the will is carried out, and the new court is to appoint what is called a [148] guardian. The money is to be sent to me every six months. It surely is a great shame Mam'selle has no male relatives."

"Shall we have to change, Monsieur?" asked Pani with a dread in her voice.

"Oh, no; unless Mam'selle should—" he looked questioningly at the girl.

"I shall never leave Pani." She came and stretching up clasped her arms about the woman's neck as she had in her babyhood. "And I like to go to school to the master."

"M. Bellestre counts this way, that you were three years old when you came to Detroit. That was nine years ago. And that you are twelve now. So there are four years—"

"It looks a long while, but the past does not seem so. Why, last winter is like the turn of your hand," and she turned hers over with a smile.

"Many things may happen in four years." No doubt she would have a lover and marry. "Let me go over it again."

They both listened, Jeanne wide-eyed, Pani nodding her head slowly.

"I must tell you that M. Bellestre left fifty pounds to Father Rameau for any purpose he considered best. And now the court will take it in hand, but these new American courts are all in confusion and very slow. Still, as there is to be no change, and the money will come through me as before, why, there will be no trouble." [149]

Pani nodded again but made no comment. She could hardly settle her mind to the fact of Monsieur Bellestre's death.

"Allow me to congratulate you, Mam'selle, on having so sincere a friend." M. Loisel held out his hand.

"If he had but come back! I do not care for the money."

"Still, money is a very good thing. Well, we will have several more talks about this. Adieu, Mam'selle. My business is ended at present."

He bowed politely as he went out; but he thought, "It is a crazy thing leaving her to the care of that old Indian woman. Surely he could not have distrusted Father Rameau? And though the good father is quite sure—well, it does not do for anyone to be too sure in this world."

Father Rameau came that very afternoon and had a long talk with Pani. He did not quite understand why M. Bellestre should be so opposed to the Church taking charge of the child, since she was not in the hands of any relative. But he had promised Pani she should not be separated from her, indeed, no one had a better right to her, he felt.

M. Bellestre's family were strong Huguenots, and had been made to suffer severely for their faith in Old France, and not a little in the new country. He had not cordially loved the English, but he felt that the larger liberty had been better for the settlement, and that education was the foe to superstition and bigotry, as well as ignorance. While he admitted to himself, and frankly to [150] the town, the many excellencies of the priest, it was the system, that held the people in bondage and denied enlightenment, that he protested against. It was with great pain that he had discovered his wife's gradual absorption, but knowing death was at hand he could not deny her last request. But the child should choose for herself, and, if under Pani's influence she should become a Catholic, he would not demur. From time to time he had accounts from M. Loisel, and he had been pleased with the desire of the child for education. She should have that satisfaction.

And now spring was coming again. The sense of freedom and rejoicing broke out anew in Jeanne, but she found herself restrained by some curious power that was finer than mere propriety. She was growing older and knowledge enlarged her thoughts and feelings, stirred a strange something within her that was ambition, though she knew it not; she had not grown accustomed to the names of qualities.

The master was taking great pride in her, and gave her the few advantages within his reach. Detroit was being slowly remodeled, but it was discouraging work, since the French settlers were satisfied with their own ways, and looked with suspicion on improvements even in many simple devices for farming.

With the fur season the town was in wild confusion and holiday jollity prevailed. There were Indians with packs; and the old race of the *coureurs des bois*, who were still picturesque with their red sashes and jaunty habiliments. They were wild men of the woods, who had thrown off [151] the restraints of civilized life and who hunted as much for the pleasure as the profit. They could live in a wigwam, they could join Indian dances, they were brave, hardy, but in some instances savage as the Indians themselves and quite as lawless. A century ago they had been the pioneers of the fur hunters, with many a courageous explorer among them. The newer organizations of the fur companies had curtailed their power and their numbers had dwindled, but they kept up their wild habits, and this was the carouse of the whole year.

It was a busy season. There was great chaffering, disputing, and not a few fights, though guards were detailed along the river front to keep the peace as far as was possible. Boats were being loaded for Montreal, cargoes to be shipped down the Hudson and from thence abroad, with mink and otter and beaver, beautiful fox furs, white wolf and occasionally a white bear skin that dealers would quarrel about.

Then the stores of provisions to be sent back to the trappers and hunters, the clothes and blankets and trinkets for the Indians, kept shopkeepers busy day and night, and poured money into their coffers. New men were going out,—to an adventurous young fellow this seemed the great opportunity of his life.

Jeanne Angelot's fortune had been noised abroad somewhat, though she paid little attention to it even in her thoughts. But she was a girl with a dowry now, and she was not only growing tall but strangely pretty as well. Her skin was fairer, her hair, which still fell in loose curls, was kept [152] in better order. Coif she would not wear, but sometimes she tied a bright kerchief under her chin

and looked bewitching.

French mothers of sons were never averse to a dowry, although men were so in want of wives that few went begging for husbands. Women paused to chat with Pani and make kindly inquiries about her charge. Even Madame De Ber softened. She was opposed to Pierre's going north with the hunters, but he was so eager and his father considered it a good thing. And now he was a strapping big fellow, taller than his father, slowly shaping up into manhood.

"Thou hast not been to visit Marie?" she said one day on meeting Jeanne face to face. "She has spoken of it. Last year you were such a child, but now you have quite grown and will be companionable. All the girls have visited her. Her husband is most excellent."

"I have been busy with lessons," said Jeanne with some embarrassment. Then, with a little pride—"Marie dropped me, and if I were not to be welcome—"

"Chut! chut! Marie had to put on a little dignity. A child like you should bear no malice."

"But—she sent me no invitation."

"Then I must chide her. And it will be pleasant down there in the summer. Do you know that Pierre goes back with the hunters?"

"I have heard—yes."

"It is not my wish, but if he can make money in his youth so much the better. And the others are growing up to fill his place. Good day to thee, Jeanne." [153]

That noon Madame De Ber said to her husband, "Jeanne Angelot improves greatly. Perhaps the school will do her no harm. She is rather sharp with her replies, but she always had a saucy tongue. A girl needs a mother to correct her, and Pani spoils her."

"She will have quite a dowry, I have heard," remarked her husband.

Pierre flushed a little at this pleasant mention of her name. If Jeanne only walked down in the town like some of the girls! If Rose might ask her to go!

But Rose did not dare, and then there was Martin ready to waylay her. Three were awkward when you liked best to have a young man to yourself.

How many times Pierre had watched her unseen, her lithe figure that seemed always atilt even when wrapped in furs, and her starry eyes gleaming out of her fur hood. Not even Rose could compare with her in that curious daintiness, though Pierre would have been at loss to describe it, since his vocabulary was limited, but he felt it in every slow beating pulse. He had resolved to speak, but she never gave him the opportunity. She flashed by him as if she had never known him.

But he must say good-by to her. There was Madelon Dace, who had quarreled with her lover and gone to a dance with some one else and held her head high, never looking to the right or the left, and then as suddenly melted into sweetness and they would be married. Yet Madelon had [154] said to his sister Marie, "I will never speak to him, never!" What had he done to offend Jeanne so deeply? Girls were not usually angered at a man falling in love with them.

So Pierre's pack was made up. In the autumn they could send again. He took tea the last time with Marie. The boats were all ready to start up the Huron.

He went boldly to the little cottage and said courageously to Pani, though his heart seemed to quake almost down to his feet, "I am going away at noon. I have come to say good-by to Jeanne—and to you," put in as an afterthought.

"What a great fellow you are, Pierre! I wish you good luck. Jeanne—"

Jeanne had almost forgotten her childish anger, and the love making was silly, even in remembrance.

"Surely I wish thee good luck, Pierre," she said formally, with a smile not too warm about her rosy lips. "And a fortunate hunting and trading."

"A safe return, Mam'selle, put that in," he pleaded.

"A safe return."

Then they shook hands and he went his way, thinking with great comfort that she had not flouted him.

It was quite a great thing to see the boats go out. Sweethearts and wives congregated on the wharves. Some few brave women went with their husbands. Other ships were setting out for Montreal well loaded, and one or two were carrying a gay lot of passengers.

After a few weeks, quiet returned, the streets were no longer crowded and the noisy reveling [155] was over for a while. The farmers were busy out of doors, cattle were lowing, chanticleer rang out his call to work in the early morn, and busy hens were caroling in cheerful if unmusical voices. Trees budded into a beautiful haze and then sprang into leaf, into bloom. The rough social hilarity was over for a while.

A few of the emigrant farmers laughed at the clumsy, wasteful French methods and tried their own, which were laughed at in turn, but there was little disputing.

Easter had fallen early and it had been cold, but Whitsuntide made amends, and was, if anything, a greater festival. For a procession formed at St. Anne's, young girls in gala attire, smart, middle-aged women with new caps and kerchiefs, husbands and sons, and not a few children, and marched out of the Pontiac gate, as it was called in remembrance of the long siege. Forty years before Jacques Campeau had built the first little outside chapel on his farm, which had a great stretch of ground. The air was full of the fragrance of fruit blossoms and hardly needed incense. Ah, how beautiful it was in a sort of pastoral simplicity! And after saying mass, Father Frechette blessed and prayed for fertile fields and good crops and generous hearts that tithes might not be withheld, and the faithful rewarded. Then they went to the Fulcher farm, where, in a chapel not much more than a shrine, the service was again said with the people kneeling around in the grass. The farmers and good housewives placed more faith in this than in [156] the methods of the newcomers with their American wisdom. But it was a pleasing service. The procession changed about a little,—the young men walking with the demoiselles and whispering in their listening ears.

Jeanne was with them. Madame De Ber was quite gracious, and Marie Beeson singled her out. It had been a cold winter and a backward spring and Marie had not gone anywhere. Tony was so exigent, and she laughed and bridled. It was a very happy thing to be married and have some one care for you. And soon she would give a tea drinking and she would send for Jeanne, who must be sure to come.

But Jeanne had a strange, dreary feeling. She seemed between everything, no longer a child and not a woman, not a part of the Church, not a part of anything. She felt afraid of the future. Oh, what was her share of the bright, beautiful world? [157]

CHAPTER X.

BLOOMS OF THE MAY.

The spring came in with a quickening glory. A fortnight ago the snow was everywhere, the skaters were still out on the streams, the young fellows having rough snowballing matches, then suddenly one morning the white blanket turned a faint, sickly, soft gray, and withered. The pallid skies grew blue, the brown earth showed in patches, there were cheerful sounds from the long-housed animals, rivulets were all afloat running in haste to swell the streams, and from thence to the river and the lakes.

The tiny rings of fir and juniper brightened, the pine branches swelled with great furry buds, bursting open into pale green tassels that moved with every breath of wind. The hemlocks shot out feathery fronds, the spruce spikes of bluish green, the maples shook around red blossoms and then uncurled tiny leaves. The hickories budded in a strange, pale yellow, but the oaks stood sturdy with some of the winter's brown leaves clinging to them.

The long farms outside the stockade awoke to new vigor as well. Everybody set to work, for the summer heats would soon be upon them, and the season was short. There was a stir in the town proper, as well.

And now, at mid-May, when some of the crops were in, there was a day of merrymaking, [158] beginning with a procession and a blessing of the fields, and then the fiddles were taken down, for the hard work lasting well into the evening made both men and women tired enough to go to bed early, when their morning began in the twilight.

The orchards were abloom and sweetened all the air. The evergreens sent out a resinous, pungent fragrance, the grass was odorous with the night dews. The maypole was raised anew, for generally the winter winds blowing fiercely over from the great western lake demolished it, though they always let it stand as long as it would, and in the autumn again danced about it. It had been the old French symbol of welcome and good wishes to their Seigneurs, as well as to the spring. And now it was a legend of past things and a merrymaking.

The pole had bunches of flowers tied here and there, and long streamers that it was fun to jerk from some one's hand and let the wind blow them away. Girls and youths did this to rivals, with mischievous laughter.

The habitans were in their holiday garb, which had hardly changed for two hundred years except when it was put by for winter furs, clean blue tunics, scarlet caps and sashes, deerskin breeches trimmed with yellow or brown fringe, sometimes both, leggings and moccasins with bead embroidery and brightly dyed threads.

There were shopkeepers, too, there were boatmen and Indians, and some of the quality with their wives in satin and lace and gay brocades. Soldiers as well in their military gear, and officers [159] in buff and blue with cocked hats and pompons.

The French girls had put on their holiday attire and some had festooned a light skirt over one

of cloth and placed in it a bright bow. Gowns that were family heirlooms, never seeing day except on some festive occasion, strings of beads, belts studded with wampum shells, high-heeled shoes with a great buckle or bow, but not as easy to dance in as moccasins.

Two years had brought more changes to the individual, or rather the younger part of the community, than to the town. A few new houses had been built, many old ones repaired and enlarged a little. The streets were still narrow and many of them winding about. The greatest signs of life were at the river's edge. The newer American emigrant came for land and secured it outside. Every week some of the better class English who were not in the fur trade went to Quebec or Montreal to be under their own rulers.

There was not an entire feeling of security. Since Pontiac there had been no great Indian leader, but many subordinate chiefs who were very sore over the treaties. There was an Indian prophet, twin brother to the chief Tecumseh who afterward led his people to a bloody war, who used his rude eloquence to unite the warring tribes in one nation by wild visions he foresaw of their greatness.

Marauding tribes still harassed parties of travelers, but about Detroit they were peaceable; and many joined in the festivities of a day like this. While as farm laborers they were of little worth, they were often useful at the wharves, and as boatmen. [160]

Two years had brought a strange, new life to Jeanne, so imperceptibly that she was now a puzzle to herself. The child had disappeared, the growing girl she hardly knew. The wild feats that had once been the admiration of the children pleased her no longer. The children had grown as well. The boys tilled the fields with their fathers, worked in shops or on the docks, or were employed about the Fort. Some few, smitten with military ardor, were in training for future soldiers. The field for girls had grown wider. Beside the household employments there were spinning and sewing. The Indian women had made a coarse kind of lace worked with beads that the French maidens improved upon and disposed of to the better class. Or the more hoydenish ones delighted to work in the fields with their brothers, enjoying the outdoor life.

For a year Jeanne had kept on with her master, though at spring a wild impulse of liberty threatened to sweep her from her moorings.

"Why do I feel so?" she inquired almost fiercely of the master. "Something stifles me! Then I wish I had been made a bird to fly up and up until I had left the earth. Oh, what glorious thing is in the bird's mind when he can look into the very heavens, soaring out of sight?"

"There is nothing in the bird's mind, except to find a mate, build a nest and rear some young; to feed them until they can care for themselves, and, though there is much romance about the mother bird, they are always eager to get rid of their offspring. He sings because God has given him a song, his language. But he has no thought of heaven." [161]

"Oh, he must have!" she cried passionately.

The master studied her.

"Art thou ready to die, to go out of the world, to be put into the dark ground?"

"Oh, no! no!" Jeanne shuddered. "It is because I like to live, to breathe the sweet air, to run over the grass, to linger about the woods and hear all the voices. The pines have one tone, the hemlocks and spruces another, and the soft swish of the larches is like the last tender notes of some of the hymns I sing with the sisters occasionally. And the sun is so glorious! He clasps the baby leaves in his unseen hands and they grow, and he makes the blades of grass to dance for very joy. I catch him in my hands, too; I steep my face in the floods of golden light and all the air is full of stars. Oh, no, I would not, could not die! I would like to live forever. Even Pani is in no haste to die."

"Thou art a strange child, surely. I have read of some such in books. And I wonder that the heaven of the nuns does not take more hold of thee."

"But I do not like the black gowns, and the coifs so close over their ears, and the little rooms in which one is buried alive. For it seems like dying before one's time, like being half dead in a gay, glad world. Did not God give it to us to enjoy?" [162]

The master nodded. He wondered when she was in these strange moods. And he noticed that the mad pranks grew less, that there were days when she studied like a soul possessed, and paid little heed to those about her.

But when a foreign letter with a great waxen seal came to her one day her delight knew no bounds. It was not a noisy joy, however.

"Let us go out under the oak," she said to Pani.

The children were playing about. Wenonah looked up from her work and smiled.

"No, children," said Jeanne with a wave of the hand, "I cannot have you now. You may come to-morrow. This afternoon is all mine."

It was a pleasant, grave, fatherly letter. M. St. Armand had found much to do, and presently he would go to England. Laurent was at a school where he should leave him for a year.

"Listen," said Jeanne when they were both seated on the short turf that was half moss, "a grown man at school—is it not funny?" and she laughed gayly.

"But there are young men sent to Quebec and Montreal, and to that southern town, New York. And young women, too. But I hope thou wilt know enough, Jeanne, without all this journeying."

Pani studied her with great perplexity.

"But he wants me to know many things—as if I were a rich girl! I know my English quite well and can read in it. And, Pani, how wonderful that a letter can talk as if one were beside you!" [163]

She read it over and over. Some words she wondered at. The great city with its handsome churches and gardens and walks and palaces, how beautiful it must be! It was remarkable that she had no longing, envious feeling. She was so full of delight there was no room.

They sat still a long while. She patted the thin, brown hand, then laid her soft cheek on it or made a cradle of it for her chin.

"Pani," she said at length, "how splendid it would be to have M. St. Armand for one's father! I have never cared for any girl's father, but M. St. Armand would be gentle and kind. I think, too, he could smooth away all the sort of cobweb things that haunt one's brain and the thoughts you cannot make take any shape but go floating like drifts in the sky, until you are lost in the clouds."

Pani looked over toward the river. Like the master, the child's strange thoughts puzzled her, but she was afraid they were wrong. The master wished that she could be translated to some wider living.

It took Jeanne several days to answer her letter, but every hour was one of exultant joy. It gave her hardly less delight than the reception of his. Then it was to be sent to New York by Monsieur Fleury, who had dealings back and forth.

There had been a great wedding at the Fleury house. Madelon had married a titled French gentleman and gone to Montreal.

"Oh!" cried Jeanne to Monsieur Fleury, "you will be very careful and not let it get lost. I took so much pains with it. And when it gets to New York—" [164]

"A ship takes it to France. See, child, there is all this bundle to go, and there are many valuable papers in it. Do not fear;" and he smiled. "But what has M. St. Armand to say to you?"

"Oh, many things about what I should learn. I have already studied much that he asked me to, and he will be very glad to hear that."

M. Fleury smiled indulgently, and Jeanne with a proud step went down the paved walk bordered with flowers, a great innovation for that time. But his wife voiced his thoughts when she said:—

"Do you not think it rather foolish that Monsieur St. Armand should trouble his head about a child like that? No one knows to what sort of people she has belonged. And she will marry some habitan who cares little whether she can write a letter or not."

"She will have quite a dowry. She ought to marry well. A little learning will not hurt her."

"M. Bellestre must have known more than he confessed," with suspicion in her voice.

M. Fleury nodded assentingly.

Jeanne had been quite taken into Madame De Ber's good graces again. The money had worked wonders with her, only she did not see the need of it being spent upon an education. There was Pierre, who would be about the right age, but would she want Pierre to have that kind of a wife?

Rose and Jeanne became very neighborly. Marie was a happy, commonplace wife, who really adored her rough husband, and was always extolling him. He had never learned to dance, but he was a swift skater, and could row with anybody in a match. Then there was a little son, not at all to Jeanne's liking, for he had a wide mouth and no nose to speak of. [165]

"He is not as pretty as Aurel," she said.

"He will grow prettier," returned the proud grandmother, sharply.

That autumn the old schoolmaster did not come back. Some other schools had been started. M. Loisel sounded his charge as to whether she would not go to Montreal to school, but she decisively declined.

And now another spring had come, and Jeanne was a tall girl, but she would not put up her hair nor wear a coif. Father Rameau had been sent on a mission to St. Ignace. The new priest that came did not agree very well with Father Gilbert. He wanted to establish some Ursulines on a much stricter plan than the few sisters had been accustomed to, and there were bickerings and strained feelings. Beside, the Protestants were making some headway in the town.

"It is not to be wondered at," said the new priest to many of his flock. "One could hardly tell what you are. There must be better regulations."

"But we pay our tithes regularly. And Father Rameau—"

"I am tired of Father Rameau!" said the priest angrily. "And the fiddling and the dancing!"

"I do not like the quarreling," commented Jeanne. "And in the little chapel they all agree. They worship God, and not the Saints or the Virgin." [166]

"But the Virgin was a woman and is tender to us, and will intercede for us," interposed Pani.

Jeanne went to the English school that winter but the children were not much to her mind.

And now it was May, and Jeanne suddenly decided that she was tired of school.

"Pierre has come home!" almost shouted Rose to the two sitting in the doorway. "And he is a big man with a heavy voice, and, would you believe, he fairly lifted mother off her feet, and she tried to box his ears, but could not, and we all laughed so. He will be at the Fête to-morrow."

"Come, Pani," Jeanne said quite early, "we will hunt for some flowers. Susette Mass said we were to bring as many as we could."

"But—there will be the procession and the blessings—"

"And you will like that. Then we can be first to put some flowers on the shrines, maybe."

That won Pani. So together they went. At the edge of the wood wild flowers had begun to bloom, and they gathered handfuls. Little maple trees just coming up had four tiny red leaves that looked like a blossom.

There under a great birch tree was a small wooden temple with a weather-beaten cross on top, and on a shelf inside, raised a little from the ground, stood a plaster cast of the Virgin. Jeanne sprinkled the white blossoms of the wild strawberry all around. Pani knelt and said a little prayer.

Susette Mass ran to meet them. [167]

"Oh, how early you are!" she cried. "And how beautiful! Where did you find so many flowers? Some must go to the chapel."

"There will be plenty to give to the chapel. There is another shrine somewhere."

"And they say you are not a good Catholic!"

"I would like to be good. Sometimes I try," returned Jeanne, softly, and her eyes looked like a saint's, Susette thought.

Pani led the way to the other shrine and while the child scattered flowers and stood in silent reverence, Pani knelt and prayed. Then the throng of gayly dressed girls and laughing young men were coming from several quarters and the procession formed amid much chattering.

Afterward there were games of various sorts, tests of strength, running and jumping, and the Indian game of ball, which was wilder and more exciting than the French.

"Oh, here you are!" exclaimed Rose De Ber. On one side was Martin Lavosse, a well-favored young fellow, and on the other a great giant, it seemed to Jeanne. For a moment she felt afraid.

"Why, it isn't Jeanne Angelot?" Pierre caught both hands and almost crushed them, and looked into the deep blue eyes with such eagerness that the warm color flew to Jeanne's forehead. "Oh, how beautiful you have grown!"

He bent down a little and uttered it in a whisper. Jeanne flushed and then was angry at herself for the rising color. [168]

Pierre was fascinated anew. More than once in the two years he had smiled at his infatuation for the wild little girl who might be half Indian so far as anyone knew. No, not half—but very likely a little. What a temper she had, too! He had nearly forgotten all her charms. Of course it had been a childish intimacy. He had driven her in his dog sledge over the ice, he had watched her climb trees to his daring, they had been out in his father's canoe when she *would* paddle and he was almost afraid of tipping over. Really he had run risks of his life for her foolishness. And his foolishness had been in begging her to promise to marry him!

He had seen quite a good deal of the world since, and been treated as a man. In his slow-thoughted fashion he saw her the same wild, willful, obstinate little thing. Rose was a young lady, that was natural, but Jeanne—

"They are going to dance. Hear the fiddles! It is one of the great amusements up there," indicating the North with his head. "Only half the time you dance with boys—young fellows;" and he gave a chuckling laugh. "You see there is a scarcity of women. The Indian girls stand a good chance. Only a good many of the men have left wives and children at home."

"Did you like it?" Jeanne asked with interest.

Pierre shrugged his broad shoulders.

"At first I hated it. I would have run away, but if I had come back to Detroit everybody would have laughed and my father would have beaten me. Now he looks me over as if he knew I was worth something. Why, I am taller than he! And I have learned a great deal about making money." [169]

They were done tuning up the violins and all the air was soft with the natural melody of birds and whispering winds. This was broken by a stentorian shout, and men and maids fell into places. Pierre grasped Jeanne's hand so tightly that she winced. With the other hand he caught one of the streamers. There was a great scramble for them. And when, as soon as the dancing was in earnest, a young fellow had to let his streamer go in turning his partner, some one caught it and a merry shout rang through the group.

"How stupid you are!" cried Rose to Martin. "Why did you not catch that streamer? Now we are on the outside." She pouted her pretty lips. "Are you bewitched with Pierre and Jeanne?"

"How beautifully she dances, and Pierre for a clumsy, big fellow is not bad."

Hugh Pallent had caught a streamer and held out his hand to Rose.

"Well, amuse yourself with looking at them, Monsieur," returned Rose pettishly. "As for me, I came to dance," and Pallent whisked her off.

Martin's eyes followed them, other eyes as well.

Pierre threw his streamer with a sleight of hand one would hardly have looked for, and caught it again amid the cheers of his companions. Round they went, only once losing their place in the whole circle. The violins flew faster, the dancing grew almost furious, eyes sparkled and cheeks bloomed. [170]

"I am tired," Jeanne said, and lagging she half drew Pierre out of the circle.

"Tired! I could dance forever with you."

"But you must not. See how the mothers are watching you for a chance, and the girls will be proud enough to have you ask them."

"I am not going to;" shrugging his square shoulders.

"Oh, yes, you are!" with a pretty air of authority.

Jeanne saw envious eyes wandering in her direction. She did not know how she outshone most of the girls, with an air that was so different from the ordinary. Her white cotton gown had a strip of bright, curiously worked embroidery above the hem and around the square neck that gave her exquisite throat full play. The sleeves came to the elbow, and both hands and arms were beautiful. Her skin was many shades fairer, her cheeks like the heart of a rose, and her mouth dimpled in the corners. Her lithe figure had none of the squareness of the ordinary habitan, and every movement was grace itself.

"If you will not dance, let us walk, then. I have so much to say—"

"There will be all summer to say it in. And there is only one May dance. Susette!"

Susette came with sparkling eyes.

"This young man is dance bewitched. See how he has changed. We can hardly believe it is the Pierre we used to run races and climb trees with in nutting time. And he knows how to dance;" laughing. [171]

Pierre held out his hand, but there was a shade of reluctance in his eyes.

"I thought you were never going to throw over that great giant," said Martin Lavosse. "I suppose every girl will go crazy about him because he has been up north and made some money. His father has planned to take him into business. Jeanne, dance with me."

"No, not now. I am tired."

"I should think you would be, pulled around at that rate. Look, Susette can hardly keep up, and her braids have tumbled."

"Did I look like that?" asked Jeanne with sudden disapprobation in her tone.

"Oh, no, no! You were like—like the fairies and wood things old Mère Michaud tells of. Your hair just floated around like a cloud full of twilight—"

"No, the black ones when the thunderstorm is coming on," she returned mischievously.

"It was beautiful and full of waves. And you are so straight and slim. You just floated."

"And you watched me and lost your streamer twice. Rose did not like it."

He was a little jealous and a little vexed at Rose giving him the go by in such a pointed manner. He would get even with her.

"Why did you go off so early? We all went up for you."

"I wanted to gather flowers for the shrines."

"But we could have gone, too."

"No, it would have been too late. It was such a pleasure to Pani. She can't dance, you know." [172]

"Let us walk around and see the tables."

They were being spread out on the green sward, planks raised a foot or so, for every one would sit on the grass. Some of the Indian women had booths, and were already selling birch and sassafras beer, pipes and tobacco, and maple sugar. Little ones were running helter-skelter, tumbling down and getting up without a whimper. Here a knot of men were playing cards or dominoes. It was a pretty scene, and needed only cavaliers and the glittering, stately stepping dames to make it a picture of old France.

They were all tired and breathless with the dance presently, and threw themselves around on the grass for a bit of rest. There was laughing and chattering, and bright eyes full of mirth sent coquettish glances first on this side, then on that. Susette had borne off her partner in triumph to see her mother, and there were old neighbors welcoming and complimenting Pierre De Ber.

"Pierre," said a stout fellow banteringly, "you have shown us your improvement in dancing. As I remember you were a rather clumsy boy, too big for your years. Now they are going to try feats of skill and strength. After that we shall have some of the Indian women run a race. Monsieur De Ber, we shall be glad to count you in, if you have the daring to compete with the stay-at-homes."

"For shame, Hugh! What kind of an invitation is that? Pierre, you do not look as if you had spent all your prowess in dancing;" glancing admiringly at the big fellow. [173]

"You will see. Give me a trial." Pierre was nettled at the first speaker's tone. "I have not been up on the Mich for nothing. You fellows think the river and Lake St. Clair half the world. You should see Lake Michigan and Lake Superior."

"Yes, Pierre," spoke up another. "You used to be good on a jump. Come and try to distance us stay-at-homes, if you haven't grown too heavy."

They were marking off a place for the jumping on a level, and at a short distance hurdles of different heights had been put up.

Pierre had been the butt of several things in his boyish days, but, though a heavy lad, often excelled in jumping. The chaffing stirred his spirit. He would show what he could do. And Jeanne should see it. What did he care for Susette's shining eyes!

Two or three supple young fellows, two older ones with a well-seasoned appearance, stood on the mark. Pierre eyed it.

"No," he said, "it is not fair. I'm a sight heavier than those. And I won't take the glory from them. But if you are all agreed I'll try the other."

"Why, man, the other is a deal harder."

Pierre nodded indifferently.

The first started like a young athlete; a running jump and it fell short. There was a great laugh of derision. But the second was more successful and a shout went up. The next one leaped over the mark. Four of them won.

Rose was piqued that Martin should sit all this while on the grass chatting to Jeanne. She came around to them. [174]

"Pierre is going to jump," she announced. "I'm sorry, but they badgered him into it. They were really envious of his dancing."

Jeanne rose. "I do wonder where Pani is!" she said. "Shall we go nearer?"

"Oh, Pani is with the Indian women over there at the booths. No, stay, Jeanne," and Rose caught her hand. "Look! look! Why, they might almost be birds. Isn't it grand? But—Pierre—"

She might have spared her anxiety. Pierre came over with a splendid flying leap, clearing the bar better than his predecessor. A wild shout went up and Pierre's hand was clasped and shaken with a hearty approval. The girls crowded around him, and all was noisy jollity. Jeanne simply glanced up and he caught her eye.

"I have pleased her this time," he thought.

