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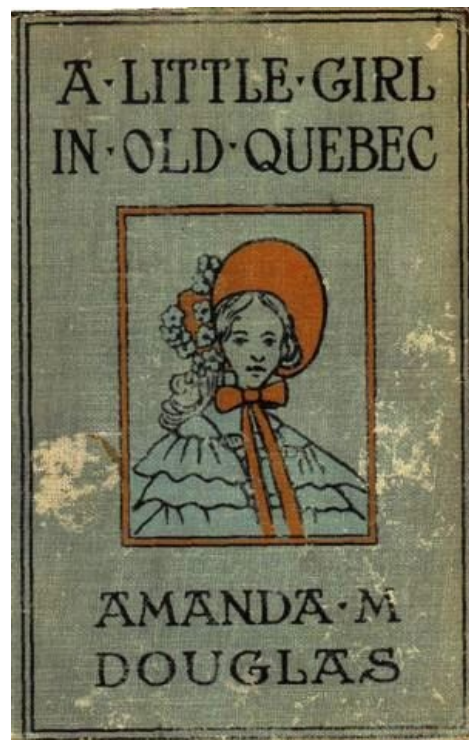
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A LITTLE GIRL IN OLD QUEBEC

By **AMANDA M. DOUGLAS**

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A LITTLE GIRL IN OLD QUEBEC

CHAPTER I

A WILD ROSE

Ralph Destournier went gayly along, whistling a merry French song that was nearly all chorus, climbing, slipping, springing, wondering in his heart as many a man did then what had induced Samuel de Champlain to dream out a city on this craggy, rocky spot. Yet its wildness had an impressive grandeur. Above the island of Orleans the channel narrowed, and there were the lovely green heights of what was to be Point Levis, more attractive, he thought, than these frowning cliffs. The angle between the St. Charles and St. Lawrence gave an impregnable site for a fortress, and Champlain was a born soldier with a quick eye to seize on the possibility of defence.

On the space between the cliffs and the water a few wooden buildings, rough hewn, marked the site of the lower town. A wall had been erected, finished with a gallery, loopholed for musketry, and within this were the beginnings of a town that was to be famous for heroic deeds, for men of high courage, for quaintness that perpetuates old stories which are perfect romances yet to-day after the lapse of three centuries.

There was a storehouse quite well fortified, there was a courtyard with some fine walnut trees, and a few gardens stretching out with pleasant greenery, while doves were flying about in wide circles, a reminder of home. Ralph Destournier had a spirit of adventure and Champlain was a great hero to him. Coming partly of Huguenot stock he had fewer chances at home, and he believed there was more liberty in the new world, a better outlook for a restless, eager mind.

He went on climbing over the sun-baked cliffs, while here and there in a depression where rain could linger there were patches of verdure, trees that somehow maintained a footing. How unlike the level old seaport town where he had passed a good part of his youth, considered his grandfather's heir, when in the turn of fortune's wheel the sturdy old Huguenot had been killed in battle and his estates confiscated.

Something stirred up above him, not any small animal either. It crackled the bushes and moved about with a certain agility. Could it be a deer? He raised his gun.

Then a burst of song held him in amaze. It was not a bird, though it seemed to mock several of them. There were no especial words or rhymes, but the music thrilled him. He strode upward. Out of a leafy bower peered a face, child or woman, he could not tell at first, a crown of light, loose curling hair and two dark, soft merry eyes, a cherry-red mouth and dimpled chin.

"Hello! How did you get up there?" he asked in his astonishment. Indians sometimes lurked about.

"I climbed. You did not suppose I flew?"

The tone was merry rather than saucy, and taking a few steps nearer, he saw she was quite a child. But she wore no cap and she shook the wind-blown hair aside with a dainty gesture. There was a fearlessness about her that charmed him.

"And you live—here?"

"Not here in the woods—no. But down in the town. Down there by the garden, M'sieu Hébert and the General. And Maman has one. But I hate working in it. So I ran away. Do you know what will happen to me when I go back?"

"No, what?" with a sense of amusement. "Perhaps you will get no supper!"

"I shall be whipped. And to-morrow I shall not be let out of the garden. When I get to be a woman I won't work in the garden. I won't even have a husband. They make you do just as they like. Why isn't one's way as good as another's?"

A line of perplexity settled between her eyes that were soft enough to melt the heart of a stone, he thought, if stones really had hearts.

"Older people are generally wiser. And mothers——"

"Oh, she isn't my mother," interrupted the child. "Even Catherine was not my mother. I was very sorry for that. She was good and tender, but she died. And Jean was very angry because she was not my real mother, and he would have nothing to do with me. So he brought me to Maman. Oh, it was a long while ago. Maman is good in some ways. She gives me plenty to eat when we have it and she does not beat me often, as she does Pani."

"And who is Pani?"

"Oh, the little slave. His tribe was driven away after they had lost their battle, but some of the children were left behind and they are slaves. Do you suppose the Indians will ever conquer M. de Champlain? Then we should be slaves—or killed."

He shuddered. Already he had heard tales of awful cruelty in the treatment of prisoners.

"Are you not afraid some Indians may be prowling about?" and he glanced furtively around.

"Oh, they do not come here. They are good friends with M. de Champlain. And the fort is guarded. I should hide if one came."

She began to descend and presently reached his level.

"There are long shadows. It gets to be supper time."

He smiled. "Are the shadows your clock hands?"

"We have no clock. M. de Champlain carries his in his pocket. But you see the sun sends long shadows over to the east. It is queer. The sun keeps going round. What is on the other side?"

"It would take a good deal of study to understand it all," he returned gravely.

"I like to hear them talk. There are wonderful places. And where is India? Can any one find the passage they are looking for and sail round the world?"

"They have sailed round it."

"And have you seen Paris and the King?"

"I fought for the dead King. And Paris—why, you cannot imagine anything like it."

"Ah, but we are going to have new France here. And perhaps Paris."

There were pride and gladness in her voice. He smiled inwardly, he would not disturb her childish dream. Would she ever see the beautiful city and the pageants that were almost daily occurrences?

"When did you come here?" she asked presently.

"A fortnight ago, when the storeship arrived."

"Ah, yes. Maman and I went to see it and M. Hébert sent us some curious, delicious dried fruits. M. de Champlain is quite sure we shall grow them in time and have beautiful gardens, and fine people who know many things. Can you read?"

"Why, yes"—laughing.

"I wish I could. But we have no books. Maman thinks it a waste of time, except for the men who must do business and write letters. Can you write letters?"

"Yes"—studying her with amusement.

"Catherine could read. But she had no books. I once learned some of the letters. Jean could make figures."

"Where is he?"

"Oh, off with the fur-hunters. And Antoine makes ever so much money. And he says he and Maman will go back to France. And I suppose they will leave me here. Antoine has two brothers and one is at Brouage, where M. de Champlain was born."

She leaped from point to point in a graceful, agile manner, ran swiftly down some declivity, while he held his breath, it seemed so fraught with danger, but she only looked back laughingly. What a daring midget she was!

And when they were in sight of the palisades they saw a group of men, Pontgrave and Champlain among them. Destournier quickened his pace and touched his hat to them with a reverent grace.

"Have you had a guide?" and Champlain held out his hand to the little girl while he asked the question of Destournier. She took Champlain's hand in both of hers and pressed it against her cheek. Pontgrave smiled at her as well.

Destournier glanced up at the eminence where he had first seen the moving figure. How steep and unapproachable!

"Could you find no fairer site for a new Paris?" he inquired smilingly. "How will you get up and down the streets when you come to that?"

"Is it not the key to the north and a natural fortress? Look you, with a cannon at its base and over opposite, no trading vessel could steal up, no hostile man-of-war invade us. There will come a time when the old world will divide this mighty continent between them and the struggle will be tremendous. It will behoove France to see that her entrances are well guarded. And from this point we must build. What could be a fairer, prouder, more invincible heritage for France? For we shall sweep across the continent, we shall have the whole of the fur trade in time. We shall build great cities," and Champlain's face glowed with the pride he took in the new world.

Yet it was a small beginning, and a less intrepid soul would have been daunted by the many discouragements. A few dwelling houses, a moat with a drawbridge, and the space of land running down to the river divided into gardens. The Sieur de Champlain found time to sow various seeds, wheat and rye as well, to set out berries brought from the woods and native grape vines that were better fitted to withstand the rigorous climate. But now it was simply magnificent, glowing with the early autumn suns.

"I have a good neighbor who takes a great interest in these things. You must inspect Mère Dubray's garden. With a dozen emigrants like her we should have the wilderness abloom. She rivals Hébert. We must have some agriculture. We cannot depend on the mother country for all our food. And if the Indians can raise corn and other needful supplies, why not we?"

"Ah, ha! little truant!" cried Mère Dubray, with a sharp glance at the child, "where hast thou been all the afternoon, while weeds have been growing apace?"

"She has been playing guide to a stranger," explained Destournier, "and I have found her most interesting. It has been time well spent."

Mère Dubray smiled. She always felt honored by the encomiums of M. de Champlain. She was proud of her garden, as well, and pleased to have visitors inspect it. Indeed the young man thought he had seen no neater gardens in sunny France.

"Mère Dubray," he said, "convert this young man into an emigrant. I am a little sorry to have him begin in the autumn when the summer is so much more enticing. But if the worst is taken first there is hope for better to cheer the heart."

Something about her brought to mind the women of old France who sturdily fought their way to a certain prosperity. She was rather short and stout, but with no loosely-hanging flesh, her hair was still coal-black, with a sharp sort of waviness, and her eyes had the sparkle of beads. Her brown skin was relieved by a warm color in the cheeks and the red, rather smiling lips. No one could imagine the child hers. It was nothing to him, yet he felt rather glad.

Destournier was very friendly, however, and found her really intelligent. The little girl ran hither and thither, quite a privileged character. There were very few children beyond the Indians and half-breeds. The fur-hunters often went through a sort of ceremony with the Indian girls during their weeks of dicking with the traders. Some returned another season to renew their vows, others sought new loves.

"I suppose the child has some sort of story?" he said to Champlain as they sat in the evening smoking their pipes.

"The child? The reputed mother came over with some emigrants sent by the King, and as a widow she married Jean Arlac. He, it seems, was much disappointed at not having children of his own and was not over-cordial to the little girl. Rather more than a year ago his wife was taken ill, she had never been robust. And in her last moments she confessed the child was not her own, but that of a friend, and before she told the whole story a convulsion seized her. Jean was very angry and declared the child was nothing to him. He brought it to Mère Dubray and then went off to the fur regions, from whence the tidings came that he had married an Indian woman and taken a post station. She is a bright little thing, and I think must have come of gentle people. Her only trinket is a chain and locket, with a sweet young face in it."

"But there is no chance here for any sort of education. She seems naturally intelligent."

"There will be soon. There is a plan to bring out some nuns, and we shall build a chapel. We cannot do everything at once. The mother country cannot be roused to the importance of this step. It is not simply to discover, one must hold with a secure hand. And we must make homes, we must people them."

Pontgrave was to return to France. Ralph Destournier had half a mind to accompany him, but he was young and adventurous and desirous of seeing more of this strange country. At last he cast in his lot with them for the year at least.

October was a gorgeous month with its changing colors, its rather sharp nights when the log

fires were a delight, and its days of sunshine that brought a summer warmth at noon. At night the sky sparkled with stars.

The buildings were caked on the outside and hung with furs within. Harsh winds swept down from the northwest, everything was hooded with snow. Now one counted stores carefully and wasted nothing, though Champlain's ever sympathetic heart dealt out a little from his not too abundant supplies to the wandering Montagnais and gave their women and children food and shelter. There was a continual fight to keep even tolerably well. Scurvy was one enemy, a low sort of fever another.

There were many plans to make for the opening of spring. Yet Ralph Destournier would have found it intolerably dull but for the little girl whose name was Rose. He taught her to read—Champlain fortunately had some books in French and Latin. There were bits of old history, a volume of Terence, another of Virgil, and out of what he knew and read he reconstructed stories that charmed her. Most of all she liked to hear about the King. The romances of Henry of Navarre fired her rapidly-awakening imagination.

Destournier took several little excursions with the intrepid explorer before the severest of the winter set in. What faith he had in this wonderful new France that was to add so much glory and prosperity to the old world! If its rulers could have but looked through his eyes and had his aims. There was Tadoussac, there was the upper St. Charles, where Jacques Cartier and his men had passed a winter that in spite of the utmost heroism had ended in the tragedy of death. To the south there was a sturdy band of Englishmen trying the same experiment, not merely for their King and country, but also some reward for themselves. Neither were they eager to plant the standard of religion; that was left for Puritans and French missionaries.

It seemed to Destournier that the scheme of colonization was hardly worth while. He had not Champlain's enthusiasm—there was much to do for France, and that land had always to be on the defensive with England. Would it not be so here in the years to come? And the Indians would be a continual menace.

But there was a whole continent to convert, to civilize. He went back to the times of Charlemagne and the struggles that had brought out a glorious France. And no one had given up the passage to India. Lying westward was a great river, and what was beyond that no one knew. It was the province of man to find out.

It was a dull life for a little girl in the winter. Rose almost longed for the garden, even if weeds did grow apace. In the old country Mère Dubray had spun flax and wool, here there was none to spin. She had learned a little work from the Indian women, but she was severely plain. What need of fringes and bead work and laying feathers in rows to be stitched on with a sort of thread made of fine, tough grass? And as for cooking, one had to be economical and make everything with a view to real sustenance, not the high art of cooking, though her peasant life had inducted her into this.

The little girl made a playhouse in one corner of the cabin and stood up sticks for Indian children to whom she told over what had been taught her. They blundered just as she had done, but she had a curious patience with them that would have touched one's heart.

"What nonsense!" Mère Dubray would exclaim. "It is well enough for men, and priests must know Latin prayers, but this is beyond anything a woman needs. And to be repeating it to sticks——"

"But I get so lonely when they are all away," and the child sighed. "The real Indian girls were a pleasure, but I'm afraid you could not teach them to read any more than these make-believes."

"Yes, winter is a dreary time. I'm not sure but I would rather be up in the fur country with my man. It seems they find plenty of game."

There was not so much game here, for the Indians were ever on the alert and the roving bands always on the verge of starvation. But once in a while there was a feast of fresh meat and Mère Dubray made tasty messes for the hungry men.

Rose, bundled up in furs sometimes, ran around the gallery where they had cleared the snow. Then there were the forge and the workshop, where the men were hewing immense walnut trees into slabs and posts for spring building. Some days the doves were let out of the cote in the sunshine and it was fascinating to see them circle around. They knew the little girl and would alight on her shoulder and eat grains out of her hand, coo to her and kiss her. Destournier loved to watch her, a real child of nature, innocent as the doves themselves. Mère Dubray had scarcely more idea of the seriousness of life or the demands of another existence beyond. She told her beads, prayed to her patron saint with small idea of what heaven might be like, unless it was the beautiful little hamlet where she was born. And as she was not sure the child had been christened, she thought it best to wait for the advent of a priest to direct her in the right way.

She was not a little horrified by Destournier's curious familiarity with God and heaven, as it seemed to her. Rose understood almost intuitively that it terrified her, that it seemed a sacrilege, though she would not have known what the word meant. So she said very little about it—it was a beautiful land beyond the sky where people went when they died. Sometimes, when the wonderful beauty of sunset moved her to a strange ecstasy, she longed to be transported thither. And in the moving white drifts she saw angel forms with out-stretched arms and called to them.

The beginning of the new year was bitter indeed. Snow piled mountain high, it seemed a whole

world of snow. For windows they had cloth soaked in oil, but now the curtains of fur were dropped within and a barricade raised without. There were only the blazing logs to give light and make shadows about. They hovered around it, ate nuts, parched corn, and heated their smoked eels. They slept late in the morning and went to bed early. The lack of exercise and vegetables told on health, and towards spring more than one of the little band went their way to the land beyond and left a painful vacancy. But one week there came a marvellous change. The mountains of snow sank down into hills, there was a rush in the river, the barricades were removed from the windows and the fur hangings pushed aside to let in some welcome light.

Rose ran around wild. "I can recall last spring," she said, with a burst of gayety. "The trees coming out in leaf, the birds singing, the blossoms——"

"And the garden," interposed Destournier.

Rose made a wry face.

"It will be an excellent thing for you to run about out of doors. You have lost your rosy cheeks."

"But I am Rose still," she said archly.

She ran gayly one day, she went up the stream in the canoe with Destournier and was full of merriment. But the next day she felt strangely languid. Most of the men had gone hunting. Mère Dubray was piling away some of the heaviest furs.

"Thou wilt roast there in the chimney corner," she said rather sharply. "Get thee out of doors in the fresh air again. It is silly to think one cannot stir without a troop of men tagging to one. Thou art too young for such folly."

"My legs ache," returned the child, "and my head feels queer and goes round when I stir. And I am sleepy, as if there had not been any night."

Mère Dubray glanced at her sharply.

"Why, thy cheeks are red and thy eyes bright. Come, stir about or I shall take a stick to thee. That will liven thee up."

The child rose and made a few uncertain steps. Then she flung out her hands wildly, and the next instant fell in a little heap on the floor.

The elder looked at her in amaze and shook her rather roughly by the arm. And now the redness was gone and the child had a strange gray look, with her eyes rolled up so that only a little of the pupil showed.

"Saint Elizabeth have mercy!" she cried. "The child is truly ill. And she has been so well and strong. And the doctor gone up to Tadoussac!"

She laid her on the rude couch. Rose began to mutter and then broke into a pitiful whine. There were some herbs that every householder gathered, there were secrets extorted from the squaws much more efficacious than those of their medicine men. The little hand was burning hot; yes, it was fever. There had been scurvy and dysentery, but she was a little non-plussed by the fever. And the Sieur would not be here until to-morrow; the doctor, no one knew when.

She took out her chest of simples, a quaintly-made birchen-bark receptacle. They had been carefully labelled by the doctor. Yes, here was "fever"—here another. Which to take puzzled her.

"I might try first one and then the other," she ruminated. "I would get the good of both. And they might not mix well."

She boiled some water and poured it over the herbs. It diffused a bitter, but not unpleasant flavor. Then she put it out of doors to cool.

Rose was sleeping heavily, but her eyes were half open and it startled Mère Dubray.

"A child is a great responsibility," she moaned to herself. "If the Sieur were only here, or the doctor!" She woke her presently and administered the potion. But it brought on a desperate sickness.

"Perhaps I had better try the other." She took the hot, limp hand, the cheeks were burning, but great drops of perspiration stood out on the forehead. She twisted the soft hair in a knot and struck one of her highly-prized pins through it, then she thought a night-cap would be better. Only they would be a world too large for the child. But she succeeded in pinning it to the right shape, though she grudged the two pins. They were a great rarity in those days, and if one was lost hours were spent hunting it up.

The second dose fared better. There was nothing to do but let the child sleep. She busied herself about the few household cares, studied the weather and the signs of spring. Oh, was that a bird! Surely he was early with his song. The river went rushing on joyously, leaping, foaming as if glad to be unchained. The air had softened marvellously. Ah, why should one be ill when spring had come!

The kindly Mère repeated her dose. Towards night the fever seemed to abate, but the child was desperately restless and the worthy woman much troubled. Yet what was the child to her? to any one? And death was sure to come sometime. She would be spared much trouble. She would also

lose much happiness. But was there any great share of it in this new world?

Rose was no better the next day. The nausea returned and clearly she was out of her head. But late this afternoon the Sieur and the young guest returned and were so much alarmed they dispatched an Indian servitor with instructions to bring the doctor at once.

"A pretty severe case," he said, with a grave shake of the head. "You have done the best you could, Mère Dubray, and children have wonderful recuperative powers. So we will try."

"Poor, pretty little thing," thought Destournier. "Will she find anything worth living for?" Women had so few opportunities in those times. And when one was poor and unknown, and in a strange country. Yet he could not bear to think of her dying. There was always a hopeful future to living.

CHAPTER II

THE JOY OF FRIENDSHIP

She went down to the very boundaries of the other country, this little Rose. One night and one day they gave her up. She lay white and silent and Mère Dubray brought out a white muslin dress and ironed it up, much troubled to know whether she had a right to Christian burial or not.

And then she opened her eyes with their olden light and began to ask in a weak voice what happened to her yesterday, and found her last remembrance was six weeks ago.

She could hardly raise her thin little hand, but all the air was sweet with growing things. The tall trees had come into rich leafage, the sunshine glowed upon the grass that danced as if each blade was fairy-born, and sparkled on the river that went hurrying by as if to tell a wonderful story. The great craggy upper town glinted in a thousand varying tints, and at evening was wreathed in trailing mists that seemed some strange army marching across. The thickly wooded hills were nodding and smiling to each other, some native fruit trees were in bloom, and the air was delicious with the scent of wild-grape fragrance.

"It was a bad fever. And we had no priest to call upon. As if people here did not need one as well as in that wild place with a long name where they are hunting copper and maybe gold. But thanks to the saints and the good doctor, you have come through. Ah, we ought to have a chapel at least where one could go and pray."

"It is so beautiful and sweet. One would not want to be put in the ground."

She shuddered thinking of it.

"No, no! And M. Pontgrave has come in with two ships. There is plenty of provisions and fruits from La Belle France. See, M'sieu Ralph brought them in for you. Now you have only to get well."

Mère Dubray's face was alight with joy. The child smiled faintly.

"And the Sieur de Champlain?" she asked.

"Oh, he is as busy as any two men with plans for building up the town, and workmen, and some women for wives—two of whom are married already, though one couple did their courting on shipboard. Oh, you must soon get about. We are going to have a rare summer."

The child raised herself up a trifle and then sank back.

"Oh, dear!" with a little cry.

"Do not mind, *ma petite*. People are always so at first. To-morrow maybe you can sit up, and a few days after walk. And then go out."

"The world is so lovely and sweet," she murmured. And she was glad she had not died.

The next day M'sieu Ralph came in. He appeared changed some way, but the old smile was there. The eyes seemed to have taken on a deeper blue tint. She stretched out her hands.

"Thank the good God that you are restored, little one," he exclaimed, with deep fervor. "Only you are a shadow of the Rose who climbed rocks like a joyous kid less than a year ago. When will you pilot me again?"

She drew a long breath like a sigh.

"And there have been so many happenings. There are new people, though no little girls among them, for which I am sorry. And already they are building houses. The Sieur de Champlain has great plans. He will have a fine city if they work. Why, when thou art an old lady and goest dressed in silks and velvets and furs, as the women of the mother country, thou wilt have rare stories to tell to thy grandchildren. And no doubt thou wilt have seen Paris as well."

Then she smiled, but it was a pitiful attempt.

It was true Quebec had received a wonderful hastening in the new-comers and in several grants

the King had made concerning the fur trade. The dreary winter was a thing of the past.

Destournier came in the next day and insisted the child should be wrapped up and carried out in the sunshine. She seemed light as a baby when he took her in his arms. He seated himself on a bench and held her closely wound up in Mère's choicest blanket she had brought from St. Malo, and which had been woven by her grandmother.

Ah, how lovely that savage primeval beauty looked to the child, who felt more than she could understand. Every pulse seemed instinct with new life. The gardens with their beds of vegetables, the tall slim spikes of onions which everybody had been requested to plant plentifully, the feathery leaves of the young carrots, the beans already in white bloom, the sword-like leaves of the corn hardly long enough to wave as yet, and the river with boats and canoes—why, it had never been so brisk and wonderful before.

She drew in long breaths of health-giving fragrance. There had been some trouble with the Indians and the Sieur de Champlain had gone to chastise them. There were fur-traders on the way and soon everything would be stirring with eager business. And when she could they would take a sail around and up the St. Charles, and visit the islands, for besides Pani the Mère had another Indian boy the Sieur had sent her, so there would be no gardening for the small, white Rose. And he had made a new friend for her, who was waiting anxiously to see her.

Presently she went soundly asleep in the fragrant air, and he carried her back and laid her on the bed. Mère Dubray came and looked at her and shook her head. She was indeed a white Rose now. They had cut her hair when she had tangled it with her tossing about, and it was now a bed of golden rings, but the long lashes that were like a fringe on her cheeks were black.

"It will take her a good while to get back all she has lost," said the young man. "It is little short of a miracle that she is here."

She gained a little every day. But she felt very shaky when she walked about, and light in the head. And then Destournier brought her a visitor one afternoon, a lady the like of whom the child had not dreamed of in her wildest imaginings, as she had listened to tales of royalty. A tall, fair woman whose bright hair was a mass of puffs and short dainty curls held by combs that sparkled with jewels, and the silken gown that was strewn with brocaded roses on a soft gray ground. It had dainty ruffles around the bottom that barely reached her ankles, and showed the clocked and embroidered stockings and elegant slippers laced back and forth with golden cord, and a buckle that sparkled with gems like the combs. Even royalty condescended to wear imitation jewels, so why should not the lower round? Her shapely shoulders were half veiled by a gauze scarf on which were woven exquisite flowers.

The child gazed with fascinated admiration. Did the Greek women Destournier had read about, who won every heart, look like this?

"This is the lady I told you of, little one, who has lately come from France, Madame Giffard. And this is Rose—" He paused suddenly with a half smile. "I believe the child has no other name."

"Was she born here?" How soft and winning the voice was.

Destournier flushed unconsciously.

"She has a story and a mystery that no one has fathomed. The Sieur made some inquiries. A woman of the better class who came over with some emigrants brought her, and was supposed to be her mother. But some secret lay heavy on her mind, it seemed, and when she was dying she confessed that the child was not hers, but she had no time for explanations. The husband brought her here and has gone to one of the fur stations. His disappointment was so intense he gave up the child. And so—her name is neither Arlac nor Dubray. We shall have to rechristen her."

"What a curious romance! If one knew what town she came from. Oh, my little one, will you let me be your friend? I had a little golden-haired girl who died when she was but four, and no children have come since to gladden my heart."

Madame Giffard bent over and took the small hand, noting the taper fingers and slender wrist that seemed to indicate good birth. She pressed it to her lips. Rose looked up trustfully and smiled.

"I like you," she said, with frank earnestness.

"Then I shall come to see you often. This is such a queer place with no ready-made houses and really nothing but log huts or those made of rough slabs. I wonder now how I had the courage to come. But I could not be separated from my dear husband. And when he makes his fortune we shall go back to our dearly beloved France."

The child smiled. The story had no embarrassment for her—Catherine had brought her from France and she had never called her mother until on shipboard. Back of it was vague and misty, though Catherine was in it all. But this beautiful woman with her soft voice, different from anything she had ever heard—why, she liked her already almost as much as M'sieu Ralph.

"And you have been ill a long while?"

"It seemed only a day when I first woke up. Then the snow was on the ground. I was so cold. I wanted to go to sleep on the chimney seat and Mère would not let me. And now everything is in

bloom and the garden is planted and the sun shines in very gladness. I shall never like winter again," and she shuddered.

"Are the winters so dreadful?" she inquired of Destournier.

"I never knew anything like it. I can't understand why the Sieur de Champlain should want to found a city here when the country south is so much more congenial. Although this is the key to the North, as he says. And there is a north to the continent over there."

"You think there are fortunes to be made?"

"For those who come to make them. But the mother country will squeeze hard. We have not found the gold and silver yet. But after all, trade is your best pioneer. And this is an era of exploring, of fame, rather than money-getting. We are just coming to know there are other sides to the world. Ah, here is Mère Dubray."

The child glanced from one woman to the other. She saw the same difference as there was between the workmen and the few of the better class. Was it knowledge such as M'sieu Ralph had? And the good-hearted home-making Mère scouted learning for women. Their business was cooking and keeping the house. But she decided she liked the lady the best, just as she liked M'sieu Ralph better than the brawny leathern- and fur-clad workmen. But the Mère had been very good and never scolded her now.

She brought in some little cakes and a glass of beer brewed from roots and herbs. Madame Giffard thanked her and sipped it delicately. Some vague memory haunted the child, as if she had seen this lady before with the dead Catherine.

"It is a wild, wild country. There is nothing like it in France," the lady said, in a tone of disparagement. "And how one is to live——"

"You were not in France two or three centuries ago," he returned good-naturedly. "Most countries go through this period. Beginnings are not always agreeable."

"But I cannot admit this is a city. Yet they talk about it at home. The furs are certainly fine. But the Indians! You are in fear of them all the time. And if they should make an attack here?"

"They will hardly dare now. Indeed one Indian tribe is practically wiped out. And the fortifications are to be strengthened. We manage to keep quite friendly, though we do not trust too far."

"But it is horrible to live in perpetual fear," and she shuddered.

"You must not look on that side of it. It is a hard country for women, I shall have to admit."

"But I have not come to stay, thank the saints. A year maybe at the longest. My husband is to go back when he has—what you call it—established his claim—concession. We like sunny France the best. Only one wants a fortune to enjoy it."

"That is true, too. But here one can do without. At least a man can"—laughing a little as he surveyed the dainty figure.

"A year," repeated the child. "How long is a year?"

Mère Dubray had been standing in the doorway, waiting to take the cup when my lady had finished. Now she said in an unemotional tone—

"It is a summer and a winter. It was last May when Jean Arlac brought you here."

The child nodded thoughtfully and there came a far-away expression in her eyes.

"Jean Arlac went up to the fur country," she said to the guest.

"Does he return when the furs come in?"

She glanced at Mère Dubray, who shook her head.

"He comes back no more. He has married an Indian woman. But my husband will be here."

"Does M. Gifford desire to go out himself?"

"That is his plan, I believe. Can he get back before winter?"

"Oh, yes, or by that time."

"I shall come often to see the little one. And when they have finished the—the hut, the child must come often to me. I have brought some furnishings and pictures and a few books. There is much more in the old château, and my aunt is there to take care of it. But I wanted some old friends about me."

At the mention of books Rose had glanced up eagerly at Destournier. Then there was a sudden rush without. Both Indian boys were racing and yelling in their broken language.

"They are coming; they are coming! The canoes are in," and both began to caper about.

Mère Dubray took down a leathern thong and laid it about them; but they were like eels and glided out of her reach.

"One was bad enough, but I could manage him. The other"—and she gave her shoulders a shrug.

The lady laughed. "That is like home," she said.

"It is quite a sight. And I hope you will not be frightened, for the next few days. I had better escort you back, I think, for there will be a crowd."

They were guests of M. de Champlain, who had quite comfortable quarters. Beside his governmental business he was much engrossed with a history of his journeys and explorations and the maps he was making. All the furnishings were plain, as became a hardy soldier who often slept out in the open. But the keeping room already showed some traces of a woman's love for adornment. He looked rather grim over it, but made no comment.

"I will come again to-morrow." Madame Giffard pressed a kiss upon the white forehead. The child grasped her hand with convulsive warmth.

An hour had changed the aspect of everything. Instead of the quiet, deserted, winding ways, you could hardly call them streets, everything seemed alive with a motley, moving throng. A long line of boats, and what one might call a caravan, seemed to have risen from the very earth, or been evolved from the wilderness. There were shouting and singing, white men turned to brown by exposure, Indians, half-breeds of varying shades, and attire that was really indescribable.

"Is it an attack?" and Madame Giffard clung to her guide in affright.

He laughed reassuringly.

"It is only the awakening of Quebec after its long hibernation. They have been expected some days. Ah, now you will see the true business side and really believe the town flourishing, be able to carry a good report back to France."

They looked over the land side from the eminence of the fortifications. Quebec did not mean to admit these roisterers within her precincts, which were none too well guarded. Still the cannons looked rather formidable from their embrasures. But as little would these lawless men have cared to be under the guard of the soldiery.

They seemed to come to a pause. Indians and half-breeds threw down their packs. Some sat on them and gesticulated fiercely, as if on the verge of a quarrel. A few, who seemed the leaders, went about ordering, pointing to places where a few stakes had been driven. Great bundles were unpacked, a centre pole reared, and a tent was in progress.

"Why, it is like a magic play," and she clapped her hands in eager delight. "Will they live here? Oh, where is Laurent, I wonder. He ought to see this."

"They will live here a month or so. Some of the earlier ones will go away, new ones come. The company's furs will be packed and loaded on vessels for France, but there are plenty of others who trade on their own account. There will be roistering and drinking and quarrelling and dickering, and then the tents will be folded and packed and the throng take up their march for the great north again, and months of hunting."

It was fascinating to watch them. They were building stone fireplaces outside and kindling fires. Here some deft hands were skinning a moose or a deer and placing portions on a rude spit. And there was the Sieur de Champlain and a dozen or so of armed soldiers, he holding parley with some of the leaders.

"Oh, there is M. Giffard," she cried presently. "And look—are there—women?"

"Squaws. Oh, yes."

"Do they travel, I mean come from the fur country? What a long journey it must be for them."

"They do not mind. They are nomads of the wilderness. You know the Indians never build towns as we do. Some of them settle for months until the hunting gives out, then they are off on a new trail."

"What queer people. One would think the good missionaries would civilize them, teach them to be like—can they civilize them?"

"After centuries, perhaps"—dryly.

"Is all this country theirs?"

"Well"—he lifted his eyebrows in a queer, humorous fashion. "The King of France thinks he has a right to what his explorers discover; the King of England—well, it was Queen Elizabeth, I believe, who laid claim to a portion called Virginia. She died, but the English remain. Their colony is largely recruited from their prisons, I have heard. Then his Spanish majesty has somewhat. It is a great land. But the French set out to save souls and convert the heathen savages into Christian men. They have made friends with some of the tribes. But they are not like the people of Europe, rather they resemble the barbarians of the north. And the Church, you know, has labored to convert them."

"How much men know!" she said, with a long sigh of admiration.

The sun was dropping down behind the distant mountains, pine- and fir-clad. She had never

looked upon so grand a scene and was filled with a tremulous sort of awe. Up there the St. Charles river, here the majestic St. Lawrence, islands, coves, green points running out in the water where the reedy grass waved to and fro, tangles of vines and wild flowers. And here at their feet the settlement that had just sprung into existence.

"You must be fatigued," he said suddenly. "Pardon my forgetfulness. I have been so interested myself."

"Yes, I am a little tired. It has been such a strange afternoon. And that poor little girl, Monsieur—does that woman care well for her? She has the coarseness of a peasant, and the child not being her own——"

"Oh, I think she is fairly good to her. We do not expect all the graces here in the wilderness. But I could wish——"

Madame Gifford stumbled at that moment and might have gone over a ledge of rock, and there were many there, but he caught her in strong arms.

"How clumsy!" she cried. "No, I am not hurt, thanks to you. I was looking over at that woman with something on her back that resembles a child."

"Yes, a papoose. That is their way of carrying them."

"Poor mother! She must get very weary."

They threaded their way carefully to the citadel. The guard nodded and they passed. An Indian woman was bringing in a basket of vegetables and there was a savory smell of roasting meat.

"Now you are safe," he said. "The Sieur would have transported me to France or hung me on the ramparts if any evil had happened to you."

He gave a short laugh as if he had escaped a danger, but there was a gleam of mirth in his eyes.

"A thousand thanks, M'sieu. Though I can't think I was in any great danger. And another thousand for the sweet little girl. I must see a good deal of her."

The room she entered was within the double fortification and its windows were securely barred. The walls were of heavy timbers stained just enough to bring out the beautiful grain. But some of the dressed deerskins were still hanging and there were festoons of wampum, curiously made bead and shell curtains interspersed with gun racks, great moose horns and deer heads, and antlers. Tables and chairs curiously made and a great couch big enough for a bed.

But the adjoining room was the real workroom of the Sieur. Here were his books, he brought a few more every time he came from France; shelves of curiosities, a wide stone fireplace, with sundry pipes of Indian make on the ledges. A great table occupied the centre of the room and all about it were strewn papers,—maps in every state,—plans for the city, plans of fortifications, diagrams of the unsuccessful settlements, and the new project of Mont Réal. Notes on agriculture and the propagation of fruits, for none better than the Sieur understood that the colony must in some way provide its own food, that it could not depend upon sustenance from the mother country. For his ambition desired to make New France the envy of the nations who had tried colonizing. He ordered crops of wheat and rye and barley sown, and often worked in his own field when the moon shone with such glory that it inspired him. And though he had all the ardor of an explorer, he meant to turn the profits of trade to this end, but to further it settlements were necessary, and he bent much of his energy to the duller and more trying task of building colonies. Though the route to the Indies fired his ambition he was in real earnest to bring this vast multitude of heathens within the pale of the Church, and to do that he must be friendly with them as far as they could be trusted, but there were times when he almost lost faith.

CHAPTER III

SUMMER TIME

The child sat in a dream on a rude, squarely-built settle with a coarse blanket on it of Indian make and some skins thrown over the back, for often at sundown the air grew cool and as yet women were not spinning or weaving as in old France. A few luxuries had been brought thither, but the mother government had a feeling that the colonists ought mostly to provide for themselves, and was often indifferent to the necessary demands.

Mère Dubray went out to the kitchen and began to prepare supper. There was a great stone chimney with a bench at each side, and for a fireplace two flat stones that would be filled in with chunks of wood. When the blaze had burned them to coals the cooking began. Corn bread baked on both sides, sometimes rye or wheaten cakes, a kettle boiled, though the home-brewed beer was the common drink in summer, except among those who used the stronger potions. The teas were mostly fragrant herbs, thought to be good for the stomach and to keep the blood pure.

Mère Dubray dressed half a dozen birds in a trice. It was true that in the summer they could live on the luxuries of the land in some respects. Fish and game of all kinds were abundant, and as

there were but few ways of keeping against winter it was as well to feast while one could. They dried and smoked eels and some other fish, and salted them, but they had learned that too much of this diet induced scurvy.

The birds were hung on an improvised spit, with a pan below to catch the drippings with which they were basted. Between whiles the worthy woman unexpectedly bolted out to the garden with a switch in her hand and laid it about the two Indian boys, who did not bear it with the stoicism of their race, as they learned the greater the noise the shorter their punishment.

The little girl did not heed the screams or the shrill scolding, or even the singing of the birds that grew deliciously tender toward nightfall. She often watched the waving branches as the wind blew among them until it seemed as if they must be alive, bending over caressing each other and murmuring in low tones. If she could only know what they said. Of course they must be alive; she heard them cry piteously in winter when they were stripped of their covering. Why did God do it? Why did He send winter when summer was so much better, when people were merry and happy and could hunt and fish and wander in the woods and fight Indians? She had not had much of an idea of God hitherto only as a secret charm connected with Mère Dubray's beads, but now it was some great power living beyond the sky, just as the Indians believed. You could only go there by growing cold and stiff and being put in the ground. She shrank from that thought.

Something new had come in her life now. There was a vague, confused idea of gods and goddesses, that she had gathered from the Latin verses that she no more understood than the language. And this must be one that descended upon her this afternoon. The soft, sweet voice still lingered in her ears, entrancing her. The graceful figure that was like some delicate swaying branch, the attire the like of which she had never even dreamed of. How could she indeed, when the finest things she had seen were the soldiers' trappings?

And this beautiful being had kissed her. Only once she remembered being kissed, but Catherine's lips were so cold that for days when she thought of it she shuddered and connected it with that mysterious going away, that horrid, underground life. This was warm and sweet and strange, like the nectar of flowers she had held to her lips. Oh, would the lovely being come again? But M'sieu Ralph had said so, and what he promised came to pass. There was a sudden ecstasy as if she could not wait, as if she could fly out of the body after her charmer. Whither was she going? Oh, M'sieu Ralph would know. But could she wait until to-morrow?

Into this half-delirious vision broke the strong, rather harsh voice that filled her for an instant with a curious hate so acute that if she had been large enough, strong enough, she would have thrust the woman out of doors.

"Oh, have you been asleep? Your eyes look wild. And your cheeks! Is it the fever coming back again? That chatter went through my head. And to be gowned as if she were going to have audience with the Queen! I don't know about such things. There is a King always—I suppose there must be a Queen."

The child had recovered herself a little and the enraptured dream was slipping by.

"And here is your supper. Such a great dish of raspberries, and some juice pressed out for wine. And the birds broiled to a turn. Here is a little wheaten cake. The Sieur sent the wheat and it is a great rarity. And now eat like a hungry child."

She raised her up and put a cushion of dried hay at her back. The food was on a small trencher with a flat bottom, and was placed on the settle beside her.

"No, no, the tea first," she said, holding a birch-bark cup to her lips.

Rose made a wry face, but drank it, nevertheless. Then she took the raspberry juice, which was much pleasanter.

"Yes, a great lady, no doubt. We have few of them. This is no place for silken hose and dainty slippers, and gowns slipping off the shoulders, and my lady will soon find that out. I wondered at M. Destournier. The saints forbid that we should import these kind of cattle to New France."

"She is very sweet"—protestingly.

"Oh, yes. So is the flower sweet, and it drops off into withered leaves. And her eyes looked askance at M'sieu Ralph, yet she hath a husband. Come, eat of thy bird and bread, and to-morrow maybe thou wilt run about lest thy limbs stiffen up to a palsy."

"Mistress, mistress," called Pani—"here is a man to see thee."

She went through both rooms. The man stood without, rather rough, unkempt, with buckskin breeches, fringed leggings, an Indian blanket, a grizzled beard hanging down on his breast, and his tousled hair well sprinkled with white; his face wrinkled with the hardships he had passed through, but the gray-blue eyes twinkled.

"Ha! ha!" A coarse, but not unfriendly laugh finished the greeting as he caught both hands in an impetuous embrace. "Lalotte, old girl, has thy memory failed in two years? Or hast thou gotten another husband?"

The woman gave a shriek of mingled surprise and delight. "The saints be praised, it is Antoine. And how if thou hast taken some Indian woman to wife? Braves do not consort with white women

who cannot be made into slaves," she answered, with spirit.

"Lalotte, thou wert hard to win in those early days. But now a dozen good kisses with more flavor in them than Burgundy wine, and I will prove to you I am the same old Antoine. And then—but thy supper smell is good to a hungry man. And a dish of shallots. It takes a man back to old Barbizon."

Stout and strong as was Madame Dubray, her husband almost kissed the breath out of her body in his rapturous embrace.

"But I had no word of your coming——"

"How could you, pardieu! But you knew the traders were coming in. And a man can't send messengers hundreds of miles."

"I looked last year——"

"Pouf! There are men who stay five or ten years, and have left a wife in France. You can't blame them for taking a new one when you are invited to. It is a wild, hard life, but not worse than a soldier's. And when you are your own master the hardships are light. But some of this good supper."

"Out with you," she said to the Indian boys, who had snatched a piece of the broiled fish. Then she put down a plate, took up two birds that dripped delicious gravy, and a squirrel browned to a turn. From the cupboard beside the great stone chimney, so cunningly devised that no one would have suspected it, she brought forth a bottle of wine from the old world, her last choice possession, that she had dreamed of saving for Antoine, and now her dream had come true.

There was much to tell on both sides, though her life had been comparatively uneventful. He related incidents of his wilder experiences far away from civilization that he had grown to enjoy in its perfect freedom that often lapped over into lawlessness. And he ate until squirrel, fish, and the cakes, both of rye and corn, had disappeared. The slave boys fared ill that night.

Rose had eaten her supper more daintily. The great pile of raspberries was a delight; large, luscious; melting in one's mouth without the aid of sugar, and being picked up with the fingers. She had been startled at the sudden appearance of the husband she had heard talked of, but of course not seen. His loud voice grated on her ears, made more sensitive by illness, and when, a long while after, the pine torch that was flaring in the kitchen defined his brawny frame as he stood in the doorway, she wanted to scream.

"Oh—what have you here—a ghost?" he asked.

"A child who was left here more than a year ago. Jean Arlac lost his wife, and not knowing what to do with her—she was not his own child—left her here. He went out with the fur-hunters."

"Jean Arlac!" Antoine scratched among his rough locks as if to assist his memory. "Yes. And on the way he picked up a likely Indian girl who has given him a son. And he saddled her on you?"

"Oh, the Sieur will look after her—perhaps take her back to France," she answered, indifferently.

"The best place for her, no doubt. She looks a frail reed. And women need strength in this new world. A little infusion of Indian blood will do no harm. I wouldn't mind a son myself, but a girl—pouf!"

The child was glad he would not want her. She turned her face to the wall. She had not known what loneliness was before, but now she felt it through all her body, like a great pain.

On the opposite side of the room was another settle, part of which turned over and was upheld by drawing out two rounds of logs. Mère Dubray made up the wider bed now, and soon Antoine was snoring lustily. At first it frightened the child, though she was used to the screech of the owl that spent his nights in the great walnut tree inside the palisade.

Was it a dream, she wondered the next morning. She slept soundly at last and late and found herself alone in the house. She put on her simple frock and went to the doorway. Ah, what a splendid glowing morning it was! The sunshine lay in golden masses and fairly gilded the green of the maize, the waving grasses, the bronze of the trees, and the river threw up lights and shadows like birds skimming about.

No one was in the garden. The table had been despoiled to the last crumb. Even the cupboard had been ransacked and all that remained was some raw fish. She was not hungry and the fragrant air was reviving. It seemed to speed through every pulse. Why, she suddenly felt strong again.

She wandered out of the enclosure and climbed the steps, sitting down now and then and drawing curious breaths that frightened her, they came so irregularly. There were workmen building additional fortifications around the post, there were houses going up. It was like a strange place. She reached the gallery presently and looked over what was sometime to be the city of Quebec. The long stretch was full of tents and tepees and throngs of men of every description, it would seem; Indians, swarthy Spaniards who had roamed half round the world, French from the jaunty trader, with a certain air of breeding, down to the rough, unkempt peasant, who had been lured away from his native land with visions of an easily-made fortune and much liberty in New France, and convicts who had been given a choice between death and

expatriation. Great stacks of furs still coming in from some quarter, haranguing, bargaining, shouting, coming to blows, and the interference of soldiers. Was it so last summer when she sometimes ran out with Pani, though she had been forbidden to?

It was growing very hot up here. The sun that looked so glorious through the long stretches of the forest and played about the St. Lawrence as if in a game of hide-and-seek with the boats, grew merciless. All the air was full of dancing stars and she was so tired trying to reach out to them, as if they were a stairway leading up to heaven, so that one need not be put in the dark, wretched ground. Oh, yes, she could find the way, and she half rose.

It seemed a long journey in the darkness. Then there was a coolness on her brow, a soft hand passed over it, and she heard some murmuring, caressing words. She opened her eyes, she tried to rise.

"Lie still, little one," said the voice that soothed and somehow made it easy to obey. She was fanned slowly, and all was peace.

"Did you climb up to the gallery all alone? And yesterday you seemed so weak, so fragile."

"I wanted—some one. They had all gone——"

"Quebec looks like a besieged camp. Laurent, that is my husband," with a bright color, "said I could see it from the gallery, and that it resembled a great show. I went out and found you. At first I thought you were dead. But the Indian woman, Jollette is her Christian name, but I should have liked Wanamee better, carried you in here and after a while brought you to. But I thought sure you were dead. Poor little white Rose! Truly named."

"But once I had red cheeks," in a faint voice.

"Then thou wouldst have been a red Rose."

She sang a delicious little chanson to a red rose from a lover. The child sighed in great content.

"Were they good to you down there? That woman seemed—well, hard. And were you left all alone?"

Rose began to tell the story of how the husband came home, and Madame Giffard could see that she shrank from him. "And when she woke they had all gone away. There was nothing to eat."

"Merci! How careless and unkind!" But Madame Giffard could not know the little slave boys had ransacked the place.

"I was not hungry. And it was so delightful to walk about again. Though I trembled all over and thought I should fall down."

"As you did. Now I have ordered you some good broth. And you must lie still to get rested."

"But it is so nice to talk. You were so beautiful yesterday I was afraid. I never saw such fine clothes."

Madame Giffard was in a soft gray gown to-day that had long wrinkled sleeves, a very short waist, and a square neck filled in with ruffles that stood up in a stiff fashion. She looked very quaint and pretty, more approachable, though the child felt rather than understood.

"Are there no women here, and no society? Merci! but it is a strange place, a wilderness. And no balls or dinners or excursions, with gay little luncheons? There is war all the time at home, but plenty of pleasure, too. And what is one to do here!"

"The Indians have some ball games. But they often fight at the end."

The lady laughed. What a charming ripple it was, like the falls here and there, and there were many of them.

"Not that kind," she said, in her soft tone that could not wound the child. "A great room like a palace, and lights everywhere, hundreds of candles, and mirrors where you see yourself at every turn. Then festoons of gauzy things that wave about, and flowers—not always real ones, they fade so soon. And the men—there are officers and counts and marquises, and their habiliments are—well, I can't describe them so you would understand, but a hundred times finer than those of the Sieur de Champlain. And the women—oh, if I had worn a ball dress yesterday, you would have been speechless."

She laughed again gayly at the child's innocence. And just then Wanamee came in with the broth.

"Madame Dubray's husband has come," nodding to the child.

"Yes, yesterday, just at night."

"He has great stores, they say. He is shrewd and means to make money. But there will be no quiet now for weeks. And it will hardly be safe to venture outside the palisades."

Jollette had been among the first converts, a prisoner taken in one of the numerous Indian battles, rescued and saved from torture by the Sieur himself, and though she had been a wife of one of the chiefs, she had been beaten and treated like a slave. Champlain found her amenable to the influences of civilization, and in some respects really superior to the emigrants that had been

sent over, though most of them were eagerly seized upon as wives for the workmen. Frenchwomen were not anxious to leave their native land.

Madame Giffard fed her small *protégée* in a most dainty and enticing manner. The little girl would have thought herself in an enchanted country if she had known anything about enchantment. But most of the stories she had heard were of Indian superstition, and so horrid she never wanted to recur to them. Madame Dubray was much too busy to allow her thoughts to run in fanciful channels, and really lacked any sort of imagination.

After she had been fed she leaned back on the pillow again. Madame soon sang her to sleep. The child was very much exhausted and in the quietude of slumber looked like a bit of carving.

"Her eyelashes are splendid," thought her watcher, "and her lips have pretty curves. There is something about her—she must have belonged to gentle people. But she will grow coarse under that woman's training."

She sighed a little. Did she want the child, she wondered. If Laurent could make a fortune here in this curious land where most of the population seemed barbarians.

She drew from a work-bag a purse she was knitting of silken thread, and worked as she watched the sleeping child. Once she rose, but the view from the window did not satisfy her, so she went out on the gallery. A French vessel was coming up into port, with its colors at half mast and its golden lilies shrouded with crape. Some important personage must be dead—was it the King?

She heard her husband's voice calling her and turned, took a few steps forward. "Oh, what has happened?" she cried.

"The King! Our heroic Béarnese! For though we must always regret his change of religion, yet it was best for France and his rights. And a wretched miscreant stabbed him in his carriage, but he has paid the penalty. And the new King is but a child, so a woman will rule. There is no knowing what policies may be overturned."

"Our brave King!" There were tears in her eyes.

"They are loading vessels to return. Ah, what a rich country, even if they cannot find the gold the Spaniards covet. Such an array of choice furs bewilders one, and to see them tossed about carelessly makes one almost scream with rage. Ah, my lady, you shall have in the winter what the Queen Mother would envy."

"Then you mean to stay"—uncertainly.

"Yes, unless there should be great changes. I have not seen the Sieur since the news came. He was to go to Tadoussac the first of the week, and I had permission to go with him. One would think to-day that Quebec was one of the most flourishing of towns, and it is hard to believe the contrary. But every soldier is on the watch. They trust no one. What have you been doing, *ma mie*?"

"Oh, I have something to show you. Come."

She placed her finger to her lips in token of silence and led him back to the room she had left. The child was still sleep.

"What an angel," he murmured. "Is it—how did it come here? I thought you said the little girl was ill."

"She was, and is. Doesn't she look like a marvellous statue? But no one seems to regard her beauty here."

"She is too delicate."

"But she was well and strong and daring, and could climb like a deer, M. Destournier says. She will be well again with good care. I want to keep her."

"She will be a good plaything for thee when I am away. Though this may change many plans. The Sieur is bent on discoveries, and now he has orders to print his book. The maps are wonderful. What a man! He should be a king in this new world. France does not understand the mighty empire he is founding for her."

"Then you do not mind—if I keep the child? She has crept into the empty niche in my heart. I must have been directed by the saints when I felt the desire to go out. She would have died from exhaustion in the broiling sun."

"Say the good Father, rather."

"And yet we must adore the saints, the old patriarchs. Did not the disciples desire to build a memento to them?"

"They were not such men as have disgraced the holy calling by fire and sword and persecution. And if one can draw a free breath in this new land. The English with all their faults allow freedom in religion. It is these hated Jesuits. And I believe they are answerable for the murder of our heroic King."

Wanamee summoned them to the midday repast. The plain walnut boards that formed the table

had been polished until the beautiful grain and the many curvings were brought out like the shades of a painting. If the dishes were a motley array, a few pieces of silver and polished pewter with common earthenware and curious cups of carved wood as well as birch-bark platters, the viands were certainly appetizing.

"One will not starve in this new country," he said.

"But it is the winter that tries one, M. Destournier says."

"There must be plenty of game. And France sends many things. But a colony must have agricultural resources. And the Indian raids are so destructive. We need more soldiers."

He was off again to plunge in the thick of business. It was supposed the fur company and the concessions ruled most of the bargain-making, but there were independent trappers who had not infrequently secured skins that were well-nigh priceless when they reached the hands of the Paris furrier. And toward night, when wine and whiskey had been passed around rather freely, there were broils that led to more than one fatal ending. Indian women thronged around as well, with curious handiwork made in their forest fastnesses.

The child slept a long while, she was so exhausted.

"Why, the sun is going over the mountains," she began, in vague alarm. "I must go home. I did not mean to run away."

She sprang up on her feet, but swayed so that she would have fallen had not Madame caught her.

"Nay, nay, thou art not well enough to run away from me, little one. I will send word down to the cabin of Mère Dubray. She has her husband, whom she has not seen for two years, and will care naught for thee. Women are all alike when a man's love is proffered," and she gave a gay little laugh.

"My head feels light and swims around as if it was on the rapid river. But I must go home, I——"

"Art afraid? Well, I promise nothing shall harm thee. Lie down again. I will send Wanamee with the word. Will it make thee happy—content?"

The child looked at her hostess as if she was studying her, but her intellect had never been roused sufficiently for that. There was a vague delight stealing over her as slumber does at times, a confusion of what might have been duty if she had understood that even, in staying away from what was really her home. Mère Dubray would be angry. She would hardly beat her, she had only slapped her once during her illness, and that was to make her swallow some bitter tea. And something within her seemed to cry out for the adjuncts of this place. She had been in the room before, she had even peered into the Sieur's study. He always had a kindly word for her, she was different from the children of the workmen, and looked at one with sober, wondering eyes, as if she might fathom many things.

"You do not want to go back?"—persuasively.

Was it the pretty lady who changed the aspect of everything for her?

"Oh, if I could stay here always!" she cried, with a vehemence of more years than had passed over her head. "It is better than the beautiful world where I sit on the rocks and wonder, and dream of the great beyond that goes over and meets the sky. There are no cruel Indians then, and I want to wander on and on and listen to the voices in the trees, the splash of the great river, and the little stream that plays against the stones almost like the song you sung. If one could live there always and did not get hungry or cold——"

"What a queer, visionary child! One would not look for it in these wilds. The ladies over yonder talk of them because it is a fashion, but when they ride through the parks and woods they want a train of admirers. And with you it is pure love. Could you love any one as you do nature? Was any one ever so good to you that you could fall down at their feet and worship them? Surely you do not love Madame Dubray?"

"M'sieu Ralph has been very kind. But you are like a wonderful flower one finds now and then, and dares not gather it lest the gods of the woods and trees should be angry."

"But I will gather you to my heart, little one," and she slipped down beside the couch, encircling the child in her arms, and pressing kisses on brow and legs and pallid cheeks, bringing a roseate tint to them.

"And you must love me, you must want to stay with me. Oh, there was a little one once who was flesh of my flesh, on whom I lavished the delight and tenderness of my soul, and the great Father took her. He sent nothing in her place, though I prayed and prayed. And now I shall put you there. Surely the good God cannot be angry, for you have no one."

She had followed a sudden impulse, and was not quite sure it was for the best. Only her mother heart cried out for love.

The child stared, motionless, and it dampened her ardor for the moment. She could not fathom the eyes.

"Are you not glad? Would you not like to live with me?"

"Oh, oh!" It was a cry of rapture. She caught the soft white hands and kissed them. The joy was so new, so unexpected, she had no words for it.

CHAPTER IV

A HUSBAND

Lalotte Dubray had had the gala day of her life. Her peasant wedding had been simple enough. The curé's blessing after the civil ceremony, the dance on the green, the going home to the one room in the small thatched hut, the bunk-like bed along the wall, the two chests that answered for seats, a kitchen table, two shelves for a rude dresser, with dishes that had been earned by the hardest toil, but they were better off than some, for there was a pig grunting and squealing outside, and a little garden.

Times had grown harder and harder. Antoine had been compelled to join the army and fight for he knew not what. Then he had decamped, and instead of being shot had been sent to New France. Lalotte was willing enough to go with him.

Hard as it was, it bettered their fortunes. He had gone out once as a sort of servant and handy man to the company. Then he had struck out for himself. He was shrewd and industrious, and did not mind hard work, nor hardships.

Now he was in the lightest of spirits. He had some choice furs that were eagerly snapped up. The Indian women had been shrewd enough to arrange tempting booths, where frying fish and roasted birds gave forth an appetizing fragrance. There were cakes of ground maize baked on hot stones, and though Champlain had used his best efforts to keep some restraint on spirituous liquors, there were many ways of evading.

Lalotte was fairly stupefied with amazement at her husband's prosperity.

"Why, you are rich with that bag of money," she cried. "I never saw so much."

He laughed jovially. "Better than standing up to be shot—he! he! Jacques Lallemond had the idea, and they wanted emigrants for New France bad enough. Why don't they send more? The English understand better. *Sacré!* But it is a great country. Only Quebec stays little, when it should be a great place. Why can they not see?"

Lalotte could venture no explanation of that. She seemed to be in a maze herself.

Vessels were taking on cargoes of furs as soon as they were inspected. The river as far as Tadoussac looked thriving enough. Antoine met old friends, but he was more level-headed than some, and did not get tipsy. Lalotte held her head higher than ever.

When it was getting rather too rough they made their way out.

"Oh, the child!" she exclaimed, with a sudden twinge of conscience. "And those wretched slave boys. If your back is turned they are in league with the evil one himself. Baptism does not seem to drive it out. Whether the poor thing had her breakfast."

"Let that alone. It was mighty cool in Jean Arlac to foist her on thee. And now that we have left the crowd behind and are comfortable in the stomach."

"But the cost, Antoine. I could have gotten it for half!"

"A man may treat his wife, when he has not seen her for two years," and he gave a short chuckling laugh. "There has been a plan in my head, hatched in the long winter nights up at the bay. Why should man and wife be living apart when they might be together? Thou hast a hot temper, Lalotte, but it will serve to warm up the biting air."

"A hot temper!" resentfully. "Much of it you have taken truly! Two years soldiering—months in prison, and now two years again——"

He laughed good-humoredly, if it was loud enough to wake echoes.

"The saints know how I have wished for the sound of your voice. Indian women there are ready enough to be a wife for six months, and then perhaps some brave steals in at night and pouf! out goes your candle."

"The sin of it!"—holding up both hands.

"Sins are not counted in this wild land. But there are no old memories, no talks with each other. Oh, you cannot think how the loneliness almost freezes up one's very vitals. And I said to myself—I will bring Lalotte back with me. Why should we not share the same life and live over together our memories of sunny France?—not always sunny, either."

"To—take me with you"—gasping.

"Yes, why not? As if a man cannot order his wife about!" he exclaimed jocosely, catching her around the waist and imprinting half a dozen kisses with smacks that were like an explosion. "Yes

—I have sighed for thee many a night. There are high logs for firing, there are piles of bearskins, thick and fleecy as those of our best sheep at home. There is enough to eat at most times, and with thy cookery, *ma mie*, a man would feast. It is a rough journey, to be sure, but then thou wilt not refuse, or I shall think thou hast a secret lover."

"The Virgin herself knows I shall be glad to go with thee, Antoine," and the tears of joy stood in her eyes. "There is nothing in all Quebec to compare with thee. And heaven knows one sometimes grows hungry of a winter night, when food is scarce and one depends upon sleep to make it up. No, I should be happy anywhere with thee."

They jogged along in a lover-like fashion, but they were not quite out of hearing of the din. At nightfall all dickering was stopped and guards placed about. But in many a tent there were drinking and gambling, and more than one affray.

They came to the small unpretentious cabin. The door stood wide open, and the shaggy old dog was stretched on the doorstep, dozing. No soul was to be seen.

"Where is the child, Britta? Why, she must have been carried off. She could not walk any distance."

The dog gave a wise look and flicked her ear. Lalotte searched every nook.

"Where could she have gone?" in dismay.

"Let the child alone. What is she to us? Does Jean Arlac stay awake nights with trouble in his conscience about her? She was not his wife's child and so nothing to him. What more is she to us? Come, get some supper; I've not tasted such fried fish in an age as yours last night."

"The fish about here has a fine flavor, that is true. Those imps of boys, and not a stick of wood handy. Their skins shall be well warmed; just wait until I get at them."

"Nay, I will get some wood. I am hungry as a bear in the thaw, when he crawls out."

But Lalotte, armed with a switch, began a survey of the garden. The work had been neglected, that was plain. There under a clump of bushes lay Pani, sleeping, with no fear of retribution on his placid face. And Lalotte put in some satisfactory work before he even stirred.

But he knew nothing of his compeer, only they had been down to the river together. As for the child, when he returned she was gone.

"Let the child alone, I say!" and Antoine brought his fist heavily down on the table. "Next thing you will be begging that we take her. Since the good Lord in His mercy has refrained from giving us any mouths to feed, we will not fly in His face for those who do not concern us. And the puling thing would die on the journey and have to be left behind to feed the wolves. Come! come! Attend to thy supper."

The slim Indian convert was coming up the path. She was one of the Abenaki tribe, and she had mostly discarded the picturesque attire.

"The lady Madame Giffard sent me to say the girl is safe with her and will not be able to return to-night."

"So much the better," growled Antoine, looking with hungry eyes on the fish browning before the coals.

"Did she come and take her? I went with my husband to see the traders."

"She has been very poorly, but is much better now. And miladi thought——"

"Oh, yes, it is all right. Yes, I am glad," nodding definitely, as if the matter was settled. She did not want to quarrel with Antoine about a child that was no kin to them, when he was so much like her old lover. He seemed to bring back the hopes of youth and a certain gayety to which she had long been a stranger.

After enjoying his meal he brought out his pipe and stretched himself in a comfortable position, begging her to attend to him and let the slave boy take the fragments. He went on to describe the settlement of the fur merchants and trappers at Hudson Bay, but toned down much of the rudeness of the actual living. A few of the white women, wives of the leaders and the men in command, formed a little community. There was card-playing and the relating of adventures through the long winter evenings, that sometimes began soon after three. Dances, too, Indian entertainments, and for daylight, flying about on snowshoes, and skating. There was a short summer. The Indian women were expert in modelling garments—everything was of fur and dressed deerskins.

Few knew how to read at that day among the seekers of fortune and adventurers, but they were shrewd at keeping accounts, nevertheless. There were certain regulations skilfully evaded by the knowing ones.

No, it would never do to take the child. She had no real mother love for it, yet she often wondered whose child it might be, since it was not Catherine Arlac's? Strange stories about foundlings often came to light in old France.

The death of the King rather disorganized matters, for no one quite knew what the new order of

things would be. The Sieur de Champlain sorrowed truly, for he had ever been a staunch admirer of Henry of Navarre. Demont had not had his concession renewed and to an extent the fur trade had been thrown open. Several vessels were eagerly competing for stores of Indian peltries, as against those of the company. Indeed it was a regular carnival time. One would think old Quebec a most prosperous settlement, if judged only by that. But none of the motley crew were allowed inside the palisades. The Sieur controlled the rough community with rare good judgment. He had shown that he could punish as well as govern; fight, if need be, and then be generous to the foe. Indeed in the two Indian battles he had won much prestige, and had frowned on the torture of helpless prisoners.

Madame Giffard besought her husband that evening to consent to her taking the care of little Rose, at least while they remained in Canada, the year and perhaps more.

"And that may unfit her for her after life. You will make a pet and plaything of her, and then it would be cruel to return her to this woman to whom it seems she was given. She may be claimed some day."

"And if we liked her, might we not take her home with us? There seems no doubt but what she came from France. Not that I could put any one quite in the place of my lost darling, but it will afford me much interest through the winter, which, by all accounts, is dreary. I can teach her to read—she hardly knows a French letter. M. Destournier has taken a great interest in her. And she needs care now, encouragement to get well."

"Let us do nothing rash. The Sieur may be able to advise what is best," he returned gently. He felt he would rather know more of the case before he took the responsibility.

"She is so sweet, so innocent. She did not really know what love was," and Madame laughed softly. "This Catherine Arlac must have been a maid, I think. Yes, I am sure she must have come from gentle people. She has every indication of it."

"Well, thou canst play nurse a while and it will interest thee, and fill up thy lonely hours, for I have much to do and must take some journeys quite impossible for a woman. And then we will decide, if this woman is ready to part with her. *Ma mie*, thou knowest I would not refuse thee any wish that was possible."

"That is true, Laurent," and she kissed him fondly.

Destournier had been busy every moment of the day and had been closeted with the Sieur until late in the evening. Champlain felt now that he must give up an exploring expedition, on which his heart was set, and return to France, where large interests of the colony were at stake. There was much to be arranged.

So it was not until the next morning that he found his way to the Dubray house, and then he was surprised at the tidings. Lalotte was almost a girl again in her interest in the new plans. As soon as a sufficient number had sold their wares to make a journey safe from marauders they would start for Hudson's Bay, while the weather was pleasant. Of course the child must be left behind. She had no real claim on them; neither could she stand the journey. She was now with Madame Giffard.

Thither he hurried. Little Rose had improved wonderfully, though she was almost transparently thin, and her eyes seemed larger and softer in their mysterious darkness. Already love had done much for her.

He told his story and the plans of the Dubrays.

"Then I can stay here," she cried with kindling eyes, reaching out her small hand as if to sign her right in Madame's.

Madame's eyes, too, were joyous as she raised them in a sort of gratitude to her visitor.

"How strange it comes about," she cried. "And now, M. Destournier, will you learn all you can about this Catherine Arlac; where she came from in France, and if she was any sort of a trustworthy person? It may some day be of importance to the child."

"Yes, anything I can do to advance her interest you may depend on. Are you happy, little one?"

"I could fly like a bird, I am so light with joy. But I would not fly away from here. Oh, then I shall not have to go back! I was frightened at M. Dubray."

"I don't wonder. Yet these are the kind of men New France needs, who are not afraid of the wilderness and its trials. The real civilization follows on after the paths are trodden down. Did you go out yesterday?" to the lady.

"Only on the gallery."

"That was safest. Such a crowd was fit only for Indian women, and some of them shrank from it, I noticed. You heard the news about the King?"

"The sad, sad news. Yes."

"And the Sieur feels he must go back to France."

"What is Quebec to do? And if there is an Indian raid? Oh, this new land is full of fears."

"And think of the strifes and battles of the old world! Ah, if peace could reign. Yet the bravest of men are in the forefront."

Then he came over to the child.

"Who brought you here yesterday?" he asked, with a smile.

"I was all alone. I had nothing to eat. I wanted to get out in the sunshine. I walked, but presently I shook so, I crawled up on the gallery. And then——"

She looked wistfully at miladi, who took up the rest of the journey.

"You were a brave little girl. But what if Madame had not chanced to come out? Why, you might have died."

The dark eyes grew humid. "It does not hurt to die," she said slowly. "Only if you did not have to be put in the ground."

"Don't talk of such things," interposed Madame, with a half shudder. "You are going to get well now, and run about and show me the places you love. And we can sail up to the islands and through the St. Charles, that looks so fascinating and mysterious, can we not?" smiling up at Destournier.