The racing of the squaws, though some indeed were quite young girls, was productive of much amusement. This was the only trial that had a prize attached to it,—a beautiful blanket, for money was a scarce commodity. A slim, young damsel won it.

"Jeanne," and Pierre bent over her, for, though she was taller than the average, he was head and almost shoulders above her, "Jeanne, you could have beaten them all."

She flushed. "I do not run races anymore," she returned with dignity.

He sighed. "That was a happy old time. How long ago it seems! Jeanne—are you glad to see me? You are so—so grave. And all the time I have been thinking of the child—I forgot you were to grow." [175]

Some one blew a horn long and loud that sent echoes among the trees a thousand times more beautiful than the sound itself. The tables, if they could be called that, were spread, and in no

time were surrounded by merry, laughing, chatting groups, who brought with them the appetites of the woods and wilds, hardly leaving crumbs for the birds.

After that there was dancing again and rambling around, and Pierre was made much of by the mothers. It was a proud day for Madame De Ber, and she glanced about among the girls to see whom of them she would choose for a daughter-in-law. For now Pierre could have his pick of them all. [176]

CHAPTER XI.

LOVE, LIKE THE ROSE, IS BRIERY.

Jeanne Angelot sat in the doorway in the moonlight silvering the street. There were so many nooks and places in shadow that everything had a weird, fantastic look. The small garrison were quiet, and many of them asleep by nine o'clock. Early hours was the rule except in what were called the great houses. But in this out of the way nook few pedestrians ever passed in the evening.

"Child, are you not coming to bed? Why do you sit there? You said you were tired."

Pani was crooning over a handful of fire. The May sunshine had not penetrated all the houses, and her old blood had lost its heat.

"Yes, I was. What with the dancing and the walking about and all I was very weary. I want to get rested. It is so quiet and lovely."

"You can rest in bed."

"I want to stay here a little while longer. Do not mind me, but go to bed yourself."

The voice was tender, persuasive, but Pani did not stir. Now and then she felt uncertain of the child.

"Was it not a happy day to you, *ma fille?*"

"Yes," with soft brevity.

Had it been happy? At different times during the past two years a curious something, like a great wave, had swept over her, bearing her away, yet slowly she seemed to float back. Only it [177] was never quite the same—the shores, the woods, the birds, the squirrels, the deer that came and looked at her with unafraid eyes, impressed her with some new, inexplicable emotion. What meaning was behind them?

But to-night she could not go back. She had passed the unknown boundary. Her limited knowledge could not understand the unfolding, the budding of womanhood, whose next change was blossoming. It had been a day of varied emotions. If she could have run up the hillside with no curious eyes upon her, sung with the birds, gathered great handfuls of daisies and bell flowers, tumbled up the pink and yellow fungus that grew around the tree roots, studied the bits of crisp moss that stood up like sentinels, with their red caps, and if you trod on them bristled up again, or if she could have climbed the trees and swung from branch to branch in the wavering flecks of sunshine as she did only such a little while ago, all would have been well. What was it restrained her? Was it the throng of people? She had enjoyed startling them with a kind of bravado. That was childhood. Ah, yes. Everybody grew up, and these wild antics no longer pleased. Oh, could she not go back and have it all over again?

She had danced and laughed. Pierre had tried to keep her a good deal to himself, but she had been elusive as a golden mote dancing up and down. She seemed to understand what this sense of appropriating meant, and she did not like it. [178]

And then Martin Lavosse had been curious as well. Rose and he were not betrothed, and Rose was like a gay humming bird, sipping pleasure and then away. Madame De Ber had certainly grown less strict. But Martin was still very young and poor, and Rose could do better with her pretty face. Like a shrewd, experienced person she offered no opposition that would be like a breeze to a smoldering flame. There was Edouard Loisel, the notary's nephew, and even if he was one of the best fiddlers in town, he had a head for business as well, and was a shrewd trader. M. Loisel had no children of his own and only these two nephews, and if Edouard fancied Rose before Martin was ready to speak—so the mother had a blind eye for Rose's pretty coquetries in that direction; but Rose did not like to have Martin quite so devoted to any other girl as he seemed to be to Jeanne.

Jeanne had not liked it at all. She had been good friends and comrades with the boys, but now they were grown and had curious ideas of holding one's hand and looking into one's eyes that intensified the new feeling penetrating every pulse. If only she might run away somewhere. If Pani were not so old they would go to the other side of the mountain and build a hut and live together there. She did not believe the Indians would molest them. Anything to get away from this strange burthen pressing down upon her that she knew not was womanhood, and be free

once more.

She rose presently and went in. Pani was a heap in the chimney corner, she saw her by the long silver ray that fell across the floor. [179]

"Pani! Pani!" she cried vehemently.

Her arms were around the neck and the face was lifted up, kissed with a fervor she had never experienced before.

"My little one! my little one!" sighed the woman.

"Come, let us go to bed." There was an eagerness in the tone that comforted the woman.

The next morning Detroit was at work betimes. There was no fashion of loitering then; when the sun flung out his golden arrows that dispelled the night, men and women were cheerfully astir.

"I must go and get some silk for Wenonah; she has some embroidery to finish for the wife of one of the officers," exclaimed Jeanne. "And then I will take it to her."

So if Pierre dropped in—

There were some stores down on St. Louis street where the imported goods from Montreal and Quebec were kept. Laces and finery for the quality, silks and brocades, hard as the times were. Jeanne tripped along gayly. She would be happy this morning anyhow, as if she was putting off some impending evil.

"Take care, child! Ah, it is Jeanne Angelot. Did I run over thee, or thou over me?" laughing. "I have not on my glasses, but I ought to see a tall slip of a girl like thee."

"Pardon, Monsieur. I was in haste and heedless." [180]

"I have something for thee that will gladden thy heart—a letter. Let me see—" beginning to search his pockets, and then taking out a great leathern wallet. "No?" staring in surprise. "Then I must have left it on my desk at home. Canst thou spend time to run up and get it?"

"Oh, gladly." The words had a ring of joy that touched the man's heart.

"It is well, Mam'selle, that it comes from the father, since it is received with such delight."

She did not catch the double meaning. Indeed, Laurent was far from her thoughts.

"Thank you a thousand times," with her radiant smile, and he carried the bright face into his dingy warehouse.

She went on her way blithe as the gayest bird. A letter from M. St. Armand! It had been so long that sometimes she was afraid he might be dead, like M. Bellestre. The birds were singing. "A letter," they caroled; "a letter, a l-e-t-t-e-r," dwelling on every sound with enchanting tenderness.

The old Fleury house overlooked the military garden to the west, and the river to the east. There had been an addition built to it, a wing that placed the hall in the middle. It was wide, and the door at each end was set open. At the back were glimpses of all kinds of greenery and the fragrance of blossoming shrubs. A great enameled jar stood midway of the hall and had in it a tall blooming rose kept through the winter indoors, a Spanish rose growing wild in its own country. The floor was polished, the fur rugs had been stowed away, and the curious Indian grass mats [181] exhaled a peculiar fragrance. A bird cage hung up high and its inmate was warbling an exquisite melody. Jeanne stood quite still and a sense of harmonious beauty penetrated her, gave her a vague impression of having sometime been part and parcel of it.

"What is it?" demanded the Indian servant. There were very few negroes in Detroit, and although there were no factories or mills, French girls seldom hired out for domestics.

"Madame Fleury—Monsieur sent me for a letter lying on his desk," Jeanne said in a half hesitating manner.

The servant stepped into the room to consult her mistress. Then she said to Jeanne:—

"Walk in here, Mademoiselle."

The room was much more richly appointed than the hall, though the polished floor was quite bare. A great high-backed settee with a carved top was covered with some flowered stuff in which golden threads shimmered; there was a tall escritoire going nearly up to the ceiling, the bottom with drawers that had curious brass handles, rings spouting out of a dragon's mouth. There were glass doors above and books and strange ornaments and minerals on the shelves. On the high mantel, and very few houses could boast them, stood brass candlesticks and vases of colored glass that had come from Venice. There were some quaint portraits, family heirlooms ranged round the wall, and chairs with carved legs and stuffed backs and seats. [182]

On a worktable lay a book and a piece of lace work over a cushion full of pins. By it sat a young lady in musing mood.

She, too, said, "What is it?" but her voice had a soft, lingering cadence.

Jeanne explained meeting M. Fleury and his message, but her manner was shy and hesitating.

"Oh, then you are Jeanne Angelot, I suppose?" half assertion, half inquiry.

"Yes, Mademoiselle," and she folded her hands.

"I think I remember you as a little child. You lived with an Indian woman and were a"—no, she could not say "foundling" to this beautiful girl, who might have been born to the purple, so fine was her figure, her air, the very atmosphere surrounding her.

"I was given to her—Pani. My mother had died," she replied, simply.

"Yes—a letter. Let me see." She rose and went through a wide open doorway. Jeanne's eyes followed her. The walls seemed full of arms and hunting trophies and fishing tackle, and in the center of the room a sort of table with drawers down one side.

"Yes, here. 'Mademoiselle Jeanne Angelot.'" She seemed to study the writing. She was quite pretty, Jeanne thought, though rather pale, and her silken gown looped up at the side with a great bow of ribbon, fell at the back in a long train. Her movements were so soft and gliding that the girl was half enchanted.

"You still live with—with the woman?" [183]

"M. Bellestre gave her the house. It is small, but big enough for us two. Yes, Mademoiselle. Thank you," as she placed the letter in Jeanne's hand, and received in return an enchanting smile. With a courtesy she left the room, and walked slowly down the path, trying to think. Some girl, for there was gossip even in those days, had said that Mam'selle's lover had proved false to her, and married some one else in one of the southern cities. Jeanne felt sorry for her.

Lisa Fleury wondered why so much beauty had been given to a girl who could make no use of it.

Jeanne hugged her letter to her heart. It had been so long, so long that she felt afraid she would never hear again. She wanted to run every step of the way, last summer she would have. She almost forgot Wenonah and the silk, then laughed at herself, and outside of the palisades she did run.

"You are so good," Wenonah said. "Look at this embroidery,—is it not grand? And that I used to color threads where now I can use beautiful silk. It shines like the sun. The white people have wonderful ways."

Jeanne laughed and opened her letter. She could wait no longer. Oh, delightful news! She laughed again in sheer delight, soft, rippling notes.

"What is it pleases thee so, Mam'selle?"

"It is my friend who comes back, the grand Monsieur with the beautiful white beard, for whose sake I learned to write. I am glad I have learned so many things. By another spring he will be here!" [184]

Then Jeanne forgot the somber garment of womanhood that shadowed her last night, and danced in the very gladness of her heart. Wenonah smiled and then sighed. What if this man of so many years should want to marry the child? Such things had been. And there was that fine young De Ber just come home. But then, a year was a good while.

"I must go and tell Pani," and she was off like a bird.

Oh, what a glad day it was! The maypole and the dancing were as nothing to it. After she had told over her news and they had partaken of a simple meal, she dragged the Indian woman off to her favorite haunt in the woods, where three great tree boles made a pretty shelter and where Pani always fell asleep.

Bees were out buzzing, their curious accompaniment to their work. Or were they scolding because flowers were not sweeter? Yellow butterflies made a dazzle in the air, that was transparent to-day. The white birches were scattering their last year's garments, and she gathered quite a roll. Ah, what a wonderful thing it was to live and breathe this fragrant air! It exhilarated her with joy as drinking wine might another. The mighty spirit of nature penetrated every pulse.

From a little farther up she could see the blue waters, and the distant horizon seemed to bound the lake. Would she ever visit the grand places of the world? What was a great city such as Quebec like? Would she stay here for years and years and grow old like Pani? For somehow she [185] could not fancy herself in a home with a husband like Marie Beeson, or Madelon Freché, or several of the girls a little older than herself. The commonplaces of life, the monotonous work, the continual admiration and approval of one man who seemed in no way admirable would be slow death.

"Which is a warning that I must not get married," she thought, and her gay laugh rippled under the trees in soft echoes.

She felt more certain of her resolve that evening when Pierre came.

"Where were you all the afternoon?" he said, almost crossly. "I was here twice. I felt sure you

would expect me."

Jeanne flushed guiltily. She knew she had gone to escape such an infliction, and she was secretly glad, yet somehow her heart pricked her.

"Oh, you surely have not forgotten that I live half the time in the woods;" glancing up mischievously.

"Haven't you outgrown that? There was enough of it yesterday," he said.

"You ought not to complain. What a welcome you had, and what a triumph, too!"

"Oh, that was not much. You should see the leaping and the wrestling up north. And the great bounds with the pole! That's the thing when one has a long journey. And the snowshoes—ah, that is the sport!"

"You liked it up there?" [186]

"I was desperately homesick at first. I had half a mind to run away. But when I once got really used to the people and the life—it was the making of me, Jeanne."

He stretched up proudly and swelled up his broad chest, enjoying his manhood.

"You will go back?" she asked, tentatively.

"Well—that depends. Father wants me to stay. He begins to see that I am worth something. But pouf! how do people live in this crowded up town in the winter! It is dirtier than ever. The Americans have not improved it much. You see there is Rose and Angelique, before Baptiste, and he is rather puny, and father is getting old. Then, I could go up north every two or three years. Well, one finds out your worth when you go away."

He gave a loud, rather exultant laugh that jarred on Jeanne. Why were these rough characteristics so repellant to her? She had lived with them all her short life. From whence came the other side of her nature that longed for refinement, cultivated speech, and manners? And people of real education, not merely the business faculty, the figuring and bargain making, were more to her taste. M. Fleury was a gentleman, like M. St. Armand.

Pierre stretched out his long legs and crossed his feet, then slipped his hands into his pockets. He seemed to take up half the room.

"What have you been doing all the time I was away?" he said, when the awkwardness of the silence began to oppress him. [187]

Jeanne made a little crease in her forehead, and a curl came to the rose red lip.

"I went to school until Christmas, then there was no teacher for a while. And when spring was coming I decided not to go back. I read at home. I have some books, and I write to improve myself. I can do it quite well in English. Then there is some one at the Fort, a sort of minister, who has a class down in the town, St. Louis street, and I go there."

"Is the minister a Catholic?"

"No," she answered, briefly.

"That is bad." He shook his head disapprovingly. "But you go to church?"

"There is a little chapel and I like the talk and the singing. I know two girls who go there. Sometimes I go with Pani to St. Anne's."

"But you should go all the time, Jeanne. Religion is especially for women. They have the children to bring up and to pray for their husbands, when they are on voyages or in dangers."

Pierre delivered this with an unpleasant air of masculine authority which Jeanne resented in her inmost soul. So she exclaimed rather curtly:—

"We will not discuss religion, Monsieur Pierre."

The young man looked amazed. He gave the fringe on his deerskin legging a sharp twitch.

"You are still briery, Mam'selle. And yet you are so beautiful that you ought to be gentle as well."

"Why do people want to tell me that I am beautiful? Do they not suppose I can see it?" Jeanne flung out, impatiently. [188]

"Because it is a sweet thing to say what the speaker feels. And beauty and goodness should go hand in hand."

"I am for myself alone;" she returned, proudly. "And if I do not suit other people they may take the less of me. There are many pretty girls."

"Oh, Mam'selle," he exclaimed, beseechingly, "do not let us quarrel immediately, when I have thought of you so often and longed to see you so much! And now that my mother says pleasant things about you—she is not so opposed to learning since Tony Beeson has been teaching Marie to read and write and figure—and we are all such friends—"

Ah, if they could remain only friends! But Jeanne mistrusted the outcome of it.

"Then tell me about the great North instead of talking foolishness; the Straits and the wonderful land of snow beyond, and the beautiful islands! I like to hear of countries. And, Pierre, far to the south flowers bloom and fruit ripens all the year round, luscious things that we know nothing about."

Pierre's descriptive faculties were not of a high order. Still when he was once under way describing some of the skating and sledging matches he did very well, and in this there was no dangerous ground.

The great bell at the Fort clanged out nine.

"It is time to go," Jeanne exclaimed, rising. "That is the signal. And Pani has fallen asleep."

Pierre rose disconcerted. The bright face was merry and friendly, that was all. Yesterday other girls had treated him with more real warmth and pleasure. But there was a certain authority about her not to be gainsaid. [189]

"Good night, then," rather gruffly.

"He loves thee, *ma mie*. Hast thou no pity on him?" said Pani, looking earnestly at the lovely face.

"I do not want to be loved;" and she gave a dissentient, shivering motion. "It displeases me."

"But I am old. And when I am gone—"

The pathetic voice touched the girl and she put her arms around the shrunken neck.

"I shall not let you go, ever. I shall try charms and get potions from your nation. And then, M. St. Armand is to come. Let us go to bed. I want to dream about him."

One of the pitiful mysteries never to be explained is why a man or a woman should go on loving hopelessly. For Pierre De Ber had loved Jeanne in boyhood, in spite of rebuffs; and there was a certain dogged tenacity in his nature that fought against denial. A narrow idea, too, that a girl must eventually see what was best for her, and in this he gained Pani's sympathy and good will for his wooing.

He was not to be easily daunted. He had improved greatly and gained a certain self-reliance that at once won him respect. A fine, tall fellow, up in business methods, knowing much of the changes of the fur trade, and with shrewdness enough to take advantage where it could be found without absolute dishonesty, he was consulted by the more cautious traders on many points.

"Thou hast a fine son," one and another would say to M. De Ber; and the father was mightily gratified. [190]

There were many pleasures for the young people. It was not all work in their lives. Jeanne joined the parties; she liked the canoeing on the river, the picnics to the small islands about, and the dances often given moonlight evenings on the farms. For never was there a more pleasure loving people with all their industry. And then, indeed, simple gowns were good enough for most occasions.

Jeanne was ever on the watch not to be left alone with Pierre. Sometimes she half suspected Pani of being in league with the young man. So she took one and another of the admirers who suited her best, bestowing her favors very impartially, she thought, and verging on the other hand to the subtle dangers of coquetry. What was there in her smile that should seem to summon one with a spell of witchery?

Madame De Ber was full of capricious moods as well. She loved her son, and was very proud of him. She selected this girl and that, but no, it was useless.

"He has no eyes for anyone but Jeanne," declared Rose half angrily, sore at Martin's defection as well, though she was not sure she wanted him. "She coquets first with one, then with another, then holds her head stiffly above them all. And at the Whitsun dance there was a young lieutenant who followed her about and she made so much of him that I was ashamed of her for a French maid."

Rose delivered herself with severe dignity, though she had been very proud to dance with the American herself. [191]

"Yes, I wish Pierre would see some charm elsewhere. He is old enough now to marry. And Jeanne Angelot may be only very little French, though her skin has bleached up clearer, and she puts on delicate airs with her accent. She will not make a good wife."

"You are talking of Jeanne," and the big body nearly filled the window, that had no hangings in summer, and the sash was swung open for air. Pierre leaned his elbows on the sill, and his face flushed deeply. "You do not like her, I know, but she is the prettiest girl in Detroit, and she has a dowry as well."

"And that has a tint of scandal about it," rejoined the mother scornfully.

"But Father Rameau disproved that. And, whatever she is, even if she were half Indian, I love

her! I have always loved her. And I shall marry her, even if I have to take her up north and spend my whole life there. I know how to make money, and we shall do well enough. And that will be the upshot if you and my father oppose me, though I think it is more you and Rose."

"Did ever a French son talk so to his mother before? If this is northern manners and respect—"

Madame De Ber dropped into a chair and began to cry, and then, a very unusual thing it must be confessed, went into hysterics.

"Oh, you have killed her!" screamed Rose.

"She is not dead. Dead people do not make such a noise. Maman, maman," the endearing term of childhood, "do not be so vexed. I will be a good son to you always, but I cannot make myself miserable by marrying one woman when I love another;" and he kissed her fondly, caressing her with his strong hands. [192]

The storm blew over presently. That evening when Père De Ber heard the story he said, a little gruffly: "Let the boy alone. He is a fine son and smart, and I need his help. I am not as stout as I used to be. And, Marie, thou rememberest that thou wert my choice and not that of any go-between. We have been happy and had fine children because we loved each other. The girl is pretty and sweet."

They came to neighborly sailing after a while. Jeanne knew nothing of the dispute, but one day on the river when Martin's canoe was keeping time with hers, and he making pretty speeches to her, she said:—

"It is not fair nor right that you should pay such devotion to me, Martin. Rose does not like it, and it makes bad friends. And I think you care for her, so it is only a jealous play and keeps me uncomfortable."

"Rose does not care for me. She is flying at higher game. And if she cannot succeed, I will not be whistled back like a dog whose master has kicked him," cried the young fellow indignantly.

"Rose has said I coquetted with you," Jeanne exclaimed with a roseate flush and courageous honesty.

"I wish it was something more. Jeanne, you are the sweetest girl in all Detroit." [193]

"Oh, no, Martin, nor the prettiest, nor the girl who will make the best wife. And I do not want any lovers, nor to be married, which, I suppose, is a queer thing. Sometimes I think I will stay in the house altogether, but it is so warm and gets dreary, and out-of-doors is so beautiful with sunshine and fragrant air. But if I cannot be friends with anyone—"

"We will be friends, then," said Martin Lavosse. [194]

CHAPTER XII.

PIERRE.

When Madame De Ber found that Pierre was growing moody and dispirited and talked of going up north again, her mother's heart relented. Moreover, she could not but see that Jeanne was a great favorite in spite of her wild forest ways and love of solitude with a book in hand. Her little nook had become a sort of court, so she went there no more, for some one was sure to track her. And the great oak was too well known. She would drop down the river and fasten her canoe in some sheltered spot, and finding a comfortable place sit and read or dream. The chapel parson was much interested in her and lent her some wonderful books,—a strange story in measured lines by one John Milton, and a history of France that seemed so curious to her she could hardly believe such people had lived, but the parson said it was all true and that there were histories of many other countries. But she liked this because Monsieur St. Armand had gone there.

Yet better than all were the dreams of his return. She could see the vessel come sailing up the beautiful river and the tall, fine figure with the long, silken beard snowy white, and the blue eyes, the smiling mouth, hear the voice that had so much music in it, and feel the clasp of the hand soft as that of any of the fine ladies. Birds sang and insects chirped, wild ducks and swans chattered to their neighbors, and great flocks made a dazzle across the blue sky. Some frogs in marshy places gave choruses in every key, but nothing disturbed her. [195]

What then?

Something different would come to her life. An old Indian squaw had told her fortune a year agone. "You will have many lovers and many adventures," she said, "and people coming from far to claim you, but you will not go with them. And then another old man, like a father, will take you over the seas and you will see wonderful things and get a husband who will love you."

What if M. St. Armand should want to take her over the sea? She did not belong to anybody; she knew that now, and at times it gave her a mortifying pain. Some of the ladies had occasionally noticed her and talked with her, but she had a quick consciousness that they did not

esteem her of their kind. She liked the lovely surroundings of their lives, the rustle of their gowns, the glitter of the jewels some of them wore, their long, soft white fingers, so different from the stubby hands of the habitans. Hers were slim, with pink nails that looked like a bit of shell, but they were not white. Perhaps there was a little Indian blood that made her so lithe and light, able to climb trees, to swim like a fish, and gave her this great love for the wide out-of-doors.

It was hot one afternoon, and she would not go out anywhere. The chamber window overlooked the garden, where flowers and sweet herbs were growing, and every whiff of wind [196] sent a shower of fragrance within. She had dropped her book and gone to dreaming. Pani sat stringing beads for some embroidery—or perhaps had fallen into a doze.

There was a step and a cordial "*bon soir*." Jeanne roused at the voice.

"I am glad to find you in, Pani. It is well that you have not much house to keep, for then you could not go out so often."

"No. Be seated, Madame, if it please you."

"Yes. I want a little talk about the child, Pani. Monsieur De Ber has been in consultation with the notary, M. Loisel, and has laid before him a marriage proposal from Pierre. He could see no objections. I did think I would like a little more thrift and household knowledge in my son's wife, but I am convinced he will never fancy anyone else, and he will be well enough fixed to keep a maid, though they are wasteful trollops and not like your own people, Pani. And Jeanne has her dowry. Since she has no mother or aunt it is but right to consult you, and I know you have been friendly to Pierre. It will be a very good marriage for her, and I have come to say we are all agreed, and that the betrothal may take place as soon as she likes."

Jeanne had listened with amazement and curiosity to the first part of the speech and the really pleasant tone of voice. Now she came forward and stood in the doorway, her slim figure erect, her waving hair falling over her beautiful shoulders, her eyes with the darkness of night in them, [197] but the color gone out of her cheeks with the great effort she was making to keep calm.

"Madame De Ber," she began, "I could not help hearing what you said. I thank you for your kindly feelings toward your son's wishes, but before any further steps are taken I want to say that a betrothal is out of the question, and that there can be no plan of marriage between us."

"Jeanne Angelot!" Madame's eyes flashed with yellow lights and her black brows met in a frown.

"I am sorry that Pierre loves me. I told him long ago, before he went away, when we were only children, that I could not be his wife. I tried to evade him when he came back, and to show him how useless his hopes were. But he would not heed. Even if you had liked and approved me, Madame, I might have felt sorrier, but that would not have made me love him."

"And, pray, what is the matter with Pierre? He may not be such a gallant dancing Jack as the young officer, or a marvelous fiddler like M. Loisel's nephew, who I hear has been paying court to you. Mam'selle Jeanne Angelot, you have made yourself the talk of the town, and you may be glad to have a respectable man marry you."

"Oh, if I were the talk of the town I care too much for Pierre to give him such a wife. I would take no man's love when I could not return it. And I do not love Pierre. I think love cannot be made, Madame, for if you try to make it, it turns to hate. I do not love anyone. I do not want to marry!" [198]

"Thou hast not the mark of an old maid, and some day it may fare worse with thee!" the visitor flung out angrily.

Jeanne's face blazed at the taunt. A childish impulse seized her to strike Madame in the very mouth for it. She kept silence for some seconds until the angry blood was a little calmer.

"I trust the good God will keep me safe, Madame," she said tremulously, every pulse still athrob. "I pray to him night and morning."

"But thou dost not go to confession or mass. Such prayers of thine own planning will never be heard. Thou art a wicked girl, an unbeliever. I would have trained thee in the safe way, and cared for thee like a mother. But that is at an end. Now I would not receive thee in my house, if my son lay dying."

"I shall not come. Do not fear, Madame. And I am truly sorry for Pierre when there are so many fine girls who would be glad of a nice husband. I hope he will be happy and get some one you can all love."

Madame was speechless. The soft answer had blunted her weapons. Jeanne turned away, glided into the chamber and the next instant had leaped out of the window. There was a grassy spot in the far corner of the garden, shaded by their neighbor's walnut tree. She flung herself down upon it, and buried her face in the cool grass.

"My poor son! my poor son!" moaned Madame. "She has no heart, that child! She is not human. Pani, it was not a child the squaw dropped in your arms, it was—" [199]

"Hush! hush!" cried Pani, rising and looking fierce as if she might attack Madame. "Do not

utter it. She was made a Christian child in the church. She is sweet and good, and if she cannot love a husband, the saints and the holy Mother know why, and will forgive her."

"My poor Pierre! But she is not worth his sorrow. Only he is so obstinate. Last night he declared he would never take a wife while she was single. And to deprive him of happiness! To refuse when I had sacrificed my own feelings and meant to be a mother to her! No, she is not human. I pity you, Pani."

Then Madame swept out of the door with majestic dignity. Pani clasped her arms about her knees and rocked herself to and fro, while the old superstitions and weird legends of her race rushed over her. The mother might have died, but who was the father? There was some strange blood in the child.

"Heaven and the saints and the good God keep watch over her!" she prayed passionately. Then she ran out into the small yard.

"Little one, little one—" her voice was tremulous with fear.

Jeanne sprang up and clasped her arms about Pani's neck. How warm and soft they were. And her cheek was like a rose leaf.

"Pani," between a cry and a laugh, "do lovers keep coming on forever? There was Louis Marsac and Pierre, and Martin Lavosse angry with Rose, and"—her cheek was hot now against Pani's [200] cool one, throbbing with girlish confusion.

"Because thou art beautiful, child."

"Then I wish I were ugly. Oh, no, I do not, either." Would M. St. Armand like her so well if she were ugly? "Ah, I do not wonder women become nuns—sometimes. And I am sincerely sorry for Pierre. I suppose the De Bers will never speak to me again. Pani, it is growing cooler now, let us go out in the woods. I feel stifled. I wish we had a wigwam up in the forest. Come."

Pani put away her work.

"Let us go the other way, the *chemin du ronde*, to the gate. Rose may be gossiping with some of the neighbors."

They walked down that way. There was quite a throng at King's wharf. Some new boats had come in. One and another nodded to Jeanne; but just as she was turning a hand touched her arm, too lightly to be the jostle of the throng. She was in no mood for familiarities, and shook it off indignantly.

"Mam'selle Jeanne Angelot," a rather rich voice said in a laughing tone.

She guessed before she even changed the poise of her head. What cruel fate followed her!

"Nay, do not look so fierce! How you have grown, yet I should have known you among a thousand."

"Louis Marsac!" The name seemed wrested from her. She could feel the wrench in her mind.

"Then you have not forgotten me! Mam'selle, I cannot help it—" with a deprecation in his voice [201] that was an apology and begged for condonation. "You were pretty before, but you have grown wonderfully beautiful. You will allow an old friend to say it."

His eyes seemed to devour her, from her dusky head to the finger tips, nay, even to the slim ankles, for skirts were worn short among the ordinary women. Only the quality went in trailing gowns, and held them up carefully in the unpaved ways.

"If you begin to compliment, I shall dismiss you from the list of my acquaintances. It is foolish and ill-bred. And if you go around praising every pretty girl in Le Detroit, you will have no time left for business, Monsieur."

Her face set itself in resolute lines, her voice had a cold scornfulness in it.

"Is this all the welcome you have for me? I have been in but an hour, and busy enough with these dolts in unloading. Then I meant to hunt you up instead of going to sup with Monsieur Meldrum, with whom I have much business, but an old friend should have the first consideration."

"I am not sure, Monsieur, that I care for friends. I have found them troublesome. And you would have had your effort for nothing. Pani and I would not be at home."

"You are the same briery rose, Jeanne," with an amused laugh. "So sweet a one does well to be set in thorns. Still, I shall claim an old friend's privilege. And I have no end of stirring adventures for your ear. I have come now from Quebec, where the ladies are most gracious and charming." [202]

"Then I shall not please you, Monsieur," curtly. "Come, Pani," linking her arm in that of the woman, "let us get out of the crowd," and she nodded a careless adieu.

They turned into a sort of lane that led below the palisades.

"Pani," excitedly, "let us go out on the river. There will be an early moon, and we shall not mind so that we get in by nine. And we need not stop to gossip with people, canoes are not so

friendly as woodland paths."

Her laugh was forced and a little bitter.

Pani had hardly recovered from her surprise. She nodded assent with a feeling that she had been stricken dumb. It was not altogether Louis Marsac's appearance, he had been expected last summer and had not come. She had almost forgotten about him. It was Jeanne's mood that perplexed her so. The two had been such friends and playmates, one might say, only a few years ago. He had been a slave to her pretty whims then. She had decorated his head with feathers and called him Chief of Detroit, or she had twined daisy wreaths and sweet grasses about his neck. He had bent down the young saplings that she might ride on them, a graceful, fearless child. They had run races,—she was fleet as the wind and he could not always catch her. He had gathered the first ripe wild strawberries, not bigger than the end of her little finger, but, oh, how luscious! She had quarreled with him, too, she had struck him with a feathery hemlock branch, [203] until he begged her pardon for some fancied fault, and nothing had suited him better than to loll under the great oak tree, listening to Pani's story and all the mysterious suppositions of her coming. Then he told wild legends of the various tribes, talked in a strange, guttural accent, danced a war dance, and was almost as much her attendant as Pani.

But the three years had allowed him to escape from the woman's memory, as any event they might expect again in their lives. Hugh de Marsac had turned into something of an explorer, beside his profitable connection with the fur company. The copper mines on Lake Superior had stirred up a great interest, and plans were being made to work them to a better advantage than the Indians had ever done. Fortunes were the dream of mankind even then; though this was destined to end in disappointment.

Jeanne chose her canoe and they pushed out. She was in no haste, and few people were going down the river, not many anywhere except on business. The numerous holy days of the Church, which gave to religion an hour or two in the morning and devoted to pleasure the rest of the day, set the river in a whirl of gayety. Ordinary days were for work.

The air was soft and fragrant. Some sea gulls started from a sandy nook with disturbed cries, then returned as if they knew the girl. A fishhawk darted swiftly down, having seen his prey in the clear water and captured it. There were farms stretching down the river now, with rough log [204] huts quite distinct from the whitewashed or vine-covered cottages of the French. But the fields betrayed a more thrifty cultivation. There were young orchards nodding in the sunshine, great stretches of waving maize fields, and patches of different grains. Little streams danced out here and there and gurgled into the river, as if they were glad to be part of it.

"Pani, do you suppose we could go ever so far down and build a tent or a hut and live there all the rest of the summer?"

"But I thought you liked the woods!"

"I like being far away. I am tired of Detroit."

"Mam'selle, it would hardly be safe. There are still unfriendly Indians. And—the loneliness of it! For there are some evil spirits about, though Holy Church has banished them from the town."

Occasionally her old beliefs and fears rushed over the Indian woman and shook her in a clutch of terror. She felt safest in her own little nest, under the shadow of the Citadel, with the high, sharp palisades about her, when night came on.

"Art thou afraid of Madame De Ber?" she asked, hesitatingly. "For of a truth she did not want you for her son's wife."

"I know it. Pierre made them all agree to it. I am sorry for Pierre, and yet he has the blindness of a mole. I am not the kind of wife he wants. For though there is so much kissing and caressing at first, there are dinners and suppers, and the man is cross sometimes because other things go wrong. And he smells of the skins and oils and paints, and the dirt, too," laughing. "Faugh! I [205] could not endure it. I would rather dwell in the woods all my life. Why, I should come to hate such a man! I should run away or kill myself. And that would be a bitter self-punishment, for I love so to live if I can have my own life. Pani, why do men want one particular woman? Susette is blithe and merry, and Angelique is pretty as a flower, and when she spins she makes a picture like one the schoolmaster told me about. Oh, yes, there are plenty of girls who would be proud and glad to keep Pierre's house. Why does not the good God give men the right sense of things?"

Pani turned her head mournfully from side to side, and the shrunken lips made no reply.

Then they glided on and on. The blue, sunlit arch overhead, the waving trees that sent dancing shadows like troops of elfin sprites over the water, the fret in one place where a rock broke the murmurous lapping, the swish somewhere else, where grasses and weeds and water blooms rooted in the sedge rocked back and forth with the slow tide—how peaceful it all was!

Yet Jeanne Angelot was not at peace. Why, when the woods or the river always soothed her? And it was not Pierre who disturbed the current, who lay at the bottom like some evil spirit, reaching up long, cruel arms to grasp her. Last summer she had put Louis Marsac out of her life with an exultant thrill. He would forget all about her. He would or had married some one up North, and she was glad. [206]

He had come back. She knew now what this look in a man's eyes meant. She had seen it in a girl's eyes, too, but the girl had the right, and was offering incense to her betrothed. Oh, perhaps —perhaps some other one might attract him, for he was very handsome, much finer and more manly than when he went away.

Why did not Pani say something about him? Why did she sit there half asleep?

"Wasn't it queer, Pani, that we should go so near the wharf, when we were trying to run away —"

She ended with a short laugh, in which there was neither pleasure nor mirth.

Pani glanced up with distressful eyes.

"Eh, child!" she cried, with a sort of anguish, "it is a pity thou wert made so beautiful."

"But there are many pretty girls, and great ladies are lovely to look at. Why should I not have some of the charm? It gives one satisfaction."

"There is danger for thee in it. Perhaps, after all, the Recollet house would be best for thee."

"No, no;" with a passionate protest. "And, Pani, no man can make me marry him. I would scream and cry until the priest would feel afraid to say a word."

Pani put her thin, brown hand over the plump, dimpled one; and her eyes were large and weird.

"Thou art afraid of Louis Marsac," she said.

"Oh, Pani, I am, I am!" The voice was tremulous, entreating. "Did you see something in his face, a curious resolve, and shall I call it admiration? I hope he has a wife. Oh, I know he has not! [207] Pani, you must help me, guard me."

"There is M. Loisel, who would not have thee marry against thy will. I wish Father Rameau were home—he comes in the autumn."

"I do not want to marry anyone. I am a strange girl. Marie Beeson said some girls were born old maids, and surely I am one. I like the older men who give you fatherly looks, and call you child, and do not press your hand so tight. Yet the young men who can talk are pleasant to meet. Pani, did you love your husband?"

"Indian girls are different. My father brought a brave to the wigwam and we had a feast and a dance. The next morning I went away with him. He was not cruel, but you see squaws are beasts of burthens. I was only a child as you consider it. Then there came a great war between two tribes and the victors sold their prisoners. It is so long ago that it seems like a story I have heard."

The young wives Jeanne knew were always extolling their husbands, but she thought in spite of their many virtues she would not care to have them. What made her so strange, so obstinate!

"Pani," in a low tone scarce above the ripple of the water, "M. Marsac is very handsome. The Indian blood does not show much in him."

"Yes, child. He is improved. There is—what do you call it?—the grand air about him, like a gentleman, only he was impertinent to thee."

"You will not be persuaded to like him? It was different with Pierre." [208]

Jeanne made this concession with a slight hesitation.

"Oh, little one, I will never take pity on anyone again if you do not care for him! The Holy Mother of God hears me promise that. I was sorry for Pierre and he is a good lad. He has not learned to drink rum and is reverent to his father. It is a thousand pities that he should love you so."

Pani kissed the hand she held; Jeanne suddenly felt light of heart again.

Down the river they floated and up again when the silver light was flooding everything with a softened glory. Jeanne drew her canoe in gently, there was no one down this end, and they took a longer way around to avoid the drinking shops. The little house was quiet and dark with no one to waylay them.

"You will never leave me alone, Pani," and she laid her head on the woman's shoulder. "Then when M. St. Armand comes next year—"

She prayed to God to keep him safely, she even uttered a little prayer to the Virgin. But could the Divine Mother know anything of girls' troubles? [209]

CHAPTER XIII.

Louis Marsac stood a little dazed as the slim, proudly carried figure turned away from him. He was not much used to such behavior from women. He was both angry and amused.

"She was ever an uncertain little witch, but—to an old friend! I dare say lovers have turned her head. Perhaps I have waited too long."

There was too much pressing business for him to speculate on a girl's waywardness; orders to give, and then important matters to discuss at the warehouse before he made himself presentable at the dinner. The three years had added much to Marsac's store of knowledge, as well as to his conscious self-importance. He had been in grand houses, a favored guest, in spite of the admixture of Indian blood. His father's position was high, and Louis held more than one fortunate chance in his hand. Developing the country was a new and attractive watchword. He had no prejudices as to who should rule, except that he understood that the French narrowness and bigotry had served them ill. Religion was, no doubt, an excellent thing; the priests helped to keep order and were in many respects serviceable. As for the new rulers, one need to be a little wary of too profound a faith in them. The Indians had not been wholly conquered, the English dreamed [210] of re-conquest.

Detroit was not much changed under the new régime. Louis liked the great expanse at the North better. The town was only for business.

He had a certain polish and graceful manner that had come from the French side, and an intelligence that was practical and appealed to men. He had the suavity and deference that pleased women, if he knew little about poets and writers, then coming to be the fashion. His French was melodious, the Indian voice scarcely perceptible.

In these three years there had been months that he had never thought of Jeanne Angelot, and he might have let her slip from his memory but for a slender thread that interested him, and of which he at last held the clew. If he found her unmarried—well, a marriage with him would advance her interests, if not—was it worth while to take trouble that could be of no benefit to one's self?

Was it an omen of success that she should cross his path almost the first thing, grown into a slim, handsome girl, with glorious eyes and a rose red mouth that he would have liked to kiss there in the public street? How proud and dignified she had been, how piquant and daring and indifferent to flattery! The saints forfend! It was not flattery at all, but the living truth.

The next day he was very busy, but he stole away once to the great oak. Some children were playing about it, but she was not there. And there was a dance that evening, given really for his [211] entertainment, so he must participate in it.

The second day he sauntered with an indifferent air to the well known spot. A few American soldiers were busy about the barracks. How odd not to see a bit of prancing scarlet!

The door was closed top and bottom. The tailor's wife sat on her doorstep, her husband on his bench within.

"They have gone away, M'sieu," she said. "They went early this morning."

He nodded. Monsieur De Ber had met him most cordially and invited him to drop in and see Madame. They were in the lane that led to St. Anne's street; he need not go out of his way.

He was welcomed with true French hospitality. Rose greeted him with a delighted surprise, coquettish and demure, being under her mother's sharp eye. Yes, here was a pretty girl!

"My husband was telling about the wonderful copper mines," Madame began with great interest. "There was where the Indians brought it from, I suppose, but in the old years they kept very close about it. No doubt there are fortunes and fortunes in them;" glancing up with interest.

"My father is getting a fortune out of them. He has a large tract of land thereabout. If there should be peace for years there will be great prosperity, and Detroit will have her share. It has not changed much except about the river front. Do you like the Americans for neighbors as well as the English?" [212]

Madame gave a little shrug. "They do not spend their money so readily, my husband says."

"They have less to spend," with a short laugh. "Some of the best English families are gone. I met them at Quebec. Ah, Madame, there is a town for you!" and his eyes sparkled.

"It is very gay, I suppose," subjoined Rose.

"Gay and prosperous. Mam'selle, you should be taken there once to show them how Detroit maids bloom. There is much driving about, while here—"

"The town spreads outside. There are some American farmers, but their methods are wild and queer."

"You have a fine son, Madame, and a daughter married, I hear. Mam'selle, are many of the neighborhood girls mated?"

"Oh, a dozen or so," laughed Rose. "But—let me see, the wild little thing, Jeanne Angelot, that used to amuse the children by her pranks, still roams the woods with her Pani woman."

"Then she has not found a lover?" carelessly.

"She plays too much with them, Monsieur. It is every little while a new one. She settles to nothing, and I think the schooling and the money did her harm. But there was no one in authority, and it is not even as if M. Loisel had a wife, you see;" explained Madame, with emphasis.

"The money?" raising his brows, curiously.

"Oh, it was a little M. Bellestre left," and a fine bit of scorn crossed Madame's face. "There was some gossip over it. She has too much liberty, but there is no one to say a word, and she goes to [213] the heretic chapel since Father Rameau has been up North. He comes back this autumn. Father Gilbert is very good, but he is more for the new people and the home for the sisters. There are some to come from the Ursuline convent at Montreal, I hear."

Marsac was not interested in the nuns. After a modicum of judicious praise to Madame, he departed, promising to come in again.

When a week had elapsed and he had not seen Jeanne he was more than piqued, he was angry. Then he bethought himself of the Protestant chapel. Pani could not bring herself to enter it, but Jeanne had found a pleasing and devoted American woman who came in every Sunday and they met at a point convenient to both. Pani walked to this trysting spot for her darling.

And now she was fairly caught. Louis Marsac bowed in the politest fashion and wished her good day in a friendly tone, ranging himself beside her. Jeanne's color came and went, and she put her hands in a clasp instead of letting them hang down at her side as they had a moment before. Her answers were brief, a simple "yes" or "no," or "I do not know, Monsieur."

And Pani was not there! Jeanne bade her friend a gentle good day and then holding her head very straight walked on.

"Mam'selle," he began in his softest voice, though his heart was raging, "are we no longer friends, when we used to have such merry times under the old oak? I have remembered you; I [214] have said times without number, 'When I go back to La Belle Detroit, my first duty will be to hunt up little Jeanne Angelot. If she is married I shall return with a heavy heart.' But she is not—"

"Monsieur, if thy light-heartedness depends on that alone, thou mayst go back cheerily enough," she replied formally. "I think I am one of St. Catharine's maids and in the other world will spend my time combing her hair. Thou mayst come and go many times, perhaps, and find me Jeanne Angelot still."

"Have you forsworn marriage? For a handsome girl hardly misses a lover."

He was trying to keep his temper in the face of such a plain denial.

"I am not for marriage," she returned briefly.

"You are young to be so resolute."

"Let us not discuss the matter;" and now her tone was haughty, forbidding.

"A father would have authority to change your mind, or a guardian."

"But I have no father, you know."

He nodded doubtfully. She felt rather than saw the incredulous half smile. Had he some plot in hand? Why should she distrust him so?

"Jeanne, we were such friends in that old time. I have carried you in my arms when you were a light, soft burthen. I have held you up to catch some branch where you could swing like a cat. I have hunted the woods with you for flowers and berries and nuts, and been obedient to your [215] pretty whims because I loved you. I love you still. I want you for my wife. Jeanne, you shall have silks and laces, and golden gauds and servants to wait on you—"

"I told you, Monsieur, I was not for marriage," she interrupted in the coldest of tones.

"Every woman is, if you woo her long enough and strong enough."

He tried very earnestly to keep the sneer out of his voice, but hardly succeeded. His face flushed, his eyes shone with a fierce light. Have this girl he would. She should see who was master.

"Monsieur, that is ungentlemanly."

"*Monsieur!* In the old time, it was Louis."

"We have outgrown the old times," carelessly.

"I have not. Nor my love."

"Then I am sorry for you. But it cannot change my mind."

The way was very narrow now. She made a quick motion and passed him. But she might better have sent him on ahead, instead of giving him this study of her pliant grace. The exquisite curves of her figure in its thin, close gown, the fair neck gleaming through the soft curls, the beautiful shoulders, the slim waist with a ribbon for belt, the light, gliding step that scarcely moved her, held an enthralling charm. He had a passionate longing to clasp his arms about her. All the hot blood within him was roused, and he was not used to being denied.

There was one little turn. Pani was not sitting before the door. Oh, where was she? A terror [216] seized Jeanne, yet she commanded her voice and moved just a trifle, though she did not look at him. He saw that she had paled; she was afraid, and a cruel exultation filled him.

"Monsieur, I am at home," she said. "Your escort was not needed," and she summoned a vague smile. "There is little harm in our streets, except when the traders are in, and Pani is generally my guard. Then for us the soldiers are within call. Good day, Monsieur Marsac."

"Nay, my pretty one, you must be gentler and not so severe to make it a good day for me. And I am resolved that it shall be. See, Jeanne, I have always loved you, and though there have been years between I have not forgotten. You shall be my wife yet. I will not give you up. I shall stay here in Detroit until I have won you. No other demoiselle would be so obdurate."

"Because I do not love you, Monsieur," and she gave the appellation its most formal sound. "And soon I shall begin to hate you!"

Oh, how handsome she looked as she stood there in a kind of noble indignation, her heart swelling above her girdle, the child's sweetness still in the lines of her face and figure, as the bud when it is just about to burst into bloom. He longed to crush her in one eager embrace, and kiss the nectar of her lovely lips, even if he received a blow for it as before. That would pile up a double revenge.

Pani burst from the adjoining cottage.

"Oh," she cried, studying one and the other. "*Ma fille*, the poor tailor, Philippe! He had a fit [217] come on, and his poor wife screamed for help, so I hurried in. And now the doctor says he is dying. O Monsieur Marsac, would you kindly find some one in the street to run for a priest?"

"I will go," with a most obliging smile and inclination of the head.

Jeanne clasped her arms about Pani's neck, and, laying her head on the shrunken bosom, gave way to a flood of tears.

"*Ma petite*, has he dared—"

"He loves me, Pani, with a fierce, wicked passion. I can see it in his eyes. Afterward, when things went wrong, he would remember and beat me. He kissed me once on the mouth and I struck him. He will never forget. But then, rather than be his wife, I would kill myself. I will not, will not do it."

"No, *mon ange*, no, no. Pierre would be a hundred times better. And he would take thee away."

"But I want no one. Keep me from him, Pani. Oh, if we could go away—"

"Dear—the good sisters would give us shelter."

Jeanne shook her head. "If Father Rameau were but here. Father Gilbert is sharp and called me a heretic. Perhaps I am. I cannot count beads any more. And when they brought two finger bones of some one long dead to St. Anne's, and all knelt down and prayed to them, and Father Gilbert blessed them, and said a touch would cure any disease and help a dying soul through purgatory, I could not believe it. Why did it not cure little Marie Faus when her hip was broken, [218] and the great running sore never stopped and she died? And he said it was a judgment against Marie's mother because she would not live with her drunken brute of a husband. No, I do not think Père Gilbert would take me in unless I recanted."

"Oh, come, come," cried Pani. "Poor Margot is most crazed. And I cannot leave you here alone."

They entered the adjoining cottage. There were but two rooms and overhead a great loft with a peaked roof where the children slept. Philippe lay on the floor, his face ghastly and contorted. There were some hemlock cushions under him, and his poor wife knelt chafing his hands.

"It is of no use," said the doctor. "Did some one summon the priest?"

"Immediately," returned Pani.

"And there is poor Antoine on the Badeau farm, knowing nothing of this," cried the weeping mother.

The baby wailed a sorrowful cry as if in sympathy. It had been a puny little thing. Three other small ones stood around with frightened faces.

Jeanne took up the baby and bore it out into the small garden, where she walked up and down and crooned to it so sweetly it soon fell asleep. The next younger child stole thither and caught her gown, keeping pace with tiny steps. How long the moments seemed! The hot sun beat down, but it was cool here under the tree. How many times in the stifling afternoons Philippe had

brought his work out here! He had grown paler and thinner, but no one had seemed to think much of it. What a strange thing death was! What was the other world like—and purgatory? The [219] mother of little Marie Faus was starving herself to pay for the salvation of her darling's soul.

"Oh, I should not like to die!" and Jeanne shuddered.

The priest came, but it was not Father Gilbert. The last rites were performed over the man who might be dead already. The baby and the little girl were brought in and the priest blessed them. There were several neighbors ready to perform the last offices, and now Jeanne took all the children out under the tree.

Louis Marsac returned, presently, and offered his help in any matter, crowding some money into the poor, widowed hand. Jeanne he could see nowhere. Pani was busy.

The next day he paid M. Loisel a visit, and stated his wishes.

"You see, Monsieur, Jeanne Angelot is in some sort a foundling, and many families would not care to take her in. That I love her will be sufficient for my father, and her beauty and sweetness will do the rest. She will live like a queen and have servants to wait on her. There are many rich people up North, and, though the winters are long, no one suffers except the improvident. And I think I have loved Mam'selle from a little child. Then, too," with an easy smile, "there is a suspicion that some Indian blood runs in Mam'selle's veins. On that ground we are even."

Yes, M. Loisel had heard that. Mixed marriages were not approved of by the better class [220] French, but a small share of Indian blood was not contemned. When it came to that, Louis Marsac was not a person to be lightly treated. His father had much influence with the Indian tribes and was a rich man.

So the notary laid the matter before Pani and his ward, when the funeral was over, though he would rather have pleaded for his nephew. It was a most excellent proffer.

But he was not long in learning that Jeanne Angelot had not only dislike but a sort of fear and hatred for the young man; and that nothing was farther from her thoughts. Yet he wondered a little that the fortune and adoration did not tempt her.

"Well, well, my child, we shall not be sorry to have you left in old Detroit. Some of our pretty girls have been in haste to get away to Quebec or to the more eastern cities. Boston, they say, is a fine place. And at New York they have gay doings. But we like our own town and have all the pleasure that is good for one. So I am glad to have thee stay."

"If I loved him it would be different. But I think this kind of love has been left out of me," and she colored daintily. "All other loves and gratitude have been put in, and oh, M'sieu, such an adoration for the beautiful world God has made. Sometimes I go down on my knees in the forest, everything speaks to me so,—the birds and the wind among the trees, the mosses with dainty blooms like a pin's head, the velvet lichens with rings of gray and brown and pink. And the little [221] lizards that run about will come to my hand, and the deer never spring away, while the squirrels chatter and laugh and I talk back to them. Then I have grown so fond of books. Some of them have strange melodies in them that I sing to myself. Oh, no, I do not want to be a wife and have a house to keep, neither do I want to go away."

"Thou art a strange child."

M. Loisel leaned over and kissed her on the crown of her head where the parting shone white as the moon at its full. Lips and rosy mouths were left for lovers in those days.

"And you will make him understand?"

"I will do my best. No one can force a damsel into marriage nowadays."

Opposition heightened Louis Marsac's desires. Then he generally had his way with women. He did not need to work hard to win their hearts. Even here in spite of Indian blood, maids smiled on the handsome, jaunty fellow who went arrayed in the latest fashion, and carried it off with the air of a prince. There was another sort of secret dimly guessed at that would be of immense advantage to him, but he had the wariness of the mother's side as well as the astuteness of the father.

A fortnight went by with no advantage. Pani never left her charge alone. The rambles in the woods were given up, and the girl's heart almost died within her for longing. She helped poor Margot nurse her children, and if Marsac came on a generous errand they surrounded her and [222] swarmed over her. He could have killed them with a good will. She would not go out on the river nor join the girls in swimming matches nor take part in dances. Sometimes with Pani she spent mornings in the minister's study, and read aloud or listened to him while his wife sat sewing.

"You are not easily tempted," said the good wife one day. "It is no secret that this young trader, M. Marsac, is wild for love of you."

"But I do not like him, how then could I give him love?" and she glanced out of proud, sincere eyes, while a soft color fluttered in her face.

"No, that could not be," assentingly.

The demon within him that Louis Marsac called love raged and rose to white heat. If he could

even carry her off! But that would be a foolish thing. She might be rescued, and he would lose the good opinion of many who gave him a flattering sympathy now.

So the weeks went on. The boats were loaded with provision, some of them started on their journey. He came one evening and found Jeanne and her protector sitting in their doorway. Jeanne was light-hearted. She had heard he was to sail to-morrow.

"I have come to bid my old playmate and friend good-by," and there was a sweet pathos in his voice that woke a sort of tenderness in the girl's heart, for it brought back a touch of the old pleasant days before he had really grown to manhood, when they sat under her oak and listened to Pani's legendary stories.

"I wish you *bon voyage*, Monsieur." [223]

"Say Louis just once. It will be a bit of music to which I shall sail up the river."

"Monsieur Louis."

The tone was clear and no warmth penetrated it. He could see her face distinctly in the moonlight and it was passive in its beauty.

"Thou hast not forgiven me. If I knelt—"

"Nay!" she sprang up and stood at Pani's back. "There is nothing to kneel for. When you are away I shall strive to forget your insistence—"

"And remember that it sprang from love," he interrupted. "Jeanne, is your heart of marble that nothing moves it? There are curious stories of women who have little human warmth in them—who are born of strange parents."

"Monsieur, that is wrong. Jeanne hath ever been loving and fond from the time she put her little arms around my neck. She is kindly and tender—the poor tailor's lonely woman will tell you. And she spent hours with poor Madame Campeau when her own daughter left her and went away to a convent, comforting her and reading prayers. No, she is not cold hearted."

"Then you have taken all her love," complainingly.

"It is not that, either," returned the woman.

"Jeanne, I shall love thee always, cruel as thou hast been. And if thou art so generous as to pray for others, say a little prayer that will help me bear my loneliness through the cold northern winter that I had hoped might be made warm and bright by thy presence. Have a little pity if thou [224] hast no love."

He was mournfully handsome as he stood there in the silvery light. Almost her heart was moved. She said a special prayer for only one person, but Louis Marsac might slip into the other class that was "all the world."

"Monsieur, I will remember," bowing a little.

"Oh, lovely icicle, you are enough to freeze a man's soul, and yet you rouse it to white heat! I can make no impression I see. Adieu, adieu."

He gave a sudden movement and would have kissed her mouth but she put her hand across it, and Pani, divining the endeavor, rose at the same instant.

"Mam'selle Jeanne Angelot, you will repent this some day!" and his tone was bitter with revenge.

Then he plunged down the street with an unsteady gait and was lost in the darkness.

"Pani, come in, bar the door. And the shutter must be fastened;" pulling the woman hastily within.

"But the night will be hot."

"It is cooler now. There has been a fresh breeze from the river. And—I am sore afraid."

It was true that the night dews and the river gave a coolness to the city at night, and on the other side was the great sweep of woods and hills.

Nothing came to disturb them. Jeanne was restless and had bad dreams, then slept soundly until after sunrise.

"Antoine," she said to the tailor's little lad, "go down to the wharf and watch until the 'Flying Star' sails up the river. The tide is early. I will reward you well." [225]

"O Mam'selle, I will do it for love;" and he set off on a trot.

"There are many kinds of love," mused Jeanne. "Strange there should be a kind that makes one afraid."

At ten the "Flying Star" went up the river.

"Thou hast been a foolish girl, Jeanne Angelot!" declared one of the neighbors. "Think how

thou mightst have gone up the river on a wedding journey, and a handsome young husband such as falls to the lot of few maids, with money in plenty and furs fit for a queen. And there is, no doubt, some Indian blood in thy veins! Thou hast always been wild as a deer and longing to live out of doors."

Jeanne only laughed. She was so glad to feel at liberty once more. For a month she had virtually been a prisoner.

Madame De Ber, though secretly glad, joined the general disapproval. She had half hoped he might fancy Rose, who sympathized warmly with him. She could have forgiven the alien blood if she had seen Rose go up the river, in state, to such a future.

And though Jeanne was not so much beyond childhood, it was settled that she would be an old maid. She did not care.

"Let us go out under the oak, Pani," she exclaimed. "I want to look at something different from the Citadel and the little old houses, something wide and free, where the wind can blow about, and where there are waves of sweetness bathing one's face like a delightful sea. And to-morrow [226] we will take to the woods. Do you suppose the birds and the squirrels have wondered?"

She laughed gayly and danced about joyously.

Wenonah sat at her hut door making a cape of gull's feathers for an officer's wife.

"You did not go north, little one," and she glanced up with a smile of approval.

For to her Jeanne would always be the wild, eager, joyous child who had whistled and sung with the birds, and could never outgrow childhood. She looked not more than a dozen years old to-day.

"No, no, no. Wenonah, why do you cease to care for people, when you have once liked them? Yet I am sorry for Louis. I wish he had loved some one else. I hope he will."

"No doubt there are those up there who have shared his heart and his wigwam until he tired of them. And he will console himself again. You need not give him so much pity."

"Wenonah!" Jeanne's face was a study in surprise.

"I am glad, Mam'selle, that his honeyed tongue did not win you. I wanted to warn, but the careful Pani said there was no danger. My brave has told some wild stories about him when he has had too much brandy. And sometimes an Indian girl who is deserted takes a cruel revenge, not on the selfish man, but on the innocent girl who has trusted him, and is not to blame. He is handsome and double of tongue and treacherous. See—he would have given me money to coax [227] you to go out in the canoe with me some day to gather reeds. Then he could snatch you away. It was a good deal of money, too!"

"O Wenonah!" She fell on the woman's neck and kissed the soft, brown cheek.

"He knew you trusted me, that was the evil of him. And I said to Pani, 'Do not let her go out on the river, lest the god of the Strait put forth his hand and pull her down to the depths and take her to his cave.' And Pani understood."

"Yes, I trust you," said the girl proudly.

"And I have no white blood in my veins."

She went down to the great oak with Pani and they sat shaded from the afternoon sunshine with the lovely river stretching out before them. She did not care for the old story any more, but she leaned against Pani's bosom and patted her hand and said: "No matter what comes, Pani, we shall never part. And I will grow old with you like a good daughter and wait on you and care for you, and cook your meals when you are ill."

Pani looked into the love-lit, shining eyes.

"But I shall be so very, very old," she replied with a soft laugh. [228]

CHAPTER XIV.

A HIDDEN FOE.

Ah, what a day it was to Jeanne Angelot! They had gone early in the morning and taken some food with them in a pretty basket made of birch bark. How good it was to be alive, to be free! The sunshine had never been so golden, she thought, nor danced so among the branches nor shook out such dainty sprites. How they skipped over the turf, now hold of hands, now singly, now running away and disappearing, others coming in their places!

"The very woods are alive," she declared in glee.

Alive they were with the song of birds, the chirp of insects, the murmuring wind. Back of her

was a rivulet fretting its way over pebbles down a hillside, making an irregular music. She kept time to it, then she changed to the bird song, and the rustle among the pines.

"It is so lovely, Pani. I seem to be drinking in a strange draught that goes to my very finger tips. Oh, I wonder how anyone can bear to die!"