"Oh, yes, a month will finish the trading, for the ships will want to start with their freight, while the weather is fine. True, the Indians and many of the *coureurs de bois* will loiter about until the last moment. There is to be a great Indian dance, I hear. They generally break up with one that has a good deal of savagery in it, but this early one is quite mild, I have understood, and gives one an opportunity to see them in their fine feathers and war paint."

"Oh, it must be interesting. Would it be safe to go?" she inquired.

"With a bodyguard, yes. Your husband and myself, and we might call in the services of the Dubrays. Madame is a host in herself. And they are glad, it seems, to shift the care of the child on some one else," lowering his voice.

"You will not forget to inquire——"

"Why, there must be a record here. The Sieur has the name and addresses of all the emigrants, I think. There have not been many shiploads of women."

"She has no indication of peasant parentage. There is a curious delicacy about her, but *merci!* what wonderful and delightful ignorance. It is like a fallow field. Mère Dubray seems to have sown nothing in it. Oh, I promise myself rare pleasure in teaching her many things."

"She has a quick and peculiar imagination. I am glad she has fallen into other hands. Settling a new country is a great undertaking, especially when one has but a handful of people and you have to uproot other habits of life and thought. I wonder if one can civilize an Indian!" and he laughed doubtfully.

"But it is to save their souls, I thought!"

"Yet some of them worship the same God that we do, only He is called the Great Manitou. And they have an hereafter for the braves at least, a happy hunting ground. But they are cruel and implacable enemies with each other. And we have wars at home as well. It is a curious muddle, I think. You come from a Huguenot family, I believe."

"My mother did. But she went with my father. There were no family dissensions. Does it make so much difference if one is upright and honest and kindly?"

"Kindly. If that could be put in the creed. 'Tis a big question," and he gave a sigh. "At least you are proving that part of the creed," and he crossed over to the child, chatting with her in a pleasant manner until he left them.

That evening there was a serious discussion in the Sieur's study. Captain Chauvin was to return also, and who was most trustworthy to be put in command of the infant colony was an important matter. There had been quite an acreage of grain sown the year before, maize was promising, and a variety of vegetables had been cultivated. Meats and fish were dried and salted. They had learned how to protect themselves from serious inroads of the scurvy. The houses in the post were being much improved and made more secure against the rigors of the long winter.

An officer who had spent the preceding winter at the fort was put in command, and the next day the garrison and the workmen were called in and enjoined to render him full obedience.

Destournier and Gifford were to undertake some adventures in a northerly direction, following several designated routes that Champlain had expected to pursue. Their journeys would not be very long.

As for Rose, she improved every day and began to chatter delightfully, while her adoration of Madame Giffard was really touching, and filled hours that would otherwise have been very tedious.

They had brought with them a few books. Madame was an expert at embroidery and lace-making, but was aghast when she realized her slender stock of materials, and that it would be well-nigh a

year before any could come from France.

"But there is bead work, and the Indian women make threads out of grasses," explained Wanamee. "And feathers of birds are sewed around garments and fringes are cut. Oh, miladi will find some employment for her fingers."

Mère Dubray made no objection to accompanying them to the Indian dance. She had been to several of them, but they were wild things that one could not well understand; nothing like the village dances at home. "But what would you? These were savages!"

"I wish I could go, too," the child said wistfully. "But I could not climb about nor stand up as I used. When will I be able to run around again?"

She was gaining every day and went out on the gallery for exercise. She was a very cheerful invalid; indeed miladi was so entertaining she was never weary when with her, and if her husband needed her, Wanamee came to sit with the child. Rose knew many words in the language, as well as that of the unfortunate Iroquois.

All they had been able to learn about Catherine Arlac was that she had come from Paris to Honfleur, a widow, with a little girl. And Paris was such a great and puzzling place for a search.

"But she is a sweet human rose with no thorns, and I must keep her," declared miladi.

Laurent Giffard made no demur. He was really glad for his wife to have an interest while he was away.

The party threaded their way through the narrow winding paths that were to be so famous afterward and witness the heroic struggle, when the lilies of France went down for the last time, and the heritage that had cost so much in valiant endeavor and blood and treasure was signed away.

There were flaming torches and swinging lanterns and throngs wending to the part beyond the tents. The dance was not to pass a certain radius, where guards were stationed. Already there was a central fire of logs, around which the braves sat with their knees drawn up and their chins resting upon them, looking as if they were asleep.

"A fire this warm night," said miladi, in irony.

"We could hardly see them without it," returned her husband.

At the summons of a rude drum that made a startling noise, the braves rose, threw down their blankets and displayed their holiday attire of paint, fringes, beads, and dressed deerskins with great headdresses of feathers. Another ring formed round them. One brave, an old man, came forward, and gesticulating wildly, went through a series of antics. One after another fell in, and the slow tread began to increase. Then shrill songs, with a kind of musical rhythm, low at first, but growing louder and louder, the two or three circles joining in, the speed increasing until they went whirling around like madmen, shouting, thrusting at each other with their brawny arms, until all seemed like a sudden frenzy.

"Oh, they will kill each other!" almost shrieked Madame.

"*Non, non*, but small loss if they did," commented Madame Dubray.

They paused suddenly. It seemed like disentangling a chain. The confusion was heightened by the cries and the dancing feather headdresses that might have been a flock of giant birds. But presently they resolved into a circle again, and began to march to a slow chant. One young fellow seized a brand from the fire and began a wild gyration, pointing the end to the circle, at random, it seemed. Then another and another until the lights flashed about madly and there was a scent of burning feathers. The circle stood its ground bravely, but there were shrieks and mocking laughter as they danced around, sometimes making a lunge out at the spectators, who would draw back in affright, a signal for roars of mirth.

"They will burn each other up," cried Madame. "Oh, let us go. The noise is more than I can bear. And if they should attack us. Do you remember what M. du Parc was telling us?"

"I think we have had enough of it," began M. Giffard. "They are said to be very treacherous. What is to hinder them from attacking the whites?"

"The knowledge that they have not yet received any pay, and their remaining stock would be confiscated. They are not totally devoid of self-interest, and most of them have a respect for the fighting powers of the Sieur and his punishing capacity, as well."

As they left the place the noise seemed to subside, though it was like the roar of wild animals.

"Am I to remain here all winter with these savages? Can I not return with M. de Champlain?" pleaded Madame Giffard.

"Such a time would be almost a Godsend in the winter," declared Destournier. "But they will be hundreds of miles away, and the near Indians are sometimes too friendly, when driven by hunger to seek the fort. Oh, you will find no cause for alarm, I think."

"And how long will they keep this up?" she asked, as they were ascending the parapet from which they could still see the moving mass and the flashing lights, weird amid the surrounding

darkness.

"They will sit in a ring presently and smoke the pipe of peace and enjoyment, and drop off to sleep. And for your satisfaction, not a few among those were fur-hunters and traders, white men, who have given up the customs of civilized life and enjoy the hardships of the wilderness, but who will fight like tigers for their brethren when the issue comes. They are seldom recreant to their own blood."

"I do not want to see it again, ever," she cried passionately. "I shall hardly sleep for thinking of it and some horrible things a sailor told on shipboard. I can believe them all true now."

"And we have had horrible battles, cruelty to prisoners," declared her husband. "These poor savages have never been taught anything better, and are always at war with each other. But for us, who have a higher state of civilization, it seems incredible that we should take a delight in destroying our brethren."

It was quiet and peaceful enough inside the fort. The Sieur was still engrossed with his papers, marking out routes and places where lakes and rivers might be found and where trading posts might be profitably set, and colonies established. It was a daring ambition to plant the lilies of France up northward, to take in the mighty lakes they had already discovered and to cross the continent and find the sure route to India. There were heroes in those days and afterwards.

CHAPTER V

CHANGING ABOUT

"If you are ready for your sail and have the courage——"

Laurent Giffard kissed his pretty wife as she sat with some needlework in her hand, telling legendary tales, that were half fairy embellishments, to the little Rose, who was listening eagerly and with a delicious color in her cheeks. The child lived in a sort of fairy land. Miladi was the queen, her gowns were gold and silver brocade, but what brocade was, it would have been difficult for her to describe. She was very happy in these days, growing strong so she could take walks outside the fort, though she did not venture to do much climbing. The old life was almost forgotten. Mère Dubray was very busy with her own affairs, and her husband was as exigent as any new lover. Her cookery appealed to him in the most important place, his stomach.

"And to think I have done without thee these two years," he would moan.

When she saw her, the little girl had a strange fear that at the last moment they would seize her and take her up to the fur country with them. Pani was to go; he was of some service, if you kept a sharp eye on him, and had a switch handy.

"I'll tell you," he said to Rose when he waylaid her one day, "because you never got me into trouble and had me beaten. I shall have to start with them and I will go two days' journey, so they won't suspect. Then at night I'll start back. I like Quebec, and you and the good gentleman who throws you a laugh when he passes, instead of striking you. And I'll hunt and fish, and be a sailor. I'll not starve. And you will not tell even miladi, who is so beautiful and sweet. Promise."

Rose promised. And now they were to go down the river.

"The courage, of course," and Madame glanced up smilingly. "We take the child for the present."

"I shall soon be jealous, *ma mie*, but it is a pleasure to see a bright young thing about that can talk with her eyes and not chatter shrilly. *Mon dieu!* what voices most of the wives have, and they are transmitting them to their children. Yes; we will start at noon, and be gone two days. Destournier has some messages to deliver. Put on thy plainest frock, we are not in sunny France now."

She had learned that and only dressed up now and then for her husband's sake, or to please the child. And she had made her some pretty frocks out of petticoats quite too fine for wear here.

Rose was overjoyed. Wanamee was to accompany them. When they were ready they were piloted down to the wharf by Monsieur, and there was M. Ralph to welcome them. The river was brisk with boats and canoes and shallops. The sun glistened on the naked backs of Indian rowers bending with every stroke of the paddles to a rhythmic sort of sound, that later on grew to be regular songs. There were squaws handling canoes with grace and dexterity. One would have considered Quebec a great *entrepôt*.

But the river with its beautiful bank, its groves of trees that had not yet been despoiled, its frowning rocks glinting in the sunshine, its wild flowers, its swift dazzle of birds, its great flocks of geese, snowy white, in the little coves that uttered shrill cries and then huddled together, the islands that reared grassy heads a moment and were submerged as the current swept over them.

"Why are they not drowned?" asked Rose. "Or can they swim like the little Indian boys?"

M. Giffard laughed—he often did at her quaint questions.

"They are like the trees; they have taken root ever so far down, and the tide cannot sweep them away."

"And is Quebec rooted that way? Do the rocks hold fast? And—all the places, even France?"

"They have staunch foundations. The good God has anchored them fast."

A puzzled look wavered over her face. "Monsieur, it is said the great world is round. Why does not the water spill out as it turns? It would fall out of a pail."

"Ah, child, that once puzzled wiser heads than thine. And years must pass over thy head before thou canst understand."

"When I am as big as miladi?"

"I am afraid I do not quite understand myself, though I learned it in the convent, I am quite sure. And I could not see why we did not fall off. Some of the good nuns still believed the world was flat," and miladi laughed. "Women's brains were not made for over-much study."

"Is it far to France?"

"Two months' or so sail."

"On a river?"

"Oh, on a great ocean. We must look at the Sieur's chart. Out of sight of any land for days and days."

"I should feel afraid. And if you did not know where the land was?"

"But the sailor can tell by his chart."

What a wonderful world it was. She had supposed Quebec the greatest thing in it. And now she knew so much about France and the beautiful city called Paris, where the King and Queen lived, and ladies who went gowned just like Madame, the first time she saw her. And there was an England. M. Ralph had been there and seen their island empire, which could not compare with France. She had a vague idea France was all the rest of the world.

What days they were, for the weather was unusually fine. Now and then they paused to explore some small isle, or to get fresh game. As for fish, in those days the river seemed full of them. So many small streams emptied into the St. Lawrence. Berries were abundant, and they feasted to their hearts' content. The Indians dried them in the sun for winter use.

Tadoussac was almost as busy as Quebec. As the fur monopoly had been in part broken up, there were trappers here with packs of furs, and several Indian settlements. It was Champlain's idea which Giffard was to work up, to enlist rival traders to become sharers in the traffic, and enlarge the trade, instead of keeping in one channel.

Madame and the little girl, piloted by Wanamee, visited several of the wigwams, and the surprise of the Indian women at seeing the white lady and the child was great indeed. Rose was rather afraid at first, and drew back.

"They take it that you are the wife of the great father in France, that is the King," translated Wanamee, "because you have crossed the ocean. And you must not blame their curiosity. They will do you no harm."

But they wanted to examine my lady's frock and her shoes, with their great buckles that nearly covered her small foot. Her sleeves came in for a share of wonder, and her white, delicate arms they loaded with curious bracelets, made of shells ground and polished until they resembled gems. Then, too, they must feast them with a dish of Indian cookery, which seemed ground maize broken by curiously arranged millstones, in which were put edible roots, fish, and strips of dried meat, that proved quite too much for miladi's delicate stomach. The child had grown accustomed to it, as Lalotte sometimes indulged in it, but she always shook her head in disdain and frowned on it.

"Such *pot au feu* no one would eat at home," she would declare emphatically.

They were loaded with gifts when they came away. Beautifully dressed deerskins, strips of work that were remarkable, miladi thought, and she wondered how they could accomplish so much with so few advantages.

The child had been a great source of amusement to all on shipboard. Her utter ignorance of the outside world, her quaint frankness and innocence tempted Giffard to play off on her curiosity and tell wonderful tales of the mother country. And then Wanamee would recount Indian legends and strange charms and rites used by the sages of the Abenakis in the time of her forefathers, before any white man had been seen in the country.

Then their homeward route began, the pause at the Isle d'Orléans, the narrowing river, the more familiar Point Levis, the frowning rocks, the palisades, and the fort. All the rest was wildness, except the clearing that had been made and kept free that no skulking enemy should take an undue advantage and surprise them by a sudden onslaught.

The Sieur de Champlain came down to meet them. Rose was leaping from point to point like a

young deer. It was no longer a pale face, it had been a little changed by sun and wind.

"Well, little one, hast thou made many discoveries?"

"Oh, yes, indeed. I would not mind going to France now. And we have brought back some such queer things; beautiful, too. But we did not like some of the cooking, miladi and I, and Quebec is dearer, for it is home," and her eyes shone with delight.

"Home! Thanks, little maid, for your naming it on this wise," and he smiled down in the eager face as he turned to greet Madame.

She was a little weary of the wildness and loneliness of dense woods and great hills and banks of the river, that roared and shrieked at times as if ghost-haunted. Wanamee's stories had touched the superstitious threads of her brain.

M. Giffard took the Sieur's arm and drew him a trifle aside. Destournier offered his to the lady and assisted her up the rocky steep. Many a tragedy would pass there before old Quebec became new Quebec, with famous and heroic story.

She leaned a little heavily on his arm. "The motion of the ship is still swaying my brain," she remarked, with a soft laugh. "So, if I am awkward, I crave your patience. Oh, see that child! She will surely fall."

Rose was climbing this way and that, now hugging a young tree growing out of some crevice, then letting it go with a great flap, now snatching a handful of wild flowers, and treading the fragrance out of wild grapes.

"She is sure-footed like any other wild thing. I saw her first perched upon that great gray rock yonder."

"The daring little monkey! I believe they brave every danger. I wonder if we shall ever learn anything about her. The Sieur has so much on hand, and men are wont to drop the thread of a pursuit or get it tangled up with other things, so it would be too much of a burthen to ask him. And another year I shall go to Paris myself. If she does not develop too much waywardness, and keeps her good looks, I shall take her."

"Then I think you may be quite sure of a companion."

Wanamee had preceded them and thrown open the room to the slant rays of western sunshine. Madame sank down on a couch, exhausted. The Indian girl brought in some refreshments.

"Stay and partake of some," she said, with a winsome smile. "I cannot be bereft of everybody."

But the child came in presently, eager and full of news that was hardly news to her, after all.

"Pani is here," she exclaimed. "Madame Dubray and her husband have gone with the trappers. They took Pani. He said he would run away. They kept him two days, and tied him at night, but he loosened the thongs and ran nearly all night. Then he has hidden away, for some new people have taken the house. And he wants to stay here. He will be my slave."

She looked eagerly at my lady.

"Thou art getting to be such a venturesome midge that it may be well to have so devoted an attendant. Yet I remember he left thee alone and ill and hungry not so long ago."

Rose laughed gayly.

"If he had not left me I could not have taken the courage to crawl out. And no one else might have come. He wanted to see the ships. And Madame Dubray whipped him well, so that score is settled," with a sound of justice well-paid for in her voice.

"We will see"—nodding and laughing.

"Then can I tell him?"

"The elders had better do that. But there will be room enough in Quebec for him and us, I fancy," returned miladi.

Rose ran away. Pani was waiting out on the gallery.

"They will not mind," she announced. "But you must have some place to sleep, and"—studying him critically from the rather narrow face, the bony shoulders, and slim legs—"something to eat. Mère Dubray had plenty, except towards spring when the stores began to fail."

"I can track rabbits and hares, and catch fish on the thin places in the rivers. Oh, I shall not starve. But I'm hungry."

The wistful look in his eyes touched her.

"Let us find Wanamee," she exclaimed, leading the way to the culinary department.

Miladi had been surprised and almost shocked at the rough manner of living in this new France. The food, too, was primitive, lacking in the delicacies to which she had been used, and the manners she thought barbarous. But for M. Destournier and the courtesy of the Sieur she would have prayed to return at once.

"Wait a little," pleaded Laurent. "If there is a fortune to be made in this new world, why should we not have our share? And I can see that there is. Matters are quite unsettled at home, but if we go back with gold in our purses we shall do well enough."

Then the child had appealed to her. And it was flattering to be the only lady of note and have homage paid to her.

So the children sought Wanamee, and while Pani brought some sticks and soon had a bed of coals, Wanamee stirred up some cakes of rye and maize, and the boy prepared a fish for cooking. He was indeed hungry, and his eyes glistened with the delight of eating.

"It smells so good," said Rose. "Wanamee, bring me a piece. I can always eat now, and a while ago I could not bear the smell of food."

"You were so thin and white. And Mère Dubray thought every morning you would be dead. You wouldn't like to be put in the ground, would you?"

"Oh, no, no!" shivering.

"Nor burned. Then you go to ashes and only the bones are left."

"That is horrid, too. Burning hurts. I have burned my fingers with coals."

"But my people don't mind it. They are very brave. And you go to the great hunting grounds way over to the west, where the good Manitou has everything, and you don't have to work, and no one beats you."

"The white people have a heaven. That is above the sky. And when the stars come out it is light as day on the other side, and there are flowers and trees, and rivers and all manner of fruit such as you never see here."

"I'd rather hunt. When I get to be a man I shall go off and discover wonderful things. In some of the mountains there is gold. And out by the great oceans where the Hurons have encamped there are copper and silver. The company talked about it. Some were for going there. And there were fur animals, all the same."

Rose had been considering another subject.

"Pani," she began, with great seriousness, "you are not any one's slave now."

"No"—rather hesitatingly. "The Dubrays will never come back, or if they should next summer, with furs, I will run away again up to the Saguenay, where they will not look. But there are Indian boys in plenty where the tribes fight and take prisoners."

"You shall be my slave."

The young Indian's cheek flushed.

"The slave of a girl!" he said, with a touch of disdain.

"Why not? I should not beat you."

"Oh, you couldn't"—triumphantly.

"But you might be miladi's slave," suggested Wanamee, "and then you could watch the little one and follow her about to see that nothing harmed her."

"There shouldn't anything hurt her." He sprang up. "You see I am growing tall, and presently I shall be a man. But I won't be a slave always."

"No, no," said the Indian woman.

"That was very good, excellent," pointing to the two empty birch-bark dishes, which he picked up and threw on the coals, a primitive way to escape dish washing. "I will find you a heap more. I will get fish or berries, and oh, I know where the bees have stored a lot of honey in a hollow tree."

"You let them alone for another month," commanded Wanamee. "Honey—that will be a treat indeed."

Miladi had missed the sweets of her native land, though there they had not been over-plentiful, since royalty must needs be served first. They bought maple sugar and a kind of crude syrup of the Abenaqui women, who were quite experts in making it. When the sun touched the trees in the morning when the hoarfrost had disappeared, they inserted tubes of bark, rolled tightly, and caught the sap in the troughs. Then they filled their kettles that swung over great fires, and the fragrance arising made the forests sweet with a peculiar spiciness. It was a grand time for the children, who snatched some of the liquid out of the kettle on a birch-bark ladle, and ran into the woods for it to cool. Pani had often been with them.

"Let us go down to the old house," exclaimed Rose. "Do you know who is there?"

"Pierre Gaudrion. He gets stone for the new walls they are laying against the fort. And there are five or six little ones."

"It must be queer. Oh, let us go and see them."

She was off like a flash, but he followed as swiftly. Here was the garden where she had pulled weeds with a hot hatred in her heart that she would have liked to tear up the whole garden and throw it over in the river. She glanced around furtively—what if Mère Dubray should come suddenly in search of Pani.

Three little ones were tumbling about on the grass. The oldest girl was grinding at the rude mill, a boy was making something out of birch branches, interlaced with willow. A round, cheerful face glanced up from patching a boy's garment, and smiled. Madame Gaudrion's mother had been a white woman left at the Saguenay basin in a dying condition, it was supposed, but she had recovered and married a half-breed. One daughter had cast in her lot with a roving tribe. Pierre Gaudrion had seen the other in one of the journeys up to Tadoussac and brought her home.

The Sieur did not discourage these marriages, for the children generally affiliated with the whites, and if the colony was to prosper there must be marriages and children.

Rose stopped suddenly, rather embarrassed, for all her bravado.

"I used to live here," as if apologizing.

"Yes. But Mère Dubray was not your mother."

"No. Nor Catherine Arlac."

The woman shook her head. "I know not many people. We live on the other side. And the babies come so fast I have not much time. But Pierre say now we must have bigger space and garden for the children to work in. So we are glad when Mère Dubray go up to the fur country with her man. You were ill, they said. But you do not look ill. Did you not want to go with her?"

"Oh, no, no. And I live clear up there," nodding to the higher altitude. "M'sieu Hébert is there and Madame. And a beautiful lady, Madame Giffard. I did not love Mère Dubray."

"If I have a child that will not love me, it would break my heart. What else are little ones for until they grow up and marry in turn?"

"But—I was not her child."

"And your mother."

"I do not know. She was dead before I could remember. Then I was brought from France."

Suddenly she felt the loss of her mother. She belonged to no one in the world.

"Poor *petite*." She made a sudden snatch at her own baby and hugged it so tightly that it shrieked, at which she laughed.

"Some day a man will hug thee and thou wilt not scream," she said in good humor.

Pani came from round the corner and then darted back. The boy left his work and came forward.

"Who was that?" he asked. "My father said 'get an Indian boy to work in the garden.' I am making a chair for the little one. And I can't tell which are weeds. Yesterday I pulled up some onions and father was angry, but he could set them out again."

Rose laughed at that, and thought it remarkable that his father did not beat him.

"Pani might show you a little. He belongs to me now. We both used to work in the garden. Mère Dubray was always knitting and cooking."

Pani emerged again. "Yes, let us go," and Rose led the way, but she would have liked to throw herself down among the babies, who seemed all arms and legs.

"Can you read?" the boy said suddenly. "We have a book and I can read quite well. My father knows how. And I want to be a great man like the Sieur, and some of the soldiers. I want to know how to keep accounts, and to go to France some time in the big ships."

Rose colored. "I am going to learn to read this winter, when we have to stay in. But it is very difficult—tiresome. I'd rather climb the rocks and watch the birds. I had some once that would come for grains and bits of corn cake. And the geese were so tame down there by the end of the garden."

The rows of corn stood up finely, shaking out their silken heads, turning to a bronze red. Then there were potatoes. These were of the Dubrays' planting, as well as some of the smaller beds.

"M'sieu Hébert gave father some of these plants. He knows a great deal, and he can make all kinds of medicine. It is very fine to know a great deal, isn't it?"

"But it must be hard to study so much," returned Rose, with a sigh.

"I don't think so. I wish I had ever so many books like the Sieur and M. Hébert. And you can find out places—there are so many of them in the world. And do you know there are English people working with all their might down in Virginia, and Spanish and Dutch! But some day we shall drive them all out and it will be New France as far as you can go. And the Indians——"

"You can't drive the Indians out," exclaimed Pani decisively. "The whole country is theirs. And there are so many of them. There are tribes and tribes all over the land. And they know how to fight."

"They are fighting each other continually. M. Hébert says they will sweep each other off after a while. And they are very cruel. You will see the French do not fight the French."

Alas, young Pierre Gaudrion, already Catholic and Huguenot were at war: one fighting for the right to live in a certain liberty of belief, the other thinking they did God a service by undertaking their extermination.

The argument rather floored Pani, whose range of knowledge was only wide enough to know that many tribes were at bitter enmity with each other.

"Do you want to work in the garden? There are weeds enough to keep you busy," said Pierre presently.

"No," returned Pani stoutly.

"And Pani belongs to me," declared Rose.

Pierre turned to look at the girl. Her beauty stirred him strangely. Sometimes, when his father sang the old songs of home, the same quiver went through every pulse.

"I'm sorry," he said, in a gentler tone. "Now I must go back to my chair."

"Is it to be a chair?"

"I can't weave the grasses just right, though some one showed me, only I was thinking of other things."

"Let's see." Pani was a little mollified.

They went back to the boy's work.

"I'm only making a little one for Marie. Then I shall try a larger one. There are two in the room."

Yes, Rose knew them well. The place was about the same, with the great bunk on one side and the smaller one on the other. Mère Dubray's bright blankets were gone, with the pictures of the Virgin, and the high candlestick, that was alight on certain days. Little mattresses filled with dried grass were piled on top of the bunk. It looked like, and yet unlike. Rose was glad she did not live here.

Pani inspected the boy's work.

"Oh, you haven't it right. You must put pegs in here, then you can pull it up. And this is the way you go."

Pani's deft fingers went in and out like a bit of machinery. It was forest lore, and he was at home in it.

"You make it beautiful," exclaimed Pierre. "Oh, go slower, so I can understand."

Pani smiled with the praise and put in a word of explanation now and then. The boys were fast becoming friends.

"Maman," Pierre cried, "come and see how fine the boy does it. If he would come and live with us!"

"I might come a little while and look after the garden. And I could catch fish and I know the best places for berries, and the grapes will soon be ripening. And the plums. I can shoot birds with an arrow. But I belong to mam'selle."

"If she will let you come now and then," wistfully.

"Yes, I might," with an air of condescension.

"Thou art a pretty little lady," was Mère Gaudrion's parting benison to the little girl, and Rose smiled. "Come again often."

When they were out of the narrow passageway she said, "Now let us have a race. I am glad Mère Dubray is there no longer, are you not? But what a funny pile of children!"

They had their race, and a climb, and on the gallery they found miladi looking for them, and they told over their adventure.

"Yes," she said smilingly. "I think we can find a place for Pani, and between us all I fancy we can keep him so well employed he will not want to run away."

CHAPTER VI

FINDING AMUSEMENTS

About the middle of August the Sieur de Champlain and Captain François de Pontgrave sailed from Tadoussac for France. The Giffards, Destournier, and several others accompanied them to the port, and were then to survey some of the places that had advantages for planting colonies. They did not return until in September. The season was unusually fine and warm, and there had been an abundance of everything. The colonists had been busy enough preparing for winter. They had learned ways of drying fruit, of smoking meats and fish, of caring for their grains. There had been no talk of Indian raids, indeed the villages about were friendly with the whites, and friendly with several of the outlying tribes. Some had gone on raids farther south.

Madame Giffard would have found time hanging heavy on her hands but for the child. She began to teach her to read and to play checkers. Rose did not take kindly to embroidery, but some of the Indian work interested her. With Pani and Wanamee's assistance she made baskets and curious vase-like jars. Pierre Gaudrion came up now and then, and miladi considered him quite a prodigy in several ways.

When they were dull and tired miladi gave Rose dancing lessons. The child was really fascinated with the enjoyment. Miladi would dress up in one of her pretty gowns to the child's great delight, and they would invent wonderful figures. Sometimes the two men would join them, and they would keep up the amusement till midnight.

Pani was growing rapidly and he was their most devoted knight. And when the snows set in there were great snowballing games; sometimes between the Indians alone, at others, the whites would take a hand.

It was splendid entertainment for the children to slide about on the snowy crust, that glistened in the sunlight as if sprinkled with gems. The Indian women often participated in this amusement. And miladi looked as bewitching in her deerskin suit, with its fringes and bright adornments of feather borders, and her lovely furs, as in her Paris attire. She often thought she would like to walk into some assembly and make a stir in her strange garments.

What is the Sieur doing? Making new bargains, persuading colonists to join them, getting concessions to the profit of New France. Alas! Old France was a selfish sort of stepmother. She wanted furs, she wanted colonies planted, she wanted explorations, and possessions taken in every direction, to thwart English and Dutch, who seemed somehow to be prospering, but the money supplies were pared to the narrowest edge.

The little girl would have been much interested in one step her dear Sieur was taking, though she did not hear of it until long afterward. This was his betrothment and marriage to Marie Hélène, the daughter of Nicolas Boullé, private secretary to the young King. A child of twelve, and the soldier and explorer who was now forty or over, but held his years well and the hardships had written few lines on his kindly and handsome face. That he was very much charmed with the child, who was really quite mature for her age, was true, though it is thought the friendship of her father and her dowry had some weight. But she adored her heroic lover, although she was to be returned to the convent to finish her education. Then the Sieur made his will and settled a part of the dowry on his bride, and the income of all his other property, his maps and books, "in case of his death in voyages on the sea and in the service of the King."

If the autumn had been lovely and long beyond expectations, winter lingered as well. And the travellers had a hard time on their return. Lofty bergs floated down the Atlantic, and great floes closed in around the vessel, and the rigging was encased in glittering ice. Sometimes their hearts failed them and the small boats were made ready, but whither would they steer? Captain Pontgrave kept up his courage, and "when they brought their battered craft into the harbor of Tadoussac they fired a cannon shot in joyous salute," says history. Seventy-four days had their journey lasted.

The country was still white with snow, although it was May. Already some trading vessels were bidding for furs, but the Montagnais had had a hard winter as well, and the Bay traders would have perished on the way.

Champlain pushed on to Quebec, though his heart was full of fears.

Rose was out on the gallery, that Pani was clearing from the frequent light falls of snow. A canoe was being rowed by some Indians and in the stern sat the dearly-loved Commander. "They have come! they have come!" shouted Rose, and she ran in to spread the joyful news. Destournier and Giffard were at a critical point in a game of chess, but both sprang up. The bell pealed out, there was a salute, and every one in the fort rushed out with exclamations of joy. For the sake of the little girl he had left, the Sieur stooped and kissed Rose.

Du Parc was in the best of spirits, and had only a good account. There had been no sickness, no Indian troubles, and provisions had lasted well. All was joy and congratulations. Even the Indian settlements near by built bonfires and beat their drums, dancing about with every indication of delighted welcome.

He had brought with him the young Indian Savignon, while Etienne Brulé had wintered with the Ottawas, perfecting himself in their language. He was a fine specimen of his race, as far as physique went, and his winter in civilization had given him quite a polish.

There was a great feast. Miladi was in her glory ordering it, and Savignon paid her some compliments that quite savored of old times in her native land. She was fond of admiration, and here there was but small allowance of it.

He was to restore the young brave to his tribe, and Destournier was to accompany him. He saw that with trade open to rivals there must be some stations. It was true no men could be spared to form a new colony, and the few he had induced to emigrate would do better service in the old settlement. In Cartier's time there had been the village of Hochelega. It was a great stretch of open fertile land, abounding in wild fruits and grapes, so he pre-empted it in the name of the King, put up a stout cross, and built two or three log huts, and planted some grain seeds that might in turn scatter themselves around. And so began Montreal. The river was dotted with islands; the largest, on which the wild iris, the fleur-de-lis, grew abundantly, he named St. Hélène, in remembrance of his little betrothed.

They pushed on beyond the rapids and here he met the Algonquins and restored their young brave to them, and was glad to find Etienne Brulé in good health and spirits. But Savignon bade him farewell ruefully, declaring life in Paris was much more agreeable, and spoiled one for the wilderness.

Various bands of Hurons and Algonquins came to meet the great white Sagamore, and he secured much trade for the coming season. But the fur business was being greatly scattered, and Demont's finances were at a rather low ebb, so there could not be the necessary branching out.

Destournier had some schemes as well. He had come to the new world partly from curiosity and the desire to mend his fortunes. He saw now some fine openings, if he could get a concession or grant of land. His old family seat might be disposed of, he had not Laurent Giffard's aim to make a fortune here and go back to France and spend it for show.

Madame Giffard was deeply disappointed at this prospect, and Rose was inconsolable.

"Who will read to us in the long evenings and the days when the driving snow makes it seem like night. And oh, M'sieu, who will dance with me and tell me those delightful stories, and laugh at my sayings that come like birds' flights across my mind and go their way?"

"You will have miladi. And there are the Gaudrion children. Pierre has a heart full of worship for you. And books that the Governor brought. The time will pass quickly."

"To you. There will be so many things. But the long, long days. And miladi says there are so many pretty girls in Paris, whose dancing and singing are marvellous, and who would laugh at a frock of deerskin. Oh, you will forget me, and all the time I shall think of you. You will not care."

Her beautiful eyes were suffused with tears, the brilliance of her cheek faded, and her bosom heaved with emotion. What a girl she would be a few years hence. His dear Sieur had married a child—was he really in love with her? But his regard was fatherly, brotherly.

"See," he began, "we will make a bargain. When the first star comes out you will watch for it and say, 'M'sieu Ralph is looking at it and thinking of me.' And I will say—'the little Rose of Quebec is turning toward me,' and we will meet in heart. Will not this comfort thee?"