"When they are old it is like falling asleep. And sometimes they are so tired it makes them glad."

"I should only be tired of staying in the house. But I suppose one cannot help death. One can refuse to go into a little cell and shut out the sunlight and all the beauty that God has made. It is wicked I think. For one can pray out of doors and sing hymns. I am sure God will hear." [229]

They ate their lunch with a relish; Jeanne had found some berries and some ripe wild plums. There was a hollow tree full of honey, she could tell by the odorous, pungent smell. She would tell Wenonah and have some of the boys go at night and—oh, how hard to rob the poor bees, to murder and rob them! No, she would keep their secret.

She laid her head down in Pani's lap and went fast asleep; and the Indian woman's eyes were touched with the same poppy juice. Once Pani started, she thought she heard a step. In an instant her eyes were bent inquiringly around. There was no one in sight.

"It was the patter of squirrels," she thought.

The movement roused Jeanne. She opened her eyes and smiled with infantine joy.

"We have both been asleep," said the woman. "And now is it not time to go home?"

"Oh, look at the long shadows. They are purple now, and soft dark green. The spirits of the wood have trooped home, tired of their dancing."

She rose and gave herself a little shake.

"Pani," she exclaimed, "I saw some beautiful flowers before noon, over on the other side of the stream. I think they were something strange. I can easily jump across. I will not be gone long, and you may stay here. Poor Pani! I tired you out."

"No, Mam'selle, you were asleep first."

"Was I? It was such a lovely sleep. Oh, you dear woods;" and she clasped her hands in adoration. [230]

Long, flute-like notes quivered through the branches—birds calling to their mates. Pani watched the child skipping, leaping, pulling down a branch and letting it fly up again. Then she jumped across the brook with a merry shout, and a tree hid her.

Pani studied the turf, the ants and beetles running to and fro, the strange creatures with heavy loads. A woodpecker ran up a tree and pulled out a white grub. "Tinkle, tinkle, bu-r-r-r," said the little stream. Was that another shout?

Presently Pani rose and went toward the stream. "Jeanne! Jeanne!" she called. The forest echoes made reply. She walked up, Jeanne had gone in that direction. Once it seemed as if the voice answered.

Yes, over yonder was a great thicket of bloom. Surely the child would not need to go any farther. Presently there was a tangle of underbrush and wild grapevines. Pani retraced her steps and going farther down crossed and came up on the other side, calling as she went. The woods grew more dense. There was a chill in the air as if the sun never penetrated it. There was no real path and she wandered on in a thrill of terror, still calling but not losing sight of the stream.

And now the sun dropped down. Terrified, Pani made the best of her way back. What had happened? She had seen no sign of a wild animal, and surely the child could not be lost in that brief while!

She must give an alarm. She ran now until she was out of breath, then she had to pause until she could run again. She reached the farms. They were mostly all long strips of land with the houses in reach of the stockade for safety. [231]

"Andre Helmuth," she cried, "I have lost the child, Jeanne. Give an alarm." Then she sank down half senseless.

Dame Helmuth ran out from the fish she was cooking for supper. "What is it?" she cried. "And who is this?" pointing to the prostrate figure.

"Jeanne Angelot's Pani. And Jeanne, she says, is lost. It must be in the woods. But she knows them so well."

"She was ever a wild thing," declared the dame. "But a night in the woods alone is not such a pleasant pastime, with panthers, and bears have been seen. And there may be savages prowling about. Yes, Andre, give the alarm and I will look after the poor creature. She has always been faithful to the child."

By the time the dame had restored her, the news had spread. It reached Wenonah presently,

who hastened to the Helmuths'. Pani sat bewildered, and the Indian woman, by skillful questioning, finally drew the story from her.

"I think it is a band of roving Indians," she said. "I am glad now that Paspah is at home. He is a good guide. But we must send in town and get a company."

"Yes, yes, that is the thing to do. A few soldiers with arms. One cannot tell how many of the Indians there may be. I will go at once," and Andre Helmuth set off on a clumsy trot.

"And the savory fish that he is so fond of, getting spoiled. But what is that to the child's danger? Children, come and have your suppers." [232]

They wanted to linger about Pani, but the throng kept increasing. Wenonah warded off troublesome questions and detailed the story to newcomers. The dame brought her a cup of tea with a little brandy in it, and then waited what seemed an interminable while.

The alarm spread through the garrison, and a searching party was ordered out equipped with lanterns and well armed. At its head was Jeanne's admirer, the young lieutenant.

Tony Helmuth had finished his supper.

"Let me go with them," he pleaded. "I know every inch of the way. I have been up and down the creek a hundred times."

Pani rose. "I must go, too," she said, weakly, but she dropped back on the seat.

"Thou wilt come home with me," began Wenonah, with gentle persuasiveness. "Thou hast not the strength."

She yielded passively and clung piteously to the younger woman, her feet lagging.

"She was so glad and joyous all day. I should not have let her go out of my sight," the foster mother moaned. "And it was only such a little while. Heaven and the blessed Mother send her back safely."

"I think they will find her. Paspah is good on a trail. If they stop for the night and build a fire that will surely betray them." [233]

She led Pani carefully along, though quite a procession followed.

"Let her be quiet now," said the younger squaw. "You can hear nothing more from her, and she needs rest. Go your ways."

Pani was too much exhausted and too dazed to oppose anything. Once or twice she started feebly and said she must go home, but dropped back again on the pine needle couch covered with a blanket. Between waking and sleep strange dreams came to her that made her start and cry out, and Wenonah soothed her as one would a child.

All the next day they waited. The town was stirred with the event, and the sympathy was universal. The pretty Jeanne Angelot, who had been left so mysteriously, had awakened romantic interest anew. A few years ago this would have been a common incident, but why one should want to carry off a girl of no special value,—though a ransom would be raised readily enough if such a thing could save her.

On the second day the company returned home. No trace of any marauding party had been found. There had been no fires kindled, no signs of any struggle, and no Indian trails in the circuit they had made. The party might have had a canoe on Little river and paddled out to Lake St. Clair; if so, they were beyond reach.

The tidings utterly crushed Pani. For a fortnight she lay in Wenonah's cabin, paying no attention to anything and would have refused sustenance if Wenonah had not fed her as a child. [234] Then one day she seemed to wake as out of a trance.

"They have not found her—my little one?" she said.

Wenonah shook her head.

"Some evil spirit of the woods has taken her."

"Can you listen and think, Pani?" and she chafed the cold hand she held. "I have had many strange thoughts and Touchas, you know, has seen visions. The white man has changed everything and driven away the children of the air who used to run to and fro in the times of our fathers. In her youth she called them, but the Church has it they are demons, and to look at the future is a wicked thing. It is said in some places they have put people to death for doing it."

Pani's dark eyes gave a glance of mute inquiry.

"But I asked Touchas. At first she said the great Manitou had taken the power from her. But the night the moon described the full circle and one could discern strange shapes in it, she came to me, and we went and sat under the oak tree where the child first came to thee. There was great disturbance in Touchas' mind, and her eyes seemed to traverse space beyond the stars. Presently, like one in a dream, she said:—

"'The child is alive. She was taken by Indians to the *petite* lake, her head covered, and in

strong arms. Then they journeyed by water, stopping, and going on until they met a big ship sailing up North. She is in great danger, but the stars watch over her; a prisoner where the [235]
window is barred and the door locked. There is a man between two women, an Indian maiden, whose heart hungers for him. She comes down to meet him and follows a trail and finds something that rouses her to fierce anger. She creeps and creeps, and finds the key and unlocks the door. The white maiden is afraid at first and cowers, for she reads passion in the other's eyes. O great Manitou, save her!' Then Touchas screamed and woke, shivering all over, and could see no further into the strange future. 'Wait until the next moon,' she keeps saying. But the child will be saved, she declares."

"Oh, my darling, my little one!" moaned the woman, rocking herself to and fro. "The saints protect thee. Oh, I should have watched thee better! But she felt so safe. She had been afraid, but the fear had departed. Oh, my little one! I shall die if I do not see thee again."

"I feel that the great God will care for her. She has done no evil; and the priests declare that he will protect the good. And I thought and thought, until a knowledge seemed to come out of the clear sky. So I did not wait for the next moon. I said, 'I have little need for Paspah, since I earn bread for the little ones. Why should he sit in the wigwam all winter, now and then killing a deer or helping on the dock for a drink of brandy?' So I sent him North again to join the hunters and to find Jeanne. For I know that handsome, evil-eyed Louis Marsac is at the bottom of it." [236]

"Oh, Wenonah!" Pani fell on her shoulder and cried, she was so weak and overcome.

"We will not speak of this. Paspah has a grudge against Marsac; he struck him a blow last summer. My father would have killed him for the blow, but the red men who hang around the towns have no spirit. They creep about like panthers, and only show their teeth to an enemy. The forest is the place for them, but this life is easier for a woman."

Wenonah sighed. Civilization had charms for her, yet she saw that it was weakening her race. They were driven farther and farther back and to the northward. Women might accept labor, they were accustomed to it in the savage state but a brave could not so demean himself.

Pani's mind was not very active yet. For some moments she studied Wenonah in silence.

"She was afraid of him. She would not go out to the forest nor on the river while he was here. But he went away—"

"He could have planned it all. He would find enough to do his bidding. But if she has been taken up North, Paspah will find her."

That gave some present comfort to Pani. But she began to be restless and wanted to return to her own cottage.

"You must not live alone," said Wenonah.

"But I want to be there. If my darling comes it is there she will search for me."

When Wenonah found she could no longer keep her by persuasion or entreaty, she went home with her one day. The tailor's widow had taken some little charge of the place. It was clean and [237]
tidy.

Pani drew a long, delighted breath, like a child.

"Yes, this is home," she exclaimed. "Wenonah, the good Mother of God will reward you for your kindness. There is something"—touching her forehead in piteous appeal—"that keeps me from thinking as I ought. But you are sure my little one will come back, like a bird to its nest?"

"She will come back," replied Wenonah, hardly knowing whether she believed it herself or not.

"Then I shall stay here."

She was deaf to all entreaties. She went about talking to herself, with a sentence here and there addressed to Jeanne.

"Yes, leave her," said Margot. "She was good to me in my sorrow, and *petite* Jeanne was an angel. The children loved her so. She would not go away of her own accord. And I will watch and see that no harm happens to Pani, and that she has food. The boys will bring her fagots for fire. I will send you word every day, so you will know how it fares with her."

Pani grew more cheerful day by day and gained not only physical strength, but made some mental improvement. In the short twilight she would sit in the doorway listening to every step and tone, sometimes rising as if she would go to meet Jeanne, then dropping back with a sigh.

The soldiers were very kind to her and often stopped to give her good day. Neighbors, too, paused, some in sympathy, some in curiosity. [238]

There were many explanations of the sudden disappearance. That Jeanne Angelot had been carried off by Indians seemed most likely. Such things were still done.

But many of the superstitious shook their heads. She had come queerly as if she had dropped from the clouds, she had gone in the same manner. Perhaps she was not a human child. All wild things had come at her call,—she had talked to them in the woods. Once a doe had run to her from some hunters and she had so covered it with her girlish arms and figure that they had not

dared to shoot. If there were bears or panthers or wolves in the woods, they never molested her.

They recalled old legends, Indian and French, some gruesome enough, but they did not seem meet for pretty, laughing Jeanne, who was all kindliness and sweetness and truth. If she was part spirit, surely it was a good spirit and not an evil one.

Then Pani thought she would go to Father Gilbert, though she had never felt at home with him as she did with good Père Rameau. There might be prayers that would hasten her return. Or, if relics helped, if she could once hold them in her hand and wish—

The old missionaries who had gone a century or two before to plant the cross along with the lilies of France had the souls of the heathen savages at heart. Since then times had changed and the Indians were not looked upon as such promising subjects. Father Gilbert worked for the good and the glory of the Church. One English convert was worth a dozen Indians. So the church had [239]
been improved and made more beautiful. There were singers who caught the ear of the casual listener, and he or she came again. The school, too, was improved, the sisters' house enlarged, and a retreat built where women could spend days of sorrow and go away refreshed. Sometimes they preferred to stay altogether.

Father Gilbert listened rather impatiently to the prolix story. He might have heard it before, he did not remember. There were several Indian waifs in school.

"And this child was baptized, you say? Why did you not bring her to church?" he asked sharply.

"Good Père, I did at first. But M. Bellestre would not have her forced. And then she only came sometimes. She liked the new school because they taught about countries and many things. She was always honest and truth speaking and hated cruel deeds—"

"But she belonged to the Church, you see. Woman, you have done her a great wrong and this is sent upon you for punishment. She should have been trained to love her Church. Yes, you must come every day and pray that she may be returned to the true fold, and that the good God will forgive your sin. You have been very wicked and careless and I do not wonder God has sent this upon you. When she comes back she must be given to the Church."

Pani turned away without asking about the relics. Her savage heart rose up in revolt. The child was hers, the Church had not all the right. And Jeanne had come to believe like the chapel father, [240]
who had been very friendly toward her. Perhaps it was all wrong and wicked, but Jeanne was an angel. Ah, if she could hold her in her old arms once more!

Father Gilbert went to see M. Loisel. What was it about the money the Indian woman and the child had? Could not the Church take better care of it? And if the girl was dead, what then?

M. Loisel explained the wording of the bequest. If both died it went back to the Bellestre estate. Only in case of Jeanne's marriage did it take the form of a dowry. In June and December it came to him, and he sent back an account of the two beneficiaries.

Really then it was not worth looking after, Father Gilbert decided, when there was so much other work on hand.

Madame De Ber and her coterie, for already there were little cliques in Detroit, shrugged their shoulders and raised their eyebrows when Jeanne Angelot was mentioned.

She was such a coquette! And though she flouted Louis Marsac to his face, when he had really taken her at her word and gone, she might have repented and run after him. It was hardly likely a band of roving Indians would burthen themselves with a girl. Then she was fleet of foot and had a quick brain, she could have eluded them and returned by this time.

Rose De Ber had succeeded in captivating her fine lover and sent Martin about with a bit of haughtiness that would have become a queen. It was a fine wedding and Jeanne was lost sight of [241]
in the newer excitement.

Pani rambled to and fro, a grave, silent woman. When she grew strong enough she went to the forest and haunted the little creek with her plaints. The weather grew colder. Furs and rugs were brought out, and warm hangings for winter. Martin Lavosse came in and arranged some comforts for Pani, looked to see that the shutters would swing easily and brought fresh cedar and pine boughs for pallets. Crops were being gathered in, and there were merrymakings and church festivals, but the poor woman sat alone in her room that fronted the street, now and then casting her eyes up and down in mute questioning. The light of her life had gone. If Jeanne came not back all would be gone, even faith in the good God. For why should he, if he was so great and could manage the whole world, let this thing happen? Why should he deliver Jeanne into the hands of the man she hated, or perhaps let her be torn to pieces by some wild beast of the forest, when, by raising a finger, he could have helped it? Could he be angry because she had not sent the child to be shut up in the Recollet house and made a nun of?

Slavery and servitude had not extinguished the love of liberty that had been born in Pani's soul. She had succumbed to force, then to a certain fondness for a kind mistress. But it seemed as if she alone had understood the child's wild flights, her hatred of bondage. She had done no harm to any living creature; she had been full of gratitude to the great Manitou for every flower, [242]
every bird, for the golden sun that set her pulses in a glow, for the moon and stars, and the winds that sang to her. Oh, surely God could not be angry with her! [243]

CHAPTER XV.

A PRISONER.

Jeanne Angelot climbed a slight ascent where great jagged stones had probably been swept down in some fierce storm and found lodgment. Tufts of pink flowers, the like of which she had not seen before, hung over one ledge. They were not wild roses, yet had a spicy fragrance. Here the little stream formed a sort of basin, and the overflow made the cascade down the winding way strewn with pebbles and stones worn smooth by the force of the early spring floods. How wonderfully beautiful it was! To the north, after a space of wild land, there was a prairie stretching out as far as one could see, golden green in the sunlight; to the east the lake, that seemed to gather all sorts of changeful, magical tints on its bosom.

She had never heard of the vale of Enna nor her prototype who stooped to pluck

"The fateful flower beside the rill,
The daffodil! The daffodil!"

as she sprang down to gather the blossoms. The stir in the woods did not alarm her. Her eyes were still over to the eastward drinking in that fine draught of celestial wine, the true nectar of life. A bird piped overhead. She laughed and answered him. Then a sudden darkness fell upon her, close, smothering. Her cry was lost in it. She was picked up, slung over some one's shoulder [244] and borne onward by a swift trot. Her arms were fast, she could only struggle feebly.

When at length she was placed on her feet and the blanket partly unrolled, she gave a cry.

"Hush, hush!" said a rough voice in Chippewa. "If you make a noise we shall kill you and throw you into the lake. Be silent and nothing shall harm you."

"Oh, let me go!" she pleaded. "Why do you want me?"

The blanket was drawn over her head again. Another stalwart Indian seized her and ran on with such strides that it nearly jolted the breath out of her body, and the close smell of the blanket made her faint. When the second Indian released her she fell to the ground in a heap.

"White Rose lost her breath, eh?"

"You have covered her too close. We are to deliver her alive. The white brave will have us murdered if she dies."

One of them brought some water from a stream near by, and it revived her.

"Give me a drink!" she cried, piteously. Then she glanced at her abductors. Four fierce looking Indians, two unusually tall and powerful. To resist would be useless.

"Whither are you going to take me?"

A grunt was the only reply, and they prepared to envelop her again. [245]

"Oh, let me walk a little," she besought. "I am stiff and tired."

"You will not give any alarm?"

Who could hear in this wild, solitary place?

"I will be quiet. Nay, do not put the blanket about me, it is so warm," she entreated.

One of the Indians threw it over his shoulder. Two others took an arm with a tight grasp and commenced a quick trot. They lifted her almost off her feet, and she found this more wearying than being carried.

"Do not go so fast," she pleaded.

The Indian caught her up and ran again. Her slim figure was as nothing to him. But it was better not to have her head covered.

There seemed a narrow path through these woods, a trail the Indians knew. Now and then they emerged from the woods to a more open space, but the sunlight was mostly shut out. Once more they changed and now they reached a stream and put down their burthen.

"We go now in a canoe," began the chief spokesman. "If the White Rose will keep quiet and orderly no harm will come to her. Otherwise her hands and feet must be tied."

Jeanne drew a long breath and looked from one to the other. Their faces were stolid. Questioning would be useless.

"I will be quiet," she made answer.

They spread the blanket about and seated her in the middle. One man took his place behind her, one in front, and each had two ends of the blanket to frustrate any desperate move. Then [246] another stood up to the paddle and steered the canoe swiftly along the stream, which was an arm

of a greater river emptying into the lake.

What could they want of her? Jeanne mused. Perhaps a ransom, she had heard such tales, though it was oftener after a battle that a prisoner was released by a ransom. She did not know in what direction they were taking her, everything was strange though she had been on many of the small streams about Detroit. Now the way was narrow, overhung with gloomy trees, here and there a white beech shining out in a ghostly fashion. The sun dropped down and darkness gathered, broken by the shrill cry of a wild cat or the prolonged howl of a wolf. Here they started a nest of waterfowl that made a great clatter, but they glided swiftly by. It grew darker and darker but they went silently with only a low grunt from one of the Indians now and then.

Presently they reached the main stream. This was much larger, with the shores farther off and clearer, though weird enough in the darkness. Stars were coming out. Jeanne watched them in the deep magnificent blue, golden, white, greenish and with crimson tints. Was the world beyond the stars as beautiful as this? But she knew no one there. She wondered a little about her mother —was she in that bright sphere? There was another Mother—

"O Mother of God," she cried in her soul, "have pity upon me! I put myself in thy care. Guard me from evil! Restore me to my home!" [247]

For it seemed, amid these rough savages, she sorely needed a mother's tender care. And she thought now there had been no loving woman in her life save Pani. Madame Bellestre had petted her, but she had lost her out of her life so soon. There had been the schoolmaster, that she could still think of with affection for all his queer fatherly interest and kindness; there was M. Loisel; and oh, Monsieur St. Armand, who was coming back in the early summer, and had some plans to lay before her. Even M. De Ber had been kindly and friendly, but Madame had never approved her. Poor Madame Campeau had come to love her, but often in her wandering moments she called her Berthê.

The quiet, the lapping of the waves, and perhaps a little fatigue overcame her at length. She dropped back against the Indian's knee, and her soft breath rose and fell peacefully. He drew the blanket up over her.

"Ugh! ugh!" he ejaculated, but she heard it not. "The tide is good, we shall make the Point before dawn."

The others nodded. They lighted their pipes, and presently the Indian at the paddle changed with one of his comrades and they stole on and on, both wind and tide in their favor. Several times their charge stirred but did not wake. Youth and health had overcome even anxiety.

There was dawn in the eastern sky. Jeanne roused. [248]

"Oh, where am I?" she cried in piercing accents; and endeavored to spring up.

"Thou art safe enough and naught has harmed thee," was the reply. "Keep quiet, that is all."

"Oh, where do you mean to take me? I am stiff and cold. Oh, let me change a little!"

She straightened herself and pulled the blanket over her. The same stolid faces that had refused any satisfaction last night met her gaze again in blankness.

There was a broad, open space of water, no longer the river. She glanced about. A sudden arrow of gold gleamed swiftly across it—then another, and it was a sea of flame with dancing crimson lights.

"It is the lake," she said. "Lake Huron." She had been up the picturesque shores of the St. Clair river.

The Indian nodded.

"You are going north?" A great terror overwhelmed her like a sudden revelation.

The answer was a solemn nod.

"Some one has hired you to do this."

Not a muscle in any stolid face moved.

"If I guess rightly will you tell me?"

There was a refusal in the shake of the head.

Jeanne Angelot at that moment could have leaped from the boat. Yet she knew it would be of no avail. A chill went through every pulse and turned it to the ice of apprehension.

The canoe made a turn and ran up an inlet. A great clump of trees hid a wigwam until they were in sight of it There was a smoke issuing from the rude chimney, and a savory smell permeated the air. Two squaws had been squatted before the blaze of the stone-built fireplace. They both rose and came down the narrow strip of beach. They were short, the older one had a squat, ungainly figure of great breadth for the height, and a most forbidding face. The other was much younger. [249]

Jeanne did not understand the language, but from a few words she guessed it was Huron. It

seemed at first as if there was fierce upbraiding from some cause, but it settled satisfactorily it would seem. She was helped out of the canoe. Oh, how good it was to stand free on the ground again!

The Indian who appeared to be the leader of the party took her arm and led her up to the inclosure, the back of which seemed rocks, one piled upon another. The wigwam was set against them. The rude shelter outside was the kitchen department, evidently. A huge kettle had been lifted from the coals and was still steaming. A bark platter was piled high with deliciously browned fish, and in spite of her terror and distrust she felt that she was hungry.

"If I might have some water," she asked hesitatingly,—"a drink and some to bathe my face and hands?"

The drink was offered her in a gourd cup. Then the younger woman led her within the wigwam. There was a rough earthen bowl filled with water, a bit of looking-glass framed in birch bark, a bed, and some rounds of logs for seats. Around hung articles of clothing, both native made and bought from the traders. [250]

"I understand Chippewa," announced Jeanne looking inquiringly at the woman.

She put her finger on her lip. Then she said, almost breathlessly, "We are not to talk to the French demoiselle."

"But tell me, am I to stay here?"

She gave a negative shake of the head.

"Am I to go—farther north?"

An affirmative nod this time.

"Wanee! Wanee!" was called sharply from without.

Jeanne sank on her knees.

"O Holy Mother of Christ, have pity on me and save me!" she cried. For the vague suspicion that had haunted her since waking, crystallized into a certainty. Part of a rosary came to her:—

"Heart of Jesus, refuge of sinners;
Heart of Jesus, fortitude of the just;
Heart of Jesus, comfort the afflicted."

Then she rose and made a brief toilet. She shook out her long hair, passing her damp hands over it, and it fell in curls again. She straightened her dress, but she still felt chill in the cool morning air. There was a cape of gull's feathers, hanging by the flap of the wigwam, and she reached it down making a sign to the woman asking permission.

She nodded assentingly.

It felt good and warm. Jeanne's breakfast was spread on a board resting on two stones. The squaw had made coffee out of some parched and ground grains, and it had a comforting flavor. The plate of fish was set before her and cakes of honey bread, and her coffee poured in a gourd bowl. The birds were singing overhead, and she could hear the lap of the tide in the lake, a soft tone of monotony. The beauty of it all penetrated her very soul. Even the group around the great kettle, dipping in their wooden spoons and gravely chatting, the younger woman smiling and one might almost imagine teasing them, had a picturesque aspect, and softened the thought of what might happen to-morrow. [251]

They lolled on the turf and smoked pipes afterward. Jeanne paced up and down within sight of their glances that she knew were fixed upon her in spite of the half-closed lids. It was so good to be free in the fragrant air, to stretch her cramped limbs and feel the soft short grass under her feet. Dozens of wild plans flashed through her brain. But she knew escape was impossible, and she wondered what was to be the next move. Were they awaiting the trader, Louis Marsac?

Plainly they were not. When they were rested and had eaten again and had drunk a thick liquid made of roots and barks and honey, they rose and went toward the canoe, as if discussing some matter. They parleyed with the elder woman, who brought out two blankets and a pine needle cushion, which they threw in the boat, then a bottle of water from the spring, a gourd cup and some provisions. [252]

"Come," the leader said, not unkindly. "Thou hast had a rest. We must be on our journey."

Pleading would be in vain, she recognized that. The women could not befriend her even if they would. So she allowed herself to be helped into the canoe, and the men pushed off amid the rather vociferous jargon of the women. She was made much more comfortable than before, though so seated that either brave could reach out his long arm and snatch her from any untoward resolve.

She looked down into the shining waters. Did she really care to try them? The hope of youth is unbounded and its trust in the future sublime. She did not want to die. Life was a glad, sweet thing to her, even if full of vague dreams, and she hoped somehow to be delivered from this danger, to find a friend raised up for her. Stories of miracles and wonderful rescues floated

through her mind. Surely God would not let her fall a prey to this man she both feared and hated. She could feel his one hot, vicious kiss upon her lips even yet.

The woods calmed and soothed her with their grays and greens, and the infrequent birches, tall and slim, with circles of white still about them. Great tree boles stood up like hosts of silent Indian warriors, ready to pounce down on one. They hugged the shore closely, sometimes it was translucent green, and one could almost catch the darting fishes with one's hand. Then the dense shade rendered it black, and it seemed bottomless.

So gliding along, keeping well out of the reach of other craft, the hours growing more tiresome [253]
to Jeanne, they passed the Point Aux Barques and steered across Saginaw bay. Once they had stopped for a little rest and a tramp along the shore. Then another evening dropped down upon them, another night, and Jeanne slept from a sort of exhaustion.

The next forenoon they landed at one of the islands, where a trading vessel of considerable size and fair equipment lay at anchor. A man on deck with a glass had been sighting them. She had not noted him particularly, in fact she was weary and disheartened with her journey and her fears. But they made a sudden turn and came up to the vessel, poled around to the shore side, when she was suddenly lifted up by strong arms and caught by other arms with a motion so rapid she could not have struggled if she had wished. And now she was set down almost roughly.

"Welcome, my fair demoiselle," said a voice whose triumph was in no degree disguised. "How shall I ever thank you for this journey you have taken to meet me? I could have made it pleasanter for you if you would have consented a little earlier. But a willful girl takes her own way, and her way is sweet to the man who loves her, no matter how briery the path may be."

Jeanne Angelot was stunned. Then her worst fears were realized. She was in the power of Louis Marsac. Oh, why had she not thrown herself into the river; why had she not seized the knife with which they had been cutting venison steak yester morn and ended it all? She tried to speak [254]
—her lips were dry, and her tongue numb as well as dumb.

He took her arm. As if deprived of resistance she suffered herself to be led forward and then down a few steps. He opened a door.

"See," he said, "I have arranged a pretty bower for you, and a servant to wait upon you. And now, Mam'selle Angelot, further refusal is useless. To-morrow or next day at the latest the priest will make us man and wife."

"I will never be your wife alive," she said. Every pulse within her shrank from the desecration.

"Oh, yes, you will," and he smiled with a blandness that was maddening. "When we are once married I shall be very sweet and gentle. I shall wait with such patience that you will learn to pity me at first. My devotion will be so great that even a heart of marble could not resist. Mam'selle, the sun and the rain will wear away the stoutest rocks in time, and in the split crevices there grows some tiny flower. That is the way it is with the most resolute woman's heart. And you are not much more than a child. Then—you have no lover."

Jeanne stood spellbound. Was it possible that she should ever come to love this man? Yet in her childhood she had been very fond of him. She was a great puzzle to herself at this moment. All the old charms and fascinations that had been part of the lore of her childhood, weird stories that Touchas had told, but which were forbidden by the Church, rushed over her. She was full of [255]
terror at herself as well as of Louis Marsac.

He read the changes in her countenance, but he did not understand her shrinking from an abhorred suitor, nor the many fine and delicate lines of restraint that had come to hedge her about, to impress a peculiar responsibility of her own soul that would be degraded by the bondage. She had seen some of it in other girls mated to coarse natures.

"My beautiful bird shall have everything. We will go up to the head of the great lake where my father has a lodge that is second only to that of the White Chief. I am his only son. He wishes for my marriage. Jeanne, he will give thee such a welcome as no woman ever had. The costliest furs shall be thine, jewels from abroad, servants to come at the bidding of thy finger—"

"I do not want them!" she interrupted, vehemently. "I have told you I do not want to be the wife of any man. Give me the freedom you have stolen from me. Send me back to Detroit. Oh, there must be women ready to marry you. Let me go."

Her voice had a piercing sweetness. Even anger could not have made it harsh. She dropped on her knees; she raised her beautiful eyes in passionate entreaty.

There was much of the savage Indian in him. He would enjoy her subjugation. It would begin gently, then he would tighten the cord until she had paid back to the uttermost, even to the blow she had given him. But he was too astute to begin here. [256]

"Thou shalt go back in state as my wife. Ere long my father will be as big a magnate as the White Chief. Detroit will be proud to honor us both, when we shall be chiefs of the great copper country. Rise, Star of the Morning. Then, whatever thou shalt ask as my wife shall be granted to thee."