"Oh, I shall hug it to my heart. The star! the star! And when the sky is thick with clouds I shall remember you told me the stars were always there. And I will shut my eyes and see you. I see strange things at times."

"So you must not be unhappy, for I shall return," and he took her throbbing fingers in his.

She raised her lovely eyes. What a charming coquette she would make, if she were not so innocent. But the long fringe of lashes was beaded with tears.

It was odd, he thought, but with all the admiration of her husband miladi made as great a time as the child. What should she do in this horrible lonely place, shut up in the fort all winter, with no company but an Indian woman and a child whose limited understanding took in only foolish pleasures. What miladi needed was companionship. Ah! if she could return to France. If Laurent would only consent. But now he thought only of fortune-making.

"And a return at the end. He is not taking root here. I am. I like the boundless freedom of this new country," said Destournier.

"You will marry. There is some demoiselle at home on whom your heart is set. And the old friendship will go for naught. You have been—yes, like a brother," and she flushed.

"No, I am not likely to marry," he returned gravely.

"But—you will not return," in a desperate kind of tone. "You will be won by Paris."

"I shall return. All my interests are here. And as I said—I shall leave my heart in this new country."

Then she smiled, a little secure in the thought that she had no rival.

So again the Sieur de Champlain set sail for France, and many a discourse he held with Ralph Destournier on the future of Quebec, that child of his dreams and his heart. It would be fame enough, he thought, to be handed down to posterity as the founder of Quebec, the explorer of the

great inland seas that joining arms must lead across the continent.

Miladi was very capricious, Rose found, although she did not know the meaning of the word. What she wanted to-day she scouted to-morrow. Rose's reading was enough to set one wild. Sure she was not French-born, or she would know by intuition. Sometimes she would say pettishly, "Go away, child, you disturb me," and then Rose would play hide-and-see with Pani, or run down to the Gaudrions. Marie was quite an expert in Indian embroidery, the children were gay and frolicsome, and there was a new baby. Pierre was very fond of her; a studious fellow, with queer ideas that often worked themselves out in some useful fashion. They read together, stumbling over words they could not understand.

"And I shall build a boat of my own and go out to those wonderful rapids. At one moment it feels as if you would be submerged, then you ride up on top with a shout. Cubenic said the Sieur stood it as bravely as any Indian. Why—if your boat was overturned you could swim."

"But there's a current that sucks you in. And there's a strange woman, a windigo, who haunts the rapids and drags you down and eats you."

"I don't believe such nonsense. In one of the Sieur's books there is a story of some people who believed there was a spirit in everything. There were gods of the waters, of the trees, of the winds, and the Indians are much like them. I've never found any of their gods, have you?"

"No"—rather reluctantly. "But Wanamee has. And sometimes they bring back dead people."

"Then they don't always eat them," and the boy laughed.

She had meant to tell miladi of her tryst and beg her to come out and see the star, but when she found her not only indifferent, but fretful, she refrained and was glad presently that she had this delicious secret to herself. But there was a great mystery. Sometimes the star was different. Instead of being golden, it was a pale blue, and then almost red. Was it that way in France, she wondered.

She came to have a strange fondness for the stars, and to note their changes. Was it true that the old people M'sieu Ralph had read about, the Greeks, had seen their gods and goddesses taken up to the sky and set in the blue? There were thrones mounted with gems, there were figures that chased each other; to-night they were here, to-morrow night somewhere else. But the star that came out first was hers, and she sent a message across the ocean with it. And the star said in return, "I am thinking of you."

He did think of her, and tried to trace out some parentage. Catherine Defroy had gone from St. Malo, a single woman. Then by all the accounts he could find she must have spent two years in Paris. Clearly she was not mother of the child.

After all, what did it matter? Rose would probably spend her life in New France. If it was never proven that she came of gentlefolks, Laurent Giffard would hardly consent to his wife's mothering her. He had a good deal of pride of birth.

The winter passed away and this year spring came early, unchaining the streams and sending them headlong to the rivers; filling the air with the fragrant new growth of the pines, hemlocks, and cedars, the young grasses, and presently all blossoming things. The beauty touched Rose deeply. No one understood, so she only talked of these strange things to the trees and the stars at night. Often she was a merry romp, climbing rocks, out in a canoe, which she had learned to manage perfectly, though sometimes Pani accompanied her, sometimes Pierre Gaudrion, who was growing fast and making himself very useful to Du Parc.

As for the Sieur, he found much to engross his attention. There was a new trading company that had the privilege of eleven years. There was another volume of voyages and discoveries, the maps and illustrations finely engraved. Then he had laid before the secretary of the King the urgent need of some religious instruction. Acadia had quite a thriving Jesuit mission. This order was not in high favor with Champlain, who deprecated their narrowness. The Sieur Houel recommended the Récollets, and four willing missionaries were finally chosen. The company had fitted up a large vessel and were taking all the stores they could purchase or beg, and quite a number of emigrants of a better class than heretofore.

They were all warmly welcomed, and found the colonists in very good order. The enthusiastic priest startled them by kneeling on the soil and devoutly consecrating it to God, and giving thanks that He had called them to this new and arduous field of labor. The coarse gray cassock girt at the waist with a bit of rope, the pointed hood, which often hung around their necks and betrayed the shaven crown, their general air of poverty and humility attracted attention, but did not so much appeal to the colonists or the Indians. They were fearful of the new order of things.

Quebec had enlarged her borders somewhat. The one-roomed hut had spread out into two or three apartments. The gardens had increased. Some roads had been made, the workmen taking the stone quarried to add to their own houses. Still they received the fathers with a certain degree of cordiality.

Champlain set aside ground for their convent, and they first erected an altar and celebrated Mass. Père Dolbeau was the officiating priest. The people, most of whom came from curiosity, knelt around on the earth, while cannon from the ramparts announced the mystic services. The Giffards joined in them reverentially, but Rose was full of wonderment. Indeed, her joy was so

great at seeing Destournier again that she could give thanks for nothing else.

Then they erected a rude hut and discussed the work that lay before them. Le Caron would go to the Hurons, Dolbeau to the Montagnais, Jamay and Du Plessis would take charge of Quebec and the outlying provinces, and planned to build a chapel.

Destournier had been successful with his grant. He had been made seignior of a large tract outside of the town, which was destined one day to be a part of it. Here he settled some friendly Indians, and several of the new-comers, who were to till the soil under his directions, and raise different crops to ward off the scarcity of rations in the winter. He would build a house for himself and live among them.

"But why not remain in the fort?" asked miladi. "What charm can you find with those ignorant people? Though perhaps peas and beans, radishes and cabbages may console one for more intellectual pursuits."

"I shall only spend the days with them at present," he returned, with a smile.

And now again came the influx of the fur-traders. It had been a good season and from the new settlement of Montreal to Tadoussac, vessels were packing away the precious freight. Champlain had gone with a body of soldiers to help defend a town the Iroquois had threatened to attack. The missions thus far had borne no fruit. Indeed the new teaching of the Récollets in its severity was not pleasant. The Hurons were seized with a panic after losing several of their leaders and the Sieur was wounded. All winter the people at Quebec waited anxiously for their leader, and parties set out to see if they could find any tidings. At last they were sighted, and great was the joy at finding their beloved chieftain well and unharmed. But he was not allowed to remain long in his pet settlement. There were disputes and altercations, and he was summoned to France.

"Another year we shall go ourselves," announced Laurent Giffard to his wife. "We have enough now to make ourselves comfortable, and I doubt if the company can weather through. At all events I shall be glad to be well out of it. Art thou glad of the prospect?"

"There is great commotion with the King and his mother, and between Huguenot and Catholic," she made answer slowly. "Does the Sieur Destournier throw up his schemes in disgust as well?"

"Ah, I think he is wedded to the soil. The Governor trusts everything to him, and Du Parc, and both are capable men. But truth to tell I have lost faith in the colony. I hear the Virginians and the Bostonnais are doing much better. France cannot, or will not, spend the money, nor send the men to put the place on a sure foundation. The Indians grow more troublesome. They hate being meddled with by the priests. They take wives when they want them, and send them away when they are tired of them. They torture prisoners—some day the priests will have a taste of it themselves."

"They are all horrible," she said, with a shiver.

"And we will go back to La Belle France. I fancy I can manage a sort of preferment with Dubissay, who has the ear of the Queen mother at present. At all events I am tired of this turmoil, and thou, *ma mie*, art wasting thy beauty in this savage land."

He stooped and kissed her. If he had been ready last year, she would have hailed the prospect with delight. Why did it not seem so attractive now?

"And the child?" she asked presently, her eyes fixed on the floor.

Was the tone indifferent?

"How much dost thou love her, *ma mie*? At first thy heart was sore for the loss of our own, but time heals all such wounds. Destournier left no stone unturned to discover her parentage, and failed. I think she has been some one's love child. True we could give her our name, and with a good dowry she could marry well. But she will want some years of convent training to tone her down."

"And if we should leave her here? Though they say Miladi de Champlain comes over soon, and there may be a court with maids of honor."

He laughed. "What I fancy is this, though I am no seer. Destournier is fond of her, fatherly now, but she is shooting up into a tall girl. There will not be so many years between them as the Sieur and Mademoiselle Boullé. And some day he will take her to wife. 'Twere a pity to spoil the romance. She adores him."

Miladi bit her lip hard, and drew her brow into a sharp frown.

"What nonsense!" she made answer.

"Destournier is a fine fellow, and will be a rich one some day."

"The more need that he should marry in his own station."

"But there is talk of reproducing home titles in this new land. And Baron Destournier can raise his wife to his own station. If the child should not be amenable to training, or develop some waywardness, there might be sorrow, rather than joy or satisfaction in thine heart."

"There will be time enough to consider," she returned.

He left the room. She went out on the shady side of the gallery, and looked down over the town. The two under discussion a moment ago were climbing the steep rocks instead of taking the path where steps were cut. The wind blew her shining hair about, her face was filled with ripples of laughter. He took her arm and she would have no help, but sprang like a deer from point to point, then turned to throw her merriment at him.

"Yes, miladi would take her to France. What if some day he should follow?"

The Governor spent a month in intense satisfaction, enlarging the borders of his pet garden, talking with M. Hébert, who had been watching the growth of some fine fruit trees imported from northern France, that had blossomed and were perfecting a few specimens of fruit. He thought sometimes it would be a joy to give up all cares and rest in cultivating the soil. If the summers were short everything grew abundantly. There were several rare plants, also, that they had acclimated.

"Bring thy wife over and be content," advised M. Hébert, in a cordial tone, "and enjoy the governorship."

M. de Champlain laughed. But presently he said: "Friend, you little know the delights of an explorer who brings new countries to light, who builds cities that may continue after him. The route to India has not yet been located. The fields of gold and silver have not been discovered. The lilies of France have not been planted over there," nodding his head. "We must go before the Spaniard gets a foothold. Yet there are delights I must confess that even Horace longed for—a garden."

But if he longed for it at times he found the restless current hurrying him on. Some disaffected members of the company were bringing charges against him, desiring to depose him from the governorship. But Condé, who had again come into power, knew there was not another man who would work so untiringly for the good of New France, or make it bring in such rich returns.

CHAPTER VII

JOURNEYING TO A FAR COUNTRY

The colony passed a very fair winter. It was in the latter part of April that one night an alarm was given and the big bell at the fort rang out its call to arms.

The messenger had trudged through the snow and was breathless.

"An Indian attack. The Iroquois are burning the settlement, and murdering our people. To arms! to arms!"

There had been no Indian raid for a long while. Destournier had tried to fortify the back of his plantation. There were Montagnais and Algonquins of the better type living there peaceably. It was not altogether cupidity. An Iroquois woman had been found cruelly murdered, and the wandering band laid it at once to the settlement. It took only a brief while to work themselves up to a frenzy.

It did not take long to plan revenge. There was no chief at the head; indeed, in these roving bands it was every brave for himself. And now after a powwow, since they were not large enough in numbers to attack the fort, and they found some of the Indian converts were in the new settlement, they determined on an onslaught.

The barricade at the back was high and strong. It was not so well fortified on the side toward the fort, and they pushed through a weak place at the end, lighted their torches, and commenced a treacherous assault. Roused from their slumbers, and terrified to the last degree, the air was soon filled with shrieks, and bursting in doors, the houses were set on fire. They were wary enough to guard their loop-hole for escape, but they found themselves outnumbered, and in turn had to fight for their own lives. The blazing huts lighted up the snow in a weird fashion; the shrieks and cries and jargon of the Iroquois added to the frightfulness. Yet the struggle was brief. The enemy, finding themselves on the losing side, began to fly, pursued by the soldiers, and indeed, many of the inhabitants.

Destournier roused at the first alarm, and Du Parc gave orders that were speedily obeyed. The citadel was in a glow of light and wild commotion.

Giffard ran down the stone steps with his musket. Destournier barred his way.

"Some of us have no wives," he said briefly. "Go back and keep guard until we see what the dastardly attack means."

"There are wives and children in the settlement," was the reply, but he paused while Destournier ran on. When he was out of sight, Giffard followed.

The soldiers pursued the flying band, but they presently plunged into the woods and crept on stealthily, while the pursuers returned. The gray morning began to dawn on the smoking ruin and the fitful blazes that the men were trying hard to extinguish with the snow. Destournier went

from one to another. A few huts had not been disturbed, and crying women and children were crowding in them. Some bodies lay silent on the blood-stained snow. Destournier had taken great pride in the surprise he had thought to give the Governor on his return, and here lay most of his hopes in ruins.

He gave orders that the wounded should be taken to the fort for treatment. It was a gratification to find two Iroquois dead, and when a soldier despatched a wounded one he made no comment. It was pitiful when the sun rose over the scene of destruction.

"Still there could not have been a large body, or the carnage would have been more complete," he said, with some comforting assurance.

"You had better come in for some breakfast," an officer remarked. "You look ghastly, and you are blood-stained."

He glanced down at his garments. "Yes," he said, "I will take your advice. I want something hot to drink. And we must send some food over there."

Rose came flying in as he was demolishing a savory slice of venison.

"Where is M. Giffard?" she cried. "Miladi is so frightened. She wants him at once. Oh, wasn't it dreadful! Thank the saints you are safe!"

"Giffard!" He had caught two or three glimpses of him in the mêlée. "He may be attending to the wounded. He is a brave fellow in an emergency. I must find him."

He swallowed the brandy and water and rushed down to the improvised hospital. A dozen or more were being fed and nursed by Wanamee and two other Indian women. The priest, too, was kindly exhorting courage and patience. Giffard was not here. No one had seen him. He ran over the crusty, but trodden-down snow, stained here and there with blood. The sun had risen gorgeously, and there was a decided balminess in the air. He glanced at the insides of the huts. The furry skins had not been good conductors of flames, and the snow on the roofs had saved them. Beside the two dead Iroquois there was an Abenaki woman and her child. In the huts that were intact, the frightened women and children had huddled. Some of the men were already appraising possible repairs.

"They went this way," announced an Algonquin, in his broken French. He had been employed about the fort and found trusty.

The path was marked with blood and fragments of clothing, bags of maize, that they had dropped in their flight—finding them a burthen. Here lay an Iroquois with a broken leg, who was twisting himself along. The Algonquin hit him a blow over the head with the stout club he carried.

"He will not get much further," he commented, as the Indian dropped over motionless.

"Have you seen M. Giffard?" Destournier asked.

"*Non, non.* The men came back."

"He is not at the fort."

"Shall we follow on?"

Destournier nodded.

They heard a step crunching over the snow and waited breathlessly.

It was Jacques Roleau they saw as he came in sight, one of the workmen at the fort. He gestured to them that all was right.

"They have fled, what was left of them," he explained. "I despatched two wounded Iroquois that they had left behind. There are two of our men that they must have made prisoners, the M'sieu at the fort who has the pretty wife, and young Chauvin"—and he paused, as if there was more to say.

"Wounded?"

He shook his head sadly.

"Dead?" Destournier's breath came with a gasp.

"Both dead, M'sieu, but strange, neither has been scalped."

"Let us push on," exclaimed Destournier sadly.

They followed the trail. After a short distance a body had been dragged evidently. Roleau led the way through a tortuous path until they came in sight of a small vacant spot where sometime Indians had camped, as they could tell by the scorched and blackened trees. A nearly nude body had been fastened to one and a few dead branches gathered, evidently for a fire.

Destournier stood speechless. The head hung down, the face was unmarred, save for a few scratches, and he gave thanks for that. But his heart was heavy within him. The poor body had been stabbed and cut, yet it had not bled much, it seemed.

He would have felt relieved if he had known the whole story. Two stalwart bucks had seized

Giffard just beyond the settlement and hurried him along at such a pace that he could hardly breathe. They fastened his arms behind, each man grasping an elbow, and fairly galloped, until one of them caught his foot in a fallen tree and went down. In the fall Giffard's temple struck against a stone that knocked him senseless. He might have revived, but he was hurried along by a stout leathern thong slipped under the armpits, and was then dragged a dead weight. They had stopped for a holocaust and bound him to a tree, while they despatched the younger man. But there was difficulty in finding anything dry enough to burn, so they had amused themselves by gashing the dead body. Then suddenly alarmed they had plunged farther into the forest, leaving one of their own wounded that Roleau had finished.

Giffard had been captured in a moment of incautiousness, but the sights and the wantonness had fired his blood and roused a spirit of retaliation.

They had nearly stripped both bodies, and carried off the garments.

"If you can manage, M'sieu," exclaimed their guide, "I will take the young fellow." He stooped, picked him up, and threw him over his shoulder.

"You will find him a heavy burthen," as the man staggered a little.

"I can carry. Do not fear," nodding assurance.

Destournier took off his fur coat and wrapped it about the poor body. Each took hold of the improvised litter and they commenced their melancholy journey. How could Madame Giffard stand it, for she really did love him. The man's heart ached with the sincerest pity.

They laid down their burthens inside the settlement in one of the partly destroyed cabins. Du Parc came thither to meet them.

"Ah," he exclaimed, "that fine young fellow who was going to be a great success. The company wanted him back in France. And his poor wife! The blow will kill her."

"I wished him to remain within for her sake. He was no coward, either. I would give the whole settlement if it would restore him to life. The Governor thought it an excellent, but venturesome plan. But we must have colonists if ever we are to make a town that will be an honor to New France."

"It is not such a complete ruin. We have lost two men, one woman, and three children. Five Iroquois bodies have been found and two are badly wounded."

"And two more out in the woods. They had better be buried, so as to stir up no more strife. It could not have been a large party, or we would have suffered more severely."

"The English have had many of these surprises. I think we have been fortunate, even if we have fewer in numbers. And it would have been worse if there had been growing crops."

"I shall have the fortifications strengthened. And perhaps it would be well to keep guard."

They left Roleau in charge of the bodies and turned to the fort. The wounded had been made comfortable.

Rose sprang down the steps to meet Destournier.

"Oh, have you found him? Miladi is almost dead with grief and anxiety. She is sure they have killed M. Giffard."

"Poor wife! How will we tell her?"

"Oh, then he is dead?" The child's face was blanched with terror.

"Yes, he has been killed by the cruel savages. But we have brought home his body. Who is with her?"

"Wanamee and Madawando, who is saying charms over her. She is the medicine woman who brought back the Gaudrion baby when he was dead. Oh, can you not make her bring back M. Giffard? Miladi will surely die of grief. Couldn't they put some one in his place? Wouldn't the great God listen to the priest's prayers?" and she raised her humid, beseeching eyes.

"My child, you loved him dearly."

"Sometimes. Then he made me feel—well, as if I could run away. He was never cross. Oh, I think it was because he loved Miladi so very much, there was no room for any one else. And that is why I love you so—because you have no one belonging to you."

"We are alike in that," he made answer.

He saw Wanamee presently.

"She goes from one dying fit to another. Madawando brings her back. But if he is dead, M'sieu, why should they not let her join him?"

Would she be happier in that great unknown land with him. What was there here for her?

And some way he felt in part responsible. He had risked his life to save Destournier's property.

There were sad days in the fort. The weather came off comparatively pleasant, and the half-ruined huts were repaired, the wounded healed, the losses made good, as far as possible. The dead Iroquois were put in a trench, but better sepulture was provided for the colonists, and the services over the body of M. Giffard were in a degree military. The two Récollet priests were kindness and devotion personified, and they said prayers every hour in their rude little chapel, where a candle was kept burning before the altar.

They frowned severely on what they termed the mummeries of Madawando. Even the Indian converts, and they were few enough, lapsed into charms and incantations in times of trouble. They willingly had their children baptized, as if this was one of the charms to ward off danger. But the priests labored with unabated courage.

Miladi seemed to hover a long while between the two worlds, it was thought, but the real spring was coming on, and all nature was reviving. She had never quite wanted to die, so at the lowest ebb she seemed to will herself back to life by some occult power.

Rose meanwhile had run quite wild, but she had been Destournier's companion in his walks, in his canoe journeys; sometimes with Marie Gaudrion, she was in and out of the settlement, and as she understood a little of the several Indian languages, she was quite a favorite; but Destournier felt troubled about her at times. She was very fearless, very upright, and detected the subterfuges of the children of the wilderness, condemning them most severely. But they never seemed angry with her.

Sometimes he thought he would send her to France and begin her education in a convent. But could the wild little thing who skipped and danced and sung, climbed rocks and trees, managed a canoe, tamed birds that came and sang on her shoulder, endure the dull routine of convent life? She could read French quite fluently. She had taken an immense fancy to Latin, and caught the lines so easily when Destournier read them from musical Horace, or the stirring scenes of the *Odyssey*, the only two Latin books he owned. And her head was stuffed full of wild Indian tales.

"I wonder," she said one day, as she sat on the rocks, leaning against Destournier's knee, the soft wind playing through the silken tendrils of her hair—"I wonder if you should die whether I could be like miladi, and want the room dark and have every one go in the softest moccasins, and have headaches and the sound of any one's voice pierce through you like a knife. It would be terrible."

"Why do you think of that?"

"Because I love you best of everybody. The Governor is very nice, but he is in France so much and you are here. Then we can climb rocks together and sit in the forests and hear the trees talk. I go to M. Giffard's grave and say over the spells Madawando taught me, to bring him back, but he does not come. If he could, miladi would be bright and gay again, and we would dance and sing, and have merry times. If you died I should want to die, too."

He was touched by the child's simple devotion.

"I am not going to die. Your Madawando told me I should live to be very old. There were some curious lines in my hand."

"I am so glad," she said simply.

"But you had better not tell the good priest that you are trying to bring M. Giffard back to life in this Indian fashion. They think it a sin."

"I do not like the priests, in their dirty gray gowns, and their heads looking as if they had been scalped. Only when they read in their book. It sounds like those great people in the wars of Troy."

And this was a little Christian girl. Were not the priests also praying that the souls in purgatory might be lightened of their burden? and he smiled.

But somehow miladi pressed heavily upon his conscience. M. Giffard had come to *his* assistance, to save his property, as well as to save human lives. He lost sight of the great brotherhood of mankind, of the heroism of a truly noble soul. Was there anything he could do to lighten her burthen?

At last she expressed a desire to see him. He had looked to find her wasted away with grief, changed so that it would be sorrow to look upon her. She was pale, but, it seemed, more really beautiful than he had ever known her. Her gown was white, and she had a thin black scarf thrown around her shoulders which enhanced her fairness. There could be no shopping for mourning in this benighted country.

"I thought I should go to him," she said in her soft, half-languid voice. "But the good Père believes there is something for me to do and that I must be content to remain, and thankful to live. But all is so changed. Sometimes I make myself believe that Laurent has gone back to France to settle matters. He counted so on our return. And that he will come again for me."

"You would like to go to friends?"

"Alas, there are not many. Some have gone to England, some to Holland, not liking the new King's policy. And some are dead. I should have no one to make a home for me. A woman's loneliness is intense. She cannot turn to business, nor go out and find friends."

That was true enough. He pitied her profoundly.

"Is it true our Governor is bringing his new wife to Quebec?" she asked presently.

"So the trading vessels have said. They are already loading up with furs, and trade seems brisk. Of course it brings great confusion. I have taken charge of M. Giffard's bales that came in last week. They had better be sent as usual. The Paris firm is eager for them. They are a fine lot. What is your pleasure?"

"Oh, relieve me of all care that you can. I am so helpless. Laurent did everything. Women were never meant for business, he thought. I am no wiser than a child."

She looked so helpless, so sweet, so dependent.

"I shall be glad to do what I can. Yes, it would be no place for a woman. She could not manage matters. And if you like to trust me——"

"I would trust you in all things. Laurent thought your judgment excellent. He cared so much for you. Oh, if you will take charge——"

She looked up with sweet, appealing eyes. Did he not owe her some protection and care? He was pondering silently.

"You have relieved me of such a burthen. I think I shall get well now. I hardly knew whether I wanted most to live or die."

"Life is best, sweetest." It would be for her. He uttered the sentence involuntarily.

"You make it so." Her eyes were bewitchingly downcast and a faint color fluttered over her face, while her pretty hands worked nervously.

He paced the gallery afterward in the twilight, when the stars were slowly finding their way through the blue vault overhead, and the river plashed by with its monotone of music. She might desire to return to France; this life in the wilderness did not appeal to delicate women. Yet she had taken it very cheerfully, he thought.

If she decided to stay—there was one way in which he could befriend her, perhaps make her happy again. Marriage was hardly considered the outcome of love in that period, many other considerations entered into it. There were betrothals where the future husband and wife saw each other for the first time. And they did very well. His ideas of married life were a sort of good-fellowship and admiration, if the woman was pretty; good cooking and a desire to please among the commoner ones. At four and twenty he had not given the matter much consideration. Madame Giffard was full thirty, but she looked like a girl in her lightness and grace. And he owed the memory of M. Giffard something. This step would make amends and allay a troublesome sort of conscience in the matter.

CHAPTER VIII

WHAT ROSE DID NOT LIKE

Eustache Boullé, the Governor's brother-in-law, had been not a little surprised when his sister was helped off the vessel at Tadoussac. He greeted her warmly.

"But I never believed you would come to this wild country," he exclaimed, with a half-mischievous smile. "I am afraid the Sieur has let his hopes of the future run riot in his brain. He can see great things with that far gaze of his."

"But a good wife follows her husband. We have had a rather stormy and tiresome passage, but praised be the saints, we have at last reached our haven."

"I hope you will see some promise in it. We on the business side do not look for pleasure alone."

"It is wild, but marvellously fine. The islands with their frowning rocks and glowing verdure, the points, and headlands, the great gulf and the river are really majestic. And you—you are a man. Two years have made a wondrous change. I wish our mother could see you. She has frightful dreams of your being captured by Indians."

He laughed at that.

"Are the Indians very fierce here?" she asked timidly.

"Some tribes are, the Hurons. And others are very easily managed if you can keep fire-water away from them."

"Fire"—wonderingly.

"Rum or brandy. You will see strange sights. But you must not get frightened. Now tell me about our parents."

The Sieur was quite angry when he heard some boats had been up the river, and bartered firearms and ammunition for peltries. It was their desire to keep the white man's weapons away

from the savages.

Pontgrave had left a bark for the Governor, and Eustache joined them as they went journeying on to Quebec. It was new and strange to the young wife, whose lines so far had been cast in civilized places. The wide, ever-changing river, the rough, unbroken country with here and there a clearing, where parties of hunters had encamped and left their rude stone fireplaces, the endless woods with high hills back of them, and several groups of Indians with a wigwam for shelter, that interested her very much. Braves were spread out on the carpet of dried leaves, playing some kind of game with short knives and smoking leisurely. Squaws gossiping and gesticulating with as much interest as their fairer sisters, their attire new and strange, and papooses tumbling about. They passed great tangles of wild grapes that scented the air, here and there an island shimmering with the bloom of blueberries.

Then the great cliff of Quebec came in sight. Latterly it had taken on an aspect of decay that caused the Governor to frown. The courtyard was littered with rubbish from a building that had actually fallen down, and a new one was being erected. And though some of the houses were quite comfortable within, the exterior was very unattractive, from the different materials, like patches put on to add warmth in winter.

The cannon rang out a salute, and the lilies of France floated in the brilliant sunshine. Officers and men had formed a sort of cordon, and from the gallery several ladies looked down and waved handkerchiefs. The Héberts, with their son and daughter, a few other women, a little above the peasant rank, had joined them and Madame Giffard, who still essayed a rôle of delicacy.

The Sieur took formal possession again in the name of the new Governor General, the Duke of Montmorency. Then they repaired to the little chapel, where the priest held a service of thanksgiving for their safe arrival.

The Récollets had chosen a site on the St. Charles river, some distance from the post, and had begun the erection of a church and convent, for headquarters. Madame Champlain was pleased to hear this and held quite a lengthy talk with Père Jamay, who was glad to find the new wife took a fervent interest in religion, for even among the French women he had not awakened the influence he had hoped for, in his enthusiasm.

Eustache began a tour of observation. Perched on a rock with a great hemlock tree back of her, he saw a small human being that he was quite sure was not an Indian girl. She was talking to something, and raised her small forefinger to emphasize her words. What incantation was she using?

As he came nearer he saw it was a flock of pigeons. She had been feeding them berries and grains of rye. They arched their glossy necks and cooed in answer. He watched in amaze, drawing nearer. What sprite of the forest was this?

Did she feel the influence that invaded her solitude? She glanced up with wide startled eyes at the intruder, and looked at first as if she would fly.

"Do not be afraid, I will not harm you," said a clear, reassuring voice. "Are you charming the wild things of the forest? Your incantation was in French—do they understand the language?"

"They understand me."

There was a curious dignity in her reply.

"You are French, Mam'selle?"

"I came from France a long while ago, so long that I do not remember."

"Was it in another life? Are you human, or some forest nymph? For you are not out of childhood."

"I do not understand."

"But you must belong to some one——"

"No," she said proudly. "I have never really belonged to any one. M'sieu Destournier is my good friend, and miladi took me when the Dubrays went to the fur country. But she has been ill, and she does not like me as she used."

"But you must have a home——"

"I live at the post, mostly with Wanamee. Some days my lady sends for me. But I like out-of-doors, and the birds, and the blue sky, and the voice of the falling waters that are always going on, and the great gray rocks, where I find mossy little caves with red bloom like tiny papooses, and the tall grasses that shake their heads so wisely, as if they knew secrets they would never tell. And the birds—even some of the little lizards with their bright black eyes. They are dainty, not like the snakes that go twisting along."

"Are you not afraid of them?"

"I do not molest them," calmly.

"You should have been down at the post. The Governor's wife has come."

"Yes, I saw her. And I did not like her. But the Sieur was always kind to me. He used to show me

journeys on the maps, and the great lakes he has seen. He has been all over the world, I believe."

"Oh, no. But I think he would like to. Why do you not like Madame de Champlain?"

She studied him with a thoughtful gaze.

"M'sieu Ralph told me when he went to France he was betrothed to a pretty little French girl, and that some day he would bring her here to be his wife. I was glad of the little girl. I like Marie Gaudrion, but she has to care for the babies and—she does not understand why I love the woods and the rocks. And I thought this other little *girl*—"

She was so naïve that he smiled, but it was not the smile to hurt one.

"She was a little girl then. But every one grows. Some day you will be a woman."

"No, I will not. I shall stay this way," and she patted the ground decisively with her small foot, the moccasin being little more than a sandal, and showed the high arch and shapely ankle that dimpled with the motion.

"I am afraid you cannot. But I think you will like Madame when you know her. I am her brother, though I have not seen her for over two years."

She studied him attentively. The birds began to grow restless and circled about her as if to warn off the intruder. Then she suddenly listened. There was a familiar step climbing the rock.

M'sieu Destournier parted the hemlock branches.

"I thought I should find you here. Why did you run away? Ah, M. Boullé," but the older man frowned a little.

"She left the company because my sister was grown up and not the little girl she imagined. Is she a product of the forest? Her very ignorance is charming."

"I am not ignorant!" she returned. "I can read a page in Latin, and that miladi cannot do."

"She is a curious child," explained Destournier, "but a sweet and noble nature, and innocent is the better word for it. The birds all know her, and she has a tame doe that follows her about, except that it will not venture inside the palisade. I'm not sure but she could charm a wolf."

"The Loup Garou," laughed the younger man. "I think nothing would dare harm her. But I should like my sister to see her. Oh, I am sure you will like her, even if she is a woman grown."

"Come," said Destournier, holding out his hand.

The pigeons had circled wider and wider, and were now purplish shadows against the serene blue. Rose sprang up and clasped Destournier's hand. But she was silent as they took their way down.

"Whatever bewitched my august brother-in-law about this place I cannot see. Except that the new fort will sweep the river and render the town impregnable from that side. It will be the key of the North. But Montreal will be a finer town at much less cost."

Rose was fain to refuse at the last moment, but M'sieu Ralph persuaded. The few women of any note were gathered in the room miladi had first occupied. Rose looked curiously at the daughter of M. Hébert—she was so much taller than she used to be, and her hair was put up on her head with a big comb.

"Thou art a sweet child," said Madame de Champlain. "And whose daughter may she be?"

It was an awkward question. Destournier flushed unconsciously.

"She is the Rose of Quebec," he made answer, with a smile. "Her parents were dead before she came here."

"Ah, I remember hearing the Governor speak of her, and learned that there were so few real citizens in Quebec who were to grow up with the town as their birthright. It is but a dreary-looking place, yet the wild river, the great gulf, the magnificent forests give one a sense of grandeur, yet loneliness. And my husband says it is the same hundreds of miles to the westward; that there are lakes like oceans in themselves. And such furs! All Paris is wild with the beauty of them. Yet they lie around here as if of no value."

"You would find that the traders appraise them pretty well," and he raised his brows a trifle, while a rather amused expression played about his eyes.

"Is there always such a turmoil of trade?"

"Oh, no. The traders scatter before mid-autumn. The cold weather sets in and the snow and ice are our companions. The small streams freeze up. But the Sieur has written of all these things in his book."

He looked inquiringly at her for a touch of enthusiasm, but her sweet face was placid.

"Monsieur my husband desired that I should be educated in his religion in the convent. We do not take up worldly matters, that is not considered becoming to girls and women. We think more of the souls that may be saved from perdition. The men go ahead to discover, the priests come to

teach these ignorant savages that they have souls that must be returned to God, or suffer eternally."