She rose only to throw herself on the pile of hemlock cushions, face downward to shut him out of her sight. Was he some strange, evil spirit in a man's shape?

Noko, an old woman, waited on her. If she knew Chippewa or French she would not use them. She cooked savory messes. At night she slept on the mat of skins at the door; during the day she was outside mostly. The door was bolted and locked beside, but both bolt and lock were outside. The window with its small panes of greenish glass was securely fastened.

Jeanne could tie a band about her neck and choke herself to death. It would be horrible to strangle, and she shuddered. She had no weapon of any kind. The woman watched her while she ate and took away all the dishes when she was through.

The cabin was not large, but arranged with much taste. The sides were covered with bark and long strips of Indian embroidery, and curious plates or tiles of polished stone secured by the corners. On one side a roomy couch raised above the floor, fragrant with newly gathered balsam of fir and sweet grass, and covered with blankets of fine weaves, and skins cured to marvelous softness. Two chairs that were also hung with embroidery done on silk, and a great square [257] wooden seat covered with mottled fawn skin. Bunches of dried, sweet herbs were suspended in the corners, with curious imitation flowers made of dainty feathers, bits of bark, and various colored leaves.

Sometimes she raged like a wild creature in her cage. She would not speak when Louis entered the room. She had a horrible fear of his blandishments. There were days and nights,—how many she did not know for there was the torture of hundreds comprised in them. Then she wept and prayed. There was the great Manitou Touchas and many of the Indian women believed in; there was the good God the schoolmaster had talked about, and the minister at the chapel, who had sent his Son to save all who called upon him, and why not be saved in this world as well as the next? In heaven all would be safe—yes, it was here that people needed to be saved from a thousand dangers. And there was the good God of the Church and the Holy Mother and all the blessed saints. Oh, would they not listen to one poor little girl? She did not want to die. All her visions of life and love were bounded by dear Detroit, La Belle Detroit.

"O Holy Father, hear me!
O Blessed Mother of God, hear me!
O Precious Son of Mary, hear me!"

she cried on her knees, until a strange peace came to her soul. She believed there would be some miracle for her. There had been for others. [258]

At noon, one day, they came to a landing. There was some noise and confusion, much tramping and swearing. She heard Marsac at the door talking to Noko in French and the woman answering him. Her heart beat so that it well-nigh strangled her. But he did not come in. Presently the rumbling and unloading were over, and there was no sound but the oscillation of the vessel as it floundered in the tide with short beats, until the turning, and then the motion grew more endurable. If she could only see! But from her window there was nothing save an expanse of water, dotted with canoes and some distant islands. The cabin was always in semi-twilight.

There was a fumbling at the door presently. The bolt was drawn, the lock snapped; and the door was opened cautiously. It was neither Noko nor Marsac, but some one in a soft, gray blanket, with white borders. The corner was thrown over her head. She turned stealthily, took out the key, and locked the door again on the inside. Then she faced Jeanne who had half risen, and her blanket fell to the floor.

A handsome Indian girl, arrayed in a beautiful costume that bespoke rank in the wearer. Across her brow was a fillet made of polished stones that sparkled like jewels. Her long, black hair nearly reached her knees. Her skin was fine and clear, of a light bronze tint, through which the pink in her cheeks glowed. Her eyes were larger and softer than most of her race, of a liquid blackness, her nose was straight and slim, with fine nostrils, and her mouth like an opening rose, the under petal falling apart. [259]

She came close to the white girl who shrank back terrified at the eyes fixed so resolutely on her.

"You are the French girl who wants to marry Louis Marsac," she hissed, between her white teeth.

"I am a French girl, Jeanne Angelot, and he stole me from Detroit. I do not want to marry him. Oh, no! a thousand times no! I have told him that I shall kill myself if he forces me to marry him!"

The Indian girl looked amazed. Her hands dropped at her side. Her eyes flickered in wavering lights, and her breath came in gasps.

"You do not want to marry him?"

Her voice was hoarse, guttural. "Ah, you lie! You make believe! It cannot be! Why, then, did you come up here? And why has he gone to L'Arbre Croche for the priest he expected?"

"I told you. He hired some Indians to take me from Detroit, after his boat had left. I would not go. I did not want to marry him and said '*no*' dozens of times. They took me out in a canoe. I think they were Hurons; I did not understand their language. Somewhere—I do not know where we are now, and I cannot remember the days that passed, but they met the trader's boat and put me on it, and then I knew it was Louis Marsac who had stolen me. Has he gone for a priest? Is that what you said? Oh, save me! Help me to escape. I might throw myself into the bay, but I can swim. I

should not like to die when life is so sweet and beautiful, and I am afraid I should try to save myself or some one might rescue me. Oh, believe it is no lie! I do not want to marry him." [260]

"You have another lover?" The eyes seemed to pierce her through, as if sure of an affirmative.

"I have no lover, not even in Detroit. I do not like love. It is foolish and full of hot kisses, and I do not want to marry. Oh, save me if you have any pity! Help me to escape!"

She slipped down at the Indian girl's feet and caught at the garment of feathers so smooth and soft it seemed like satin.

"See here." The visitor put her hand in her bosom and drew forth a small dagger with a pearl hilt in which was set jewels. Jeanne shuddered, but remained on her knees, glancing up piteously.

"See here. I came to kill you. I said no French girl, be she beautiful as moonlight on the lake, shall marry Louis Marsac. He belongs to me. No woman shall be folded in his arms or lie on his breast or rejoice in the kisses of his mouth and live! I cannot understand. When one has tasted the sweetness—and he is so handsome, not so different from his mother's race but that I am a fit mate for him. My father was a chief, and there was a quarrel between him and a relative who claimed the right, and he was killed. Ah, you can never know how good and tender Louis was to me, so different from most of the clumsy Canadian traders; next, I think, to the great White Chief of the island; yes, handsomer, though not as large. All the winter and spring he loved me. And this cabin was mine. I came here many times. He loves me unless you have stolen his heart with [261] some evil charm. Stand up; see. I am as tall as you. My skin is fine and clear, if not as pale as the white faces; and yours—pouf! you have no rose in your cheeks. Is not my mouth made for kisses? I like those that burn as fire running through your veins. And my hand—" she caught Jeanne's hand and compared them. "It is as slim and soft, and the pink is under the nails. And my hair is like a veil, reaching to my knees. Yes, I am a fitter mate than you, who are naught but a child, with no shape that fills a man with admiration. Is it that you have worked some evil charm?"

Jeanne's eyes were distended with horror. Now that death and escape were near she shrank with the fear of all young things who have known naught of life but its joy. She could not even beg, her tongue seemed paralyzed.

They would have made a statue worthy of a sculptor as they stood there, the Indian girl in her splendid attire and the utmost beauty of her race, with the dagger in one hand; and the girl, pale now as a snow wreath, at her feet.

"Would you go away, escape?" Some curious thoughts had flashed into Owaissa's brain.

"Oh, help me, help me! I will beg my way back to Detroit. I will pray that all his love may be given to you; morning and night I will pray on my knees. Oh, believe, believe!"

The Indian girl could not doubt her sincerity. But with the injustice of a passionate, jealous love she did not so much blame her recreant lover. Some charm, some art, must have been used, [262] perhaps by a third person, and the girl be guiltless. And if she could send her away and remain in her stead—

She gave a soft, musical ripple of laughter. So pretty Minnehaha must have laughed when Longfellow caught the sound in his charmed brain. She put up her dagger. She raised Jeanne, wondering, but no longer afraid. This was the miracle she had prayed for and it had come to pass.

"Listen. You shall go. The night comes on and it is a long sail; but you will not be afraid. The White Chief will take you in, but when you tell your story say it was Indians who stole you. For if you bring any harm to Louis Marsac I will follow you and kill you even if it were leagues beyond sunset, in the wild land that no one has penetrated. Remember. Promise by the great Manitou. Kiss my hand;" and she held it out.

Jeanne obeyed. Could escape be so near? Her heart beats almost strangled her.

"Wanita is my faithful slave. He will do my bidding and you need not be afraid. My canoe lies down below there," and she indicated the southern end with a motion of her head. "You will take this ring to him and he will know that the message comes from me. Oh, you will not hesitate?"

Jeanne raised her head proudly. "I will obey you to the letter. But—how will I find him?"

"You will go off the boat and walk down below the dock. There is a clump of scrub pines blown [263] awry; then a little cove; the boat lies there; you will say 'Wanita,' twice; he will come and you will give him the ring; then he will believe you."

"But how shall I get off the boat? And how did you get the key? And Noko—"

"I had a key. It was mine all the early spring. I used to come and we sailed around, but I would not be a wife until a French priest could marry us, and he said 'wait, wait,' and an Indian girl is proud to obey the man she loves. And when it was time for him to return I came down from the Strait and heard—this—that his heart had been stolen from me and that when Father Hugon did not come he was very angry and has gone up to the island. They have much illness there it seems."

"Then I give you back all I ever had, oh, so gladly."

"Your father, perhaps, wanted him and saw some woman who dealt in charms?"

"I have no father or mother. A poor old Indian woman cares for me. She was my nurse, everything. Oh, her heart will be broken! And this White Chief will surely let me go to Detroit?"

"He is good and gracious to all, and just. That is why you must not mention Marsac's name, for he might not understand about the wicked go-between. There are *shil loups*, spirits of wretched people who wander about making mischief. But I must believe thee. Thine eyes are truthful."

She brushed Jeanne's hair from her forehead and looked keenly, questioningly into them. They met the glance with the shine of innocence and truth that never wavered in their heavenly blue. [264]

"The White Chief has boats that go up and down continually. You will get safely to Detroit."

"And you?" inquired Jeanne. [265]

CHAPTER XVI.

RESCUED.

"And you?" repeated Jeanne Angelot when Owaissa seemed lost in thought.

"I shall remain here. When Louis Marsac comes I will break the fatal spell that bound him, and the priest will marry us. I shall make him very happy, for we are kindred blood; happier than any cool-blooded, pale-face girl could dream. And now you must set out. The sun is going down. You will not be faint of heart?"

"I shall be so glad! And I shall be praying to the good Christ and his Mother to make you happy and give you all of Louis Marsac's heart. No, I shall not be afraid. And you are quite sure the White Chief will befriend me?"

"Oh, yes. And his wife is of Indian blood, a great Princess from Hudson Bay, and the handsomest woman of the North, the kindest and most generous to those in sorrow or trouble. The White Queen she is called. Oh, yes, if I had a sister that needed protection, I should send her to the White Queen. Oh, do not be afraid." Then she took both of Jeanne's hands in hers and kissed her on the forehead. "I am glad I did not have to kill you," she added with the naïve innocence of perfect truth. "I think you are the kind of girl out of whom they make nuns, who [266] care for no men but the fathers, and yet they must adore some one. In thy convent cell pray for me that I may have brave sons."

Jeanne made no protest against the misconstruction. Her heart was filled with gratitude and wonder, yet she could hardly believe.

"You must take my blanket," and Owaissa began draping it about her.

"But—Noko?" said the French girl.

"Noko is soundly asleep. And the sailors are throwing dice or drinking rum. Their master cannot be back until dark. Go your way proudly, as if you had the blood of a hundred braves in your veins. They are often a cowardly set, challenging those who are weak and fearful. Do not mind."

"Oh, the good Father bless you forevermore." Jeanne caught the hands and covered them with kisses. "And you will not be afraid of—of *his* anger?"

"I am not afraid. I am glad I came, though it was with such a desperate purpose. Here is my ring," and she slipped it on Jeanne's finger. "Give it to Wanita when you are landed. He is faithful to me and this is our seal."

She unlocked the door. Noko was in a little heap on the mat, snoring.

"Go straight over. Never mind the men. You will see the plank, and then go round the little point. Adieu. I wish thee a safe voyage home."

Jeanne pressed the hands again. She was like one in a dream. She felt afraid the men would question her, perhaps order her back. Two of them were asleep. She tripped down the plank, [267] turned the corner of the dock and saw the clump of trees. Still she hardly dared breathe until she had passed it and found the canoe beached, and a slim young Indian pacing up and down.

"Wanita, Wanita!" she exclaimed, timorously.

He studied her in surprise. Yes, that was her blanket. "Mistress—" going closer, and then hesitating.

"Here is her ring, Owaissa's ring. And she bade me—she stays on the boat. Louis Marsac comes with a priest."

"Then it was a lie, an awful black lie they told my mistress about his marrying a French girl! By all the moons in a twelvemonth she is his wife. And you—" studying her with severe scrutiny.

"I am the French girl. It was a mistake. But I must get away, and she sends me to the White Chief. She said one could trust you to the death."

"I would go to the death for my beautiful mistress. The White Chief—yes."

Then he helped her into the canoe and made her comfortable with the blankets.

"I wish it were earlier," he exclaimed. "The purple spirits of the night are stretching out their hands. You will not be afraid? It is a long pull."

"Oh, no, no!" She drew a relieved breath, but every pulse had been so weighted with anxiety for days that she could not realize her freedom. Oh, how good the blessed air felt! All the wide expanse about her brought a thrill of delight, still not unmixed with fear. A boat came bearing [268] down upon them and she held her breath, but the canoe moved aside adroitly.

"They were drunken fellows, no doubt," said Wanita. "It is told of the Sieur Cadillac that he weakened the rum and would allow a man only so much. It is a pity there is no such strictness now. The White Chief tries."

"Is he chief of the Indians?" she asked, vaguely.

"Oh, no. He is in the great council of the fur traders, but he has ever been fair to the Indians; strict, too, and they honor him, believe in him, and do his bidding. That is, most of them do. He settles many quarrels. It is not now as it used to be. Since the coming of the white men tribes have been split in parts and chiefs of the same nation fight for power. He tries to keep peace between them and the whites. There would be many wars without him."

"But he is not an Indian?"

"Oh, no. He came from Canada to the fur country. He had known great sorrow. His wife and child had been massacred by the red men. And then he married a beautiful Indian princess somewhere about Hudson Bay. He had so many men under him that they called him the White Chief, and partly, I think, because he was so noble and large and grand. Then he built his house on the island where one side is perpendicular rocks, and fortified it and made of it a most lovely home for his beautiful wife. She has everything from all countries, it is said, and the house is [269] grand as the palaces at Montreal. They have two sons. They come over to Fort St. Ignace and Michilimackinac, and he has taken her to Quebec, where, it is said, she was entertained like a queen. He is very proud of her and adores her. Ah, if you could see him you would know at once that he was a grand man. But courageous and high spirited as he is, he is always counseling peace. There is much bitter feeling still between the French and English, and now, since the Americans have conquered, the English are stirring up strife with the Indians, it is said. He advises them to make homes and settle peaceably, and hunt at the north where there is still plenty of game. He has bought tracts of land for them, but my nation are not like the white men. They despise work." Jeanne knew that well.

Then Wanita asked her about Detroit. He had been up North; his mistress had lived at Mackinaw and St. Ignace. All the spring she had been about Lake Superior, which was grand, and the big lake on the other side, Lake Michigan. Sometimes he had cared for M. Marsac's boat.

"M. Marsac was your lady's lover."

"Oh, Mam'selle, he was devoted before he went to Detroit. He is rich and handsome, you see, and there are many women smiling on him. There were at Mackinaw. The white ladies do not mind a little Indian blood when there is money. But Owaissa is for him, and she will be as grand a lady as the White Queen."

Wanita wished in his secret soul Louis Marsac was as grand as the White Chief. But few men were. [270]

And now the twilight was gone and the broad sheet of water was weird, moving blackness. The canoe seemed so frail, that used as she was to it Jeanne drew in fear with every breath. If there were only a moon! It was cold, too. She drew the blanket closer round her.

"Are we almost there?" she inquired.

"Oh, no, Mam'selle. Are you tired? If you could sing to pass away the time."

Jeanne essayed some French songs, but her heart was not light enough. Then they lapsed into silence. On and on—there was no wind and they were out of the strongest current, so there was no danger.

What was Owaissa doing, thinking? Had Louis Marsac returned with the priest? Was it true she had come to kill her, Jeanne? How strange one should love a man so deeply, strongly! She shuddered. She had only cared for quiet and pleasant wanderings and Pani. Perhaps it was all some horrid dream. Or was it true one could be bewitched?

Sometimes she drowsed. She recalled the night she had slept against the Huron's knee. Would the hours or the journey ever come to an end? She said over the rosary and all the prayers she could remember, interspersing them with thanksgivings to the good God and to Owaissa.

Something black and awful loomed up before her. She uttered a cry.

"We are here. It is nothing to be afraid of. We go around to this side, so. There is a little basin here, and a sort of wharf. It is almost a fort;" and he laughed lightly as he helped her out on to [271] dry ground, stony though it was.

"I will find the gate. The White Chief has this side well picketed, and there are enough within to defend it against odds, if the odds ever come. Now, here is the gate and I must ring. Do not be frightened, it is always closed at dusk."

The clang made Jeanne jump, and cling to her guide.

There was a step after a long while. A plate was pushed partly aside and a voice said through the grating:—

"What is it?"

"It is I, Wanita, Loudac. I have some one who has been in danger, a little maid from Detroit, stolen away by Indians. My mistress Owaissa begs shelter for her until she can be returned. It was late when she was rescued from her enemies and we stole away by night."

"How many of you?"

"The maid and myself, and—our canoe," with a light laugh. "The canoe is fastened to a stake. And I must go back, so there is but one to throw upon your kindness."

"Wait," said the gate keeper. There were great bolts to be withdrawn and chains rattled. Presently the creaking gate opened a little way and the light of a lantern flared out. Jeanne was dazed for an instant.

"I will not come in, good Loudac. It is a long way back and my mistress may need me. Here is the maid," and he gave Jeanne a gentle push. [272]

"From Detroit?" The interlocutor was a stout Canadian and seemed gigantic to Jeanne. "And 'scaped from the Indians. Lucky they did not spell, it with another letter and leave no top to thy head. Wanita, lad, thou hadst better come in and have a sup of wine. Or remain all night."

But Wanita refused with cordial thanks.

"Here is the ring;" and Jeanne pressed it in his hand. "And a thousand thanks, tell your brave mistress."

With a quick adieu he was gone.

"I must find shelter for you to-night, for our lady cannot be disturbed," he said. "Come this way."

The bolts and chains were put in place again. Jeanne followed her guide up some steps and through another gate. There was a lodge and a light within. A woman in a short gown of blue and a striped petticoat looked out of the doorway and made a sharp inquiry.

"A maid who must tell her own story, good dame, for my wits seem scattered. She hath been sent by Owaissa the Indian maiden and brought by her servitor in a canoe. Tell thy story, child."

"She is shivering with the cold and looks blue as a midwinter icicle. She must have some tea to warm her up. Stir a fire, Loudac."

Jeanne sat trembling and the tears ran down her cheeks. In a moment there was a fragrant blaze of pine boughs, and a kettle swung over them.

"A little brandy would be better," said the man. [273]

Now that the strain was over Jeanne felt as if all her strength had given way. Was she really safe? The hearty French accent sounded like home; and the dark, round face, with the almost laughing black eyes, albeit there were wrinkles around them, cheered her inmost heart. The tea was soon made and the brandy added a piquant flavor.

"Thou wert late starting on thy journey," said the woman, a tint of suspicion in her voice.

"It was only this afternoon that the Indian maid Owaissa found me and heard my story. For safety she sent me away at once. Perhaps in the daytime I might have been pursued."

"True, true. An Indian knows best about Indian ways. Most of them are a treacherous, bad lot, made much worse by drink, but there are a few. The maiden Owaissa comes from the Strait."

"To meet her lover it was said. He is that handsome half or quarter breed, Louis Marsac, a shrewd trader for one so young, and who, with his father, is delving in the copper mines of Lake Superior. Yes. What went before, child?"

She was glad to leave Marsac. Could she tell her story without incriminating him? The first part went smoothly enough. Then she hesitated and felt her color rising. "It was at Bois Blanc," she said. "They had left me alone. The beautiful Indian girl was there, and I begged her to save me. I told her my story and she wrapped me in her blanket. We were much the same size, and though I trembled so that my knees bent under me, I went off the boat without any question. [274] Wanita was waiting with the canoe and brought me over."

"Were you not afraid—and there was no moon?"

Jeanne raised her eyes to the kindly ones.

"Oh, yes," she answered with a shiver. "Lake Huron is so large, only there are islands scattered about. But when it grew very dark I simply trusted Wanita."

"And he could go in a canoe to the end of the world if it was all lakes and rivers," exclaimed Loudac. "These Indians—did you know their tribe?"

"I think two were Hurons. They could talk bad French," and she smiled. "And Chippewa, that I can understand quite well."

"Were your relatives in Detroit rich people?"

"Oh, no, I have none." Then Jeanne related her simple story.

"Strange! strange!" Loudac stroked his beard and drew his bushy eyebrows together. "There could have been no thought of ransom. I mistrust, pretty maid, that it must have been some one who watched thee and wanted thee for his squaw. Up in the wild North there would have been little chance to escape. Thou hast been fortunate in finding Owaissa. Her lover's boat came in at Bois Blanc. I suppose she went to meet him. Dame, it is late, and the child looks tired as one might well be after a long journey. Canst thou not find her a bed?"

The bed was soon improvised. Jeanne thanked her protectors with overflowing eyes and tremulous voice. For a long while she knelt in thanksgiving, her simple faith discerning a real [275] miracle in her escape. Surely God had sent Owaissa. She forgot the fell purpose of the Indian girl, and wondered at her love for Louis Marsac.

There was much confusion and noise among the children the next morning while the dame was giving them their breakfast, but Jeanne slept soundly until they were all out at play. The sun shone as she opened her eyes, and one ray slanted across the window. Oh, where was she, in prison still? Then, by slow degrees, yesterday came back to her.

The dame greeted her cheerily, and set before her a simple breakfast that tasted most delicious. Loudac had gone up to the great house.

"For when the White Chief is away, Loudac has charge of everything. Once he saved the master's life, he was his servant then, and since that time he has been the head of all matters. The White Chief trusts him like a brother. But look you, both of them came from France and there is no mixed blood in them. Rough as Loudac seems his mother was of gentle birth, and he can read and write not only French but English, and is a judge of fine furs and understands business. He is shrewd to know people as well," and she gave a satisfied smile.

"The White Chief is away—"

"He has gone up to Michilimackinac, perhaps to Hudson Bay. But all goes on here just the same. Loudac has things well in hand."

"I would like to return to Detroit," ventured Jeanne, timidly, glancing up with beseeching eyes. [276]

"That thou shalt, *ma petite*. There will be boats going down before cold weather. The winter comes early here, and yet it is not so cold as one would think, with plenty of furs and fire."

"And the—the queen—" hesitatingly.

The dame laughed heartsomely.

"Thou shalt see her. She is our delight, our dear mistress, and has many names given her by her loving chief. It is almost ten years ago that he found her up North, a queen then with a little band of braves who adored her. They had come from some far country. She was not of their tribe; she is as white almost as thou, and tall and handsome and soft of voice as the sweetest singing bird. Then they fell in love with each other, and the good père at Hudson Bay married them. He brought her here. She bought the island because it seemed fortified with the great rocks on two sides of it. Often they go away, for he has a fine vessel that is like a palace in its fittings. They have been to Montreal and out on that wild, strange coast full of islands. Whatever she wishes is hers."

Jeanne sighed a little, but not from envy.

"There are two boys, twins, and a little daughter born but two years ago. The boys are big and handsome, and wild as deer. But their father will have them run and climb and shout and play ball and shoot arrows, but not go out alone in a boat. Yet they can swim like fishes. Come, if you can eat no more breakfast, let us go out. I do not believe Detroit can match this, though it is larger." [277]

There was a roadway about the palisades with two gates near either end, then a curiously laid up stone wall where the natural rocks had failed. Here on this plateau were cottages and lodges. Canadians, some trusty Indians, and a sprinkling of half-breeds made a settlement, it would seem. There were gardens abloom, fruit trees and grapevines, making a pleasant odor in the early autumnal sun. There were sheep pasturing, a herd of tame, beautiful deer, cows in great sheds, and fowl domesticated, while doves went circling around overhead. Still another wall

almost hid the home of the White Chief, the name he was best known by, and as one might say at that time a name to conjure with, for he was really the manipulator of many of the Indian tribes, and endeavored to keep the peace among them and deal fairly with them in the fur trading. To the English he had proved a trusty neighbor, to the French a true friend, though his advice was not always palatable.

"Oh, it is beautiful!" cried Jeanne. "Something like the farms outside of the palisades at home. Inside—" she made a pretty gesture of dissatisfaction,—"the town is crowded and dirty and full of bad smells, except at the end where some of the officers and the court people and the rich folk live. They are building some new places up by the military gardens and St. Anne's Church, and beside the little river, where everything keeps green and which is full of ducks and swans and herons. And the great river is such a busy place since the Americans came. But they have not so many soldiers in the garrison, and we miss the glitter of the scarlet and the gold lace and the [278] music they used to have. Still the flag is beautiful; and most people seem satisfied. I like the Americans," Jeanne said proudly.

The dame shook her head, but not in disapprobation altogether.

"The world is getting much mixed," she said. "I think the English still feel bitter, but the French accept. Loudac hears the White Chief talk of a time when all shall live together peaceably and, instead of trying to destroy each other and their cities and towns, they will join hands in business and improvement. For that is why the Indians perish and leave so few traces,—they are bent upon each other's destruction, so the villages and fields are laid waste and people die of starvation. There are great cities in Europe, I have heard, that have stood hundreds of years, and palaces and beautiful churches, and things last through many generations. Loudac was in a town called Paris, when he was a little boy, and it is like a place reared by fairy hands."

"Oh, yes, Madame, it is a wonderful city. I have read about it and seen pictures," said Jeanne, eagerly.

"There are books and pictures up at the great house. And here comes Loudac."

"Ha! my bright Morning Star, you look the better for a night's sleep. I have been telling Miladi about our frightened refugee, and she wishes to see you. Will it please you to come now?"

Jeanne glanced from one to the other. [279]

"Oh, you need not feel afraid, you that have escaped Indians and crossed the lake in the night. For Miladi, although the wife of the great White Chief, and grand enough when necessary, is very gentle and kindly; is she not, dame?"

The dame laughed. "Run along, *petite*," she said. "I must attend to the house."

Inside this inclosure there was a really beautiful garden, a tiny park it might be justly called. Birds of many kinds flew about, others of strange plumage were in latticed cages. The walks were winding to make the place appear larger; there was a small lake with water plants and swans, and beds of brilliant flowers, trees that gave shade, vines that distributed fragrance with every passing breeze. Here in a dainty nest, that was indeed a vine-covered porch, sat a lady in a chair that suggested a throne to Jeanne, who thought she had never seen anyone so beautiful. She was not fair like either English or French, but the admixture of blood had given her a fine, creamy skin and large brownish eyes that had the softness of a fawn's. Every feature was clearly cut and perfect. Jeanne thought of a marble head that stood on the shelf of the minister's study at Detroit that was said to have come from a far country called Italy.

As for her attire, that was flowered silk and fine lace, and some jewels on her arms and fingers in golden settings that glittered like the rays of sunrise when she moved them. There were buckles of gems on her slippers, and stockings of strangely netted silk where the ivory flesh shone through. [280]

Jeanne dropped on her knees at the vision, and it smiled on her. No saint at the Recollet house was half as fair.

"This is the little voyager cast upon our shore, Miladi," explained Loudac with a bow and a touch of his hand to his head. "But Wanita did not wreck her, only left her in our safe keeping until she can be returned to her friends."

"Sit here, Mam'selle," and Miladi pointed to a cushion near her. Her French was musical and soft. "It is quite a story, and not such an unusual one either. Many maidens, I think, have been taken from home and friends, and have finally learned to be satisfied with a life they would not have chosen. You came from Detroit, Loudac says."

"Yes, Miladi," Jeanne answered, timidly.

"Do not be afraid." The lady laughed with ripples like a little stream dropping over pebbly ways. "There is a story that my mother shared a like fate, only she had to grow content with strange people and a strange land. How was it? I have a taste for adventures."

Jeanne's girlish courage and spirits came back in a flash. Yet she told her story carefully, bridging the little space where so much was left out.

"Owaissa is a courageous maiden. It is said she carries a dagger which she would not be afraid

to use. She has some strange power over the Indians. Her father was wronged out of his chieftaincy and then murdered. She demanded the blood price, and his enemies were given up to the tribe that took her under their protection. Yet I wonder a little that she should choose Louis [281] Marsac. The White Chief, my husband, does not think him quite true in all his dealings, especially with women. But if he trifled with her there would be a tragedy."

Jeanne shuddered. The tragedy had come so near.

Miladi asked some questions hard for Jeanne to answer with truth; how she had come up the lake, and if her captors had treated her well.

"It seems quite mysterious," she said.

Then they talked about Detroit, and Jeanne's past life, and Miladi was more puzzled than ever.

A slim young Indian woman brought in the baby, a dainty girl of two years old, who ran swiftly to her mother and began chattering in French with pretty broken words, and looking shyly at the guest. Then there was a great shout and a rush as of a flock of birds.

"I beat Gaston, maman, six out of ten shots."

"But two arrows broke. They were good for nothing," interrupted the second boy.

"And can't Antoine take us out fishing—" the boy stopped and came close to Jeanne, wonderingly.

"This is Mademoiselle Jeanne," their mother said, "Robert and Gaston. Being twins there is no elder."

They were round, rosy, sunburned boys, with laughing eyes and lithe figures.

"Can you swim?" queried Robert.

"Oh, yes," and a bright smile crossed Jeanne's face.

"And paddle a canoe and row?" [282]

"Yes, indeed. Many a time in the Strait, with the beautiful green shores opposite."

"What strait, Mackinaw?"

"Oh, no. It is the river Detroit, but often called a strait."

"You can't manage a bow!" declared Robert.

"Yes. And fire a pistol. And—run."

"And climb trees?" The dark eyes were alight with mirth.

"Why, yes." Then Jeanne glanced deprecatingly at Miladi, so elegant, so refined, if the word had come to her, but it remained in the chaos of thought. "I was but a wild little thing in childhood, and there was no one except Pani—my Indian nurse."

"Then come and run a race. The Canadians are clumsy fellows."