There spoke the devotee. Destournier wondered a little how the Sieur had come to choose a *dévôte* for a wife. For he was a born explorer, with a body and a will of such strength that present defeat only spurred him on. But where was there a woman to match him, to add to his courage and resolve! Perhaps men did not need such women. Destournier was not an enthusiast in religious matters. He had been here long enough to understand the hold their almost childish superstitions had on the Indians, their dull and brutish lack of any high motive, their brutal and barbarous customs. They were ready to be baptized a dozen times over just as they would use any of their own charms, or for the gain of some trifle.

Madame seemed to study the frank face of the little girl. How beautiful her eyes were; her eager, intelligent, spirited face; the fine skin that was neither light nor dark, and withstood sun and wind alike, and lost none of its attractive tints. But she was so different from the little girls sent to the nuns for training. They never looked up at you with these wide-open eyes that seemed to question you, to weigh you.

"There is no convent here where you can be taught?" addressing herself to the child.

"The fathers are building one. But it is only for the men. The women cook and learn to dress deerskins until they are like velvet. They must make the clothing, for not a great deal comes from France. And it would only do for ladies like you and Madame Giffard."

"But there must be some education, some training, some prayers," and the lady looked rather helpless.

She was very sweet and beautiful in her soft silken dress of gray, that was flowered in the same color, and trimmed with fur and velvet. From her belt depended a chain of carved ivory beads and a crucifix, from another chain a small oval looking-glass in a silver frame. Her flaring collar of lace and the stomacher were worked in pearls. Many Parisians had them sewn with jewels.

"I can read French very well," said Rose, after a pause. "And some Latin."

"Oh, the prayers, and some of the old hymns——"

"No, it isn't prayers exactly—except to their gods. There are so many gods. Jove was the great one."

"Oh, my child, this is heresy. There is but one God and the Holy Virgin, and the saints to whom you can make invocation."

"Well, then I think you have a number of gods. Do you pray to them all? And what do you pray for?"

"For the wicked world to be converted to God, for them to love Him, and serve Him."

"And how do they serve Him?" inquired the child. "If He is the great God Father Jamay teaches He can do everything, have everything. It is all His. Then why does He not keep people well, so they can work, and not blight the crops with fierce storms. Sometimes great fields of maize are swept down. And the little children die; the Indians kill each other, and at times the white men who serve them."

"Oh, child, you do not understand. There must be convents in this new world for the training of girls. They must be taught to pray that God's will may be done, not their own."

"How would I know it was God's will?" asked the irreverent child, decisively, yet with a certain sweetness.

"The good Father would tell you."

"How would he know?"

"He lives a holy life in communion with God."

"What is the convent like?" suddenly changing her thoughts.

"It is a large house full of little ones, the sisters' cells, the novices' cells——"

"There are some at the post. They put criminals in them. They are filthy and dark," with a kind of protesting vehemence.

"These are clean, because they are whitewashed, and you scrub the floor twice a week. There is a little pallet on which you sleep, a *prie-dieu*——"

"What is that?" interrupted the child.

"A little altar, with a stone step on which you kneel. And a crucifix at the top, a book of prayer and invocation. Many of the sisters pray an hour at midnight. All pray an hour in the morning, then breakfast and the chapel for another hour, with prayers and singing. After that the classes. The little girls are taught the catechism and manners, if they are to go out in the world, sewing and embroidery. At noon prayers again and a little lunch, then work out of doors for an hour, and running about for exercise, catechising again, singing, supper and a chapel hour, and then to

bed. But the nuns spend the evening in prayer, so do the devout."

"Madame, I shall never go in a convent, if the Fathers build one for girls. I like the big out-of-doors. And if God made the world He made it for some purpose, that people should go out and enjoy it. I like the wilderness, the great blue sky, the sun and the stars at night, the trees and the river, and the birds and the deer and the beautiful wild geese, as they sail in great flocks. If I was shut up in a cell I should beat my head against the stones until it was a jelly, and then I should be dead."

Madame de Champlain looked at the child in amaze. In her decorous life she had known nothing like it.

"And I wish there were no women. I do not like women any more. Men are better because they live out of doors and do not pray so much. Except the priests. And they are dirty."

Then she turned away and went out on the gallery, with a curiously swelling heart. Oh, why was not Marie Gaudrion different? What made people so unlike. If there was some one——

"Ha, little maid, where are you running to so fast?" exclaimed a laughing voice. "Have you seen my sister yet?"

Eustache Boullé caught her arm, but she shook him off, and stood up squarely, facing him. What vigor and resolution there was in her small bewitching face.

"Hi, hi! thou art a plucky little *fille*, ready for a quarrel by the looks of thy flashing eyes. What have I done to thee, that thou shouldst shake me off as a viper?"

"Nothing! I am not to be handled roughly. I am going my way, and I think it will not interfere with thine."

A pleasant smile crossed his face which made him really attractive, and half disarmed her fierceness.

"My way is set in no special lines until I return to Tadoussac. Hast thou seen my sister?"

She nodded.

"Every one loves her. She is as good as she is beautiful. And she will charm thee," in a triumphant tone, gathering that the interview had not already done this.

"I am not to be charmed in that fashion. Yes, she is beautiful, but she would like me to be put in a convent. And I would throw myself in the river first."

"There are no convents, little one. And but few people to put into them. In a new country it is best that they marry and have families. When there are too many women then convents play a useful part."

"Let me pass," she cried disdainfully, but not trying to push aside.

"Tell me where you go!"

"To Mère Gaudrion's to see that soft-headed Marie. I wish she had some ideas, but she is good and cheerful, and does as she is told."

"You are not very complimentary to your friend."

"But if I said she had a bad temper, and told what was not true, and slapped her little brothers and sisters, that would be a falsehood. And if I said she understood the song of the birds and the sough of the wind among the trees, and the running, tumbling little streams that are always saying 'oh! let me get to the gulf as soon as possible, for I want to see what a great ocean is like,' it would not be true either. I like Marie," calmly.

"Thou art a curious little casuist. I am glad you like her. It shows that you are human. There are strange creatures in the woods and wilds of this new world."

"There is the Loup Garou, but I have not seen him. He gets changed from a man to a fierce dog, and if you kill the dog, the man dies. There is the Windigo, and the old medicine woman can call strange things out of a sick person who has been bewitched, and then he gets well. But M. Destournier laughs at these stories."

The young man had been backing slowly toward the steps and she had followed without taking note.

Now he said—"Let me help you down."

"I am not lame, M'sieu, neither am I blind."

"Will you take me to see Marie Gaudrion?"

"You would laugh at her, I see it in your eyes."

"Are my eyes such telltales?"

He had not the placid fairness of his sister, and his chestnut hair curled about his temples. His cheeks were red enough for a girl.

"Why should you want to see her?"

"I want to see all there is in Quebec. I want to know how the colony progresses. I may put it in a book."

"Like the Governor. But you could not make maps out of people," with an air of triumph.

"I'm not so sure. See here."

He drew from his pocket a roll and held one of the leaves before her eyes.

"Oh, that is old Temekwisa sitting out by the hut. And, M'sieu, he looks half drunken, as he nearly always is. And that is Jacques Barbeau breaking stone. Why, it is wonderful. And who else have you?"

There were several Indians in a powwow around the fire, there was a woman with a papoose on her back, and a few partly done.

"And the Sieur—and your sister?" eagerly.

"I have tried dozens of times and cannot please myself. The Indians have about the same salient points, and that lack of expression when they are tranquil. They are easy to do. And I can sometimes catch the fierce anger. At home I would have a teacher. Here I have to go by myself, try, and tear up. Then I am busy with many other things."

Her resentment had mostly subsided. His gift, if it could be called that, fascinated her. She had reproduced wonderful pictures in her brain, but to do them with her hand would be marvellous, like the Sieur writing his books.

They had reached the garden of the Gaudrions. Pierre was employed regularly now and was studying the plans of the new fort. Marie was seated on the grass, cutting leather fringe for garments and leggings. You could use up otherwise useless bits that way. The Mère was farther down pulling weeds from the carrot bed, and directing the labors of two children, at whom she shook a switch now and then. Marie had a baby on each side of her, tumbling about in the grass.

She looked up and nodded, while a heavy sort of smile settled about her lips, the upper one protruding a little, on account of two prominent teeth. Eustache had seen the peasant type at home, the low forehead, the deep-set eyes, the short nose, flattened at the base, the wide mouth and rather broad, unmeaning countenance, the type of women who bear burthens without complaining and do not resent when they are beaten. Marie had an abundance of blue-black hair, a clear skin, and a soft color in her cheeks.

Boullé glanced from one to the other, the lithe figure, the spirited face, the eyes that could flash and soften and sparkle with mirth almost in a minute, it seemed. What a distance lay between them.

"Marie, this is"—then Rose paused and flushed, and glanced at her unbidden companion.

"I am Eustache Boullé and my sister is the wife of the Governor de Champlain. And though I have been up and down the river I have never really visited Quebec before."

Marie nodded and went on cutting fringe.

"And he has done pictures—Temekwisa, that you would know in a minute. He did them with a pencil. Show them to her," she ordered, in a pretty peremptory manner, as with a graceful gesture of the hand she invited him to be seated on the grass, deftly rolling one baby over, who stared an instant, and then fell to sucking his fist.

Marie's heavy face lighted up with a kind of cheerful surprise.

"Why did you not go up and see them come in? And after the service of thanks, almost everybody went to see our dear Sieur's wife. She is beautiful in the face and wears a silken gown, and a little cap so fine you can see her hair through it. And she has small hands that look like snow, but not many rings, like Madame Giffard."

"*Ma mère* went to the prayers, but we could not both go. I saw the line of boats and heard the salute. And your sister will live here with the Governor?"

Eustache wanted to laugh, but commanded his countenance.

"Yes, though 'tis a dreary place to live in after gay France. I long to go back."

"They are to build a new fort. My father will work on it, and my brother, Pierre. And he wonders that you do not come oftener, Rose."

"There has not been a moonlight in a long while. I cannot come in the dark. And now he wants his own way in all the plans and I like mine. He has grown so big he is not amusing any more."

"But he likes you just as well," the girl said naïvely.

Eustache glanced. Rose did not change color at this frank admission.

Then the gun boomed out to announce the day's work for the government was over.

Rose sprang up. "It will soon be supper time," she said.

"Stay and have it with us. There are some cold roasted pigeons, with spiced gravy turned over them. You shall have a whole one."

"You are very good, Marie, but there are so many men about who have been drinking too much, that M. Destournier would read me a long lecture."

"But Pierre would walk up with thee."

Eustache had gathered up his pictures. They had only been an excuse to prolong his interview with Rose.

"I will see that no harm comes to your friend. Adieu, Mam'selle," and he bowed politely, at which Marie only stared.

"We are very good friends, are we not?" as he was parting with the pretty child.

"But I might not like you to-morrow," archly.

CHAPTER IX

ABOUT MARRIAGES

The new fort was begun on the summit of the cliff, almost two hundred feet above the water, and the guns would command it up and down. A good deal of stone was used. New houses were being reared in a much better fashion, the crevices thickly plastered with mortar, the chimneys of stone, with generous fireplaces. Destournier had repaired his small settlement and added some ground to the cultivated area.

"The only way to colonize," declared the Sieur. "If we could rouse the Indians into taking more interest. Civilization does not seem to attract them, though the women make good wives, and they are a scarce commodity. The English and the Dutch are wiser in this respect than we. When children are born on the soil and marry with their neighbors, one may be sure of good citizens."

The church, too, was progressing, and was called Notre Dame des Anges. Madame de Champlain was intensely religious, and used her best efforts to further the plans. She took a great interest in the Indian children, and when she found many of the women were not really married to the laborers around the fort, insisted that Père Jamay should perform the ceremony. The women were quite delighted with this, considering it a great mark of respect.

She began to study the Algonquin language, which was the most prevalent. She had brought three serving women from France, but they were not heroic enough to be enamored of the hardships. There was so little companionship for her that but for her religion she would have had a lonely time. The Héberts were plain people and hardly felt themselves on a par with the wife of their Governor, though Champlain himself, with more democratic tastes, used often to drop in to consult the farmer and take a meal.

Madame Giffard was not really religious. She was fond of pleasure and games of cards, and really hated any self-denial, or long prayers, though she went to Mass now and then. But between her and the earnest, devoted Héléne there was no sympathy.

The new house was ready by October. Héléne would fain have had it made less comfortable, but this the Governor would not permit. It would be hung with furs when the bitter weather came in.

No one paid much attention to Rose, who came and went, and wandered about at her own sweet will. Eustache Boullé was fairly fascinated with her, and followed her like a shadow when he was not in attendance on his sister. He persuaded her to sit for a picture, but it was quite impossible to catch her elusive beauty. She would turn her head, change the curve of her pretty lips, allow her eyes to rove about and then let the lids drop decorously in a fashion he called a nun's face; but it was adorable.

"I shall not be a nun," she would declare vehemently.

"No, Mam'selle, thou art the kind to dance on a man's heart and make him most happy and most wretched. No nun's coif for that sunny, tangled mop of thine."

He would fain have lingered through the winter, but a peremptory message came for him.

"I shall be here another summer and thou wilt be older, and understand better what life is like."

"It is good enough and pleasant enough now," she answered perversely.

"I wonder—if thou wilt miss me?"

"Why, yes, silly! The splendid canoeing and the races we run, and I may be big enough next summer to go to Lachine. I would like to rush through the rapids that Antoine the sailor tells about, where you feel as if you were going down to the centre of the world."

"No woman would dare. It would not be safe," he objected.

"Men are not always lost, only a few clumsy ones. And I can swim with the best of them."

"M. Destournier will not let you go."

"He is not my father. I belong just to myself, and I will do as I like."

She stamped her foot on the ground, but she laughed as well. He was not nineteen yet, but a man would be able to manage her.

She did miss him when he was gone. And it seemed as if Marie grew more stupid and cared less for her. And that lot of a Jules Personeau would sit by her on the grass, or help her pick berries or grapes and open them skilfully, take out the seeds or the pits of plums, and place them on the flat rocks to dry. He never seemed to talk. And Rose knew that M. Destournier scolded because he was not breaking stone.

He was building a new house himself, and helping the Sieur plan out the path from the fort up above to the settlement down below. They did not dream that one day it would be the upper and the lower town, and that on the plain would be fought one of the historic battles of the world, where two of the bravest of men would give up their lives, and the lilies of France go down for the last time. Quebec was beginning to look quite a town.

Destournier's house commanded his settlement, which was more strongly fortified with a higher palisade, over which curious thorn vines were growing for protection. He had a fine wheat field, and some tobacco. Of Indian corn a great waving regiment planted only two rows thick so as to give no chance for skulking marauders.

The house of M. Giffard was falling into decay. Miladi had sent to France early in the season for many new stuffs and trinkets, and the settlement of some affairs, instead of turning all over to Destournier. The goods had come at an exorbitant price, but there had been a great tangle in money matters, and at his death his concessions had passed into other hands.

"They always manage to rob a woman," he thought grimly.

"I supposed you were to leave things in my hands," he said, a little upbraidingly, to her.

"I make you so much trouble. And you have so much to do for the Governor and your settlement, and I am so weak and helpless. I have never been strong since that dreadful night. I miss all the care and love. Oh, if you were a woman you would know how heart-breaking it was. I wish I were dead! I wish I were dead!"

"And you do not care to go back to France?"

"Do not torment me with that question. I should die on the voyage. And to be there without friends would be horrible. I have no taste for a convent."

A great many times the vague plan had entered his mind as a sort of duty. Now he would put it into execution.

"Become my wife," he said. He leaned over and took her slim hands in his and glanced earnestly into her eyes, and saw there were fine wrinkles setting about them. What did it matter? She needed protection and care, and there was no woman here that he could love as the romances described. He was too busy a man, too practical.

She let her head drop on his broad breast. She had dreamed of this and used many little arts, but had never been sure of their effect. There were the years between, but she needed his strength and devotion more than a younger woman.

"Oh, ought I be so happy again?" she murmured. "There is so much that is strong and generous to you that a woman could rest content in giving her whole life to you, her best love."

He wished she had not said that. He would have been content that her best love should lie softly in the grave, like an atmosphere around the sleeping body of Laurent Giffard, whom he had admired very much, and who had loved his wife with the fervor of youth. He drew a long breath of pity for the man. It seemed as if he was taking something away from him.

"Is it true?" she asked, in a long silence.

"That I shall care for you, yes. That you will be my wife." Then he kissed her tenderly.

"I am so happy. Oh, you cannot think how sad I have been for months, with no one to care for me," and her voice was exquisitely pathetic.

"I have cared for you all this while," he said. "You were like a sister to whom I owed a duty."

"Duty is not quite love," in her soft murmurous tone, touching his cheek caressingly.

He wondered a little what love was like, if this tranquil half pity was all. Madame de Champlain was like a child to her husband, the women emigrants thus far had not been of a high order, and the marriages had been mostly for the sake of a helpmeet and possible children. The Governor had really encouraged the mixed marriages, where the Indian women were of the better sort. A few of them were taking kindly to religion, and had many really useful arts in the way of making garments out of dressed deerskins. He chose rather some of those who had been taken prisoners and had no real affiliation with the tribes. They felt honored by marrying a white man, and now

Père Jamay performed a legal and religious ceremony, so that no man could put away his wife.

"Oh, what do you think!" and Rose sprang eagerly to Destournier, catching him by the arm with both hands and giving a swing, as he was pacing the gallery, deep in his new plans. "It is so full of amusement for me. And I can't understand how she can do it. Jules Personeau is such a stupid! And that great shock of hair that keeps tumbling into his eyes. It is such a queer color, almost as if much sitting in the sun was turning it red."

"What about Jules? He is very absent-minded nowadays, and does not attend to his work. The summer will soon be gone."

"Oh, it isn't so much about Jules. Marie Gaudrion is going to marry him."

"Why, then I think it is half about Jules," laughing down into the eager face. "A girl can't be married alone."

"Well, I suppose you would have to go and live with some one," in a puzzled tone. "But Jules has such rough, dirty hands. He caught me a few days ago and patted my cheek, and I slapped him. I will not have rough hands touch me! And Marie laughs. She is only thirteen, but she says she is a woman. I don't want to be a woman. I won't have a husband, and be taken off to a hut, and cook, and work in the garden. M'sieu, I should fly to the woods and hide."

"And the poor fellow would get no dinner." He laughed at her vehemence. "I suppose Jules is in love and we must excuse his absent-mindedness. Will it be soon?"

"Why, yes, Jules is getting his house ready. Barbe is to help her mother and care for the babies. I like Marie some," nodding indecisively, "but I wish there was a girl who liked to run and play, and climb trees, and talk to the birds, and oh, do a hundred things, all different from the other."

She gave a little hop and a laugh of exquisite freedom. She was full of restless grace, as the birds themselves; her blooming cheeks and shining eyes, the way she carried her head, the face breaking into dimples with every motion, the mouth tempting in its rosy sweetness. He bent and kissed her. She held him a moment by the shoulders.

"Oh, I like you, I like you," she cried. "You are above them all, you have something,"—her pretty brow knit,—"yet you are better than the Sieur even, the best of them all. If you will wait a long while I might marry you, but no other, no other," shaking her curls.

He laughed, yet it was not from her naïve confession. She did not realize what she was saying.

"How old am I?" insistently.

"About ten, I think."

"Ten. And ten more would be twenty. Is that old?"

"Oh, no."

"And Madame de Champlain was twelve when she was married in France. Well, I suppose that is right. And—two years more! No, M'sieu, I shall wait until I am twenty. Maybe I shall not want to climb trees then, nor scramble over rocks, nor chase the squirrels, and pelt them with nuts."

"Thou wilt be a decorous little lady then."

"That is a long way off."

"Yes. And Wanamee is calling thee."

"The priest says we must call her Jolette, that is her Christian name. Must I have another name? Well, I will not. Good-night," and away she ran.

He fell into rumination again. What would she say to his marriage? He had a misgiving she would take it rather hardly. She had not been so rapturously in love with miladi of late, but since the death of her husband, the rather noisy glee of the child had annoyed her. She would be better now. Of course they would keep the child, she had no other friends, nor home.

Marie Gaudrion's marriage was quite a mystery to Rose. That any one could love such an uncouth fellow as Jules, that a girl could leave the comfortable home and pretty garden, for now the fruit trees had grown and were full of fragrant bloom in the early season, and the ripening fruit later on, and go to that dismal little place under the rocks.

"You see it will be much warmer," Jules had said. It was built against the rock. "This will shield us from the north wind and the heavy snows, and another year we will take a place further down in the allotment. I will lay in a store of things, and we will be as happy as the squirrels in their hollow tree."

Marie and her mother cleared it up a bit. The floor was of rough planks filled in with mortar, and skins were laid down for carpet. There was but one window looking toward the south, and the door was on that side also. Then a few steps and a sort of plateau. Inside there was a box bunk, where the household goods were piled away inside. A few shelves with dishes, a table, and several stools completed the furnishing.

So on Sunday they went up to the unfinished chapel on the St. Charles, where a Mass was said,

and the young couple were united. It was a lovely day, and they rowed down in the canoes to the Gaudrions, where a feast was given and healths drunk to the newly-wedded couple, in which they were wished much happiness and many children. The table was spread luxuriously; the Mère had been two days cooking. Roasts and broils, game and fish, and many of the early fruits in preserve and just ripened. Sunday was a day for gorging in this primitive land, while summer lasted. No one need starve then.

Afterward the young couple were escorted home.

Rose sat out in the moonlight thinking of the strangeness of it all. How could Marie like it? Mère Gaudrion had said, "Jules will make a good husband, if he is clumsy and not handsome. He will never beat Marie, and now he will settle to work again, and make a good living, since courting days are over."

The child wondered what courting days were. Several strange ideas came into her mind. It was as if it grew suddenly and there were things in the world she would like to know about. Perhaps M. Ralph could tell her. Miladi said she was tiresome when she asked questions, and there was always a headache. Would her head ache when she was grown up? And she stood in curious awe of Madame de Champlain, who would only talk of the saints and martyrs, and repeat prayers. She was very attractive to the children, and gathered them about her, letting them gaze in her little mirror she carried at her belt, as was the fashion in France. They liked the touch of her soft hand on their heads, they were sometimes allowed to press their tawny cheeks against it. Then she would try to instruct them in the Catechism. They learned the sentences by rote, in an eager sort of way, but she could see the real understanding was lacking.

"It seems an almost hopeless task," she said one day to Père Jamay. "And though the little girls in the convent seemed obtuse, they did understand what devotion was. These children would worship me. When I talk of the blessed Virgin they are fain to press their faces to the hem of my gown, taking it to mean that I am our dear Lady of Sorrows. Neither do they comprehend penance, they suppose they have offended me personally."

"'Tis a curious race that God has allowed to sink to the lowest ebb, that His laborers should work the harder in the vineyard. I do not despair. There will come a glorious day when every soul shall bow the knee to our blessed Lord. The men seem incapable of any true discernment of holy things. But we must not weary in well-doing. Think what a glorious thing it would be to convert this nation to the true faith."

The lady sighed. Many a day she went to her *prie-dieu* not seven times, but twice that, to pray for their conversion.

"We must win the children. They will grow up with some knowledge and cast aside their superstitions. We must be filled with holy zeal and never weary doing our Master's will."

She had tried to win Rose, as well as some of the more intelligent half-breeds. But prayers were wearisome to the child. And why should you ask the same thing over and over again? Even M. Destournier, she had noticed, did not like to be importuned, and why then the great God, who had all the world to care for, and sent to His creatures what He thought best.

The child looked out on the wide vault so full of stars, and her heart was thrilled with the great mystery. What was the beautiful world beyond that was called heaven? What did they know who had never seen it? The splendor of the great white moon—moving majestically through the blue—touched her with a sort of ecstasy. Was it another world? And how tenderly it seemed to touch the tree tops, silvering the branches and deepening the shadows until they were haunts of darkness. Did not other gods dwell there, as those old people in the islands on the other side of the world dreamed? Over the river hung trailing clouds of misty sheen, there was a musical lapping of the waves, the curious vibration of countless insects—now the shrill cry of some night bird, then such softness again that the world seemed asleep.

"*Ma fille, ma fille,*" and the half-inquiring accent of Wanamee's voice fell on her ear.

"I am here. It is so beautiful. Wanamee, did you ever feel that you must float away to some other world and learn things that seem to hover all about you, and yet you cannot grasp?"

"You cannot, child, until you are admitted to the company of the saints. And this life is very comfortable, to some at least. Thou hast no trouble, little one. But it is time for the bed."

"Why can I not sleep out here? The Indians sleep under the tree. So has M'sieu Ralph, and the Governor. Oh, I should like to and have just that great blue sky and the stars over me."

"They would not show under the tree branches. And there are wolves and strollers that it would not be safe to see at this time of the year, when there are so many drunken traders. So come in, child."

She rose slowly. A little room in the end of the Giffard house was devoted to her and Wanamee. Two small pallets raised a little above the floor, a stand with a crucifix, that the Governor's wife insisted was necessary, a box, in which winter bedding was stored, and that served for a seat, completed the simple furniture.

Rose knelt before the stand. There were two or three Latin prayers she often said aloud, but to-night her lips did not move. This figure on the cross filled her with a kind of horror just now.

"Mam'selle," said the waiting Wanamee.

The child rose. "You must pray for yourself to-night," she said in a soft voice, throwing her pliant body on the pallet. "I do not understand anything about God any more. I do not see why He should send His Son to die for the thousands of people who do not care for Him. The great Manitou of the Indians did not do it."

"*Ma fille*, ask the priest. But then is it necessary to ask God when we have only to believe?"

"I am afraid I don't even believe," was the hesitating reply.

"Surely thou art wicked. There will be penance for thee."

"I will not do penance either. You are cruel if you torture dumb animals, and it is said they have not the keen feeling of humans. I am not sure. But where one thinks of the pain or punishment he is bearing it is more bitter. And what right has another to inflict it upon you?"

Wanamee was silent. She would ask the good priest. But ah, could she have her darling punished?

CHAPTER X

MILADI AND M. DESTOURNIER

"But what are you to do with this nice house? Why, the Governor's is hardly better. Will you live here and not at the post? And how pretty the furnishings are?"

Rose's face was wreathed in smiles, and the dimples played hide-and-seek in a most entrancing manner.

"Yes, I am to live here. And you, and Wanamee, and Nugava, and——"

She clapped her hands and jumped up and down, she pirouetted around with grace and lightness that would have enchanted the King of La Belle France. Where did she get this wonderful harmony of movement. His eyes followed her in admiration. She paused. "And what part is to be given to me?"

"This. And Wanamee will have the room between, to be within call."

His cheek flushed. How was he to get his secret told?

"And this will be yours, M'sieu. I know it on account of the books. And I can come in here and you shall teach me to read some of the new things. I have been very naughty and lazy, have I not. But in the winter one cannot roam about. Oh, how delightful it will be!"

She looked up out of such clear, happy eyes. How could he destroy her delight—he knew it would.

"There will be some one else here," he began.

"Not Père Jamay. He is with Madame a good deal. I do not like his sour face when he frowns upon me. And—oh, you will not have me sent to France and put in a convent. I would kill myself first."

"No, no. It is not the priest. I am not over in love with him myself. It is some one sweet and pretty, and that you love——"

"That I love"—wonderingly.

He took both her hands in his.

"Rose," with tender gravity, "I am going to marry Madame Giffard."

She stiffened up and looked straight at him, the glow on her cheek fading to marble paleness.

"*Petite*, you did love her dearly. You will love her again for my sake. No, you shall not go away in this angry mood. Do you not wish me to be happy?"

"Miladi belongs to her husband, who is dead. When she goes to heaven he will be there, and you two—well, one must give up. Do you not remember that Osaka murdered his wife because she went away from him and married another brave?"

He was amused at her passion.

"I will give her up then. It is only for this life. And she needs some one to care for her. Why are you so opposed to it, when you used to love her? She will be like a mother to you."

"I do not want any mother," proudly. "And she does not love me now. Oh, one can feel it just like a blast of unfriendly wind. And when she has you she will not care for any one else."

"But I can care for you both. You know you belong to me. And sometime, when new people cross the ocean, some brave, fine young fellow will love you and want to marry you."

"I will not marry him."

"Oh, my little girl, be reasonable. We shall all be happy here together. And you will grow up to womanhood and learn many things that will please you and be of great service. And will go to France some day——"

"I will not go anywhere with her. Unclasp my hands. I do not belong to you any more, to no one, I am——"

She burst into a passion of weeping. In spite of her struggles he clasped her to his heart and kissed the throbbing temples, that seemed as if they would burst.

"Oh, Rose, my little one, whom I love as a child, and always shall love, listen to me and be comforted."

"She will not let you love me. She will want me to be sent to France and be put in a convent. Father Jamay said that was what I needed. Oh, you will see!"

The sobs seemed to rend her small body. He could feel the beating of her heart and all his soul was moved with pity, although he knew her grief was unreasonable.

"And you are willing to make me very unhappy, to spoil all my pleasure in the new home. Oh, my child, I hardly thought that of you."

She made another struggle and freed herself. She stood erect, it seemed as if she had grown inches. "You may be happy with her," she said, with a dignity that would have been amusing if it had not been sad, and then she dashed out of the room.

He sat down and leaned his elbow on the table, his head on his hand. He had gathered from several things miladi had suggested, that she was rather indifferent to the child, but he did not surmise that Rose had felt and understood it. No one had a better right than he, since in all probability her parentage would remain unknown. He would not relinquish her. She should be a daughter to him. He realized that he had a curious love for the child, that she had attracted him from the first. In the years to come her beauty and winsomeness would captivate a husband, with the dowry he could give her.

For several days he saw very little of her. He was busy and miladi was exigent. Rose wandered about, sometimes to the settlement, watching the busy women dressing skins, making garments, cutting fringes, and embroidering wampum for the braves. The tawny children played about, the small papooses, strapped in their cases of bark, blinked and occasionally uttered wearisome cries. Or she rowed about in her canoe, often with Pani, for the river current was rather treacherous. Then she scudded through the woods like a deer, winding in and out of the stately columns that were here silver-gray, there white; beech and birch, dark hemlocks, that not having space to branch out, grew up tall with a head almost like a palm. Insects hummed and shrilled, or whirred like a tiny orchestra. Now and then a bird flung out a strain of melody, squirrels ran about, and the doe came and put its nose in her hand. She had tied a strip of skin, colored red, about its neck, that no one might shoot it. The rich, deep moss cushioned the ground. Occasionally an acorn fell. She would sit here in dreamy content by the hours, often just enjoying, sometimes puzzling her brains over all the mysteries that in the years to come education would solve. So few could read, indeed books were only for the few.

Then she ran up and down the rocks, hid in the nooks, came out again in dryad fashion. She had been wont to laugh and make echoes ring about, but now her heart, in spite of all she could do, was not light enough for that. Wanamee was sore troubled by her reticence, for she was too proud to make any complaint. Indeed, she did not know what to complain of. In her childish heart everything was vague, she could not reason, she could only feel that something had been snatched out of her life and set in another's. She would henceforth be lonely.

"Miladi wants to see you," said Wanamee one morning. "She wonders why you do not run in as you used. And she has something joyful to tell you."

Rose shut her lips tightly together and stamped on the floor.

"Oh, *ma petite*, you have guessed then! Or, perhaps M'sieu told you. Miladi is to marry him, and they are to go to the nice new house he is building. They are to take you and me and Pani. And he will have the two Montagnais, who have been his good servants. We shall get out of this old, tumble-down post station, and be near the Héberts. Then M'sieu is getting such a nice big wheat field and garden."

Rose was drawing long breaths. She would not cry or utter a complaint. Wanamee approached her, holding out both hands.

"Do not touch me," she entreated, in a passionate tone. "Do not say anything more. When I am a little tranquil I will go and see her. I know what she wants me to say—that I am glad. There is something just here that keeps me from being glad," and she pressed her hands tightly over her heart. "I do not know what it is."

"Surely you are not jealous of miladi? They are grown-up people. And M'sieu told her yesterday—I heard them talking—that you were to be a child to them, that they would both love you. Miladi has been irritable, and not so gay as she used, but she is better now, and will soon be her olden self. She was very nice and cheerful this morning, and laughed with the joy of other days. Oh,

child, do not disturb it by any tempers."

Wanamee's eyes were soft and entreating.

"Oh, you need not fear," the child exclaimed, proudly. "Now I will go."

She tapped at miladi's door, and a very sweet voice said—"Come, little stranger."

She opened it. Miladi was sitting by the small casement window, in one of her pretty silken gowns, long laid by. There was a dainty rose flush on her cheek, but the hand she held out was much thinner than of yore, when in the place of knuckles there were dimples.

"Where have you been all these days when I have not seen you, little maid? Come here and kiss me, and wish me joy, as they do in old France. For I am going to take your favorite as a husband, and you are to be our little daughter."

Rose lifted up her face. The kiss was on her forehead.

"Now, kiss me," and she touched the small shoulder with something like a shake, as she offered her cheek.

It was a cold little kiss from lips that hardly moved. Miladi laughed with a pretty, amused ripple.

"In good sooth," she said merrily, "some lover will teach you to kiss presently. Thou art growing very pretty, Rose, and when some of the gallants come over from Paris, they will esteem the foundling of Quebec the heroine of romance."

The child did not flush under the compliment, or the sting, but glanced down on the floor.

"Come, thou hast not wished me joy."

"Madame, as I have not been to France I do not know how they wish joy."

"Oh, you formal little child!" laughing gayly. "Do you not know what it is to be happy? Why, you used to be as merry as the birds in singing time."

"I can still be merry with the birds."

"But you must be merry for M. Destournier. He wishes you to be happy, and has asked me to be a mother to you. Why, I fell in love with you long ago, when you were so ill. And surely you have not forgotten when I found you on the gallery, in a dead faint. You were grateful for everything then."

Had she loved miladi so much? Why did she not love her now? Why was her heart so cold? like lead in her bosom.

"I am grateful for everything."

"Then say you are glad I am going to marry M. Ralph, who loves me dearly."

"Then I shall be glad you are to marry him. But I am sorry for M. Giffard, in his lonely grave."

"Oh, horrors, child! Do you think I ought to be buried in the same grave? There, run away. You give me the shivers."

Rose made a formal little courtesy, and walked slowly out of the room, with a swelling heart.

Miladi told of the scene to her lover daintily, and with some embellishments, adding—"She is a jealous little thing. You will be between two fires."

"The fires will not scorch, I think," smiling. "She will soon outgrow the childish whim."

In his secret heart there was a feeling of joy that he had touched such depths in the little girl's soul. Miladi was rather annoyed that he had not agreed to send her to some convent in France, as she hoped. But in a year or two she might choose it for herself.

They went up to the chapel to be married. The Governor gave the bride away. She was gowned just as Rose had seen her that first time, only she was covered with a fine deerskin cloak, that she laid aside as they walked up the aisle, rather scandalizing the two Récollet fathers. She looked quite like a girl, and it was evident she was very happy.

Then they had a feast in the new house, and it was the first occasion of real note there had been in Quebec. Rose was very quiet and reserved among the grown folks, though M. de Champlain found time to chat with her, and tell her that now she had found real parents.

After this there was a busy season preparing for the winter, as usual, drying and preserving fruits, taking up root vegetables and storing them, gathering nuts, and getting in grains of all kinds. Now they kept pigs alive until about midwinter, and tried to have fresh game quite often. The scurvy was practically banished.

As for Rose, the marriage made not so much difference. She was let very much alone, and rambled about as she listed, until the snows came. Occasionally she visited Marie, but everything was in a huddle in the small place, and the chimney often smoked when the wind was east. But Marie seemed strangely content and happy. Or she went to the Gaudrions, which she really liked, even if the babies did tumble over her.

She went sometimes to the classes the Governor's wife was teaching, and translated to the Indian children many things it was difficult for them to understand.

Madame de Champlain would say—"Child, thou ought to be in the service of the good God and His Virgin Mother. He has given thee many attractions, but they are to be trained for His work, not for thy own pleasure. We are not to live a life of ease, but to deny ourselves for the sake of the souls of those around us."

"I think oftentimes, Madame, they have no souls," returned the daring girl. "They seem never able to distinguish between the true God and their many gods. And if they are ill they use charms. Their religion, I observe, makes them very happy."

"There are many false things that please the carnal soul. That is what we are to fight against. Oh, child, I am afraid the evil one desires thee strongly. Thou shouldst go to confession, as we do at home, and accept the penances the good priests put upon thee."

Confession had not made much headway with these children of the new world. Father Jamay, to his great disgust, found they would tell almost anything, thinking to please him with a multitude of sins, and they went off to forget their penance. So it was not strongly insisted upon.

Madame de Champlain was a *dévôte*. In her secret heart she longed for the old convent life. Still she was deeply interested in the plans of the Récollet fathers, who were establishing missions among the Hurons and the Nipissings, and learning the languages. She gave generously of her allowance, and denied herself many things; would, indeed, have given up more had her husband allowed it.

Captain Pontgrave came in to spend the winter, brave and cheerful, though he had lost his only son. While the men exchanged plans for the future, and smoked in comfort, Madame was often kneeling on a flat stone she had ordered sent to her little convent-like niche, praying for the salvation of the new world to be laid at the foot of God's throne, and to be a glory to old France. But the court of old France was revelling in pleasure and demanding furs for profit.

Destournier occasionally joined the conclave. His heart and soul were in this new land and her advancement, but his wife demanded his company most of his evenings. She sat in her high-backed chair wrapped in furs listening to his reading aloud or appearing to, though she often drowsed off. But there was another who drank in every word, if she did not quite understand. The wide stone chimney gave out its glowing fire of great logs, sometimes hemlock branches that diffused a grateful fragrance around the room. On a sort of settle, soft with folds of furs, Rose would stretch out gracefully, or curl up like a kitten, and with wide-open eyes turn her glance from the fascinating fire to the reader's face, repeating in her brain the sentences she could catch. Sometimes it was poetry, and then she fairly revelled in delight.

After a few weeks she seemed to accept the fact of the marriage with equanimity, but she grew silent and reserved. She understood there was a secret animosity between herself and *miladi*, even if they were outwardly agreeable. She had gathered many pretty and refined ways from Madame de Champlain, or else they were part of the unknown birthright. She had turned quite industrious as well, the winter day seemed dreary when one had no employment. She read a good deal too, she could understand the French, and occasionally amused herself translating.

When the spring opened the Governor and several others went to the new trading post and town, Mont Réal. There really seemed more advantages here than at Quebec. There was a long stretch of arable land, plenty of fruit trees, if they were wild; a good port, and more ease in catching the traders as they came along. There, too, stray Indians often brought in a few choice furs, which they traded for various trifles, exchanging these again for rum.

Rose drew a long breath of delight when the spring fairly opened, and she could fly to her olden haunts. Oh, how dear they were! Though now she often smuggled one of M. Ralph's books and amused herself reading aloud until the woods rang with the melodious sounds.

Miladi liked a sail now and then on the river, when it was tranquil. She did not seem to grow stronger, though she would not admit that she was ill. She watched Rose with a curious half-dread. She was growing tall, but her figure kept its lithe symmetry. Out in the woods she sometimes danced like a wild creature. *Miladi* had been so fond of dancing in M. Giffard's time, but now it put her out of breath and brought a pain to her side. She really envied the bright young creature in the grace and rosiness of perfect health.

This summer a band of Jesuits came to the colony. They received a rather frigid welcome from the colonists, but the Récollets, convinced that they were making very slow advance in so large a field, opened their convent to them, and assisted them in getting headquarters of their own. And the church in Quebec began to take shape, it was such a journey to the convent services at the St. Charles river.

There followed a long, cold winter. *Miladi* was housed snug and warm, but she grew thinner, so that her rings would not stay on her slim fingers. There had been troubles with the Indians and at times M. Destournier was obliged to be away, and this fretted her sorely.

There was a great conclave at Three Rivers, to make a new treaty of peace with several of the tribes. A solemn smoking of pipes, passing of wampum, feasts and dances. And then, as usual, the influx of traders.

Madame de Champlain desired to return to France with her husband, who was to sail in August. The rough life was not at all to her taste.

"Oh," said miladi, eagerly, when she heard this, "let us go, too. I am tired of these long, cold winters. I was not made for this kind of life. If M. Giffard had lived a year longer he would have had a competency; and then we should have returned home. Surely you have made money."

"But mine is not where I can take it at a month's notice. I have been building on my plantation, weeding out some incompetent and drunken tenants, and putting in others. Pontgrave is going. Du Pare is much at the new settlement at Beaupré. It would not be possible for me to go, but you might."

"Go alone?" in dismay.

"It would not be alone. Madame de Champlain would be glad of your company."

"A woman who has no other thought but continual prayers, and anxieties for the souls of the whole world."

"Another year——"

"I want to go now"—impatiently.

She was like a fretful child. He looked in vain now for the charms she had once possessed.

"I could not possibly. It would be at a great loss. And I am not enamored of the broils and disputes. How do I know but some charge may be trumped up against me? The fur company seize upon any pretext. And even a brief absence might ruin some of my best plans. Marguerite, I am more of a Canadian than a Frenchman. The Sieur has promised to interest some new emigrants. I see great possibilities ahead of us."

"So you have talked always. I am homesick for La Belle France. I want no more of Canada, of Quebec, that has grown hateful to me."

Her voice was high and tremulous, and there burned a red spot on each cheek.

"Then let me send you. You should stay a year to recuperate, and I may come for you."

"I will take Rose."

"If she wishes. But I will not have her put in a convent."

"She is like a wild deer. Do you mean to marry her to some half-breed? There seems no one else. The men who come on business leave wives behind. There is no one to marry."

"You found some one," he returned good-naturedly, smoothing her fair hair.

"Can you find another?"

"She is but a child. There need to be no hurry."

"She has outgrown childhood. To be sure, there is Pierre Gaudrion, who hangs about awkwardly, now and then."

"She will never marry Pierre Gaudrion. She is of too fine stuff."

"A foundling! Who knows aught about her? Most Frenchmen like a well-born mother for their children."

"She is in no haste for a husband. But do not let us dispute about her. You excite yourself too much. Think seriously of this project. The Sieur will see you safely housed when once you are there."

He turned and went out. She fell into a violent fit of weeping. She could coax anything out of Laurent, poor Laurent, who might have been alive to-day but for the friendship he thought he owed M. Destournier. And they might now be in Paris, where there were all sorts of gay goings-on. This life was too stupid for a woman, too cold, too lonely. And a wife should be a husband's first thought. Ralph was cold and cruel, and had grown stern, almost morose.

He walked over to the plantation. By one of the log huts Rose stood talking to an Indian woman. Yes, she was no longer a child. She was tall and shapely, full of vigor, glowing with health, radiant in coloring, yes, beautiful. There was much of the olden time about her in the smiles and dimples and eagerness, though she was grave in miladi's presence.

Yet neither was she a woman. The virginal lines had not wholly filled out, but there was a promise of affluence that neither my lady nor the Madame possessed. For the lovely Hélène had dévôte written in every line of her face, a rapt expression, that seemed to lift her above the ordinary world. The souls of those she came in contact with were the great thing. And though the Sieur was a good Catholic, he was also of the present world, and its advancement, and had always been inspired with the love of an explorer, and of a full, free life. He could never have been a priest. He had the right view of colonization, too. Homes were to be made. Men and women were to be attached to the soil to make it yield up the bountiful provision hidden in its mighty breast.

And miladi! There had been so few women in his life that he knew nothing of contrast, or analysis. Some of the men took Indian wives for a year or so: that had never appealed to him. He had been charmed by Madame Giffard from the very first meeting with her, but she was another man's wife, and she loved her husband. The pretty coquetries were a part of the civilized world over in France and meant only a graceful desire to please. Then in her sorrow he pitied her profoundly, and felt that he owed her the highest and most sacred duty.

But as he studied Rose now, and thought of a suggested lover in Pierre Gaudrion, his whole soul rose in revolt. And the other thought of sending her away was equally distasteful. Why, she was the light and sweetness of the settlement. In a different fashion, she captured the hearts of the Indian women, and taught them the love of home-making, roused in some of them intelligence. How did she come by it? There was Wanamee.

He did not dream that he had awakened a desire for knowledge in the girl's breast and brain. But she had gone beyond him in the lore of the sea and the sky, and the romance of the trees, that to him were promising materials for houses and boats. They were her friends. She could translate the soft murmur that ran through their leaves, or the sweet, wild whistle of the wind that blew in from the river or down from the high hills,—from the ice and snow of the fur country. And sometimes he had seen her run races with the foaming river, where it whirled and eddied and fretted against a spur of the mighty rocks. All her life, from the day he found her on the rocks, seemed to pass before him in one great flash. He exulted that she belonged to no one, that he had the best right to her. He could not have told why. Heaven had denied him a child of his very own, and he had learned that miladi considered babies a wearisome burthen, fit only for peasants and Indian women.

Did the saintly and beautiful Hélène think so as well? he wondered. He had learned a good deal about womankind since his marriage, but he made a grand mistake, he had learned only about one woman; and she was not the noblest of her kind.

Rose turned suddenly and saw him in that half-waiting attitude. There was little introspection, or analysis, in those days; people simply lived, felt without understanding. She had outgrown her first feeling of aversion. In a vague fashion she realized that miladi needed protection and care that no one but M. Destournier could give her. She was sorry she could not ramble about, that she never brightened up, and sung and danced any more. And this was why she, Rose, did not want to grow old and give up the delights of vivid, enchanting exercise.

Why miladi was captious and changeful, never of the same mind twice, she could not understand. What suited her to-day bored her to-morrow. She gave up trying to please, though she was generally ready and gracious. But she remarked it was the same way with M. Ralph, and he bore the captiousness with so sweet a temper that she felt moved to emulate him. In the depths of her heart there was a great pity, and it was sweet to him, though neither ever adverted to it.

CHAPTER XI

A FEAST OF SUMMER

As if his eyes had summoned her, she turned toward him. Out here in God's wide, beautiful world they could be the same friends, and not fret any one. It might have been dangerous if he had not been so upright a man, with no subtle reasonings, and she less simple-hearted.

"I have been helping Evening Star arrange her house. She is anxious to be like a Frenchwoman, and has put off many Indian ways since she became a convert."

"But you do not give her her Christian name," and he smiled.

"Maria Assunta! It isn't half as pretty. She has such lovely deep eyes, and such velvety skin that her Indian name suits her best. What does it matter?"

"Perhaps it helps them to break away from Indian superstitions. I do see some improvement in the women, but the men——"

She laughed lightly. "The women were better in the beginning. They were used to work. And all the braves care for is hunting and drinking bouts. If I were a priest, I should consider them hardly worth the trouble."

"A fine priest you would make. They consider you half a heretic."

"I go to chapel, M'sieu, when one can get there. I know a great many prayers, but they are much alike. I would like all the world to be upright and good, but I do not want to stay in a stifling little box until my breath is almost gone, and my knees stiff, saying a thing over and over. M'sieu, I can feel the Great Presence out on the beautiful rocks, as I look down on the river and watch the colors come and go, amber and rose, and greens of so many tints; and the music that is always so different. Then I think God does not mean us to shut it all out and be melancholy."

"You were ever a wild little thing."

"I can be grave, M'sieu, and silent, when there is need, for others. But I cannot give up all of my own life. I say to my heart—'Be still, it is only for a little while'—then comes the dance of freedom."

She laughed, with a ripple of music.

"I wonder," he began, after a pause, watching her lithe step and the proud way she carried her head—"I wonder if you would like to cross the ocean, to go to France?"

"With the beautiful Madame? It is said she is to sail as soon as the boats are loaded."

"Miladi might go with her. I could not be spared. And you——"

He saw the sudden, great throb that moved her breast up to her very shoulders.

"I should not want to go," in a quiet tone.

"But if I found at the last hour that I could go?"

She drew a long breath. "M'sieu, I have no desire to see France. I hear you and the Governor talk about it, and the great court where the King spends his time in foolishness, and the Queen Mother plots wicked schemes. And they throw people in prison for religion's sake. Did I hear a story of some people who were burned at the stake? Why, that is as cruel as the untaught Indians. And to cross the big, fearful ocean. Last summer we sailed up to the great gulf, you know, and you could see where the ocean and sky met. No, I like this old, rocky place the best."

"But if miladi wanted you to go very much?"

"She will not want me very much, in her heart," and she glanced up so straightforwardly that he flushed. "No, you will leave me here and I will be very religious. I will go to the chapel every Sunday and pray. I will have a *prie-dieu* in one corner, and kneel many times a day, praying that you will come back safely. I shall have something real to pray for then. And—miladi will be very happy."

There was a fervor, touching in its earnestness, that penetrated his soul.

"You will not miss me much," he ventured.

The quick tears sprang to her eyes.

"Oh, yes, I should miss you," and her voice had a little tremble in it. "But you would return. Oh, yes, I know the good God would send you back. See how many times he has sent the Sieur de Champlain back!"

She raised her face to his, and though the tears still beaded her long lashes, the lips smiled adorably. He could have kissed her, but his fine respect told him that endearment was sacred to another man now.

"I do not think I shall go. Some one must be here to see that things do not go to wreck."

She wondered if miladi would go without him. They walked on silently. He was thinking of the other man. The Sieur hoped to persuade some better-class emigrants on his next voyage.

Whether miladi would have gone or not could not be known. She was taken quite ill. The doctor came down from Tadoussac, and said she would not be strong enough to stand such a long voyage.

Wanamee was her indefatigable nurse when her husband was away, as he was compelled to be in the daytime. On a few occasions she insisted that Rose should read from some old volumes of poems. She used to watch, with strange, longing eyes. Ah, if she could be young again, and strong. Did M'sieu Ralph often think of the years between, and that some time in the future she would be an old woman! He appeared to grow more vigorous and younger.

There were busy times in the little town. The traders seemed to be rougher every year. They were not much inside the palisade, but they set up booths and tents on the shore edge, and there was much drinking and chaffering.

"Thou must not go outside of the palisade," said Destournier to Rose. "There are many rude, drunken men about."

She did not demur. In truth she spent many hours comforting the Indian women for the loss of their angel lady, whom they had truly worshipped, and whom, in their vague ignorant fashion, they had confused with the Virgin. But she had wearied of the wildness and the lack of the society of the nuns that she loved so dearly. Two of her maids would return with her, the other had married.

And though she had not made very warm friends with Madame Destournier, she would have liked her companionship on the long voyage. And miladi was really sorry to have the break, since there were so few women, even if she did tire of her religion.

"If we do not meet again here," Madame H el ene said, in her sweetly-modulated voice, that savored of the convent, "it is to be hoped we shall reach the home where we shall rest with the saints, when the Divine has had His will with us. Farewell, my sister, and may the Holy Virgin

come to your assistance in the darkest hours."

Then she knelt and prayed. Miladi shuddered. Was she going to die? Oh, no, she could not.

The vessel came down from Tadoussac. All the river was afloat, as usual, at this season. A young man sprang off and pressed his sister's hand warmly.

The Héberts, with their son and daughter, the married maid and her husband and several others, who had stood a little in awe of the Governor's lady, were there to wish her *bon voyage*. Her husband assisted her, with the tenderest care. Was he happy with her, when she was only half his age? M. Destournier wondered.

When they started, a salute was fired. He was leaving his new fort but half completed.

"Who was that pretty young girl who kept so close to the Héberts?" Eustache Boullé asked his sister. "There, talking to that group of Indian women."

"Oh, that is M. Destournier's ward. Surely, you saw her when you first came here, though she was but a child then. A foundling, it seems. Good Father Jamay was quite urgent that she should be sent home, and spend some years in a convent."

"And she refused? She looks like it. Oh, yes, I remember the child."

"Beauty is a great snare where there is a wayward will," sighed the devoted Hélène. "It is no country for young girls of the better class. Though no one knows to what class she really belongs."

Eustache fell into a dream. What a bright attractive child she had been. How could he have forgotten her? He was two-and-twenty now, and his man's heart had been stirred by her beauty.

If Rose was not so much of a *dévôte* she began to make herself useful to many of the Indian converts who missed their dear lady. To keep their houses tidy, to learn a little about the useful side of gardening, and how their crops must be tended, to insure the best results. The children could be set to do much of this.

Quebec fell back to its natural state. There was no more carousing along the river, no drunken men wrangling in the booths, no affrays. Rose could ramble about as she liked, and she felt like a prisoner set free. Madame Destournier was better, and each day took a sail upon the river, which seemed to strengthen her greatly. Presently they would spend a fortnight at the new settlement, Mont Réal. Many things were left in the hands of M. Destournier, and his own affairs had greatly increased.

One afternoon Rose had espied a branch of purple plums, that no one had touched, on a great tree that had had space and sun, but fruited only on the southern side. No stick or stone could dislodge them. How temptingly they looked, in their rich, melting sheen.

"I must have some," she said, eyeing the size of the trunk, the smooth bark, and the distance before there was any limb. Then she considered. Finding a crotched stick, a limb that had been broken off in some high wind, she caught it in the lowest branch and gently pulled it down until she grasped it with her hand.

Yes, it was tough. She swung to it. Then she felt her way up cautiously, like a cat, and when she swung near enough, caught one arm around the tree trunk. It was a hard scramble, but she stood upon it triumphantly. It bore her weight, yet she must go higher, for she could not reach the temptingly-laden limb. Now and then a branch swayed—if she had her stick up here that she had dropped so disdainfully when she had captured the limb.

"It is a good thing to be sure you will not want what you fling away," she said to herself, sententiously.

"Aha!" She had caught the limb and drew it in carefully. There she sat, queen of a solitary feast. Were ever plums so luscious! Some of the ripest fell to the ground and smashed, making cones of golden red, with a tiny cap of purple at the top.

In the old Latin book she still dipped into occasionally there were descriptions of orchards laden with fruit that made the air around fragrant. She could imagine herself there.

In that country there were gods everywhere, by the streams, where one named Pan played on pipes. What were pipes that could emit music? The nooks hid them. The zephyrs repeated their songs and laments.

There was a swift dazzle and a bird lighted on the branch above her, and poured out such a melodious warble that she was entranced. A bird from some other tree answered. Ah! what delight to eat her fill to measures of sweetest music, and she suddenly joined in.

The young fellow who had been following a beaten path paused in amaze. Was it a human voice? It broke off into a clear, beautiful whistle that, striking against a ledge of rock, rebounded in an echo. He crept along on the soft grass, where the underbrush had some time been fired. The tree was swaying to and fro, and a shower of fruit came to the ground.

He drew nearer and then he espied the dryad. From one point he could see a girl, sitting in superb unconcern. Was it the one he had been searching for diligently the last hour? How had

she been able to perch herself up there?

Presently she had taken her fill of the fruit, of swinging daintily to and fro, of watching the sunbeams play hide-and-peek among the distant fir trees, that held black nooks in their shade, of studying with intense ecstasy the wonderful colors gathering around the setting sun, for which she had no name, but that always seemed as if set to some wondrous music. Every pulse stirred within her, making life itself sweet.

She stepped down on the lower limb. It would be rather rough to slide down the tree trunk, but she had not minded it in her childhood. The other way she had often tried as well. She held on to the limb above, and walked out on hers, until it began to sway so that she could hardly balance herself. Then she gave one spring, and almost came down in the young man's arms.

She righted herself in a moment, and stared at him. There was something familiar in the soft eyes, in the general contour of the face.

"You do not remember me!"

"Let me think," she said, with a calmness that amused him. "Yes, it comes to me. I saw you on the boat that conveyed Madame de Champlain. You are her brother."

"Eustache Boullé, at your service," and he bowed gracefully. "But I did not know you, Mam'selle. You were such a child four years ago. Even then you made an impression upon me."

She was so little used to compliments that it did not stir her in the slightest. She was wondering, and at length she said—

"How did you find me?"

"By hard searching, Mam'selle. I saw your foster-mother—I believe she is that—and she gave me a graphic description of your wanderings. I paused here because the beauty of the place attracted me. And I heard a voice I knew must be human, emulating the birds, so I drew nearer. Will you forgive me when I confess I rifled your store? What plums these are! I did not know that Canada could produce anything so utterly delicious. We have some wild sour ones that get dried and made eatable in the winter, when other things are scarce. And the Indians make a queer-tasting drink out of them."

"I found this tree quite by accident. I never saw it before, and if you will look, there are only two branches that have any fruit. The other side of the tree is barren. And that high branch will give the birds a feast. I do not think I could venture up there," laughing.

"I wondered how you ventured at all. And how you dared come down that way."

His eyes expressed the utmost admiration.

"Oh," she answered carelessly, "that was an old trick of mine, my childhood's delight. I used to try how far I could walk out before the limb would give me warning."

"But if it had broken?"

"Why, I should have jumped, all the same. You did not go with your sister and M. de Champlain."

"I had half a mind to, then I reconsidered."

She met his gaze calmly, as if she was wondering a little what had prevented him.

"And I came to Quebec. It begins to grow. But we want something beside Indians. M. Destournier has settled quite a plantation of them, and my sister has believed in their conversion. But when one knows them well—he has not so much faith in them. They are apt to revert to the original belief, crude superstitions."

"It is hard to believe," the girl said slowly.

"That depends. Some beliefs are very pleasant and appeal to the heart."

"But is it of real service to God that one rolls in a bed of thorns, or walks barefoot over sharp stones, or kneels all night on a hard, cold floor? There are so many beautiful things in the world, and God has made them—"

"As a snare, the priest will tell you. Mam'selle, thou hast not been made for a devotee. It would be a great loss to one man if thou shouldst bury all these charms in a convent."

"I do not know any man who would grieve," she made answer indifferently.

"But you might," and a peculiar smile settled about his lips.

"I am going to take home as many of these plums as I can carry. Madame Destournier is not well, and has a great longing for different things. I found some splendid berries yesterday which she ate with a relish. Sickness gives one many desires. I am glad I am always well. At least I was never ill but once, and that was long ago."

She sprang up and began to look about her. "If I could find some large leaves—"

"I will fill my pockets."

She looked helplessly at her own garments, and then colored vividly, thinking if this young man were not here she would gather a lapful. Why should she have this strange consciousness?

Nothing of service met her gaze, and she drew her brow into a little frown. It gave her a curious piquancy, and interested him. She had spirit.

"Oh, I know! What a dullard I was. Those great flaring dockweeds do not grow about here. But something else will answer."

She ran over to an old birch tree and tore off great pieces of bark, then gathering some half-dried grasses, began to fashion a sort of pail, bending up the edges to make the bottom. She was so quick and deft, it was a pleasure to watch her. Then she filled it with the choicest of the fruit. There was still some left.

"We might have another feast," he suggested.

"I have feasted sufficiently. Let us make another basket. It can be smaller than this."

It was very pleasant to dally there in the woods. He was unnecessarily awkward, that the slim fingers might touch his, and her little laugh was charming.

"Allow me to carry the larger one," and he reached for it.

"No, no. You are weighted in the pockets. And these are choice. I will have no one take part in them."

She drew herself aside and began to march with a graceful, vigorous step, her head proudly poised on the arching neck that, bared to summer suns and wind, yet was always white. The delicious little hollow, where the collar bones met, was formed to lay kisses in, and be filled with warm, throbbing lips. Yes, he was right in coming back to Quebec, she was more enchanting than the glimpse of her had been.

"Why do you look at me so?" she cried, with a kind of quick repulsion she did not understand, but it angered her.

"It is the homage we pay to beauty, Mam'selle."

"Your sister is beautiful," she said, with an abruptness that was almost anger.

"So thought the Sieur de Champlain, and I believe she was not offended at it."

"I am not like that," she declared decisively. "She was fair as a lily, and Father Jamay said she had the face of a saint."

"I am not so partial to saints myself. And my brother-in-law would have been better satisfied, I do believe, if she had been less saintly."

She looked a trifle puzzled.

"It is long since you left France," she commented irrelevantly.

"I was not seventeen. It is six years ago."

"Do you mean to go back?"

"Sometime, Mam'selle. Would you like to go?"

"No," she said decidedly.

"But why not?" amused.

"Because I like Quebec."

"It is a wretched wilderness of a place."

"Madame Destournier talks about France. Why, if Paris is all gayety and pleasure, are people put in dungeons, and then to death? And there seem so many rulers. They are not always good to the Sieur, either."

"They do not understand. But these are too weighty matters for a young head."

"Why do they not want a great, beautiful town here! All they care about is the furs, and the rough men and Indians spoil the summer. I like to hear the Sieur tell what might be, houses and castles, and streets, instead of these crooked, winding paths, and—there are fine shops, where you buy beautiful things," glancing vaguely at him.

"Why should you not like to go thither then, if you can dream of these delights?"

"I want the Sieur to have his way, and do some of the things he has set his heart upon. Miladi would like it too. But I am well enough satisfied."

She tossed her head in her superb strength. He had not known many women, and they were older. There was something in her fresh sweetness that touched him to the soul.

"This way, M'sieu." He was plunging ahead, keeping pace with some tumultuous thoughts.

"Ah—!"

"And see—you have been careless. You are sowing plums along the way. This is no place for them to take root."

She gave a little laugh as well, though she had begun in a sharp tone.

He had pressed the side of his slight receptacle and made a yawning crack in it.

"Well, now you must gather that great leaf and patch it. Here are some pine needles. I sew with them sometimes. You do not need a thread."

Was she laughing at him?

He managed to repair the damages, and picked up the plums he had not trodden upon, that were yielding their wine-like fragrance to the air.

"Which way do you go, M'sieu?" she asked, with unconscious hauteur.

"Why—to M. Destournier's. I called on miladi, and she sent me to find you in some wood, she hardly knew where. And I have brought you safely back."

"M'sieu, I have come back many a time in safety without you."

Her voice had a suggestion of dismissal in it.

"I must present my spoils to Madame. No, I believe they are yours, you were the discoverer, you made the purple shower that I only helped gather."

She skipped up the steps lightly. How dainty her moccasined feet were! The short skirt showed the small ankles and the swell of the beautiful leg. Her figure was not a whit behind his sister's convent-trained one, but she was fearless as a deer.

Miladi sat out on the gallery in her chair, that could be moved about with ease by a small lever at the side. Looking down at the youthful figures, the thought beset her that haunts all women, that here was material for a very fortunate match. He was much superior to Pierre Gaudrion.

"The trophies of the hunt," Boullé exclaimed gayly. "The huntress and the most delicious harvest. I have seen nothing like it."

"I found some plums, a tree quite by itself, and only two branches of fruit. We must send some of the best pits to M. Hébert. And I shall plant a row in the Sieur's garden."

She brought out a dish and took them carefully from the birch-bark receptacle. The exquisite bloom had not been disturbed.

"I will get a dish for yours," she said to the young man.

"Mine were the gleanings," he laughed.

Miladi's eyes glowed at the sight of the feast. Rose had not emptied all of hers out, and now she laid three beauties in the corner of the cupboard, looking around until she espied a pan. Wooden platters were mostly used, even the Indian women were handy in fashioning them.

The young man had taken a seat and a plum, and was regaling his hostess with the adventure.

"Curious that I should find the place so easily," and he smiled most beguilingly. "Sometimes one seems led in just the right way."

For several reasons he preferred not to say he had heard the singing.

"Yes," and now she gave a soft, answering smile, as if there might be a mysterious understanding between them. Miladi was often ennuied, now that she was never really well, and the sight and voice of a young man cheered her inexplicably.

"Every one knows her. She is the most fearless thing."

"I remember her when she was very little. How tall she has grown. A very pretty girl."

"Youth always has a prettiness. It is the roundness and coloring. I often long to go back and have it all over again. I should remain in France. I do not see what there is in this bleak country to charm one."

"There was some talk of your going with my sister, was there not?"

"Yes. But I was too ill. And M. Destournier thought he could not leave. He has many interests here."

Rose re-entered the room.

"I never tasted such delicious plums," the elder commented, in a pleased tone. "I want some saved as long as they will keep."

"There is a quantity of them. I should have had to make another journey but for M. Boullé," and she dropped a charming little courtesy.

"We might see if we could not find another tree."

"I doubt it."

"Will you stay some time?" asked miladi.

"They can do without me a while. Business is mostly over."

She raised her eyes, and they said she was pleased with the plan. Rose busied herself about the room, then suddenly disappeared. She had seen M. Destournier coming up the crooked pathway, and with a parcel in her hand, went out to meet him.

"I thought of you. Miladi was delighted with hers. Some seagull must have brought the pit across the ocean. It is so much finer than any we have around here."

He broke it open, but the golden purple juice ran over his hand.

"It is the wine of sunshine. Here is to thy health, Rose of Quebec."

"M. Boullé is in there," nodding. "He came out in the wood and found me up the tree," and she laughed gayly.

"Found thee——" Something sharp went to the heart of the man, and he looked down into the fearless eyes, with their gay, unsuspecting innocence.

"As if I could be lost in dear old Quebec!"

"Is it dear to thee?"

"Why, I have never known any other place, any other home."

There were many knowledges beside that of childhood. And among them one might be all-engrossing.

CHAPTER XII

A LOVER IN EARNEST

Eustache Boullé seemed in no hurry to return to Tadoussac. He was wonderfully interested in the new fort, in the different improvements, in miladi, who, somehow, seemed to improve and render herself very agreeable. She had a queer feeling about him. If one could be young again—ah, that would be back in France. She had a happy time with Laurent. She had exulted in winning her second husband, but somehow the real flavor and zest of love had not been there.

When Eustache was with Rose she experienced a keen, hungering jealousy, and it was then she wanted to be young. The girl was strangely obtuse. She never colored when he came, or evinced any half-bashful joy, she left him with miladi, and went off with the utmost unconcern. She was much in the settlement, showing the Indian women nice ways of keeping their homes and children tidy, so that when the beautiful wife of the Governor returned they would have great improvement to show her. True, they went out canoeing, and the sweet breath of the river washing the sedgy grass on the small islands, gave a faint tang of salt, or where it dashed and fretted against the rocks made iridescent spray. There were so many beautiful places. And though she had seen the falls more than once, she went again to please him, after making several excuses. Pani was her bodyguard. He was still small, and lithe as an eel, and the mixture of races showed in him. Wanamee was sometimes peremptorily ordered to accompany him.

The wooing of looks and smiles had little effect on her. Sometimes he reached for her hand, but it cunningly evaded him. She seemed so sufficient for herself that the matter was reduced to good-comrade-ship. Yet there were times when he was wild to kiss the rosy, dimpling mouth, to press the soft cheek, to hold the pliant figure in his arms.

It was but right that he should ask M. Destournier for his foster-daughter.

To lose her! Ah, how could he give her up?

"Would you come to Quebec?"

"My interests are at Tadoussac. And there are the fisheries at the islands growing more profitable. But I might come often if she grew homesick, and pined for this rough, rocky place."

"It will be as she pleases," the man said, with a heavy heart.

"I must tell you that I think Madame favors my suit."

M. Destournier merely bowed.

The husband and wife had never touched upon the subject. She could not decide. The girl was very useful to her since she had fallen into invalid ways. M. Destournier had to be journeying about a good deal. She could read so delightfully when the nights were long, tiresome, and sleepless. Even Wanamee could not arrange her hair with such deft touches, and it really

appeared as if she could take off the burthen of years by some delicate manipulations. Yes, she would miss her very much. But it would be a grand match for a foundling. And if they went to France, she would rouse herself and go. M. Destournier was so occupied with the matters of the town that he had grown indifferent, and seldom played the lover.

But how was Eustache to propose to a girl who could not, or would not understand, who never allowed any endearments or softened to sentiment. Why, here had been a whole fortnight since he had won the Sieur's tardy consent. Now and then he had found some soft-eyed Indian girl not averse to modestly-caressing ways, but his religion kept him from any absolute wrong, and meaning to marry some time, he had not played at love.