Robert grasped her arm. Gaston stood tilted on one foot, as if he could fly.

"Oh, boys, you are too rough! Mam'selle will think you worse than wild Indians."

"I should like to run with them, Miladi." Jeanne's eyes sparkled, and she was a child again.

"As thou wilt." Miladi smiled and nodded. So much of the delight of her soul was centered in these two handsome, fearless boys beloved by their father. Once she remembered she had felt almost jealous.

"I will give you some odds," cried Jeanne. "I will not start until you have reached the pole of the roses."

"No! no! no!" they shouted. "Girls cannot run at the end of the race. There we will win," and they laughed gayly. [283]

They were fleet as deer. Jeanne did not mean to outstrip them, but she was seized with enthusiasm. It was as if she had wings to her feet and they would not lag, even if the head desired it. She was breathless, with flying hair and brilliant color, as she reached the goal and turned to see two brave but disappointed faces.

"I told you it was not fair," she began. "I am larger than you, taller and older. You should have had odds."

"But we can always beat Berthê Loudac, and she is almost as big as you. And some of the Indian boys."

"Let us try it again. Now I will give you to the larch tree."

They started off, looking back when they reached that point and saw her come flying. She was not so eager now and held back toward the last. Gaston came in with a shout of triumph and in

two seconds Robert was at the goal. She laughed joyously. Their mother leaning over a railing laughed also and waved her handkerchief as they both glanced up.

"How old are you?" asked Robert.

"Almost sixteen, I believe."

"And we are eight."

"That is twice as old."

"And when we are sixteen we will run twice as fast, faster than the Indians. We shall win the races. We are going up North then. Don't you want to go?"

Jeanne shook her head. [284]

"But then girls do not go fur hunting. Only the squaws follow, to make the fires and cook the meals. And you would be too pretty for a squaw. You must be a lady like maman, and have plenty of servants. Oh, we will ask father to bring you a husband as strong and nice and big as he is! And then he will build you a lodge here. No one can have such a splendid house as maman; he once said so."

"Come down to the palisade."

They ran down together. The inhabitants of the cottages and lodges looked out after them, they were so gay and full of frolic. The gate was open and Robert peered out. Jeanne took a step forward. She was anxious to see what was beyond.

"Don't." Gaston put out his arm to bar her. "We promised never to go outside without permission. Only a coward or a thief tells lies and breaks his word. If we could find Loudac."

Loudac had gone over to Manitou. The dame had been baking some brown bread with spice seeds in it, and she gave them all a great slice. How good it tasted! Then they were off again, and when they reached the house their mother had gone in, for the porch was hot from the sun.

Jeanne had never seen anything like it. The walls seemed set with wonderful stones and gems, some ground to facets. Long strips of embroidery in brilliant colors and curious designs parted them like frames. Here a border of wampum shells, white, pale grayish, pink and purple; there great flowers made of shells gathered from the shores of lakes and rivers. At the far end of the [285] room were two Indian girls working on bead embroidery, another sewing rows of beautiful feathers in a border.

The boys were eager to rehearse their good time.

"If they have not tired you to death," said their mother.

Jeanne protested that she had enjoyed it quite as much.

"It is a luxury to have a new playfellow now that their father is away. They are so fond of him. Sometimes we all go."

"When will he return, Madame?"

"In a fortnight or so. Then he takes the long winter journey. That is a more dreary time, but we shut ourselves up and have blazing fires and work and read, and the time passes. There is the great hope at the end," and she gave an exquisite smile.

"But—Miladi—how can I get back to Detroit?"

"Must thou go?" endearingly. "If there are no parents—"

"But there is my poor Pani! And Detroit that I am so familiar with. Then I dare say they are all wondering."

"Loudac will tell us when he comes back."

Loudac had a budget of news. First there had been a marriage that very morning on the "Flying Star," the pretty boat of Louis Marsac, and Owaissa was the bride. There had been a feast given to the men, and the young mistress had stood before them to have her health drunk and receive the good wishes and a belt of wampum, with a lovely white doeskin cloak that was like [286] velvet. Then they had set sail for Lake Superior.

Jeanne was very glad of the friendly twilight. She felt her face grow red and cold by turns.

"And the maiden Owaissa will be very happy," she said half in assertion, half inquiry.

"He is smart and handsome, but tricky at times, and overfond of brandy. But if a girl gets the man she wants all is well for a time, at least."

The next bit of news was that the "Return" would go to Detroit in four or five days.

"Not direct, which will be less pleasant. For she goes first over to Barre, and then crosses the lake again and stops at Presque Isle. After that it is clear sailing. A boat of hides and freight goes down, but that would not be pleasant. To-morrow I will see the captain of the 'Return.'"

"Thou wouldst not like a winter among us here?" inquired the dame. "It is not so bad, and the boys at the great house are wild over thee."

"Oh, I must go," Jeanne said, with breathless eagerness. "I shall remember all your kindness through my whole life."

"Home is home," laughed good-humored Loudac.

Very happy and light-hearted was Jeanne Angelot. There would be nothing more to fear from Louis Marsac. How had they settled it, she wondered.

Owaissa had said that she sent the child home under proper escort. Louis Marsac ground his teeth, and yet—did he care so much for the girl only to gratify a mean revenge for one thing?—the other he was not quite sure of. At all events Jeanne Angelot would always be the loser. The [287]
Detroit foundling,—and he gave a short laugh like the snarl of a dog.

Delightful as everything was, Jeanne counted the days. She was up at the great house and read to its lovely mistress, sang and danced with baby Angelique, taking hold of the tiny hands and swinging round in graceful circles, playing games with the boys and doing feats, and trying to laugh off the lamentations, which sometimes came near to tears.

"How strange," said Miladi the last evening, "that we have never heard your family name. Or—had you none?"

"Oh, yes, Madame. Some one took good care of that. It was written on a paper pinned to me; and," laughing, "pricked into my skin so I could not deny it. It is Jeanne Angelot. But there are no Angelots in Detroit."

Miladi grasped her arm so tightly that Jeanne's breath came with a flutter.

"Are there none? Are you quite sure?" There was a strained sound in her voice wont to be so musical.

"Oh, yes. Father Rameau searched."

Miladi dropped her arm.

"It grows chilly," she said, presently. "Shall we go in, or—" Somehow her voice seemed changed.

"I had better run down to the dame's. Good night, Miladi. I have been so happy. It is like a lovely dream of the summer under the trees. I am sorry I cannot be content to stay;" and she kissed the soft hand, that now was cold. [288]

Miladi made no reply. Only she stood still longer in the cold, and murmured, "Jeanne Angelot, Jeanne Angelot." And then she recalled a laughing remark of Gaston's only that morning:—

"Jeanne has wintry blue eyes like my father's! Look, maman, the frost almost sparkles in them. And he says his came from the wonderful skies above the Arctic seas. Do you know where that is?"

No, Jeanne did not know where that was. But there were plenty of blue-eyed people in Detroit.

She ran down the steps in the light of the young crescent moon, and rubbed her arm a little where the fingers had almost made a dent.

The next day the "Return" touched at the island. It was not at all out of her way, and the captain and Loudac were warm friends. The boys clung to Jeanne and would hardly let her go.

"I wish my father could buy you for another sister," exclaimed Gaston hanging to her skirt. "If he were here he would not let you go, I am quite sure. It will take such a long while for Angelique to grow up, and then we shall be men."

Did Miladi give her a rather formal farewell? It seemed as if something chilled Jeanne.

Loudac and the dame were effusive enough to make amends. The "Return" was larger but not as jaunty as the "Flying Star," and it smelled strongly of salt fish. But Jeanne stepped joyously aboard—was she not going to La Belle Detroit? All her pulses thrilled with anticipation. Home! How sweet a word it was! [289]

CHAPTER XVII.

A PÆAN OF GLADNESS.

Jeanne's little cabin was very plain, but the window gave a nice lookout and could be opened at will. They would cross the lake and go down to Barre on the Canada side, and that would give a different view. Was the ocean so very much larger, she wondered in her inexperienced fashion.

They passed a few boats going up. It was curiously lonely, with great reaches of stunted pines

and scrubby hemlocks, then a space of rather sandy shore and wiry grasses that reared themselves stiffly. There was nothing to read. And now she wished for some sewing. She was glad enough when night came. The next morning the sky was overcast and there was a dull, threatening wind.

"If we can make Barre before it storms," said Captain Mallard. "There is a good harbor, and a fierce east wind would drive us back to the other side."

They fortunately made Barre before the storm broke in all its fierceness, but it was terrible! There was a roar over the lake as if a drove of bisons were tearing madly about. The great waves pounded and battered against the sides of the vessel as if they would break through, and the surf flew up from the point that jutted out and made the harbor. Gulls and bitterns went screaming, and Jeanne held her breath in very terror. Earth and lake and sky were one vast picture of [290] desolation, for where the eye stopped the mind went on.

All night and all the next day the storm continued beating and bruising. But at evening the wind fell, and Jeanne gave thanks with a hearty and humble mind, and slept that night. When she woke the sun was struggling through a sky of gray, with some faint yellow and green tints that came and went as if not sure of their way. By degrees a dull red commingled with them and a sulky sun showed his face.

"It is well we were in a safe port, Mam'selle, for the storm has been terrible," explained the worthy captain. "As it is, in the darkness we have lost one man overboard, and a day must be spent in repairing. The little town is not much, but it might be a rest to go ashore."

"Yes," said Jeanne, rather absently.

"If you have a good blanket—the cold has sprung up suddenly. It is squaw winter, which comes sooner you know, like a woman's temper, and spends itself, clearing the way for smiles again."

Dame Loudac had given her a fur cap with lappets that made a hood of it. She had Owaissa's blanket, and some warm leggings. The captain helped her ashore, but it was a most uncheerful outlook. A few streets with roughly built cottages, some shops at the wharf, a packing house with the refuse of fish about, and a wide stretch of level land on which the wind had swept the trees so fiercely that most of them leaned westward. [291]

"Oh, how can anyone live here!" cried Jeanne with a shiver, contrasting it with the beautiful island home of the White Chief.

The inhabitants were mostly French, rugged, with dull faces and clumsy figures. They looked curiously at Jeanne and then went on with their various employments.

But the walk freshened her and dispelled the listlessness. She gathered a few shells on one strip of sandy beach, and watched many curious creeping things. A brown lizard glided in and out of some tufts of sedge grass; a great flock of birds high up in the air went flying southward. Many gulls ran along with their shrill cries.

Oh, if she were at home! Would she ever reach there? For now gay-hearted Jeanne seemed suddenly dispirited.

All the day kept cold, though at sunset the western sky blazed out with glory and the wind died down. Captain Mallard would not start until morning, however, and though the air had a keenness in it the sun gave out a promising warmth.

Then they made Presque Isle, where there was much unloading, and some stores to be taken on board. After that it grew warmer and Jeanne enjoyed being on deck, and the memory of how she had come up the lake was like a vague dream. They sailed past beautiful shores, islands where vegetation was turning brown and yellow; here marshes still a vivid green, there great clumps of trees with scarlet branches dancing in the sun, the hickories beginning to shrivel and [292] turn yellow, the evergreens black in the shady places. At night the stars came out and the moon swelled in her slender body, her horns losing their distinct outlines.

But Jeanne had no patience even with the mysterious, beautiful night. The autumn was dying slowly, and she wondered who brought wood for Pani; if she sat by the lonely fire! It seemed months since she had been taken away.

Yes, here was the familiar lake, the shores she knew so well. She could have danced for very gladness, though her eyes were tear-wet. And here it narrowed into the river, and oh, was there ever such a blessed sight! Every familiar point looked beautiful to her. There were some boats hurrying out, the captains hoping to make a return trip. But the crowded, businesslike aspect of summer was over.

They pushed along to the King's wharf. It seemed to her all were strange faces. Was it really Detroit? St. Anne's bell came rolling down its sweet sound. The ship crunched, righted itself, crunched again, the rope was thrown out and made fast.

"Mam'selle," said the captain, "we are in."

She took his hand, the mute gratitude in her eyes, in her whole face; its sweetness touched him.

"I hope you will find your friends well."

"Oh, thank you!" she cried, with a long drawn breath. "Yes, that is my prayer."

He was handing her off. The crowd, not very large, indeed, was all a blur before her eyes. She touched the ground, then she dropped on her knees. [293]

"No, no," to some one who would have raised her. "I must say a prayer, for I have come back to my own loved Detroit, my home. Oh, let me give thanks."

"The saints be praised! It is Jeanne Angelot."

She rose as suddenly as she had knelt. Up the narrow street she ran, while the astonished throng looked after her.

"Holy Mother defend us!" and a man crossed himself devoutly. "It is no living being, it is a ghost."

For she had disappeared. The wondering eyes glanced on vacancy, stupefied.

"I said she was dead from the first. She would never have gone off and left the poor Pani woman to die of grief. She sits there alone day after day, and now she will not eat, though Dame Margot and the Indian woman Wenonah try to comfort her. And this is Jeanne's spirit come for her. You will find her dead body in the cottage. Ah, I have seen the sign."

"It was a strange disappearance!"

"The captain can tell," said another, "for if she was rescued from the Indians he must have brought her down."

"Yes, yes," and they rushed in search of the captain, wild with superstition and excitement.

It was really Jeanne Angelot. She had been rescued and left at Bois Blanc, and then taken over to another island. A pretty, sweet young girl and no ghost, Jeanne Angelot by name.

Jeanne sped on like a sprite, drawing her cap over her face. Ah, the familiar ways and sights, the stores here, the booths shut, for the outdoors trade was mostly over, the mingled French and [294] English, the patois, the shouts to the horses and dogs and to the pedestrians to get out of the way. She glanced up St. Anne's street, she passed the barrack, where some soldiers sat in the sunshine cleaning up their accouterments. Children were playing games, as the space was wider here. The door of the cottage was closed. There was a litter on the steps, dead leaves blown into the corners and crushed.

"O Pani! Pani!" she cried, and her heart stood still, her limbs trembled.

The door was not locked. The shutter had been closed and the room was dark, coming out of the sunshine. There was not even a blaze on the hearth. A heap of something at the side—her sight grew clearer, a blanketed bundle, oh, yes—

"Pani! Pani!" she cried again, all the love and longing of months in her voice—"Pani, it is I, Jeanne come back to you. Oh, surely God would not let you die now!"

She was tearing away the wrappings. She found the face and kissed it with a passion of tenderness. It was cold, but not with the awful coldness of death. The lips murmured something. The hands took hold of her feebly.

"It is Jeanne," she cried again, "your own Jeanne, who loves you with all her heart and soul, Jeanne, whom the good God has sent back to you," and then the tears and kisses mingled in a rain on the poor old wrinkled face. [295]

"Jeanne," Pani said in a quavering voice, in which there was no realizing joy. Her lifeless fingers touched the warm, young face, wet with tears. "*Petite* Jeanne!"

"Your own Jeanne come back to you. Oh, Pani, you are cold and there is no fire. And all this dreary time—but the good God has sent me back, and I shall stay always, always—"

She ran and opened the shutter. The traces of Pani's careful housekeeping were gone. Dust was everywhere, and even food was standing about as Wenonah had brought it in last night, while piles of furs and blankets were lying in a corner, waiting to be put up.

"Now we must have a fire," she began, cheerily; and, shivering with the chill herself, she stirred the embers and ashes about. There was no lack of fuel. In a moment the flames began a heartsome sound, and the scarlet rays went climbing and racing over the twigs. There was a fragrant warmth, a brightness, but it showed the wan, brown face, almost ashen color from paleness, and the lack-luster eyes.

"Pani!" Jeanne knelt before her and shook back the curls, smiled when she would fain have cried over the pitiful wreck, and at that moment she hated Louis Marsac more bitterly than ever. "Pani, dear, wake up. You have been asleep and dreamed bad dreams. Wake up, dear, my only love."

Some consciousness stirred vaguely. It was as if she made a great effort, and the pale lips moved, but no sound came from them. Still the eyes lost some of their vacancy, the brow showed [296] lines of thought.

"Jeanne," she murmured again. "*Petite* Jeanne. Did some one take you away? Or was it a dream?"

"I am here, your own Jeanne. Look at the fire blaze. Now you will be warm, and remember, and we will both give thanks. Nothing shall ever part us again."

Pani made an attempt to rise but fell back limply. Some one opened the door—it was Margot, who uttered a cry of affright and stood as if she was looking at a ghost, her eyes full of terror.

"I have come back," began Jeanne in a cheerful tone. "Some Indians carried me away. I have been almost up to the Straits, and a good captain brought me home. Has she been ill?" motioning to Pani.

"Only grief, Mam'selle. All the time she said you would return until a week or so ago, then she seemed to give up everything. I was very busy this morning, there are so many mouths to feed. I was finishing some work promised, there are good people willing to employ me. And then I came in to see—"

"Jeanne has come home," Pani exclaimed suddenly. "Margot has been so good. I am old and of no use any more. I have been only a trouble."

"Yes, yes, I want you. Oh, Pani, if I had come home and found you dead there would have been no one—and now you will get well again."

Pani shook her head, but Jeanne could discern the awakening intelligence. [297]

"Mam'selle!" Margot seemed but half convinced. Then she glanced about the room. "M. Garis was in such haste for his boy's clothes that I have done nothing but sew and sew. Marie has gone out to service and there are only the little ones. My own house has been neglected."

"Yes. Heaven will reward you for your goodness to her all this dreadful time, when you have had to work hard for your own."

Margot began to pick up articles and straighten the room, to gather the few unwashed dishes.

"Oh, Mam'selle, it made a great stir. The neighbors and the guards went out and searched. Some wild beast might have devoured you, but they found no trace. And they thought of Indians. Poor Pani! But all will be well now. Nay, Mam'selle," as Jeanne would have stopped her, "there will be people in, for strange news travels fast."

That was very likely. In a brief while they had the room tidy. Then Jeanne fixed a seat at the other side of the fireplace, spread the fur rug over it, and led the unresisting Pani thither, wrapped her in a fresh blanket, and took off the cap, smoothing out the neglected hair that seemed strangely white about the pale, brown face. The high cheek bones left great hollows underneath, but in spite of the furrows of age the skin was soft.

The woman gave a low, pleased laugh, and nodded.

"Father Rameau will come," she said.

"Father Rameau! Has he returned?" inquired the girl. [298]

"Oh, yes, Mam'selle, and so glad to get back to Detroit. I cannot tell you all his delight. And then his sorrow for you. For we were afraid you were no longer living. What a strange story!"

"It has happened before, being carried away by Indians. Some time you shall hear all, Margot."

The woman nodded. "And if you do not want me, Mam'selle—" for there was much to do at home.

"I do not need you so much just now, but come in again presently. Oh, I can never repay you!"

"Wenonah has done more than I."

In the warmth of the fire and the comfortable atmosphere about her, Pani had fallen asleep. Jeanne glanced into the chamber. The beds were spread up, and, except dust, things were not bad, but she put them in the olden order. Then she bathed her face and combed the tangles out of her hair. Here was her blue woolen gown, with the curious embroidery of beads and bright thread, that Wenonah had made for her last winter, and she slipped into it. Now she felt like herself. She would cook a little dinner for herself and Pani. And, as she was kneeling on the wide hearthstone stirring some broth, the woman opened her eyes.

"Jeanne," she said, and there was less wandering in her voice, "Jeanne, it was a dream. I have been asleep many moons, I think. The great evil spirits have had me, dragged me down into their dens, and I could not see you. Pani's heart has been sore distressed. It was all a dream, little one." [299]

"Yes, a dream!" Jeanne's arms were about her neck.

"And you will never go away, not even if M. Bellestre sends for you!" she entreated.

"I shall never go away from La Belle Detroit. Oh, Pani, there may be beautiful places in the world," and she thought of the island and Miladi, "but none so dear. No, we shall stay here always."

But the news had traveled, and suddenly there was an influx; M. De Ber going home to his midday meal could not believe until he had seen Jeanne with his own eyes. And the narrow street was filled as with a procession.

Jeanne kept to the simple story and let her listeners guess at motives or mysterious purposes. They had not harmed her. And a beautiful Indian maiden with much power over her red brethren had gained her freedom and sent her to a place of safety. Captain Mallard and the "Return" had brought her to the town, and that was all.

It was almost night when Father Rameau came. He had grown strangely old, it seemed to her, and the peaceful lines of his face were disturbed. He had come back to the home of years to find himself curiously supplanted and new methods in use that savored less of love and more of strict rule. He had known so much of the hardness of the pioneer lives, of the enjoyment and courage the rare seasons of pleasure gave them, of the ignorance that could understand little of the higher life, of the strong prejudices and superstitions that had to be uprooted gently and perhaps [300] wait for the next generation. Truth, honesty, and temperance were rare virtues and of slow growth. The new license brought in by the English was hard to combat, but he had worked in love and patience, and now he found his methods condemned and new ones instituted. His heart ached.

But he was glad enough to clasp Jeanne to his heart and to hear her simple faith in the miracle that had been wrought. How great it was, and what her danger had been, he was never to know. For Owaissa's sake and her debt to her she kept silence as to that part.

Certainly Jeanne had an ovation. When she went into the street there were smiles and bows. Some of the ladies came to speak to her, and invited her to their houses, and found her extremely interesting.

Madame De Ber was very gracious, and both Rose and Marie were friendly enough. But Madame flung out one little arrow that missed its mark.

"Your old lover soon consoled himself it seems. It is said he married a handsome Indian girl up at the Strait. I dare say he was pledged to her."

"Yes. It was Owaissa who freed me from captivity. She came down to Bois Blanc and heard the story and sent me away in her own canoe with her favorite servant. Louis Marsac was up at St. Ignace getting a priest while she waited. I cannot think he was at all honest in proposing marriage to me when another had the right. But there was a grand time it was said, and they were very happy."

Madame stared. "It was a good thing for you that you did not care for him. I had a distrust for [301] him. He was too handsome. And then he believed nothing and laughed at religion. But the Marsacs are going to be very rich it is said. You did not see them married?"

"Oh, no." Jeanne laughed with a bitterness she had not meant to put into her voice. "He was away when Owaissa came to me and heard my plight. And then there was need of haste. I had to go at once, and it would not have been pleasant even if I could have waited."

"No, no. Men are much given to make love to young girls who have no one to look after them. They think nothing of it."

"So it was fortunate that it was distasteful to me."

Jeanne had a girl's pride in wanting this woman to understand that she was in no wise hurt by Marsac's recreancy. Then she added, "The girl was beautiful as Indian girls go, and it seems a most excellent marriage. She will be fond of that wild northern country. I could not be content in it."

Jeanne felt that she was curiously changed, though sometimes she longed passionately for the wild little girl who had been ready for every kind of sport and pleasure. But the children with whom she had played were grown now, boys great strapping fellows with manners both coarse and shy, going to work at various businesses, and the girls had lovers or husbands,—they married early then. So she seemed left alone. She did not care for their chatter nor their babies of which they seemed so proud. [302]

So she kept her house and nursed Pani back to some semblance of her former self. But often it was a touch of the childhood of old age, and she rambled about those she had known, the De Longueils and Bellestres, and the night Jeanne had been left in her arms.

Jeanne liked the chapel minister and his wife very much. The lady had so many subjects to converse about that never led to curious questions. The minister lent her books and they talked them over afterward. This was the world she liked.

But she had not lost her love for that other world of freedom and exhilaration. After a brief Indian summer with days of such splendor that it seemed as if the great Artist was using his most magnificent colors, winter set in sharp and with a snap that startled every one. Snow blocked the roads and the sparkling expanse of crust on the top was the delight of the children, who walked and slid and pulled each other in long loads like a chain of dogs. And some of the lighter weight young people skated over it like flying birds. In the early evening all was gayety. Jeanne was not lacking in admirers. Young Loisel often called for her, and Martin Lavosse would easily have

verged on the sentimental if Jeanne had not been so gay and unconscious. He was quite sore over the defection of Rose De Ber, who up in one of the new streets was hobnobbing with the gentry and quite looking down on the Beesons.

Then the minister and his wife often joined these outdoor parties. Since he neither played cards, danced, nor drank in after-dinner symposiums, this spirited amusement stirred his blood. [303] Pani went to bed early, and Margot would bring in her sewing and see that nothing untoward happened.

Few of the stores were open in the evenings. Short as the day was, all the business could be done in it. Now and then one saw a feeble light in a window where a man stayed to figure on some loss or gain.

Fleets were laid up or ventured only on short journeys. From the northern country came stories of ice and snow that chilled one's marrow. Yet the great fires, the fur rugs and curtains and soft blankets kept one comfortable within.

There were some puzzling questions for Jeanne. She liked the freedom of conscience at the chapel, and then gentle Father Rameau drew her to the church.

"If I had two souls," she said one day to the minister, "I should be quite satisfied. And it seems to me sometimes as if I were two different people," looking up with a bright half smile. "In childhood I used to lay some of my wildnesses on to the Indian side. I had a curious fancy for a strain of Indian blood."

"But you have no Indian ancestry?"

"I think not. I am not so anxious for it now," laughing gayly. "But that side of me protests against the servitude Father Gilbert so insists upon. And I hate confession. To turn one's self inside out, to give away the sacred trusts of others—"

"No, that is not necessary," he declared hastily. [304]

"But when the other lives are tangled up with yours, when you can only tell half truths—"

He smiled then. "Mademoiselle Jeanne, your short life has not had time to get much entangled with other lives, or with secrets you are aware of."

"I think it has been curiously entangled," she replied. "M'sieu Bellestre, whom I have almost forgotten, M. Loisel—and the old schoolmaster I told you of, who I fancy now was a sad heretic—"

She paused and flushed, while her eyes were slowly downcast. There was Monsieur St. Armand. How could she explain this to a priest? And was not Monsieur a heretic, too? That was her own precious, delightful secret, and she would give it into no one's keeping.

She was very happy with all this mystery about her, he thought, very simple minded and sweet, doing the whole duty of a daughter to this poor Indian woman in return for her care. And when Pani was gone? She was surely fitted for some other walk in life, but she was unconsciously proud, she would not step over into it, some one must take her by the hand.

"But why trouble about the Church, as you call it? It is the life one leads, not the organization. Are these people down by the wharves and those holes on St. Louis street, where there is drunkenness and gambling and swearing, any the better for their confession and their masses, and what not?"

"If I was the priest they should not come unless they reformed," and her eyes flashed. "But when I turn away something calls me, and when I go there I do not like it. They want me to go [305] among the sisters, to be a nun perhaps, and that I should hate."

"At present you are doing a daughter's duty, let that suffice. Pani would soon die without you. When a new work comes to hand God will make the way plain for you."

Jeanne gave an assenting nod.

"She is a curious child," the minister said to his wife afterward, "and yet a very sweet, simple-hearted one. But to confine her to any routine would make her most unhappy."

There were all the Christmas festivities, and Jeanne did enjoy them. Afterward—some of the days were very long it seemed. She was tired of the great white blanket of snow and ice, and the blackness of the evergreens that in the cold turned to groups of strange monsters. Bears came down out of the woods, the sheep dogs and their masters had fights with wolves; there were dances and the merry sounds of the violin in every household where there were men and boys. Then Lent, not very strictly kept after all, and afterward Easter and the glorious spring.

Jeanne woke into new life. "I must go out for the first wild flowers," she said to Pani. "It seems years since I had any. And the robin and the thrush and the wild pigeons have come back, and the trees bud with the baths of sunshine. All the air is throbbing with fragrance."

Pani looked disturbed.

"Oh, thou wilt not go to the woods?" she cried. [306]

"I will take Wenonah and one of the boys. They are sturdy now and can howl enough to scare

even a panther. No, Pani, there is no one to carry me away. They would know that I should slip through their fingers;" and she laughed with the old time joyousness. [307]

CHAPTER XVIII.

A HEARTACHE FOR SOME ONE.

"Jeanne," exclaimed Father Rameau, "thou art wanted at the Chapter house."

He stood in the doorway of the little cottage and glanced curiously at the two inmates. Pani often amused herself cutting fringe for Wenonah, under the impression that it was needed in haste, and she was very happy over it. A bowl of violets and wild honeysuckle stood on the table, and some green branches hung about giving the room the odor of the new season and an air of rejoicing.

"What now?" She took his wrinkled old hand in hers so plump and dimpled. "Have I committed some new sin? I have been so glad for days and days that I could only rejoice."

"No, not sin. It is to hear a strange story and to be happier, perhaps."

He looked curiously at her. "Oh, something has happened!" she cried. Was it possible M. St. Armand had returned? For days her mind had been full of him. And he would be the guest of the Fleurys.

"Yes, I should spoil it in the telling, and I had strict injunctions." There was an air of mystery about him.

Surely there was no trouble. But what could they want with her? A strange story! Could some one have learned about her mother or her father? [308]

"I will change my attire in a moment. Pani, Margot will gladly come and keep you company."

"Nay, little one, I am not a baby to be watched," Pani protested.

Jeanne laughed. She looked very sweet and charming in her blue and white frock made in a plain fashion, for it did not seem becoming in her to simulate the style of the great ladies. A soft, white kerchief was drawn in a knot about her shoulders, showing the shapely throat that was nearer ivory than pearl. In the knot she drew a few violets. Head gear she usually disdained, but now she put over her curls a dainty white cap that made a delicious contrast with the dark rings nestling below the edge. A pretty, lissome girl, with a step so light it would not have crushed the grass under her feet, had there been any.

"There seems a great stir in the town," she said.

They had turned into St. Anne's street and were going toward the church.

"The new Governor General Hull is to come in a few weeks, and the officers have word to look him up a home, for governors have not lived in Detroit before. No doubt there will be fine times among the Americans."

"And there flies a white flag down at the river's edge—has that something to do with it?"

"Oh, the boat came in last evening. It is one of the great men up at the North, I think in the fur company. But he has much influence over the Indian tribes, and somehow there is a whisper that there may be disaffection and another union such as there was in Pontiac's time, which heaven forbid! He is called the White Chief." [309]

"The White Chief!" Jeanne stopped short in a maze of astonishment.

"That has nothing to do with thee," said the priest. He preferred her interest to run in another channel.

"But—I was on his island. I saw his wife and children, you remember. Oh, I must see him—"

"Not now;"—and her guide put out his hand.

"Oh, no," and she gave a short laugh. "As if I would go running after a strange man; a great chief! But he is not an Indian. He is French."

"I do remember, yes. There seems a great commotion, as if all the ships had come in. The winter was so long and cold that business is all the more brisk. Here, child, pay a little attention to where you are going. There is a lack of reverence in you young people that pains me."

"Pardon me, father." Jeanne knelt on the church steps and crossed herself. She had run up here in the dark the first night she had been back in Detroit, just to kneel and give thanks, but she had told no one.

Then she walked decorously beside him. There was the Chapel of Retreat, a room where the nuns came and spent hours on their knees. They passed that, going down a wide hall. On one side

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some young girls sat doing fine embroidery for religious purposes. At the end a kind of reception room, and there were several people in this now, two priests and three woman in the garb of Ursuline nuns.

Jeanne glanced around. A sort of chill crept over her. The room was bare and plain except a statue of the Virgin, and some candles and crucifixes. Nearly in the center stood a table with a book of devotions on it.

"This is Jeanne Angelot," exclaimed Father Rameau. She, in her youth and health and beauty, coming out of the warm and glowing sunshine of May, brought with her an atmosphere and radiance that seemed like a sudden sunrise in the dingy apartment. The three women in the coif and gown of the Ursulines fingered their beads and, after sharp glances at the maid, dropped their eyes, and their faces fell into stolid lines.

Another woman rose from the far corner and her gown made a swish on the bare floor. She came almost up to Jeanne, who shrank back in an inexplicable terror, a motion that brought a spasm of color to the newcomer's face, and a gasp for breath.

She was, perhaps, a little above the medium height, slim alway and now very thin. Her eyes were sunken, with grayish shadows underneath, her cheeks had a hollow where fullness should have been, her lips were compressed in a nearly straight line. She was not old, but asceticism had robbed her of every indication of youth, had made severity the leading indication in her countenance. [311]

"Jeanne Angelot," she repeated. "You are quite sure, Father, those garments belonged to her?"

The poor woman felt the secret antipathy and she, too, seemed to contract, to realize the mysterious distance between them, the unlikeness of which she had not dreamed. For in her narrow life of devotion she had endeavored to crucify all human feelings and affections. That was her bounden duty for her girlhood's sin. Girls were poor, weak creatures and their wills counseled them wrongly, wickedly. She had come to snatch this child, the result of her own selfish dreams, her waywardness, from a like fate. She should be housed, safe, kept from evil. The nun, too, had dreamed, although Berthê Campeau had said, "She is a wild little thing and it is suspected she has Indian blood in her veins." But it was the rescue of a soul to the service of God, the soul she was answerable for, not the ardor of human love.

The father made a slow inclination of the head.

"They were upon her that night she was dropped in the Pani's lap, and the card pinned to her. Then two letters curiously wrought upon her thigh."

"Jeanne, Jeanne, I am your mother."

It was the woman who was the suppliant, who felt a strange misgiving about this spirited girl with resolute eyes and poise of the head like a bird who would fly the next moment. And yet it was not the entreaty of starved and waiting love, that would have clasped arms about the slim, proud figure that stood almost defiant, suspicious, unbelieving. [312]

The others had heard the story and there was no surprise in their countenances.

Jeanne seemed at first like a marble image. The color went out of her cheeks but her eyes were fixed steadfastly upon the woman, their blue so clear, so penetrating, that she shrank farther into herself, seemed thinner and more wan.

"Your mother," and Father Rameau would fain have taken the girl's hand, but she suddenly clasped them behind her back. There was incredulity in the look, repulsion. What if there were some plot? She glanced at Father Gilbert but his cold eyes expressed only disapprobation.

"My mother," she said slowly. "My mother has been dead years, and I owe love and gratitude to the Indian woman, Pani, who has cared for me with all fondness."

"You do not as yet understand," interposed Father Rameau. "You have not heard the story."

She had in her mind the splendid motherhood of Miladi as she had seen it in that beautiful island home.

"A mother would not desert her child and leave it to the care of strangers, Indian enemies perhaps, and send a message that she was dead," was the proud reply.

Jeanne Angelot's words cut like a knife. There was no sign of belief in her eyes, no dawning tenderness.

The woman bowed her head over her clasped hands and swayed as if she would fall.

"It is right," she answered in a voice that might have come from the grave. "It is part of my punishment. I had no right to bring this child into the world. Holy Mother, I accept, but let me snatch her soul from perdition!" [313]

Jeanne's face flamed scarlet. "I trust the good Father above," she declared with an accent of uplifted faith that irradiated her with serene strength. "Once in great peril he saved me. I will trust my cause to him and he will clear my way."

"Thou ignorant child!" declared Father Gilbert. "Thou hast no human love in thy breast. There

must be days and weeks of penance and discipline before thou art worthy even to touch this woman's hand. She is thy mother. None other hath any right to thee. Thou must be trained in obedience, in respect; thy pride and indifference must be cast out, evil spirits that they be. She hath suffered for thy sake; she must have amends when thou art in thy right mind. Thou wert given to the Church in Holy Baptism, and now she will reclaim thee."

Jeanne turned like a stag at bay, proud, daring, defiant. It was some evil plot. Could a true mother lend herself to such a cruel scheme? Why was she not drawn to her, instead of experiencing this fear and repulsion? Would they keep her here, shut her up in a dark room as they had years ago, when she had kicked and screamed until Father Rameau had let her out to liberty and the glorious sunlight? Could she not make one wild dash now—

There was a shuffling of steps in the hall and a glitter of trappings. The Commandant of the Fort stepped forward to the doorway and glanced in. The priests questioned with their eyes, the [314] nuns turned aside.

"We were told we should find Father Rameau here. There is some curious business. Ah, here is the girl herself, Mademoiselle Jeanne Angelot. There is a gentleman here desirous of meeting her, and has a strange story for her ear. Can we have a private room—"

"Mademoiselle Jeanne Angelot is in the care of the Church and her mother, who has come to claim her;" was the emphatic reply.

"Her mother!" The man beside the Commandant stepped forward. "Her mother is dead," he said, gravely.

"The Sieur Gaston de la Touchê Angelot, better known by repute as the White Chief of the Island," announced the officer; and the guest bowed to them all.

The woman fell on her knees and bowed her head to the floor. The man glanced about the small concourse. He was tall, nearer forty than thirty, of a fine presence, and, though bronzed by exposure, was handsome, and not only that, but noble as to face; the kind of man to compel admiration and respect, and with the air of authority that sways in an unquestioning manner. His eyes rested on the girl. The same proud bearing, though with virginal softness and pliability, the same large steady eyes, both with the wondering look as they rushed to each other's glance. [315]

"If the tale I have heard, or rather have pieced out from vague bits and suggestions, and the similarity of name be true, I think I have a right to claim this girl as my daughter, supposed dead for years. There were some trinkets found on her, and there were two initials wrought in her fair baby limb by my hand. Can I see these articles?"

Then he crossed to the girl and studied her from head to foot, smiled with a little triumph, and faced the astonished group.

"I have marked her with my eyes as well," he said with a smile. "Jeanne, do you not feel that the same blood flows through our veins? Does not some mysterious voice of nature assure you that I am your father, even before the proofs are brought to light? You must know—"

Ah, did she not know! The voice spoke with no uncertain sound. Jeanne Angelot went to her father's arms.

The little group were so astounded that no one spoke. The woman still knelt, nay, shriveled in a little heap.

"She has fainted," and one of the sisters went to her, "Help, let us carry her into the next room."

They bore her away. Father Gilbert turned fiercely to the Sieur Angelot.

"There might be some question as to rights in the child," he said, in a clear, cold tone. "When did the Sieur repudiate his early marriage? He has on his island home a new wife and children."

"Death ends the most sacred of all ties for this world. Coming to meet me the party were [316] captured by a band of marauding Indians. Few escaped. Months afterward I had the account from one of the survivors. The child's preservation must have been a miracle. And that she has been here years—" he pressed her closer to his heart.

"Monsieur Angelot, I think you will not need us in the untangling of this strange incident, but we shall be glad to hear its ending. I shall expect you to dine with me as by previous arrangement. I wish you might bring your pretty daughter."

The Commandant bowed to the company and turned, attended by his suite. When their soldierly tread had ceased on the steps, Father Gilbert confronted the White Chief.

"Your wife," he began in an authoritative tone, fixing his keen eyes on the Sieur Angelot, "your wife whom you tempted from her vows and unlawfully married is still alive. I think she can demand her child."

Jeanne clung closer to her father and his inmost soul responded. But aloud he exclaimed in a horrified tone, "Good God!" Then in a moment, turning almost fiercely to the priest, "Why did she give away her child and let it be thought a foundling? For if the story is true she has been little better than a waif, a foundling of Detroit."

"She was dying and intended to send it to you. She had to intrust it to a kind-hearted squaw. What happened then will never be known, until one evening it was dropped in the lap of this Pani woman who has been foster mother." [317]

"Is this so, Jeanne?" He raised the flushed face and looked into the eyes with a glance that would have been stern had it not been so full of love.

"It is so," she made answer in a soft, clear voice. "She has been a mother to me and I love her. She is old and I will never be separated from her."

"There spoke the loyal child. And now, reverend father, where is this wife? It is a serious complication. But if, as you say, I married her unlawfully—"

"You enticed her from the convent." There was the severity of the judge in the tone.

"*Parbleu!* It did not need much enticing," and a half smile crossed his handsome face while his eyes softened. "We were both in love and she abhorred the monotony of convent life. We were of different faiths; that should have made me pause, but I thought then that love righted everything. I was of an adventurous turn and mightily stirred by the tales of the new world. Huguenot faith was not in favor in France, and I resolved to seek my fortunes elsewhere. She could not endure the parting. Yes, Father, since she had not taken any vow, not even begun her novitiate, I overpersuaded her. We were married in my faith. We came to this new world, and in Boston this child was born. We were still very happy. But I could not idle my life doing things befitting womankind. We came to Albany, and there I found some traders who told stirring tales of the great North and the fortunes made in the fur trade. My wife did oppose my going, but the enthusiasm of love, if I may call it so, had begun to wane. She had misgivings as to whether she [318] had done right in marrying me—"

"As a true daughter of the Church would," interrupted the priest severely.

"I was willing that she should return to her own faith, which she did. I left her in good hands. Fortune favored me. I liked the stir and excitement, the out-of-door life, the glamour of adventures. I found men who were of the same cast of mind. To be sure, there were dangers, there was also the pleasure and gratification of leadership, of subduing savage natures. When I had resolved to settle in the North I sent to my wife by a messenger and received answer that since I thought it best she would come to me. I felt that she had no longing for the wild life, but I meant to do my utmost to satisfy her. There was her Church at St. Ignace, there were kindly priests, and some charming and heroic women. With my love to shield her I felt she must be happy. There was a company to leave Albany, enough it was thought to make traveling safe, for Indians were still troublesome. I made arrangements for her to join them, and was to meet them at Detroit. Alas! word came that, while they were still some distance from their point of embarkation on Lake Erie, they were set upon and massacred by a body of roving Indians. Instead of my beloved wife I met one of the survivors in Detroit and heard the terrible story. Not a woman in the party had escaped. The Indians had not burthened themselves with troublesome prisoners. I returned to Michilimackinac with a heart bowed down with grief. There was the [319] comfortable home awaiting my wife, made as pretty as it had been possible to do. I could not endure it and joined some members of the company going to Hudson Bay. I made some fresh efforts to learn if anything further had been heard, but no word ever came. It is true that I married again. It does not seem possible that a once wedded wife should have lived all these years and made no effort to communicate with her husband, who, after all, could have been found. And though for years I have been known as the White Chief, from a curious power I have gained over the Indians, the hunters, and traders, I am also known as the Sieur Angelot."

He stood proudly before them, his handsome, weather-bronzed face bearing the impress of truth, his eyes shining with the clearest, highest honor. The child Jeanne felt the stiffening of every muscle, and it went through her with a thrill of joy.

"It is a long story," began Father Rameau, gently, "a strange one, too. Through the courage and craftiness of a Miami squaw, who had been a sort of maid to Madame Angelot, she escaped death. They hid in the woods and subsisted on anything they could find until Madame could go no farther. She thought herself dying, and implored the woman to take her babe to Detroit and find its father, and she lay down in a leafy covert to die. In that hour she repented bitterly of her course in leaving the convent and listening to a forbidden love. She prayed God to believe if it [320] were to do over again she would hearken to the voice of the Church, and hoped this fervent repentance would be remembered in her behalf. Then she resigned herself to death. But in the providence of the good All Father she was rescued by another party and taken to a farmhouse not far distant. Here were two devoted women who were going to Montreal to enter the convent, and were to embark at a point on Lake Ontario, where a boat going North would touch. They nursed her for several weeks before she was able to travel, and then she decided to cast in her lot with them. Her husband, no doubt, had the child. She was dead to the world. She belonged henceforward to the Church and to the service of God. Moreover, it was what she desired. She had tried worldly love and her own will, and been unhappy in it. Monsieur, she was born for a devotee. It was a sad mistake when she yielded to your persuasions. Her parents had destined her for the convent, and she had a double debt to pay. The marriage was unlawful and she was absolved from it."

"Then I was free also. It cannot bind on one side and loose on the other. I believe you have said rightly. She was not happy, though I think even now she will tell you that I did all in my power. I

did not oppose her going back to her first faith, although then I would have fought against this disruption of the marriage tie."

"It was no marriage in God's sight, with a heretic," interposed Father Gilbert. "She repented her waywardness bitterly. God made her to see it through sore trial. But the child is hers." [321]

"Not when you admit that she sent it to me, gave me the right," was the confident reply.

He pressed Jeanne closer and with a strength that said, "I will fight for you." The proud dignity of his carriage, the resolution in his face, indicated that he would not be an easy enemy to combat. There was a strange silence, as if no one could tell what would be the next move. He broke it, however.

"The child shall decide," he said. "She shall hear her mother's story, and then mine. She shall select with whom she will spend the coming years. God knows I should have been glad enough to have had her then. By what sad mistake fate should have traversed the mother's wishes, and given her these wasted years, I cannot divine."

They were only to guess at that. The Miami woman had grown tired of her charge, so unlike the papooses of the Indian mothers. Then, too, it was heavy to carry, difficult to feed. She met a party of her own tribe and resolved to cast in her destiny with them. They were going into Ohio to meet some scattered members of their people, and to effect a union with other Indian nations, looking to the recovery of much of their power. She went up to Detroit in a canoe, and, taking the sleeping child, reconnoitered awhile; finally, seeing Pani sitting alone under a great tree, she dropped the child into her lap and ran swiftly away, feeling confident the father would in some way discover the little one, since her name was pinned to her clothing. Then she rowed rapidly [322] back, her Indian ideas quite satisfied.

"I wonder if I might see"—what should he call her?—"Jeanne's mother."

Word came back that the nun was too much enfeebled to grant him an interview. But she would receive the child. Jeanne clung to her father and glanced up with entreating eyes.

"I will wait for you. Yes, see her. Hear her story first." The child followed the sister reluctantly. Sieur Angelot, who had been standing, now took a seat.

"I should like to see the trinkets you spoke of—and the clothes," he said with an air of authority.

Father Rameau brought them. Father Gilbert and the sister retired to an adjoining room.

"Yes," the Sieur remarked, "this is our miniature. It was done in Boston. And the ring was my gift to the child when she was a year old; it was much too big," and he smiled. "And the little garments. You are to be thanked most sincerely for keeping them so carefully. Tell me something about the life of the child."

Father Rameau had been so intimately connected with it, that he was a most excellent narrator. The episode with the Bellestres and Monsieur's kindly care, the efforts to subdue in some measure the child's wildness and passion for liberty, which made the father smile, thinking of his own exuberant spirits and adventures, her affection for the Indian woman, her desultory training, that Father Rameau believed now had been a sinful mistake, her strange disappearance [323] —

"That gave me the clew," interrupted his hearer. "By some mysterious chain of events she was brought to her father's house. I was up North at the time, and only recently heard the story. The name Jeanne Angelot roused me. There could not be a mistake. Some miracle must have intervened to save the child. Then I came at once. But you think she—the mother—believes her marriage was a sin?" What if she still cared?

The Sieur asked it with great hesitation. He thought of the proud, loving wife, the spirited, beautiful boys, the dainty little daughter—no, he could not relinquish them.

"She is vowed to the Church now, and is at rest. Nothing you can say will disturb her. The good Bishop of Montreal absolved her from her wrongful vow. While we hold marriage as sacred and indissoluble, it has to be a true marriage and with the sanction of the Church. This had no priestly blessing or benediction. And she repented of it. For years she has been in the service of the Lord."

He was glad to hear this. Down in his heart he knew how she had tormented her tender conscience with vain and rigorous questions and had made herself unhappy in pondering them. But he thought their new life together would neutralize this tendency and bring them closer in unison. Had she, indeed, made such a sad mistake in her feelings as to give him only an enthusiastic but temporary affection, when she was ready to throw up all the beliefs and the [324] training of her youth? But then the convent round looked dreary to her.

Jeanne came from the room where she had been listening to her mother's story of self-blame and present abhorrence for the step she had so unwisely taken in yielding to one who should have been nothing to her.

"But you loved him then!" cried Jeanne, vehemently, thinking of the other woman whose joy and pride was centered in the Sieur Angelot.

"It was a sinful fancy, a temptation of the evil one. I should have struggled against it. I should have resigned myself to the life laid out for me. A man's love is a delusion. Oh, my child, there is nothing like the continual service of God to keep one from evil. The joys of the world are but as dust and ashes, nay, worse, they leave an ineradicable stain that not even prayer and penance can wash out. And this is why I have come to warn, to reclaim you, if possible. When I heard the story from a devoted young sister, whose name in the world was Berthê Campeau, I said I must go and snatch the soul of my child from the shadow of perdition that hangs over her."

Berthê Campeau! How strange it was that the other mother, nearing the end of life, should have plead with her child to stay a little longer in the world and wait until she was gone before she buried herself in convent walls!

Was it a happy life, even a life of resignation, that had left such lines in her mother's face? She was hardly in the prime of life, but she looked old already. Instead of being drawn to sympathize [325] with her, Jeanne was repelled. Her mother did not want her for solace and human love and sympathy, but simply to keep her from evil. Was affection such a sin? She could love her father, yes, she could love M. St. Armand; and the Indian woman with her superstitions, her ignorance, was very, very dear. And she liked brightness, happy faces, the wide out-of-doors with its birds' songs, its waving trees, its fragrant breathing from shrub and flower that filled one with joy. Pani kissed her and clasped her to her heart, held her in her arms, smoothed the tangled curls, sometimes kissed them, too, caressed her soft, dainty hands as if they were another human being. This woman was her mother, but there was no passionate longing in her eyes, no tender possessing grasp in the hands that lay limp and colorless on her black gown. And Jeanne would have been still more horrified if she had known that those eyes looked upon her as part of a sinful life she had overcome by nights of vigil and days of solitude in work and prayer that she had once abhorred and fled from. Yet she pitied her profoundly. She longed to comfort her, but the nun did not want the comfort of human love.

"No, I cannot decide," Jeanne cried, and yet she knew in her soul she had decided.

She came out to her father with tears in her eyes, but the shelter of his arms was so strong and safe.

"Reverend fathers," the Sieur Angelot said, with a grave inclination of the head, "I thank you [326] for your patience and courtesy. I can appreciate your feelings, too, but I think the law will uphold me in my claim to my daughter. And in my estimation Jeanne de Burre committed no sin in marrying me, and I would ever have been a faithful husband to her. But the decision of the Church seems most in consonance with her feelings. I have the honor of wishing you good day." [327]

CHAPTER XIX.

THE HEART OF LOVE.

"And now," began the Sieur Angelot, when they were out in the sunshine, the choicest blessing of God, and had left the bare, gloomy room behind them, "and now, *petite* Jeanne, let us find thy Indian mother."

Was there a prouder or happier girl in all Old Detroit than Jeanne Angelot? The narrow, crooked streets with their mean houses were glorified to her shining eyes, the crowded stores and shops, some of them with unfragrant wares, and the motley crowd running to and fro, dodging, turning aside, staring at this tall, imposing man, with his grand, free air and his soldierly tread, a stranger, with Jeanne Angelot hanging on his arm in all the bloom and radiance of girlhood. Several knew and bowed with deference.

M. Fleury came out of his warehouse.

"Mam'selle Jeanne, allow me to present my most hearty and sincere congratulations. M. St. Armand insisted if the truth could be evolved it would be found that you belonged to gentle people and were of good birth. And we are all glad it is so. I had the honor of being presented to your father this morning;" and he bowed with respect. "Mademoiselle, I have news that will give thee greatest joy, unless thou hast forgotten old friends in the delight of the new. The 'Adventure' is expected in any time to-day, and M. St. Armand is a passenger. I beg your father to come and [328] dine with him this evening, and if thou wilt not mind old graybeards, we shall be delighted with thy company. There will be my daughter to keep thee in countenance."

"M. St. Armand!" Jeanne's face was in an exquisite glow and her voice shook a little. Her father gave a surprised glance from one to the other.

M. Fleury laughed softly and rubbed his hands together, his eyes shining with satisfaction.

"Ah, Monsieur," he exclaimed, "thou wilt be surprised at the friends Mam'selle Jeanne has in Old Detroit. I may look for thee at five this evening?"

They both promised.

Then Jeanne began to tell her story eagerly. The day the flag was raised, the after time when

she had seen the brave General Wayne, the interest that M. St. Armand had taken in having her educated, and how she had struggled against her wild tendencies, her passionate love of freedom and the woods, the birds, the denizens of the forests. They turned in and out, the soldiers at the Citadel saluted, and here was Pani on the doorstep.

"Oh, little one! It seemed as if thou wert gone forever!"

Jeanne hugged her foster mother in a transport of joy and affection. What if Pani had not cared for her all these years? There were some orphan children in the town bound out for servants. To be sure, there had been M. Bellestre.

Pani did not receive the Sieur Angelot very graciously. Jeanne tried to explain the wonderful things that had happened, but Pani's age and her limited understanding made it a hard task. "Thy mother was dead long ago," she kept saying. "And they will take thee away, little one—" [329]

"Then they will take you, too, Pani; I shall never leave you. I love you. For years there was no one else to love. And how could I be ungrateful?"

She looked so charming in her eagerness that her father bent over and kissed her. If her mother had been thus faithful!

"I shall never leave Detroit, little one. You may take up a sapling and transplant it, but the old tree, never! It dies. The new soil is strange, unfriendly."

"Do not tease her," said her father in a low tone. "It is all strange to her, and she does not understand. Try to get her to tell her story of the night you came."

At first Pani was very wary with true Indian suspicion. The Sieur Angelot had much experience with these children of the forests and wilderness. He understood their limited power of expansion, their suspicions of anything outside of their own knowledge. But he led her on skillfully, and his voice had the rare quality of persuasion, of inducing confidence. In her French *patois*, with now and then an Indian word, she began to live over those early years with the unstudied eloquence of real love.

"Touchas is dead," interposed Jeanne. "But there is Wenonah, and, oh, there is all the country outside, the pretty farms, the houses that are not so crowded. In the spring many of them are whitewashed, and the trees are in bloom, and the roses everywhere, and the birds singing—" [330]

She paused suddenly and flushed, remembering the lovely island home with all its beauty.

He laughed with a pleasant sound.

"I should think there would need to be an outside. I hardly see how one can get his breath in the crowded streets," he answered.

"But there is all the beautiful river, and the air comes sweeping down from the hills. And the canoeing. Oh, it is not to be despised," she insisted.

"I shall cherish it because it has cherished thee. And now I must say adieu for awhile. I am to talk over some matters with your officers, and then—" there was the meeting with his wife. "And at five I will come again. Child, thou art rarely sweet; much too sweet for convent walls."

"Is it unkind in me? I cannot make her seem my mother. Oh, I should love her, pity her!"

There were tears in Jeanne's eyes, and her breath came with a great, sorrowful throb.

"We will talk of all that to-morrow."

"Thou wilt not go?" Pani gave her a frightened, longing look, as if she expected her to follow her father.

"Oh, not now. It is all so wonderful, Pani, like some of the books I have read at the minister's. And M. St. Armand has come back, or will when the boat is in. Oh, what a pity to be no longer a child! A year ago I would have run down to the wharf, and now—" [331]

Her face was scarlet at the thought. What made this great difference, this sense of reticence, of waiting for another to make some sign? The frank trust was gone; no, it was not that,—she was overflowing with trust to-day. All the world was loveliness and love. But it must come to her; she could not run out to it. There was one black shadow; and then she shivered.

She told Pani the story of the morning.

The Indian woman shook her head. "She is not a true mother. She could not have left thee."

"But she thought she was dying. And if I had died there in the woods! Oh, Pani, I am so glad to live! It is such a joy that it quivers in me from head to foot. I am like my father."

She laughed for very gladness. Her mercurial temperament was born of the sun and wind, the dancing waters and singing birds.

"He will take thee away," moaned the woman like an autumnal blast.

"I will not go, then," defiantly.

"But fathers do as they like, little one."

"He will be good to me. I shall never leave you, *never*."

She knelt before Pani and clasped the bony hands, looked up earnestly into the faded eyes where the keen lights of only a few years ago were dulling, and she said again solemnly, "I will never leave you."

For she recalled the strange change of mood when she had repeated her full name to Miladi of the island. She was her father's true wife now, and though Jeanne could not comprehend the [332] intricacies of the case, she could see that her father's real happiness lay in this second marriage. It took an effort not to blame her own mother for giving him up. That handsome woman glowing with life in every pulse, ready to dare any danger with him, proud of her motherhood, and, oh, most proud of her husband, making his home a temple of bliss, was his true mate. But though Jeanne could not have explained jealousy, she felt Miladi would not love her for being the Sieur Angelot's daughter. It would be better for her to remain here with Pani.

The Sieur had a deeper gravity in his face when he returned to the cottage.

The interview with Sister Veronica had been painful to both, yet there was the profounder pity on Angelot's side. For even before her husband had gone to the North she had begun to question the religious aspect of her marriage. If it was unholy, then she had no right to live in sin. And during almost two years' absence her morbid faith had grown stronger. She would go to him and ask to be released. She would leave her child in her place to make amends for her sad mistake.

Circumstances had brought about the same ending by different means. Her nurse and companion on her journey had strengthened her faith in her resolve. Arrived at Montreal she received still further confirmation of the righteousness of her course. She had been an unlawful wife. She had sinned in taking the marriage vow. It was no holy sacrament, and she could be [333] absolved. So she began her novitiate and was presently received into the order. She fasted and prayed, she did penance in her convent cell, she prayed for the Sieur Angelot that he might be converted to the true faith. It was not as her husband, but as one might wrestle for any sinful soul. And that the child would be well brought up. She had known Berthê Campeau, sister Mary Constantia, a long while before she heard the story of the little girl who had come so mysteriously to Detroit, and who had been wild and perverse beyond anything. One day her name had been mentioned. Then she asked the Abbe to communicate with Father Rameau for particulars and had been answered. Here was a new work for her, to snatch this child from evil ways and bring her up safely in the care of the Church. She gained permission to go for her, and here again circumstances seemed to play at cross purposes.

The Sieur Angelot understood in a little while that whatever love had inspired her that night she had besought him to rescue her from a life that looked hateful to her young eyes, the passion that influenced her then was utterly dead, abhorrent to her. Better, a thousand times better, that it should be so. He could not make that eager, impetuous girl, whose voice trembled with emotion, whose kisses answered his, whose soft arms clung to his neck, out of this pale, attenuated, bloodless woman. Perhaps it was heroic to give all to her Church. Even men had done this. [334]

"And thou art happy and satisfied in this calling, Mignonne," he half assumed, half inquired.

Did the old term of endearment touch some chord that was not quite dead, after all? A faint flush brought a wavering heat to her face.

"It is my choice. And if I can have my child to train, to keep from evil—" her voice trembled.

He shook his head. "Nay, I cannot have her bright young life thrust into the shadow for which she has no taste. She would pine and die."

"I thought so once. I should have died sooner in the other life. It is God and his holy Son who give grace."

"She will not forsake her duty to the one who has taken such kindly care of her, the Pani woman."

"She can come, too. Give me my child, it is all I ask of you. Surely you do not need her."

Her voice was roused to a certain intensity, her thin hands worked. But it seemed to him there was something almost cruel in the motion.

"I cannot force her will. It is as she shall choose."

And seeing Jeanne all eager interest in the doorway of the old cottage, he knew that she would never choose to shut herself out of the radiant sunlight.

"Here is the old gift for you, my child;" and he clasped the chain with its little locket round her neck.

Pani came and looked at it. "Yes, yes," she said. "It was on thy baby neck, little one. And there are the two letters—"

"It was cruel to prick them in the soft baby flesh," the Sieur said, smilingly. "I wonder I had the [335] courage. They alone would prove my right. And now there is no time to waste. Will you make ready—"

"I am not often asked among the quality," and her face turned scarlet. "I have no fine attire. Wilt thou be ashamed of me?"

She looked so radiant in her girlish beauty, that it seemed to him at the moment there was nothing more to desire. And the delicious archness in her tone captivated him anew. Consign her to convent walls—never!

Mam'selle Fleury took charge of Jeanne at once and led her through the large hall to a side chamber. Not so long ago she was a gay, laughing girl, now she was a gravely sweet woman, nursing a sorrow.

"It was a sudden summons," she explained. "And we could not expect to know just when the child grew into a maiden. Therefore you will not feel hurt, that I, having a wider experience, prepared for the occasion. Let me arrange your costume now. I had this frock when I was of your age, though I was hardly as slim. How much you are like your father, child!"

"I think he was a little hurt that I had nothing to honor you with," Jeanne said, simply.

"Monsieur Loisel was saying that you needed a woman's hand, now that you were outgrowing childhood."

She drew off Jeanne's plain gown; and though this was simple for the fashion of the day, it transformed the child into a woman. The long, pointed bodice, the square neck, with its [336] bordering of handsome lace, showing the exquisite throat sloping into the shoulders and chest, the puffings that fell like waves about the hips and made ripples as they went down the skirt, the sleeves ending at the elbow with a fall of lace, and her hair caught up high and falling in a cascade of curls, tied with a great bow that looked like a butterfly, changed her so that she hardly knew herself.