So he came to miladi with his anxieties. Was there ever a woman's soul formed with no longing, no understanding of the divine passion, that could kneel at the marriage altar in singleness of heart?

Miladi studied the young man. Had the girl no warm blood coursing through her veins, no throb of pleased vanity, at the preference of this patient lover? Perhaps he was too patient.

"Yes," she made answer, "I will see. You are quite sure your family will not be displeased? We know nothing of her birth, you are aware."

"Her beauty will make amends for that."

One could not deny her beauty. Such a dower had never been miladi's, though she had been pretty in youth.

"Beg her to listen to me."

"A man should be able to compel a woman to listen," she made answer a little sharply.

Glancing out over the space between, she caught sight of Rose and her husband coming down from the fort. She was gay enough now, talking with no restraint.

"I am almost jealous of M. Destournier," Eustache said, with a sigh.

Miladi was suddenly jealous as well, and this swept away the last shred of reluctance.

"You give her great honor by this marriage proposal. She shall be compelled to consider it."

"A thousand thanks. If Madame will excuse, I will go out to them."

M. Destournier left her with the young lover. Would she not go out on the river? No. Then let them take a forest ramble. There were some fine grapes back of the settlement. Pani had brought in a great basket full. What would she do?

"Sit here on this ledge and watch the river. Pierre Cadotte is at the fort. They came through the rapids at Lachine. It was very exciting. He has been at the trading post up to the strait and tells marvellous stories of hardships and heroism. And the good priest up there has made converts already."

She was always so interested in some far-off thing.

"I wish a priest might make a convert here. There is much need."

She was off her guard. Canoes and boats were going up and down the river. Some men were hauling in a catch of fish; just below, an Indian woman sat weaving reed baskets, while a group of children played around. Not an ideal spot for love-making, but Eustache was desperate.

"Thee"—leaning over until his black curls touched hers. "I would have thee converted to love and matrimony. I have been a coward, and kept my heartaches and desires to myself. I can do it no longer."

"But I am not for matrimony." She raised her clear eyes that would have disheartened almost any man. "I do not want any husband. I like my own fancies, and I suppose they are strange. There is only one person I ever talk to about them. No one else understands. I think sometimes I do not belong here, but to another country; no, the country is well enough. I am suited to that. I do not want to go away."

"You would like old France, Paris. My mother would be glad to welcome you, I know. And, oh, you would like Paris. Or, if you would rather stay here——"

"I do not want to be married in a long time yet. Women change so much when they have husbands, and it seems as if they made themselves unhappy over many things their husbands do."

"But my sister was very happy. She would not have come all the way to New France if she had not loved her husband dearly."

"You see that is so different. I do not love any one in that manner. And, oh, M'sieu, she was like an angel, and prayed so much. It is a good thing, but I would not like to stay in a darkened room and pray. I like better to be roaming in the woods, and singing with the birds, and gathering flowers. I believe I am not old enough to accept these things."

"But my sister was only twelve when she was betrothed to the Sieur de Champlain."

"You see something makes the difference." Her brow knit in perplexity. "If it is a thing you want, it would be very easy to reach out your hand and take it—"

"But I want it!" He reached out his hand and caught hers. "I love you, strange, bewitching as you are in your innocence. And I would teach you what love was. No young girl loves much before marriage. But when she is with her husband day by day and his devotion is laid at her feet, she cannot help understanding what a delight it is, and she learns to give of her sweetest and best, as you will, my adorable child."

The heat of his hand and the pulse throbbing in every finger roused a deeper feeling of resistance. She tried to withdraw it, but the pressure only tightened.

"Will you release my hand?" she said, with a new-born dignity. "It is mine, not yours!"

"But I wish it for mine. Oh, Rose, you sweet, delightful creature, you *must* learn to love me. I cannot give you up. And the Destourniers are quite willing. I have asked for you."

"No one can give me away. I belong only to myself."

She drew her hand away in an unguarded moment. She sprang up straight and lithe, her head poised superbly. Every pulse within him was mysteriously stirred, and his breath came in gasps. Yes, he must set her in his life. It would be bleak and barren without. To kiss the rosy lips when he listed, to pillow the fair head on his shoulder, to encircle the supple figure, so full of vitality, in his arms—yes, that would be the highest delight.

"I will wait," he said, in a beseeching voice. "You are but a child. Pity has not sprung up in your heart yet. I will wait and watch for the first sign."

"Go!" She made a dismissing gesture with her hand. "Do not attempt to follow me."

He stood still, looking after her. His whole soul was aflame, his voice could have cried to the heavens above that she might be enkindled with the sacred flame that leaped and flashed within him.

Rose picked her way deftly, daintily over the rocky way. She did not stop at the house, but went on to the beach. A fish-hawk was chasing a robin, that suddenly veered round as if asking her protection, and picking up a sharp stone, she took aim at the hawk and stunned him for an instant, so that he lost his balance.

"Bravo, little Rose," said a hearty voice, and the canoe turned in the bend. "If your stone had been larger it might have done more execution."

"But I saved the bird." The robin had perched himself on the limb of a dead fir tree, and began a gay song.

"You had better go farther away from your enemy," she counselled. Then to the canoeist—"Will you let me come in and go down the river?"

"Yes, I will take you down. What did you do with young Boullé?"

She colored a little. "I want to tell you."

"I saw you both up on the cliff."

"I came away and left him."

He drew up the canoe and she stepped in lightly, seating herself so gently that the canoe did not even swerve.

"How blue the water is! And so clear. It is like the heaven above. And there are rays of sun in the river bed. It does not seem very deep, does it? I could almost touch it with my hand."

Destournier laughed. "Suppose you try?"

"And tip us over?" She smiled as well.

It was so lovely that both were moved to silence. Now and then they glanced at each other, at some special point or happening. She was not effusive.

After a while she began with—"Do you like M. Boullé very much?"

"He is a promising young man, I am glad he did not return to France. We have few enough of them here. Every one counts."

"He will go some time," she said, reflectively.

A sudden thought flashed through his mind. The girl's face was very calm, but her eyes had a sort of protest in them.

"Will he take you?" Destournier asked, in a husky tone.

"Oh, M'sieu Ralph, would you send me? Would you give me to any one else?"

Now her eyes were alight with an eager breathless expression that was almost anguish.

"Not if you did not want to go."

"I do not want to go anywhere. Oh, M'sieu Ralph," and now her tone was piteous, "I wish you would send him away. I liked him very well at first, but now he wants me to love him, and I cannot, the kind of love that impels one to marry, and I do not want to be married."

"Has he tried to persuade you?"

Ralph Destournier knew he would make a good husband. Some time Rose would marry. But it was plain she did not love him. And though love might not be necessary, it was a very sweet accompaniment that, he knew now, it was sad to miss.

"He talked to me about marriage. I do not like it." She gave a little shiver, and the color went out of her face, even her lips, and her pliant figure seemed to shrink as from a blow.

"My child, no one shall marry you against your will, neither shall you be taken away. Rest content in my promise."

She nodded, then smiled, with trusting eyes. He wondered a little about her future. While he lived—well, the Sieur de Champlain was well and hearty, and much older. She was only a child yet, though she had suddenly grown tall. He could care for her in the years to come, and she would no doubt find a mate. He knew very little about girls. They generally went to convents and were educated and husbands were chosen for them by their parents. But in this new world matters had changed. There was talk of a convent to train the Indian girls, and the half-breeds who took more readily to civilization. The priests were in earnest about it, but money was lacking. Rose had picked up much useful knowledge, and knew some things unusual for a girl. Good Father Jamay would be shocked at Terence, Aristophanes, and Virgil for a girl.

"So you do not like marriage?" he said, rather jestingly.

She shook her head.

"But then you know nothing about it."

"Why, there is the Sieur and the beautiful Madame. And you and miladi. And Marie, with her dirty house and her babies. She is not as nice as the Indian women. And they have to wait upon the braves or else, when the braves are off fur hunting, they have to plant the crops and catch fish, and even hunt and mend tents, and do such hard work. All that is no delight like dreaming on the moss in the woods, and talking to the birds, and breathing the fragrance all about, and having rushes of delight sweep over you like a waft from the beautiful heaven above. Oh, why should I marry; to think of some one else that I do not want and not feel that my life was my very own."

He studied the youthful unconscious face before him, the clear, fine skin, a few shades deeper from the daily contact with sun and much dallying on the river; the beautiful dark eyes that seemed always gathering the choicest of life, with joy and wonder; the rounded cheeks, with exquisitely-faint coloring, seeming to join the clear-cut chin, with its dimpled cleft melting into the shapely throat, that upheld it like a flower on a strong, yet delicate stem. He was strangely moved by the peculiar aloofness of the beauty.

Her soft hair hung about her like a cloud, the curling ends moved now and then as if by their own vigorous life. Indeed, there was an intense sort of vitality about her that, quiescent as it often was, in this trifling, daily round, could shoot up into a bewildering flame. Perhaps that was love. She did not have it for Eustache Boullé, she might never have it for him. Were men and women but half alive? Was there some sudden revivifying influence that raised them above the daily wants, that gave them an insight into a new existence? Had he ever experienced it?

The sun dropped down behind a range of hills, covered with pines, furs, and cedars, that were growing into a compact dark wall, the interstices being black. The edge of the river took on these sombre hues, but a little beyond there were long strips of rose and tawny gold, between zones of purple and green. The current tossed them hither and thither, like some weird thing winding about. Destournier was strangely moved by this mysterious kinship to nature that he had never experienced before.

"We must turn back," he began briefly, though it seemed to him he could gladly go on to a new life in some other land.

She nodded. The tide was growing a little stronger, but it was in their favor. They kept quite near the shore, where it was dark in spaces, and then opened into a sort of clearing, only to close again. Even now the voyager dreams on the enchanting shores that are not all given up to towns and business.

She began to sing. It was melody without words. Now and then she recalled a French verse or two, then it settled into some melancholy Indian plaint, or the evening song of a belated bird. She was not singing for him, yet he was enchanted.

He drew in the canoe presently. She sprang out with the agile grace caught from much solitary rambling and climbing. Then she waited for him to fasten it.

"You are quite sure that you will not consent to M. Boullé's wishes?" she inquired, as they turned in and out of the winding path.

"You shall be left entirely free. You shall not marry at all, if you prefer," he answered solemnly.

"Oh, a thousand thanks. And you will convince miladi. I think she wishes M. Boullé all success. I must go make my peace with Wanamee and get some supper."

She ran to the end of the house, the wide kitchen, where the cooking was done. Wanamee and Mawha were in a discussion, as often happened. Pani sat with a great wooden platter on his knees, eating voraciously. Rose realized suddenly that she was hungry, and the smell of the broiling fish was appetizing.

"I'm famished, Wanamee," she cried. "Will you give me some supper?"

"Miladi is much vexed with you, little one. She had supper sent to her room and M. Boullé was there. They wanted you and M. Destournier. There was to be a—I do not know what you call it, but he wanted you to promise to be his wife, for he goes to Tadoussac to-morrow."

Rose's heart beat with a guilty joy.

"I should not promise that. I do not want to be a wife."

Mawha, who had been a wife several times, a tall, rather severe-looking Indian woman, turned upon her.

"Thou art well-grown and shouldst have a husband. Girls get too wild if they are let go too long. A husband keeps them in order."

"I will have some supper," Rose said, with dignity, ignoring the stricture.

Then she cleared a place on the table and brushed it clean with the birch twigs. Wanamee brought a plate of Indian meal cake, deliciously browned, some potatoes baked in the hot ashes, and a great slice of fish, with a dish of spiced preserves of some green fruit and berries.

"I looked for you," Pani said. "Were you up on the mountain?"

Rose shook her head.

She was hungry, but she dallied over her meal, wondering if she had best go in and say good-night to miladi. She did not always; she quite understood now that there were times when miladi did not care to see her; then, at others, she sent for her. Now she would let her send. She went up to her small chamber presently. The young moon was travelling over westward with her attendant star. There were boats still out on the river, merry voices, others in loud and angry dispute. Why did people want to quarrel, when the world was so beautiful! Then a shrill cry of some night bird, guards coming and going about the fort. She grew drowsy presently, and went to bed, serene in the belief that M. Boullé would go his way and torment her no more, for had not M. Ralph promised?

M. Ralph and miladi were having a rather stormy time. She had inquired very peremptorily what had kept him so late. Pani had been sent to the warehouse and had not found him, neither had he been at the fort.

M. Destournier was no hand to prevaricate. He lived an open, honest life, and had few secrets beside those of business. Ordinarily, he would have explained what he had been about the last two hours, but he had a sudden premonition that it was wiser not to do so. Miladi was sometimes captious where Rose was concerned.

"I was busy," he made answer briefly.

"M. Boullé goes to Tadoussac to-morrow. The vessel came down for him to-day. Some urgent business requires his attention."

"He has loitered quite long enough," commented her husband. "He is a pleasant young fellow, but there is more than indolent pleasuring to a young man's life."

"He has had a purpose, a matter that lies near his heart. This new country and the lack of fixed rules are demoralizing, and it will be a good thing when there is a convent for the proper training of girls. But lawless as Rose has grown, he has asked her in marriage. We wanted you to ratify the consent I have given. He will make arrangements for the marriage a few months hence."

"You seem to think Rose has no voice in this."

"Why should she have? Do we not stand in the place of parents? My father chose M. Giffard, and he was presented to me as my future husband. No well-bred girl makes any demur. But it seems that Mam'selle Rose has some queer ideas, imbibed from heaven only knows where, that she must experience a kind of overwhelming preference for a man, which would be positively disgraceful in a young girl who has no right to consider love until she is called upon to give it to her husband. It will be a most excellent thing for her."

There was a moment or two of silence. He was considering how best to make his protest.

"Well—why do you not reply?" tartly. "The young man is very ardent. She can never do better."

"She is but a child. There need be no haste. And if she does not care——"

"She is no longer a child. Fully fourteen, I think, and Mam'selle Boullé was married younger than that."

"And whether the Sieur would quite approve. There are some formalities in old France which we have not shaken off. His parents are still alive——"

"And he is quite certain he can have the mystery about her fathomed. She should go down on her knees to a man who would prove her honorably born, even if he had no fortune. To-morrow morning he wants the matter settled, and a betrothal, before he goes. If you know where she is, you had better summon her and instruct her as to her duty. She is quite old enough to understand. She has played the child too long already, and it has spoiled her."

"I will not have her betrothed against her will. She has no fancy for marriage. And there will be time enough. If M. Boullé chooses to wait until the Sieur returns, and he consents——"

"She has always been a favorite of his," interrupted miladi. Then suddenly—"Why are you so obstinate about it, when it will be such an excellent thing for her?"

"I am not obstinate about it, only as far as she is concerned. If she desired it she should have my full and free consent. But I will not insist upon a step she does not desire."

"As if a girl knew what was best!" reiterated miladi scornfully. "And why should you wish to keep her? Unless"—and now miladi's eyes flashed fire—"unless——"

"Do not say it!" He held up his hand forbiddingly.

"I will say it! You are not her father, and it seems strange you should have such an overwhelming fondness for her as to keep her from a most excellent marriage, and persuade yourself that a woman grown can indulge in all kinds of childish behavior, without detriment to her character. If it is your fondness for her that stands in the way——"

Miladi at that moment was in a jealous fury. The passion leaped to her heart full-grown. She understood now why she half-feared, half-disliked the child that she had once esteemed a pet and plaything. She had supplanted her in her husband's affections. She had youth and beauty, and miladi was fading, beside being years older than her husband, and then never very well any more.

"Hush!" exclaimed her husband, in a commanding tone. "I forbid you to think of such a thing! When have I failed in my devotion to you? To-morrow she shall have her choice, but she shall not be forced into any promise beside her own wishes. And then I will find a new home for her."

He turned and went out of the room. Miladi pounded on the table before her with her small fist, as if she could beat the life out of something.

CHAPTER XIII

FROM A GIRL'S HEART

Rose stood looking over the wide expanse of the river to the opposite shore, wondering a little. Down there, miles and miles below, were the English settlements. The men, as traders, came to Quebec now and then. Were the English women like the French? Were there young girls among them? She was beginning to experience a peculiar loneliness, a want of companionship, that no one about her could satisfy.

"Madame Destournier wishes to see you," exclaimed Pani, who had been sent on the errand.

She went slowly to miladi's room, and entering it wished her good-morning, with a dainty courtesy.

"You will be needed for a matter in hand," began miladi, "about which I desire to say a few words before the gentlemen come. It would have been settled yesterday, but you were not to be found. Where were you?"

Miladi asked it carelessly, so intent on the matter in hand that she did not remark the color that flew up to the fair brow.

"Out on the river," she answered briefly.

"It is not proper for you to go alone. I have told you of this before. You are a young woman, and with so many men roaming about, it is too bold and unsafe, as well."

"I am never in any danger."

"You do not know. But then it is not proper."

Rose made no reply to that. For some time miladi had not seemed to care where she went. And she often did have Pani with her.

There was a rather awkward silence. Rose was meditating an escape. Then miladi began, in so severe a tone that every nerve within her quivered.

"Yes, you were needed yesterday afternoon. M. Boullé came in and laid before me a grave matter.

You two seem to have wandered about in a manner that would have scandalized a more civilized place, but there appear to be no restrictions in this wilderness of savages. I have not been able to watch over you as I should, and Wanamee does not understand. Out of all this freedom, so unusual to a French maid, has come a proposal of marriage, and this morning you are to be betrothed."

"I? But I have not consented, Madame. I told M. Boullé yesterday that I could not marry him, that I did not want to marry any one."

"You will consider. Remember you are a foundling, with no name of ancestry, no parents, that a man might refer to with pride when children grow up about the family altar. It is not a thing to be quite satisfied with, Mademoiselle, or proud of," and there was a sting in her tone. "This man loves you so well that he is willing to overlook it and offer you honorable marriage, which but few men would do. We have accepted him for you. He returns to Tadoussac to-day, but the marriage day will be settled and though you cannot have what I would wish, we will do our best."

The girl's face had changed from scarlet to deathly whiteness. Something inside of her seemed to spring into a flame of knowledge, of womanhood, and burn up grandly. That subtle chemistry that works in the girl's soul, and transforms it, sometimes slowly, was in her case like the sudden bursting of a bud into flowering. She was her own. She had said this before; in a way, she had always felt it; but now it was graven with a point of steel.

"Madame," she began, in a tone she vainly strove to render steady, "only yesterday I told M. Boullé I could not take the love he proffered me, and make any return. And then I felt on a certain equality. I understand better now. I am nameless, a rose of the wilderness, a foundling, as you said. So I will marry no man who may be ashamed of me before his children. Thank M. Boullé for the honor, and tell him——"

The door opened, Destournier recalled one of the few plays he had seen in Paris, with a tragedienne who had won a king's heart, and it seemed almost as if this girl might step into fame, so proud and full of power was she, standing there. Miladi had not been willing to wait for a conference. But the result would have been the same.

Both men looked at her in surprise, and were speechless for a moment. Then M. Destournier, recovering, reached out and took the girl's slim, nerveless hand.

"Rose," he said, "M. Boullé has done us all the honor to ask your hand in marriage. If you can accept him you will have our heartiest wishes for your happiness; if you feel that you cannot, if no affection draws you to him, then do not give him a cold, loveless heart in return. Make your own choice; there is no one to compel you, no one to insist."

"I thank you, M. Boullé, for the honor." She held her head up very straight; it seemed as if she had grown since yesterday. Her eyes were fearless in their high light, the delicious curves of her lips seemed set as if they had been carved, instead of rosy flesh. "It is more than the usual honor, I believe. I am a nameless foundling, and have been handed about from one to another, and they were not the kind in whom one could take pride. Therefore, I shall not bestow myself on any man, and no one has any right to take advantage of his generosity. If I loved you, I should do the same thing. How much more resolute I should be when I do not love you, and would wed you simply for the sake of sheltering myself under your name. I am sorry any one has considered this possible, since it is not."

Boullé took a step forward and grasped her hand, as he poured out a torrent of ardent love. Miladi looked on, amazed. Was the girl made of stone, or was her heart elsewhere? She made no appeal to M. Destournier, indeed her face was turned a trifle from him.

"You pain me," she said wearily, yet with a tender pity. "I can say no more."

"But I will wait," he pleaded.

"My answer would always be the same."

"Rose!" miladi exclaimed.

"Madame Destournier, I thank you also for your kindness to a foundling, and you, also," turning to M. Destournier, "for home and shelter, and many other things. I feel now that since I have disappointed you I cannot avail myself of your generosity any longer. I can find another home ____"

She turned swiftly as a ray of light, and disappeared.

"Have you no control over her?" cried Madame angrily, "that she defies you to your face. It shows the blood that runs in her veins, wayward, ungrateful thing that no honor can raise, no generosity touch. She has the heart of a stone. M. Boullé, you have made a fortunate escape."

"But I love her, Madame. And I thought her noble in her refusal, but I would have taken her to my heart, no matter what she was. And I do not quite despair. I may find some link that will rehabilitate her. She must have come from a fine race. There is no peasant blood there."

"Perhaps honorable peasant blood may be cleaner than a king's bastard," returned miladi scornfully.

"You have my most fervent sympathy," and M. Destournier wrung the lover's hand. "But it would

be ill work marrying a woman who did not care for you. Perhaps another year"—should he give him hope? It was such an honest, earnest face, and he would have been brave to set at naught family tradition.

They went down the winding stair together. Rose was nowhere to be seen.

"Oh, you will watch over her?" M. Boullé cried, with a lover's desperation.

"Do not fear. She has been like a child to me. No harm shall come to her."

Miladi in her transport of rage tore the handkerchief she held in her hand to shreds, and stamped her foot on the floor.

"She shall never come in this house again, the deceitful, ungrateful wretch. And he shall not care for her, or befriend her in any way. She must love him, and it is no child's love, either. Why, I have been blind and silly all this last year."

Rose had flown out of the house, across the gardens and the settlement to the woods, where she had spent so many delightful hours. She threw herself down on the moss and the fragrant pine needles, and gave way to a fit of weeping that seemed to rend both soul and body. Was she an outcast? Oh, it could not be that M. Destournier would forsake her. But she could ask nothing from him, and miladi would never see her again. Why could she not have loved M. Boullé? Did it take so much love to be a man's wife? to be held in his arms and kissed, to live with him day by day—and she shuddered at the thought.

But she was young, and the flood of tears subsided. She sat up, leaning against a stout pine. Then she rose and peered about. Was it true that M. Boullé was to go away? What if he came and found her again?

She crawled out cautiously, and looked up at the sun. It had passed the meridian. She was hungry, so she searched about and found some berries, but she longed for something more substantial. For the first time solitude seemed to pall upon her. She felt as if everything had been swept away.

Toward night she crept down to the settlement. Several of the Indian women would take her in, she knew. There was Noko sitting just outside her tent; she would not accept a cabin of logs or stone. She was making a cape of gulls' feathers, that she might sell to some of the traders, who often took curious Indian finery home with their furs. Her three sons were trappers. One had a wife and three children that the poor mother provided for, and when her brave came home, she was devoted to him, grateful for a pleasant word. What curious ideas these aborigines had of wedded love!

"Noko, will you take me in for the night, and give me some supper?" she asked, as she threw herself down beside the Indian woman, who, at forty, looked at least sixty, and though she had the face of her tribe, it was marked by a grave sort of pleasantness, and not the severity that generally characterized middle life.

"Has the Sieur gone to Tadoussac?"

"Not that I know of. But I have offended miladi. And your wigwam is always so clean, and there are no children."

The woman shook her head with a sort of remonstrance.

"You will have them of your own some day. When they are little, you will care for them. They will be no trouble. When they are older, you will be proud of them, and rejoice in their bravery. Then they go away, and forget."

She began to put up her work. "Are you in earnest?" she asked. "Do you need shelter?"

"Oh, the Gaudrions would take me in, but there is such a crowd, I am for a little quiet and solitude to-night."

"Thou shalt have it. The Sieur has been good to me. But it is hardly wise to quarrel with one's home."

"There was no quarrel. Miladi wanted me to do something that I could not. And you know I have no real claim upon them, Noko, I belong to Quebec, not to any person."

She gave a little laugh that sounded almost shrill. There was not so much joy in belonging only to one's self.

"To Quebec, yes."

"Now let me kindle the fire. See how handy I can be. And to-morrow I can help you with that beautiful cape. I suppose the great ladies in Paris feel very grand in some of these things. I heard the Governor say that a great deal of money was paid for a deerskin dress by some one at court. It was worked beautifully, and as soft as velvet."

Rose busied herself in her eager, graceful fashion. Noko broiled some deer steak on the coals, and had a stew made of various things, with fish for the foundation. Rose was not very partial to this, but the steak and the cakes made of rye and corn, and well browned, tasted good to the hungry girl. There was a tea made of herbs, which had a delightful fragrance.

Afterward they sat in the doorway, and one and another came to give Noko a bit of gossip. Rose crept off to bed presently. How fragrant the fresh balsam of fir was, and the tired girl soon fell asleep.

M. Destournier had been quite engrossed with a few forgotten things that had to go to Tadoussac. Then the vessel pushed off and he turned to the storehouse. Presently a load would go to France. Though he was mechanically busy, his thoughts turned to Rose. She must have another home. He had wondered more than once how it had come to pass that miladi had lost so many of her charms, yet grown so much more exacting. He had awakened to the fact that he had never been a rapturous lover. He paid Eustache Boullé all honor that he had proved so manly and brave, yet in his secret heart he felt glad that Rose had not loved him. Why, he could not tell, except that she was too young. And he wondered how much miladi had loved Laurent Giffard. How much was she capable of loving? And the sweet angel-like Hélène, who had willingly crossed the ocean and exiled herself from the life she loved to these uncongenial surroundings. They were that for a woman.

When business was through with, he made his way down to M. Hébert's. Though the man had been bred an apothecary, and had a wider education than many in a higher round, he was making an excellent and enthusiastic farmer. Madame Hébert had brought some of the old-world knowledge and frugality with her, and put them in practice, bringing up her daughters to habits of industry, while the son was equally well trained by the father.

M. Hébert was busy with his young fruit trees. Every year he sent for some hardy kind, and had quite a variety. He was a colonist, which so few of the emigrants were.

After a walk about the garden, they went in to see Madame Hébert and Thérèse, who was making lace. Then M. Destournier preferred his request that they would take Rose for a while. He did not hint at any disagreement. Madame Destournier's health was precarious, and she had little idea of what was necessary for a girl, having been convent-trained herself. Now that Madame de Champlain had gone there was no real companionship for Rose, who was surely outgrowing her childish fancies.

"How would you like it, Thérèse?" asked her mother.

Thérèse was a solid dark-eyed, dark-haired, rather heavy-looking girl, without the French vivacity and eagerness. Destournier smiled inwardly; he could hardly fancy their being companions; yet in a way, each might benefit the other.

"Why—if you approved. Though I am never lonely," raising her eyes to the visitor.

"Rose is quite given to rambling about. She haunts the woods, she is fond of canoeing, and I think she has quite a mind for study. I am sorry there are so few opportunities. Our good fathers seem to frown on everything but prayers."

"Prayers are good, but there must be work, as well," said Madame Hébert, who had been brought up a Huguenot, and who thought conventual life a great waste.

"I should like the change for her. It may not be for long, but it would be a favor. And you need not feel that you must devote a great deal of time and energy to her, but give her the shelter of a home, until matters change a little," with a hopeful accent in his voice, and a smile that had the same aspect.

"Madame Destournier is not well?" in a tone of inquiry.

"No. She should have gone to France with the Sieur and his wife, but it was thought she had not the strength to stand the sea voyage. I feel much troubled about her."

Madame Hébert was sympathetic, but she had never admired the wife as much as she did the husband. She was too volatile in the early days, and held her head quite too high.

It was arranged that Rose should be an inmate of the Hébert home for a month or two. It was such a comfortable, cheerful-looking place. There was a set of bookshelves, and no one beside the Governor owned more than a prayer-book, which did little good, since they could hardly read in their own language.

M. Ralph did not go at once to his wife, but stopped in the kitchen. Mawha was brewing some herbs. Wanamee entered with a plate on which there was some wheaten toast.

"She will not take it. She does nothing but fret for Monsieur, and say dreadful things about *ma fille*"—then she stopped in a fright, seeing her master.

"Where is Rose?" he asked.

"She has not been here all day. I sent Pani to look for her, but he has not returned."

M. Destournier went to his wife's room. She was hysterical and unreasonable.

"Promise me that such a miserable, deceitful thing as that girl is shall never enter this house," she cried. "I cannot breathe the same air with her. You must choose between us. If you keep to her, I shall know you have no love for me. I will kill myself."

"Marguerite, calm yourself. Rose is not to remain here, but go to the Héberts. So you will have

quiet and nothing to do but recover your health. And if you can get well enough, we will go to Montreal, as I have to transact some business. The change will do you good."

"You will not take her?"

"No, no. Now let the girl alone. She is provided for, and you have the two women at your service."

"She did nothing for me. And after roaming the woods and canoeing with M. Boullé, she should have been glad to marry him, for decency's sake."

"We will let her quite alone," he exclaimed authoritatively. "Why did you not eat some supper?"

"I couldn't. Oh, Ralph, be kind to me. Do not let that girl steal your love from me. I was quite as pretty in youth, but the years are hard on one. And I need your love more than ever. You are not tender and caressing as Laurent was."

He bent over and kissed her, smoothed her tangled hair, and patted the hot cheek.

"I have been busy all day, and have had no supper," he began, loosening the hands about his neck.

She sobbed wildly. She had been so lonely all day. She missed M. Boullé so much. He would have been a son to them.

He had to tear himself away. He did not take his supper, but rushed out to make inquiries. Where had Rose gone? Was she wandering about the woods? There had been wolves, stray Indians, and a dozen dangers. The palisade gates were fastened. He asked at two or three of the cabins, where he knew she was a favorite. And where was Pani?

Pani was asleep on a soft couch of moss, under a clump of great oak trees. He had lain down, warm and tired, and his nap was good for ten or twelve hours.

"I saw her by Noko's wigwam," said a woman, as she heard him inquiring.

Not even waiting to thank her, he rushed thither. Noko had the reputation of being a sort of seer, though she seldom used her gift. She sat on the stone beside her door, and a woman knelt before her, to whom she was talking in a low monotonous tone. His step startled the listener, and she sprang up.

"Whither did Rose go?" he asked peremptorily, seizing Noko's arm.

"She is here, Monsieur. She is in bed asleep. There is trouble and the fair-haired woman hates her. You had better not try to make them agree. And she has no love for the dark-haired suitor who is on the river, dreaming of her. She is too young. Let her alone."

"I wanted to know that she was safe. I will see her in the morning. Keep her until I come."

"Yes, Monsieur."

Madame Destournier had wept herself to sleep, and was breathing in comparative tranquillity. Ralph sat down beside the bed. If Rose had loved Eustache Boullé, the way would have been smooth as a summer sea. Was he sorry, or mysteriously glad? Why should he be glad? he demanded of himself.

Rose made no demur the next morning when M. Destournier told her of the new arrangements, only stipulating that she should have her liberty, to go and come as she pleased.

"Are you very angry because I could not take M. Boullé for a husband?" she inquired timidly.

"Oh, no, no. It was your life, Mademoiselle, for sorrow or joy. You only had the right to choose."

The bronze lashes quivered sensitively upon her cheeks, and a soft flush seemed to tangle itself among them.

"Is it joy, M'sieu?" in a low tone.

"It ought to be."

"Then I shall wait until there comes a touch of joy greater than any I have yet known. And I have had thrills of delight that have gone all through my body, but they faded. The love for a husband should last one's whole life."

"Yes, Mademoiselle. Why not?"

All the white tones of her skin flushed to rose, and crept even among the tendrils of her hair and over her small ears. Had he ever remarked how perfect they were before?

"*Ma fille*," he responded softly. "And you will be content until better times."

"So long as I do not have to marry, yes."

"That is a good *fille*. I shall see you now and then. You will like M. Hébert. He has plenty of books, and it will be a good practice to read up French."

She nodded.

He took a second thought.

"You may as well go now, and I will see that all is fair sailing. Noko, thanks for keeping Rose of Quebec where neither wolves nor marauders could get at her."

They walked quietly along, she with her agile step, that gave graceful turns to her figure. She was hardly a woman, and yet more than a child. But she kept the sweet simplicity of the latter.

Madame Hébert gave her a pleasant welcome. Thérèse glanced up from her lace work and nodded, hoping in a formal and quite ungirlish manner that she would be happy with them. Rose sat down beside her, and looked at the lace. There were pins stuck in a cushion and Thérèse threw her thread over this one and that one. How queer it looked.

"But if you should go wrong?" she inquired.

"Here is the pattern. This is quite simple. I have one very intricate, but handsome, like they make at home, Maman says. And one with beads. I took the idea from an Indian woman. I have some finished work, too."

"I have done a little of that. Miladi, that is Madame Destournier, used to do embroidery. At first she had such a store of pretty things. But now they cost so much. Only there are always packs of furs to exchange."

M. Hébert came in, with a pleasant word for his guest. They were extremely sorry that Madame was ill, but it gave them the pleasure of a visit from Rose. M. Destournier said she was fond of reading; he had some poets, and books on gardening, out of which he made poetry, smiling with French gayety.

On the whole, Rose liked the exchange. For a few days it seemed rather stiff, but there were so many new things, and M. Hébert liked a good listener. She walked about the garden with him. There were some rare flowers, of which he was very proud, and several he had found in the woods. Then there was a bed of herbs, and he distilled remedies, as well as some delightful perfumes. He soon grew quite fond of the pretty girl who was so interested in his pursuits, and fond of hearing him read aloud, and though his wife and children listened amiably, their thoughts were more on their work. Industry was Madame Hébert's cardinal virtue, and her daughter was a girl after her own heart.

But this fresh young creature to whom a marvellous world was being opened, who watched with eager eyes, who smiled or was saddened, who was sympathetic or indignant, who flushed or paled with the pain of tragedy, how charming she was!

She often ran up to the old home for a word with Wanamee, who was glad to see her. Miladi was neither better nor worse, some days so irritable that nothing could please her.