"O, Mam'selle, you have made me beautiful!" she cried, in delight. "I shall be glad to do you honor, and for the sake of M. St. Armand; but my father would love me in the plainest gown."

Mam'selle smiled over her handiwork. But Jeanne's beauty was her own.

She had grown many shades fairer during the winter, and had not rambled about so much nor been on the water so often. Her slim figure, in its virginal lines, was as lissome as the child's, but there was an exquisite roundness to every limb and it lent flexibility to her movements. A beautiful girl, Mademoiselle Fleury acknowledged to herself, and she wondered that no one beside M. St. Armand had seen the promise in her.

The Sieur Angelot had been presented to the guest so lately returned from abroad.

"I desire to thank you most heartily, Monsieur St. Armand," M. Angelot began, "for an unusual interest in my child that I did not know was living until a few weeks ago. She is most enthusiastic about you. Indeed, I have been almost jealous." [337]

St. Armand smiled, and bowed gracefully.

"I believe I shall prove to you that I had a right, and, if my discovery holds good, we are of some distant kin. When I first heard her name a vague memory puzzled me, and when I went to France I resolved to search for a family link almost forgotten in the many turns there have been in the old families in my native land. Three generations ago a Gaston de la Touchê Angelot gave his life for his religious faith. Those were perilous times, and there was little chance for freedom of belief."

"He was my grandfather," returned the Sieur Angelot gravely. "We have been Huguenots for generations. More than one has died for his faith."

"And he was a cousin to my father. I am, as you see, in the generation before you. And I am glad fate or fortune, as you will, has brought about this meeting. When I learned this fact I said: 'As soon as I return to America I shall search out this little girl in Old Detroit and take her under my care. There will be no one to object, no one who will have a better right.' I am all curiosity to know how on your side you made the discovery."

There was a rustle of silken trains in the hall. Madame Fleury entered in a stiff brocade and a sparkle of jewels, Mam'selle in a softer, though still elegant attire, and Jeanne, who stood amazed at the eyes bent upon her; even her father was mute from very surprise.

"Oh, my sweet Jeanne," began M. St. Armand, smilingly, "thou hast strangely outgrown the little girl I used to know. Memory hath cheated me in the years. For the child that kept such a [338] warm place in my heart hath grown into a woman, and not only that, but hath a new friend and will not need me."

"Monsieur, no one with remembrance in her heart can so easily give up an old friend who made life brighter and happier for her, and who kindled the spark of ambition in her soul. I think even my father owes you a great debt. I might still have been a wild thing, haunting the woods and waters Indian fashion, and, as one might say, despising civilized life," smiling with a bewitching air. "I thank you, Monsieur, for your interest in me. For it has given me a great deal of happiness, and no doubt saved me from some foolish mistakes."

She had proffered him her dainty hand at the beginning of her speech, and now with a charming color she raised her eyes to her father. One could trace a decided likeness between

them.

"Monsieur St. Armand has done still more," subjoined her father. "He has taken pains while in France to hunt up bygone records, and found that the families are related. So you have not only a friend but a relative, and I surely will join you in gratitude."

"I am most happy." She glanced smilingly from one to the other. Mam'selle Fleury watched her with surprise. The grace, ease, and presence of mind one could hardly have looked for. "It is in the blood," she said to herself, and she wished, too, that she had made herself a friend of this enchanting girl. [339]

Then they moved toward the dining room. M. Fleury took in Jeanne as the honored guest, and seated her at his right. The Sieur Angelot was beside the hostess. The conversation in the nature of the startling incidents was largely personal and between the two men. Mam'selle Fleury was deeply interested in the adventures of the Sieur Angelot, detailed with spirit and vivacity. Jeanne's varying color and her evident pride in her father was delightful to witness. That he and this elegant St. Armand should have sprung from the same stock was easy to believe. While the gentlemen sat over their wine and cigars Mam'selle took Jeanne to the pretty sitting room that she had once visited with such awe. It was odorous with the evening dew on the vines outside and the peculiar fragrance of sweetbrier.

"What an odd thing that you should have been carried off by Indians and taken to your father's house!" she began. "And this double marriage—though the Church had annulled your mother's. We have heard of the White Chief, but no one could have guessed you were his child. It is said—your mother desires you—" Mam'selle hesitated as if afraid to trench on secret matters, and not sure of the conclusion.

"She wishes me to go into the convent. But I am not like Berthê Campeau. I should fret and be miserable like a wild beast in a cage. If she were ill and needed a nurse and affection, I should be drawn to her. And then, I am not of the same faith."

"But—a mother—" [340]

"O Mam'selle, she doesn't seem like my mother. My father kissed me and held me in his arms at once and my whole heart went out to him. I feel strange and far away from her, and she thinks human love a snare to draw the soul from God. O Mam'selle, when he has made the world so beautiful with all the varying seasons, the singing birds and the blooms and the leaping waters that take on wonderful tints at sunrise and sunset, how could one be shut away from it all? There is so much to give thanks for in the wide, splendid world. It must be better to give them with a free, grateful heart."

"I have had some sorrow, and once I looked toward convent peace with secret longing. But my mother and father said, 'Wait, we both shall need thee as we grow older.' There is much good to be done outside. And one can pray as I have learned. I cannot think human ties are easily to be cast aside when God's own hand has welded them."

"And she sent me to my father. I feel that I belong to him;" Jeanne declared, proudly.

"He is a man to be fond of, so gracious and noble. And his island home is said to be most beautiful."

Jeanne gave an eloquent description of it and the two handsome boys with their splendid mother. Mam'selle wondered that there was no jealousy in her young heart. What a charming character she had! Why had not she taken her up as well, instead of feeling that M. St. Armand's interest was much misplaced? She might have won this sweet child's affection that had been lavished upon an old Indian woman. At times she had hungered for love. Her sister was away, [341] happily married, with babies clinging to her knees, and the sufficiency of a gratified life.

Jeanne was sitting upon a silken covered stool, her round arm daintily reclining on the other's knee. The elder bent over and kissed her on the forehead.

"You belong to love's world," she said.

Then the gentlemen entered. Mam'selle played on the harpsichord, and there was conversation until it was time to go.

"You will come again," she exclaimed. "I shall want to see you, though I know what your decision will be, and I think it right. And now will you keep this gown as a little gift from me? You may want to go elsewhere. My mother and I will be happy to chaperon you."

Jeanne looked up, wide-eyed and grateful. "Every one has always been so good to me," she rejoined. "Then I will not take it off. It will be such a pleasure to Pani. I never thought to look so lovely."

Both gentlemen attended her home, and gave her a tender good night.

Pleasant as the evening was Pani hovered over a handful of fire. Jeanne threw some fir twigs and broken pieces of birch bark on the coals, and the blaze set the room in a glow. "Look, Pani!" she cried, and then she went whirling round the room, her eyes shining, her rose red lips parted with a laugh.

"It is a spirit." Pani shook her head and her eyes, distended, looked frightened in the gleam of

the fire. "Little Jeanne has gone, has gone forever." [342]

Yes, little Jeanne had gone. She felt that herself. She was gay, eager, impetuous, but something new had stolen mysteriously over her.

"Little Jeanne can never go away from you, Pani. Make room in your lap, so; now put your arms about me. Never mind the gown. Now, am I not your little one?"

Pani laughed, the soft, broken croon of old age.

"My little one come back," she kept repeating in a delighted tone, stroking the soft curls.

The next morning M. St. Armand came for a long call. There was so much to talk over. He felt sorry for the poor mother, but he, too, objected strenuously to Jeanne being persuaded into convent life. He praised her for her perseverance in studying, for her improvement under limited conditions. Then he wondered a little about her future. If he could have the ordering of it!

That afternoon Father Rameau came for her. A ship was to sail the next day for Montreal, and her mother would return in it. But when he looked in the child's eyes he knew the mother would go alone. Had he been derelict in duty and let this lamb wander from the fold? Father Gilbert blamed him. Even the mother had rebuked him sharply. Looking into the child's radiant face he understood that she had no vocation for a holy life. Was not the hand of God over all his children? There were strange mysteries no one could fathom. He uttered no word of persuasion, he could not. God would guide.

To Jeanne it was an almost heart-breaking interview. Impassioned tenderness might have won, to lifelong regret, but it was duty, the salvation of her soul always uppermost. [343]

"Still I should not be with you," said Jeanne. "I should take up a strange life among strangers. We could not talk over the past, nor be the dearest of human beings to each other—"

"That is the cross," interrupted the mother. "Sinful desires must be nailed to it."

And all her warm, throbbing, eager life, her love for all human creatures, for all of God's works.

Jeanne Angelot stood up very straight. Her laughing face grew almost severe.

"I cannot do it. I belong to my father. You sent me to him once. I—I love him."

The mother turned and left the room. At that instant she could not trust herself to say farewell. [344]

CHAPTER XX.

THE LAST OF OLD DETROIT.

The Sieur Angelot was gladly consulted on many points. The British still retained the command of the Grand Portage on Lake Superior, and the Ottawa river route to the upper country. By presents and subsidies they maintained an influence over the savages of the Northwest. The different Indian tribes, though they might have disputes with each other, were gradually being drawn together with the desire of once more sweeping the latest conquerors out of existence.

The fur company endeavored to keep friendly with all, and the Indians were well aware that much of their support must be drawn from them. The new governor was expected shortly, and Detroit was to be his home.

The Sieur Angelot advised better fortifications and a larger garrison. Many points were examined and found weak. The general government had been appealed to, but the country was poor and could hardly believe, in the face of all the treaties, there could be danger.

There was also the outcome of the fur trade to be discussed with the merchants, and new arrangements were being made, for the Sieur was to return before long. [345]

Jeanne had spent a sorrowful time within her own soul, though she strove to be outwardly cheerful. June was upon them in all its glory and richness. Sunshine scattered golden rays and made a clarified atmosphere that dazzled. The river with rosy fogs in the morning, the quivering breath of noon when spirals of yellow light shot up, changing tints and pallors every moment, the softer purplish coloring as the sun began to drop behind the tree tops, illuminating the different shades of green and intensifying the birches until one could imagine them white-robed ghosts. The sails on the river, the rambles in the woods, were Jeanne's delight once more, and with so charming a companion as M. St. Armand, her cup seemed full of joy.

At times the thought of her lonely mother haunted her. Yet what a dreary life it must be that had robbed her of every semblance of youth and set stern lines in her face, that had uprooted the sweetest human love! How could she have turned from the husband of her choice, and that husband so brave and tender a man as Sieur Angelot? For day by day it seemed to Jeanne that she found new graces and tenderness in him.

Yet she knew she must pain him, too. Only for a brief while, perhaps. And—there was a curious hesitation about the new home.

"Jeanne," he said one afternoon, when they, too, were lingering idly about the suburban part of the town, the gardens, the orchards, the long fields stretching back distantly, here and there a cottage, a nest of bloom. There were the stolid farmers working in their old-fashioned methods, [346] there was a sound of strokes in the dusky woods where some men were chopping that brought faint, reverberating echoes, there was the humming of bees, the laughter of children. Little naked Indian babies ran about, the sun making the copper of their skins burnished, squaws sat with bead work, young fellows were playing games with smooth stones or throwing at a mark. French women had brought their wheels out under the shade of some tree, and were making a pleasant whir with the spinning.

"Jeanne," he began again, "it is time for me to go up North. And I must take you, my daughter —" looking at her with questioning eyes.

She raised her hand as if to entreat. A soft color wavered over her face, and then she glanced up with a gentle gravity.

"Oh, my father, leave me here a little longer. I cannot go now;" and her voice was persuasively sweet.

"Cannot—why?" There was insistence in his tone.

"There is Pani—"

"But we will take Pani. I would not think of leaving her behind."

"She will not go. I have planned and talked. She is no longer strong. To tear her up by the roots would be cruel. And do you not see that all her life is wound about me? She has been the tenderest of mothers. I must give her back some of the care she has bestowed upon me. She has [347] never been quite the same since I was taken away. She came near to dying then. Yes, you must leave me awhile."

"Jeanne, my little one, I cannot permit this sacrifice;" and the tenderness in his eyes smote her.

"Ah, you cannot imagine how I should pine for Detroit and for her. Then besides—"

A warm color flooded her face; her eyes drooped.

"My darling, can you not trust yourself to my love?"

"There is another to share your love. Oh, believe me, I am not jealous that one so beautiful and worthy should stand in the place my mother contemned. She has the right."

"Child, you have wondered how I found the clew to your existence. I have meant to tell you but there have been so many things intervening. Do you remember one night she asked your name, after having heard your story? She had listened to the other side more than once, and, piecing them together, she guessed—"

Jeanne recalled the sudden change from delight to coldness. Ah, was this the key?

"The boys were full of enthusiasm over the strange guest, whose eyes were like their father's. No suspicion struck me. Blue eyes are not so unusual, though they all have dark ones. Neither was it so strange that one should be captured by the Indians and escape. But I saw presently that something weighed heavily on the heart that had always been open as the day. Now and then she seemed on the point of some confession. I have large patience, Jeanne, and I waited, since I knew [348] it had nothing to do with any lack of love towards me. And one night when her secret had pricked her sorely she told me her suspicions. My little child might be alive, might have escaped by some miracle; and she besought me with all eagerness to hasten to Detroit and find this Jeanne Angelot. She had been jealous and unhappy that there should be another claimant for my love, but then she was nobly sweet and generous and would give you a warm welcome. I sent her word by a boat going North, and now I have received another message. Women's hearts are strange things, child, but you need not be afraid to trust her, though the welcome will be more like that of a sister," and he smiled. "I am your rightful protector. I cannot leave you here alone."

"Nothing would harm me," she made answer, proudly. "There are many friends. Detroit is dear to me. And for Pani's sake—oh, leave me here a little while longer. For I can see Pani grows weaker and day by day loses a little of her hold on life. Then there is Monsieur Loisel, who will guard me, and Monsieur Fleury and Madame, who are most kind. Yes, you will consent. After that I will come and be your most dutiful daughter. But, oh, think; I owe the Indian woman a child's service as well."

Her lovely eyes turned full upon him with tenderest entreaty. He would be loth to reward any such devotion with ingratitude, and it would be that. Pani could not be taken from Detroit. [349]

"Jeanne, it wrings my heart to find you and then give you up even for a brief while. How can I?"

"But you will," she said, and her arms were about his neck, her soft, warm cheek was pressed to his, and he could feel her heart beat against his. "It pains me, too, for see, I love you. I have a right to love you. I must make amends for the pang of the other defection. And you will tell *her*, yes. I think I ought to be sister to her. And there are the two charming boys and Angelique—she

will let me love them. I will not take their love from her."

He drew a long breath. "I know not how to consent, and yet I see that it would be the finest and loveliest duty. I honor you for desiring it. I must think and school myself," smiling sadly.

He consulted M. St. Armand on the matter.

"Give her into my guardianship for a while," that gentleman said. "It is noble in her to care for her foster mother to the last. I shall be in and out of Detroit, and the Fleurys will be most friendly. And look you, *mon cousin*, I have a proffer to make. I have a son, a young man whose career has been most honorable, who is worthy of any woman's love, and who so far has had no entanglements. If these two should meet again presently, and come to desire each other, nothing would give me greater happiness. He would be a son quite to your liking. Both would be of one faith. And to me, Jeanne would be the dearest of daughters."

The Sieur Angelot wrung the hand of his relative. [350]

"It must be as the young people wish. And I would like to have her a little while to myself."

"That is right, too. I could wish she were my daughter, only then my son might miss a great joy."

So the matter was settled. M. and Madame Fleury would have opened their house to Jeanne and her charge, but it was best for them to remain where they were. Wenonah came in often and Margot was always ready to do a service.

One day Jeanne went down to the wharf to see the vessel depart for the North. It was a magnificent June morning, with the river almost like glass and a gentle wind from the south. She watched the tall figure on the deck, waving his hand until the proud outline mingled with others and was indistinct—or was it the tears in her eyes?

M. St. Armand had some business in Quebec, but would remain only a short time.

It seemed strangely solitary to Jeanne after that, although there was no lack of friends. Everybody was ready to serve her, and the young men bowed with the utmost respect when they met her. She took Pani out for short walks, the favorite one to the great oak tree where Jeanne had begun her life in Detroit. Children played about, brown Indian babies, grave-faced even in their play, vivacious French little ones calling to each other in shrill *patois*, laughing and tumbling and climbing. Had she once been wild and merry like them? Then Pani would babble of the past and stroke the soft curls and call her "little one." What a curious dream life was! [351]

They were busy with the governor's house and the military squares and the old fort. The streets were cleared up a little. Houses had been painted and whitewashed. Stores and shops spread out their attractions, booths were flying gay colors and showing tempting eatables. All along the river was the stir of active life. People stayed later in the streets these warm evenings and sat on stoops chatting. Young men and maids planned pleasures and sails on the river and went to bed gay and light-hearted. Was there any place quite like Old Detroit?

Early one morning while the last stars were lingering in the sky and the east was suffused with a faint pink haze, a scarlet spire shot up that was not sunrise. No one remarked it at first. Then a broad flash that might have been lightning but was not, and a cry on the still air startled the sleepers. "Fire! Fire!"

Suddenly all was terror. There had been no rain in some time, and the inflammable buildings caught like so much tinder. From the end of St. Anne's street up and down it ran, the dense smoke sometimes hiding the flames. Like the eruption of a great crater the smoke rose thick, black, with here and there a tongue of flame that was frightful. The streets were so narrow and crowded, the appliances for fighting the terrible enemy so limited, that men soon gave up in despair. On and on it went devouring all within its reach.

Shop keepers emptied their stores, hurried their stocks down to the wharf, and filled the boats. [352] Furniture, century-old heirlooms, were tumbled frantically out of houses to some place of refuge as the fire swept on, carried farther and farther. Daylight and sunlight were alike obscured. Frantic people ran hither and thither, children were gathered in arms, and hurried without the palisades, which in many instances were burned away. And presently the inhabitants gave way to the wildest despair. It was a new and terrible experience. The whole town must go.

Jeanne had been sleeping soundly, and in the first uproar listened like one dazed. Was it an Indian assault, such as her father had feared presently? Then the smoke rushed into every crack and crevice.

"Oh, what is it, what is it?" she cried, flinging her door open wide.

"Oh, Mam'selle," cried Margot, "the street is all aflame. Run! run! Antoine has taken the children."

Already the streets were crowded. St. Anne's was a wall of fire. One could hardly see, and the roar of the flames was terrific, drowning the cries and shrieks.

"Come, quick!" Margot caught her arm.

"Pani! Pani!" She darted back into the house. "Pani," she cried, pulling at her. "Oh, wake,

wake! We must fly. The town is burning up."

"Little one," said Pani, "nothing shall harm thee."

"Come!" Jeanne pulled her out with her strong young arms, and tried to slip a gown over the shaking figure that opposed her efforts. [353]

"I will not go," she cried. "I know, you want to take me away from dear old Detroit. I heard something the Sieur Angelot said. O Jeanne, the good Father in Heaven sent you back once. Do not go again—"

"The street is all on fire. Oh, Margot, help me, or we shall be burned to death. Pani, dear, we must fly."

"Where is Jeanne Angelot," exclaimed a sturdy voice. "Jeanne, if you do not escape now—see, the flames have struck the house."

It was the tall, strong form of Pierre De Ber, and he caught her in his arms.

"No, no! O Pierre, take Pani. She is dazed. I can follow. Cover her with a blanket, so," and Jeanne, having struggled away, threw the blanket about the woman. Pierre caught her up. "Come, follow behind me. Do not let go. O Jeanne, you must be saved."

Pani was too surprised for any resistance. She was not a heavy burthen, and he took her up easily.

"Hold to my arm. There is such a crowd. And the smoke is stifling. O Jeanne! if you should come to harm!" and almost he was tempted to drop the Indian woman, but he knew Jeanne would not leave her.

"I am here. O Pierre, how good you are!" and the praise was like a draught of wine to him.

The flames flashed hither and thither though there was little wind. But the close houses fed it, and in many places there were inflammable stores. Now and then an explosion of powder shot up [354] in the air. Where one fancied one's self out of danger the fire came racing on swift wings.

"There will be only the river left," said some one.

The crowd grew more dense. Pierre felt that he could hardly get to the gate. Then men with axes and hatchets hewed down the palisades, and, he being near, made a tremendous effort, and pushed his way outside. There was still crowd enough, but they soon came to a freer space, and he laid his burthen down, standing over her that no one might tread on her.

"O Jeanne, are you safe? Thank heaven!"

Jeanne caught his hand and pressed it in both of hers.

"If we could get to Wenonah!" she said.

He picked up his burthen again, but it was very limp.

"Open the blanket a little. I was afraid to have her see the flames. Yes, let us go on," said Jeanne, courageously.

Men and women were wringing their hands; children were screaming. The flames crackled and roared, but out here the way was a little clearer. They forced a path and were soon beyond the worst heat and smoke.

Wenonah's lodge was deserted. Pierre laid the poor body down, and Jeanne bent over and kissed the strangely passive face.

"Oh, she is dead! My poor, dear Pani!"

"I did my best," said Pierre, in a beseeching tone. [355]

"Oh, I know you did! Pierre, I should have gone crazy if I had left her there to be devoured by the flames. But I will try—"

She bathed the face, she chafed the limp hands, she called her by every endearing name. Ah, what would he not have given for one such sweet little sentence!

"Pierre—your own people," she cried. "See how selfish I have been to take you—"

"They were started before I came. Father was with them. They were going up to the square, perhaps to the Fort. Oh, the town will all go. The flames are everywhere. What an awful thing! Jeanne, what can I do? O Jeanne, little one, do not weep."

For now Jeanne had given way to sobs.

There was a rushing sound in the doorway, and Wenonah stood there.

"Oh," she exclaimed, "I tried to get into the town, but could not. Thank the good God that you are safe. And Pani—no, she is not dead, her heart beats slowly. I will get her restored."

"And I will go for further news," said Pierre.

Very slowly Pani seemed to come back to life. The crowd was pouring out to the fields and farms, and down and up the river. The flames were not satisfied until they had devoured nearly everything, but they had not gone up to the Fort. And now a breeze of wind began to dissipate the smoke, and one could see that Old Detroit was a pile of ashes and ruins. Very little was left,—a few buildings, some big stone chimneys, and heaps of iron merchandise. [356]

Pierre returned with the news. Pani was lying on the couch with her eyes partly open, breathing, but that was all.

"People are half crazy, but I don't wonder at it," said Pierre. "The warehouses are piles of ashes. Poor father will have lost everything, but I am young and strong and can help him anew."

"Thou art a good son, Pierre," exclaimed Wenonah.

Many had been routed out without any breakfast, and now it was high noon. Children were clamoring for something to eat. The farmers spread food here and there on the grass and invited the hungry ones. Jacques Giradin, the chief baker in the town, had kneaded his bread and put it in the oven, then gone to help his neighbors. The bakery was one of the few buildings that had been miraculously spared. He drew out his bread—it had been well baked—and distributed it to the hungry, glad to have something in this hour of need.

It was summer and warm, and the homeless dropped down on the grass, or in the military gardens, and passed a strange night. The next morning they saw how complete the destruction had been. Old Detroit, the dream of Cadillac and De Tonti, La Salle and Valliant, and many another hero, the town that had prospered and had known adversity, that had been beleaguered by Indian foes, that had planted the cross and the golden lilies of France, that had bowed to the conquering standard of England, and then again to the stars and stripes of Liberty, that had [357] brimmed over with romance and heroism, and even love, lay in ashes.

In a few days clearing began and tents and shanties were erected for temporary use. But poverty stared the brave citizens in the face. Fortunes had been consumed as well. Business was ruined for a time.

Jeanne remained with Wenonah. Pani improved, but she had been feeble a long while and the shock proved too much for her. She did not seem to suffer but faded gently away, satisfied when Jeanne was beside her.

Tony Beeson, quite outside of the fire, opened his house in his rough but hospitable fashion to his wife's people. Rose had not fared so well. Pierre was his father's right hand through the troublous times. Many of the well-to-do people were glad to accept shelter anywhere. The Fleurys had saved some of their most valuable belongings, but the house had gone at last.

"Thou art among the most fortunate ones," M. Loisel said to Jeanne a week afterward, "for thy portion was not vested here in Detroit. I am very glad."

It seemed to Jeanne that she cared very little for anything save the sorrows and sufferings of the great throng of people. She watched by Pani through the day and slept beside her at night. "Little one," the feeble voice would say, "little one," and the clasp of the hand seemed enough. So it passed on until one day the breath came slower and fainter, and the lips moved without any sound. Jeanne bent over and kissed them for a last farewell. Father Rameau had given her the [358] sacred rites of the Church, and said over her the burial service. A faithful woman she had been, honest and true.

And this was what Monsieur St. Armand found when he returned to Detroit, a grave girl instead of the laughing child, and an old town in ashes.

"I have news for you, too," he said to Jeanne, "partly sorrowful, partly consoling as well. Two days after reaching her convent home, your mother passed quietly away, and was found in the morning by one of the sisters. The poor, anxious soul is at peace. I cannot believe God means one to be so troubled when a sin is forgiven, especially one that has been a mistake. So, little one, if thou hadst listened to her pleadings thou wouldst have been left in a strange land with no dear friend. It is best this way. The poor Indian woman was nearer a mother to thee."

A curious peace about this matter filled Jeanne Angelot's soul. Her mother was at rest. Perhaps now she knew it was not sinful to be happy. And for her father's sake it was better. He could not help but think of the poor, lonely woman in her convent cell, expiating what she considered a sin.

"When Laurent comes we will go up to your beautiful island," he said. "I have bidden him to join me here."

Jeanne took Monsieur around to the old haunts: the beautiful woods, the stream running over the rocky hillside, the flowers in bloom that had been so fateful to her, the nooks and groves, the green where they put up the Maypole, and her brave old oak, with its great spreading branches [359] and wide leaves, nodding a welcome always.

One day they went down to the King's wharf to watch a vessel coming up the beautiful river. The sun made it a sea of molten gold to-day, the air was clear and exhilarating. But it was not a young fellow who leaped so joyously down on to the dock. A tall, handsome man, looking something like his own father, and something like hers, Jeanne thought, for his eyes were of such a deep blue.

"There is no more Old Detroit. It lies in ashes," said M. St. Armand, when the first greetings were over. "A sorrowful sight, truly."

"And no little girl." Laurent smiled with such a fascination that it brought the bright color to her face. "Mademoiselle, I have been thinking of you as the little girl whose advice I disdained and had a ducking for it. I did not look for a young lady. I do not wonder now that you have taken so much of my father's heart."

"We can give you but poor accommodations; still it will not be for long, as we go up North to accept our cousin's hospitality. You will be delighted to meet the Sieur Angelot. The Fleury family will be glad to see you again, though they have no such luxuriant hospitality as before."

They all went to the plain small shelter in which the Fleurys were thankful to be housed, and none the less glad to welcome their friends. They kept Jeanne to dinner, and would gladly have taken her as a guest. M. Loisel had offered her a home, but she preferred staying with Wenonah. [360]
Paspah had never come back from his quest. Whether he had met with some accident, or simply found wild life too fascinating to leave, no one ever knew. To Wenonah it was not very heart-breaking.

"Oh, little one," she said at parting, "I shall miss thee sorely. Detroit will not be the same without thee."

And then Jeanne Angelot went sailing up the beautiful lakes again, past shores in later summer bloom and beauty and islands that might be fairy haunts. They were enchanted bowers to her, but it was some time before she knew what had lent them such an exquisite charm.

So she came home to her father's house and met with a warm welcome, a noisy welcome from two boys, who could not understand why she would not climb and jump, though she did run races with them, and they were always hanging to her.

"And you turn red so queerly sometimes," said Gaston, much puzzled. "I can't tell which is the prettier, the red or the white. But the red seems for M. St. Armand."

Loudac and the dame were overjoyed to see her again. The good dame shook her head knowingly.

"The Sieur will not keep her long," she said.

Old Detroit rose very slowly from its ashes. In August Governor Hull arrived and found no home awaiting him, but had to go some distance to a farm house for lodgings. He brought with him many eastern ideas. The old streets must be widened, the lanes straightened, the houses [361]
made more substantial. There was a great outcry against the improvements. Old Detroit had been good enough. It was the center of trade, it commanded the highway of commerce. And no one had any money to spend on foolery.

But he persevered until he obtained a grant from Congress, and set to work rectifying wrongs that had crept in, reorganizing the courts, and revising property deeds. The old Fort was repaired, the barracks put in better shape, the garrison augmented.

But the event the Sieur Angelot had feared and foreseen, came to pass. Many difficulties had arisen between England and the United States, and at last culminated in war again. This time the northern border was the greatest sufferer on land. The Indians were aroused to new fury, the different tribes joining under Tecumseh, resolved to recover their hunting grounds. The many terrible battles have made a famous page in history. General Hull surrendered Detroit to the British, and once more the flag of England waved in proud triumph.

But it was of short duration. The magnificent victories on the lakes and Generals Harrison's and Winchester's successes on land, again changed the fate of the North. Once more the stars and stripes went up over Detroit, to remain for all time to come.

But after that it was a new Detroit,—wide streets and handsome buildings growing year by year, but not all the old landmarks obliterated; and their memories are cherished in many a history and romance. [362]

Jeanne St. Armand, a happy young wife, with two fathers very fond of her, went back to Detroit after awhile. And sometimes she wondered if she had really been the little girl to whom all these things had happened.

When Louis Marsac heard the White Chief had found his daughter and given her to Laurent St. Armand, he ground his teeth in impotent anger. But for the proud, fiery, handsome Indian wife of whom he felt secretly afraid, he might have gained the prize, he thought. She was extravagantly fond of him, and he prospered in many things, but he envied the Sieur Angelot his standing and his power, though he could never have attained either.

Pierre De Ber was a good son and a great assistance to his father in recovering their fortunes. After awhile he married, largely to please his mother, but he made an excellent husband. He knew why Jeanne Angelot could never have been more than a friend to him. But of his children he loved little Jeanne the best, and Madame St. Armand was one of her godmothers, when she was christened in the beautiful new church of St. Anne, which had experienced almost as varying fortunes as the town itself.

Transcriber's Notes

Obvious punctuation errors were corrected.

The remaining corrections made are indicated by dotted lines under the corrections. Scroll the mouse over the word and the original text will appear.

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