"She would keep M. Destournier beside her all the time," said Wanamee, "but a man has business. He is not meant for a nurse, and to yield to every whim. She is not a happy woman, miladi, and one hardly knows how much of her illness is imaginary. If she would only brighten up and go out a little, I think she would be better."

Rose used her strongest efforts to induce Thérèse to take a ramble with her. She did go to the woods occasionally, but she took her work along, always.

"Why do you keep so closely to it?" Rose asked one day.

"Mam'selle, part is for my trousseau. Maman instructed me in the fashion of her old home, where girls begin to fill up a chest, to be ready."

"Oh, Thérèse, have you a lover?"

"*Non.*" Thérèse shook her head. "But I may have, some day. There will be people, men sent over to settle New France. The King has promised."

"Did you see M. Boullé, when he was here?"

"Oh, yes. And a nice young man he is, too."

"I wish he had wanted to marry you. He is nice and good to look at. How could one marry Pierre Gaudrion, with his low brow and fierce eyebrows that meet over his nose, and his great hands, that seem made of lead, if he lays them on you! Yet he is smart and ingenious."

"And they say now that he visits Anastase Fromont. She will make a good wife."

Rose gave a little shiver. She could recall one time, the last, when Pierre had laid his hand on both her shoulders and drawn her to him, and she had wrenched herself away, every drop of blood within her rising up in protest.

"Don't you dare to touch me again, or I will kill you," she had flung out with blazing eyes.

Then for weeks he had never so much as looked at her.

"Yes," retrospectively. "Why do people take likes the wrong way? Now if M. Boullé had——"

"It is said he was wild for love of you," interposed Thérèse.

"That made the trouble. Miladi liked him so much. Thérèse, there is some kind of love we must have before you can put yourself in a man's hand, and let him take you to his home, where you must remain while life lasts. A whole long life, think of it! And if you wanted to get free the priest would forbid it. There would be nothing but to throw yourself into the river."

Thérèse looked with frightened eyes at the impetuous girl.

"There is God to obey and serve. And if He sends you a good husband—M. Boullé was brother to our dear Sieur's wife. It would have been an excellent marriage."

"If it hadst only been thou!" Rose's short-lived passion was over, and she was smiling.

"But you see, Mam'selle, they are strong Catholics. I follow my mother's faith, and we do not believe telling beads and saying prayers is all of the true service to the Lord. So it would never have done."

Rose was minded to laugh at the grave, satisfied tone, and the placid face.

"I am not a good Catholic, either. I do not go to confession. I do not tell lies nor steal, and though I get in tempers, it is because people try me and insist that I should do what I know it would be wrong for me to do. I did not want any husband, and I said so."

"But all girls hope to marry some time. I should like to have as good a husband as my mother has, and be as happy with him."

"He is delightful," admitted Rose. "But your mother loved him."

"He was chosen for her, and there was no good reason why she should not accept him. Yes, they have been very happy. But in France girls do not have a voice, and when the husband is chosen, they set themselves about making every act and thought of theirs agreeable."

"But if he was—unworthy?"

"Few parents would choose an unworthy lover, I think. They have the good of their children at heart."

Eustache Boullé had not been unworthy. He would have married her, nameless. Her heart turned suddenly tender toward him. She was learning that in the greater world there was a certain pride of birth, an honor in being well-born. She was better satisfied that she had not accepted Eustache. What if the Sieur had been opposed to it and Madame de Champlain frowned upon her?

And then the Sieur returned, but he came alone. The house in the Rue St. Germain l'Auxerrois, with Madame Boullé, was more attractive than the roughness of a half-civilized country. Even then Hélène plead for permission to become a lay sister in a convent, which would have meant a separation, but he would not agree to this. Ten years after his death she entered the Ursuline Convent, and some years later founded one in the town of Meaux, endowing it with most of her fortune. And though the next summer Eustache renewed his suit, he met with a firm refusal, and found the influence of his brother-in-law was against him.

Rose had been brave enough to lay the matter before him.

"Little one," he said, in the most fatherly tone—"if thou dost not love a man enough to give him thy whole soul, except what belongs to God, to desire to spend thy life with him, to honor and serve him with the best thou hast, then do not marry him. It is a bitter thing for a man to go hungry for love, when a woman has promised to hold the cup of joy to his lips."

Eustache then returned to France, and after a period of study and preparation, took holy orders, as a Friar.

CHAPTER XIV

A WAY OVER THORNS

Champlain found on his arrival five Jesuit priests, who had received a poor welcome, even from their French brethren. The Récollets had offered them the hospitality of their convent, which had been gratefully accepted. So far not much advance had been made among the Indians, who seemed incapable of discerning the spiritual side of religion, though they eagerly caught up any superstition.

There had also come over a number of emigrants, two or three families, the others, men of no high degree, who had been tempted by the lure of a speedy fortune. It was a long, hard, cold winter, and throngs of Indians applied for relief. Champlain had established a farm at Beaupré, down the river, and stocked it with cattle he had imported. But for weeks everything was half-buried in snow.

One morning M. Destournier came in. Rose was sitting by the fire in M. Hébert's study and shop. The great fireplace was full of blazing logs, and she looked the picture, not only of comfort, but

delight. She had not seen much of him for the month past. There was no opportunity for sledging even, the roads had been so piled with snow. Then she had taken quite a domestic turn, much to the gratification of Madame Hébert.

M. Destournier looked thin and careworn. Rose sprang up, deeply touched.

"Oh, you are ill," she cried. "I have not seen you in so long. Sit here in the warmth. And miladi?"

She always inquired after her.

"That is what I have come about. Rose, my dear child, can you forget enough of the past, and the long silence, to come back to us? Miladi wants you, needs you, has sent me to see. She is very ill, and lonely."

Rose flushed warmly, with both pain and pleasure, and her eyes softened, almost to tears.

"I shall be glad to come." There was a tremble of emotion in her voice. "I realize how great a disappointment it was to her, but you know I was right, and when I asked the Sieur if I had been too hasty, or unjust, he approved. He thinks no woman ought to marry without giving her whole heart, and somehow I had none to give," blushing deeply and looking lovelier than ever. "I think it is because—because I am a foundling, and could not go to any man with honor. So I must make myself happy in my own way."

Her figure had taken on more womanly lines, though it was still slim and exquisitely graceful. And the girlish beauty had ripened somewhat, losing none of its olden charm.

She colored still more deeply under his glance.

"Is there anything new with miladi?" she inquired, with some hesitation.

"It seems a gradual wasting away and weakness. She thinks she will be better when spring opens, and longs to return to France. I am putting my affairs in shape to make this possible. She is very lonely. She has missed your brightness and vivacity. It has seemed a different place."

Rose's heart swelled with pity. She forgave Madame from the depths of her heart, remembering only the old times and the tenderness.

"When shall I come?"

"At once. She begged for you last week, but I was afraid it was a restless fancy. The road is quite well broken. What a winter we have had! The drought last summer shortened crops, and there have been so many extra mouths to feed among the unfortunate Indians. So if you will inform the Héberts—I have seen Monsieur."

She went through to the kitchen, where mother and daughter were concocting savory messes for the sick. They both returned with her and expressed much sympathy for the invalid. M. Hébert had said to his wife that miladi was slowly nearing her end, while her real disease seemed a mystery, but medical lore in the new world had not made much advance.

"We shall only lend her to you for a while," Madame Hébert said, with a faint smile. "I hardly know how Monsieur will do without her. She is truly a rose-bloom in this dreary winter, that seems as if it would never end."

"And I want her to bloom for a while in the room where my poor sick wife has to stay. She longs for some freshness and sweetness," he said, in a pleading tone.

"She was rightly named," said Madame, with a smile. "Her poor mother must have died, I am quite sure, for she could not have sent away such an adorable child. Even when Mère Dubray had her, she was charming, in her wild, eager ways, like a bird. The good God made her a living Rose, indeed, to show how lovely a human Rose could be."

She came in the room wrapped in her furs, her hood with its border of silver-fox framing in her face, that glowed with youth and health.

"You have all been so good to me," and her beautiful eyes were alight with gratitude. "I shall come in often, and oh, I shall think of you every hour in the day."

"Do not forget the latest pattern of lace-making," added the practical, industrious Thérèse.

It was glorious without, a white world with a sky of such deep blue it almost sparkled. Leafless trees stretched out long black or gray arms, and here and there a white birch stood up grandly, like some fair goddess astray. Stretches of evergreens suggested life, but beyond them hills of snow rising higher and higher, until they seemed lost in the blue, surmounted by a sparkling frost line.

The paths had been beaten down—occasionally a tract around a doorway shovelled. It was hard and smooth as a floor. Destournier slipped her arm within his, and then gazed at her in surprise.

"You must have grown. How tall you are. I wonder if I shall get accustomed to the new phase? I seem always to see the little girl who sat upon my knee. Oh, do you remember when you were ill at Mère Dubray's?"

"All my life comes to me in pictures. I sometimes think I can remember what was before the long

sail in the boat, but it is so vague. Now it is all here, its rough ways, its rocks, its beautiful river are a part of me. I am never longing to go elsewhere. I am sorry Madame de Champlain did not love it as well. And the Sieur was such a good, tender husband."

Destournier sighed a little, also. The Sieur kept busy and full of plans, but occasionally there came a wistfulness in his eyes and a pain in the lines that were settling so rapidly about his face.

They crunched over the icy paths. A time or two she slipped, and he drew her nearer, the touch of her body, though wrapped in its furs, giving him a delicious thrill. He lifted her up the steep ways he had seen her climb with the litheness of a squirrel.

Wanamee came out with a fervent welcome. The old kitchen was the same. Pani was toasting himself in his favorite corner. Mawha was doing Indian bead and feather work, and looked up with a cordial nod.

"Get good and warm. I will tell miladi you have come. You will find her much changed, but she does not like it remarked upon."

She and Wanamee were in an earnest talk when she was summoned. The room had in it some new appointments, brought from France, but even a luxurious court beauty might have envied the rich fur rugs lying about and hanging over the rude and somewhat clumsy chairs of home manufacture.

Pillowed up in a half-sitting posture in the bed was miladi. Rose could hardly forbear a shocked exclamation. When she had seen her every day, the changes had passed unremarked, for they had begun, even then. The lovely skin was yellowed and wrinkled and defined the cheek bones, the beautiful hair had grown dull, and the eyes had lost their lustre. All her youth was gone, she was an old lady, even before the time.

And this vision of youthful, vigorous beauty was like a sudden sunburst, when the day had been dull and cloudy. She seemed to animate the room, to light up the farthest recesses, to bring a breath of revivifying air and hope.

"I have wanted you so," the invalid said piteously. "Oh, how strong and well you are! I never was very strong, and so the illness has taken a deeper hold on me. And now you must help me to get well. Your freshness will be an elixir—that is what I have wanted. Wanamee is good for a servant nurse, but I have needed something finer and better."

She held out her hand and Rose pressed it to her lips. It was bony, showing swollen blue veins, and had a clammy coldness that struck a chill to the rosy lips.

"Did you like them at the Héberts? They are very staid people, and think only of work, I believe."

"They were very kind, and I found them well-informed about everything."

"Why, when they know so much, can they not cure me? You know it is not as though my case was very serious. I am weak, that is all. The doctor came down from Tadoussac, but he just shook his head, and his powders did me no good. M. Hébert sent some extracts of herbs, but nothing gives me any strength. And the snow and cold stays on as if spring would never come. What have you been doing all this while? You couldn't run about in the woods."

"Oh, Madame, I am outgrowing that wild longing, though the trees have a hundred voices, and I seem to understand what they say, and the song of the birds, the ripple and splash of the river. But I have been learning other things. How great the world is, and the stories of kings and queens, and brave travellers, who go about and discover new places. It widens one's subjects of thought. And I have learned some cooking, and how to make home seem cheerful, and the weaving of pretty laces, like those the ships bring over. I am not so idle now."

"And you liked them very much?" She uttered this rather resentfully.

"Ah, Madame, how could one help, when people were so good, and took so much pains with one."

Her voice was sweet and appealing, yet it had a strand of strength and appreciation. But had *she* not been good to the little girl all these years!

"Has Mam'selle Thérèse any lover?" she asked, after a pause.

"Not yet, Madame. Some old family friends are to come over in the summer, and one has a son that Thérèse played with in childhood. It may be that she will like him."

"And she will do as her parents desire!"

"They are very just with her, and love her dearly."

"And the brother?"

"He went to Mont Réal before the hard cold. If there were only people to settle there it would be finer than Quebec, it is said."

"I am so tired of Quebec. Next summer we will go home; that is the country for me. M. Destournier is willing to go at last, and I shall see that he never returns to this dreary hole."

"It can hardly be called a hole, when there are so many heights all about," laughed the girl.

"It is a wretched place. And you will soon like France, and wonder how people are content to stay here. You see the Governor's wife had enough of it. She had good sense."

"But, Madame, the priests teach that a wife's place is beside her husband."

"What have I gained by staying beside mine, who is always planning how to civilize those wretched squaws, and make life better for them? The better should have been for me. And now I have lost my health, and my beautiful hair has fallen out and begins to turn white. Am I very much changed?"

Rose was embarrassed. Years ago miladi hated the thoughts of growing old.

"Illness tries one very much," she said evasively. "But you will gain it up when you begin to mend."

"Oh, do you think so? You see I must get something to restore the wasted flesh. How plump you are. And I had such an admirable figure. M. Laurent thought me the most graceful girl he had ever seen, had so many pretty compliments, and that keeps one in heart, spurs one on to new efforts. M. Destournier is not of that kind. He is cold-blooded, and seems more English than French."

Rose colored. The dispraise hurt her.

"Fix my pillows, and put me down. I get so tired. And stir up the fire."

Rose did this very gently, smoothing out wrinkles, holding the cold hands in hers, so warm and full of strength. The room seemed smothering to her, but she stirred the fire vigorously, and sent a vivid shower of sparks upward.

"Now if you had a little broth——"

"But I cannot bear to have you go away. Yes, I know I shall get stronger with you here."

"You need some nourishment. I will not be gone long," giving a heartsome smile.

A gallery ran along this side of the house, built for miladi's convenience. She stepped out on it, in the clear air and sunshine, and took a few turns. Poor Madame! Would she get well when she seemed so near dying?

The broth was reviving. Rose fed her with a teaspoon, instead of giving her the cup to drink from, and they both laughed like children. Then she arranged the pillows and bathed the poor, wrinkled face and hair with some fragrant water, and miladi fell asleep under these ministrations.

Rose moved lightly about the room, changing its aspect with deft touches. She was glad to do something in return. Miladi had been very sweet when she was ill, and there had been the pleasant years when she had not minded the exactions. Was there really a plan to go to France? Would they take her from her beloved Quebec?

M. Destournier brought in a book from the Governor's store and Rose read aloud in the evening. That was a restless time for miladi, but the sweet, cheerful voice tranquillized her. M. Ralph sat in the corner of the wide stone fireplace, watching the changes in the lovely face, as she seemed to enter into the spirit of the adventures. Heroism appealed to her. The flush came and went in her cheek, her eyes sent out gleams of glory, and her bosom rose and fell.

There came an instant of rapture to Ralph Destournier, that mysterious and almost sublime appreciation of a woman's love, a love such as this girl could give. He had possessed the childish affection, the innocent girlish fondness, but some other would win the woman's heart, the prize he would lay down his life for. What had been the pity and weak tenderness was given to the woman in the bed yonder. He knew now she had only touched his heart in sympathy, and a fancied duty. In a thousand years she would never be capable of such love as this girl, blossoming into womanhood, could give.

"There should be some women at hand," declared a weak voice from the bed. "It adds an interest to the discoveries, to think, if a woman did not inspire it, she crowned it with her admiration. But for a party of men to go off alone——"

"The hardships would be too great for a woman."

Destournier's voice was husky with repressed emotion. This girl would keep step and inspire an explorer.

"They would not take so many hardships then. What if there is a great river or ocean leading to India! A man can live but one life, and that should be devoted to some woman."

He rose, crossed the room, and kissed his wife on the forehead. He learned by accident one day that she used something to keep her lips red with the lost bloom of youth, and they had never been sweet to him since.

"Good-night. I hope you will sleep. Rose had better not read any more. We must not have all the good things in one day."

He ran down the steps to where a street had been straightened and widened in the summer. The moonlight gave everything a weird glow, the stars were tinted in all colors, as one finds in the

clear cold of the north. Only the planets and the larger ones, the myriad of small ones were outshone. What beauty, what strength, what wonders lay hidden in the wide expanse. He was tempted to plunge into the wilderness, to the frozen north, to the blooming south, or that impenetrable expanse of the west, and leave behind the weak woman, who in her selfish way loved him, and the girl who could create a new life for him, that he could love with the force of manhood suddenly aroused, that had been clean and wholesome. He was glad of that, though he could not lay it at the girl's feet. Miladi had been in this state so long, sometimes rallying, and in the summer they would go to France. But they would leave Rose of old Quebec behind.

Over there at the fort a man sat poring over maps and papers, a solitary man now, who had wedded youth and beauty, and found only Dead Sea fruit. But he was going bravely on his way. That was a man's duty.

In a few days there was a decided improvement in miladi. She was dressed, and sat up part of the time. She evinced an eager resolve to get well, she put on a sort of childish brightness, that was at times pitiful. But nothing could conceal the ravages of time. She looked older than her years. She was, in a curious manner, drawing on the vitality of the young girl, and it was generously given.

Then came to Rose a great sorrow. M. Hébert, who had been such an inspiring influence to her, died from the effects of a fall. There was a general mourning in the small settlement. The Governor felt he had lost one of his most trusty friends. The eldest daughter, Guillemette, who had married one Guillaume Couillard, came down from Tadoussac, and they took his place on the farm. Hers had been the first wedding in Quebec.

Rose felt that this must change the home for her. She had counted on going back to them. There were days when she grew very tired of miladi's whims and inanities, and longed to fly to her beloved wood.

"If I should die, he will marry her," miladi thought continually. "I will not die. I will take her to France and marry her to some one before her beauty fades. She will make a sensation."

Rose never dreamed she was so closely watched. After that moonlight battle with himself, Destournier allowed his soul no further thought of the present Rose, but dreamed over the frank child-charm she had possessed for him. He grew grave and silent, and spent much of his time with the Sieur.

Spring was very late. It seemed as if old Quebec would never throw off her ermine mantle. Richelieu was now at the helm in France, and that country and England were at war with each other. Quebec was looking forward to supplies and reinforcements that had been promised.

From a cold and unusually dry May, they went into summer heats. The Sieur de Champlain spent much of his time getting his farm at Cape Tourmente in order. M. Destournier was engrossed with the improvements of the town, and keeping the Indians at work, who were, it must be confessed, notoriously lazy. Miladi complained. Rose grew weary. She missed her dear friend M. Hébert, and she was puzzled at the coldness and distance of M. Destournier. But the rambles were a comfort and a kind of balance to her life. She brought wild flowers to miladi, and the first scarlet strawberries. And there was always such an enchanting freshness after these excursions, that the elder woman liked her to take them.

Richelieu understood better than any one yet the importance of this colony to France, when the English were making such rapid strides in the new world. He was planning extensive improvements in colonizing, and fitting out ships with stores and men.

The news came to Cape Tourmente that vessels had been sighted. Word was sent on to Quebec, and there was a general rejoicing.

But it was soon turned to terror and anguish. Some savages came paddling furiously to the town, and though the cries were indistinguishable at first, they soon gathered force.

"The English have burned and pillaged Cape Tourmente, and are at Tadoussac! Save yourselves. Man the fort. Call all to arms!"

Alas! The fort was considerably out of repair. The Indians had been peaceable for some time and the mother country had kept them short of supplies. The walled settlement was protection from marauding bands, and the fort could have been made impregnable if the Governor had carried out his plans and not been hampered by the lack of all-needed improvements.

The farmer at Cape Tourmente had been slightly wounded, and was brought down with the boat, on which several had escaped. The buildings had been burned, the cattle killed, the crops laid waste. No doubt they were now pillaging Tadoussac.

Champlain began to prepare for defense with all the force available. Muskets were loaded, cannon trained down the river, the fort manned. Friendly Indians offered their services. All was wild alarm, the blow was so unexpected.

Miladi, hearing the noise and confusion, explained it her way.

"It is always so when the horde of traders come in," she said. She had been looking over old finery, and getting ready for a return to France.

The little convent on the St. Charles was prepared to repel any surprise. But at mid-afternoon a boat hovered about in the river, and it was learned presently that it conveyed some captives taken by the English, who were sent with a letter from the commander of the fleet, that now appeared quite formidable, with its six well-manned vessels.

The Governor at once called together the leading men of the place and laid before them the summons of surrender, and the first news of the war between France and England. It was couched in polite terms, but contained a well-laid plan. In all, eighteen ships had been despatched by His Majesty, the King of Britain. Several small stations had been captured, also a boat with supplies from France, and all resources were to be cut off. By surrendering they would save their homes and property, and be treated with the utmost courtesy, but it was the intention of the English to take the town, although they preferred to do it without bloodshed.

It was quite a lengthy document, and Champlain read it slowly, that each sentence might be well considered. The hard winter, the late spring, the supplies at Cape Tourmente and Tadoussac being cut off, rendered them in no situation for a prolonged struggle. But they would not yield so easily to the demand of the English. They had the courage of men who had undergone many hardships, and the pride of their nation. Quebec had been the child of the Sieur de Champlain's work and love. With one voice they resolved to refuse, and the word was sent to Captain David Kirke.

He meanwhile turned his fleet down the river, fancying the town an easy prey, when he espied the relief stores sent from France, a dozen or so vessels, bringing colonists, workmen, priests, women, and children, and farming implements, as well as stores, convoyed by a man-of-war. It was a rich prize for the Englishman, and an order for surrender was sent, which was refused.

The battle was indeed disastrous for Quebec, though they were not to know it until months afterward. Most of the emigrants Captain Kirke despatched back to France, some of the least valuable vessels he burned, and sailed home with his trophies, leaving Quebec for another attempt.

Meanwhile the little colony waited in ill-defined terror. Day after day passed and no attack was made. Then they ventured to send out some boats and found to their surprise the river was clear of the enemy, but every little settlement had been laid waste. The stock of food was growing low, the crops were not promising. Every consignment sent from France had miscarried, and since the two nations were at war there was small hope of supplies. What would they do in winter? Already the woods were scoured for nuts and edible roots, and stores were hidden away with trembling hands. There were many plans discussed. If they could send part of their people out to find a Basque fishing fleet, and thus return home.

No heart was heavier than that of the Sieur de Champlain. To be sure there was his renown as a discoverer and explorer, but the city he had planned, that was to be the crowning point of France's possessions, was slowly falling to decay.

CHAPTER XV

HELD IN AN ENEMY'S GRASP

These were sad times for old Quebec and for the little girl who was blossoming into a womanhood that should have been joyous and serene, she asked so little of life.

When the news of the reverse and the loss of the stores reached them, they were still more greatly burthened by the influx from Tadoussac and the settlements around. Then, too, the wandering Indians joined in the clamor for food. Trade was stopped. Mont Réal took the furs and disposed of them in other channels. No one knew how many English vessels were lying outside, ready to confiscate anything valuable.

Madame Destournier was in a state of ungovernable terror.

"Why should we stay here and be murdered?" she would cry. "Or starve to death! Let us return to France, as we planned. Am I of not as much consideration as an Indian squaw, that you all profess so much anxiety for?"

"It would not be prudent to cross the ocean now," her husband said. "We might be taken prisoners and carried to England. You are in no state to face hardships."

"As if I did not face them continually! Oh, I should have gone at once, when Laurent died. And if the English take the town, where will be the fortune he struggled for! I wish I had never seen the place."

She would go on bewailing her hard fate until utterly exhausted. There were days when she would not let Rose out of her sight, except when her husband entered the room. It was well that he had a motive of the highest honor, to hold himself well in hand, though there were times when his whole heart went out in pity for Rose. Was there another soul in the world that would have been so pitiful and tender?

Eustache Boullé had come from Tadoussac, since so little could be done toward rehabilitating that, and proved himself a most worthy compatriot to Champlain. Rose was sorely troubled at first, but she soon found that miladi no longer cared for the marriage. She was too selfish to think of losing one who was so useful to her. The girl's vigor and vivacity were a daily tonic to her. Would she sap the strength out of this splendid creature? Ralph Destournier wondered, with a pang. Yet to interfere was not possible. He understood the jealous nature, that if given the slightest ground would precipitate an *esclandre*.

Among the Indians flocking in was Savignon, who had gone to France years before with Champlain, and who had been in demand as an interpreter. He had spent a year or two up at the strait, where there was quite a centre, and the priests had established a station, and gone further on to the company's outpost. An unusually fine-looking brave, with many of the white man's graces, that had not sunk deep enough to be called real qualities. But they were glad to see him, and gave him a warm welcome.

And now what was to be done? All supplies being cut off, the grain fields laid in ruin, the crops failing, how were they to sustain themselves through the winter? Various plans were suggested. One of the most feasible, though fraught with danger, was to lead a party of Algonquins against the Iroquois, and capture some of their villages. The tribe had proved itself deceitful and unfriendly on several occasions. The Algonquins were ready for this. Another was to accept the proffer of a number settled at Gaspé, who had been warm friends with Pontgrave, and who would winter about twenty of the suffering people.

Ralph Destournier offered to head the expedition, as it needed a person of some experience to restrain the Indians, and good judgment in not wasting supplies, if any could be found. Savignon consented to accompany them, and several others who were weary of the suffering around them and preferred activity. They would be back before winter set in if they met with any success.

Destournier planned that his wife should be made comfortable while he was gone. At first she protested, then she sank into a kind of sullen silence. She had seemed stronger for some weeks.

Rose had gone for her daily walk late in the afternoon. She read miladi to sleep about this time and was sure of an hour to herself. She was feeling the severe drain upon her quite sensibly, and though she longed to throw herself on a couch of moss and study the drifting clouds in the glory of the parting day, when the sun had gone behind the hills and the wake of splendor was paling to softer colors; lavender and pale green, that mingled in an indescribable tint, for which there could be no name. There was a little coolness in the air, but the breath of the river was sweet and revived her. Many of the leaves had dried and fallen from the drought, yet the juniper and cedar were bluish-green in the coming twilight, with their clusters of berries frostily gray.

But she walked on. There was a craving in her heart for a change, a larger outlook. It would not be in marrying M. Boullé, though more than once when she had surprised his eyes bent wistfully upon her, a pang of pity for him had gone to her heart. Could she spend years waiting on miladi, whose strength of will kept her alive. Or was it that horrible fear of death? If it was true as the priests taught—oh, yes, it must be. God could not be so cruel as to put creatures in this world to toil and suffer, and then drop back to dust, to nothingness. Even the Indians believed in another sphere, in their crude superstitious fashion, and there must be some better place as a reward for the pain here that was not one's own fault. She loved to peer beyond the skies as she thought, and to drift midway between them and the grand woods, the changeful sea. What if one floated off and never came back!

There was a step beside her, and she drew a long breath, though she was not alarmed, for she almost felt a presence, and turned, waited.

"Rose," the voice said, "I have wanted to find you alone. I have several things to say. I have promised to go on this expedition because I felt it was necessary. You will not blame me. I have made all arrangements for you and miladi, and I shall be back before the real cold weather sets in. I only pray that we may be successful."

"Yes," she said under her breath, yet in vague surprise.

"It is a hard burthen to lay upon you. Do not imagine I have not seen it. At first I thought it only the restless whim of failing health, but I believe she loves you as much as she can love any human being. I realize now that she should have gone to her own sunny France long ago. She is formed for pleasure and brightness, variety, and to have new people about her when she exhausts the old. I should not have married her, but it seemed the best step then. I truly believed——"

No, he would not drag his weak justification before this pure, sweet girl, though he had almost said "I believed she loved me." And he had learned since that she loved no one but her own self. Laurent Giffard had never awakened to the truth. But he had taken the best of her youth.

"Oh, you must know that I am glad to make some return for all your kindness in my childhood. And she was sweet and tender. I think it is the illness that has changed her. Oh, I can recall many delightful hours spent with her. I should be an ingrate if I could not minister to her now of my best."

"You could never be an ingrate," he protested.

"I hope not," fervently.

"I count confidently on returning. I can't tell why, for we shall risk the fate of war, but I can almost see myself here again in the old place. Like our beloved Commandant I, too, have dreams of what Quebec can be made, a glorious place to hand down to posterity. Meanwhile you will care for her as you do now, and comfort her with your many pleasant arts. I am a man formed for business and active endeavor, and cannot minister in that manner. Perhaps Providence did not intend me for a husband, and I have thwarted the will of Providence."

There was a humorous strain in his voice at the last sentence.

"Oh, you need not fear but that I will do my best. And I, too, shall look for your home-coming, believe in it, pray for it."

"The women will remain, and Pani will serve you to the uttermost. When this weary time is ended, and we are in better condition, you will have your reward."

"I do not want any reward, it is only returning what has been given."

He knew many things miladi had grudged her, most of all the home, since it was of his providing and intent.

They wandered on in silence for some time. Both hearts were too full for commonplace talk, and he did not dare venture out of safe lines. He could not pretend to fatherly love, even that cloaked by brotherliness would be but a sham, he knew. He had his own honor to satisfy, as well as her guilelessness.

Now it was quite dark.

"Oh, I must go back. It has been so pleasant that I have loitered. Let us run down this slope."

She held out her hand, and he took it. They skimmed over the ground like children. Then there were the steps to climb, but she was up the first.

"Good-night." She waved her white hand, and he saw it in the darkness.

"The saints bless and keep you."

She ran over to the level and then up again toward the kitchen end. There was a savory smell of supper. A moose had been killed and divided around.

"Oh, how delightful! Is there enough for two bites? One will not satisfy me. But I must see miladi."

"No," interposed Wanamee. "I took in a cup of broth, but she was soundly asleep. Have some steak while it is hot. The saints be praised for a mouthful of decent food."

Yes, it was good. Pani watched with eager, hungry eyes and lips aquiver. Rose felt almost conscience-smitten that she should have been satisfied first.

"Was there much to be divided?" she asked of him.

"He was a noble, big fellow. And they have gone up in the woods for deer."

Miladi was still asleep when she entered the room. She held the lamp a little close with a sudden fear, but she saw the tranquil movement of her chest and was reassured. There was a young moon coming up, a golden crescent in a sky of flawless blue. It was too small to light the savage cliffs, but she could hear the splash of the incoming tide that swirled along with the current of the river. If the English came, what then?

It was near ten when miladi woke.

"What time is it?" she asked. "Not quite morning, for it is dark. I have had such a splendid sleep. Why, I feel quite well."

She sat up in the bed.

"Come and bathe my face, Rose. Do you know whether Madame Hébert has the recipe of this fragrant water? Mine is nearly gone. It is so refreshing."

"I am quite sure she has. You have had no supper. There is some tasty meat broth."

"I'm tired of pease and greens, and make-believe things that don't nourish you at all. And there was such nice fish. Why do they not get some? The river certainly hasn't dried up."

"No, Madame," in almost a merry tone, as if it might take the edge off of complaining. "But there is such a scarcity of hooks. Petit Gabou is making a net of dried grass that he thinks will answer the purpose. And we have always had such a plentiful supply of fish."

The broth was very nourishing. Then Rose must sit with both of miladi's hands in hers, so warm and soft, hers being little beside bone and joints. She talked of France and her youth, when she was a pretty girl, just out of the convent, and went to Paris. "You will like it so much. I can hardly wait for the summer to come. I shall not mind if Monsieur has so much business on hand that he cannot leave," and her tone had a little mocking accent. "When men get older they lose their nice ways of compliment and grace. They care less for their wives. Even M. de Champlain does not fret after his, who is no doubt enjoying herself finely. She was wise not to return."

The slim, golden crescent had wandered away to other worlds, and the stars grew larger and brighter in their bed of blue. She watched them through the open window. A screen was set up so that no draught should annoy miladi. Presently she fell asleep again, and Rose stole to her own couch, the other side of the screen, where she could still watch the stars.

Savignon had come in with news. The Algonquins knew of a storehouse of the Iroquois, who had gone on the war-path, and would hardly be back for a whole moon. It would be best to start at once, and they began preparations. Some of the Indian women volunteered, they were used to carrying burthens. Bags were packed up. They trusted to find most of their food upon the route.

Miladi took the parting tranquilly. M. Ralph had spent weeks on exploring expeditions. If there was any danger in this, she did not heed it. She held up her face to be kissed, and he noted how dry and parched the lips were.

He gave a brief good-bye to Rose, who was standing near.

"Surely, he does not care for women," Miladi thought exultingly. "Even her fresh, young beauty is nothing to him. He has no tender, eager soul."

Rose went down to the plateau to see the start.

"You are much interested, Mam'selle?" Savignon said. "Give us the charm of your thoughts and prayers."

"You have both, most truly." What a fine, stalwart fellow Savignon was, lighter than the average, and picturesque in his Indian costume, though he often wore the garb of civilization. French had become to him almost a mother tongue.

Yet Rose wondered a little if it was right to rob the storehouse where the industrious Indians had been making preparations for the coming winter. Was it easier for one race to starve than another?

"And wish us a safe return."

The look in his eyes disconcerted her for an instant. Her own drooped. She was acquiring a woman's wisdom.

"I do that most heartily," she made answer, turning aside; but the admiration lingered over her fine, yet strong figure, with its grace of movement. The beautiful eyes haunted him, if they were turned away.

Such forays were not uncommon among the tribes. The Iroquois had planted more than one storehouse in the wilderness, in most secluded places. It saved carrying burthens, as they wandered about, or if in desperate weather, they set up their wigwams, and remained eating and sleeping, until hunger drove them elsewhere.

A ship had come down from Acadia with news that several English vessels were hovering about. They offered to take some of the women and children, and M. de Champlain was thankful for this. By spring there must be some change in affairs. The mother country could not wholly forget them.

Rose wondered at times that miladi remained so tranquil. She slept a great deal, and it was an immense relief. It seemed occasionally that her mind wandered, though it was mostly vague mutterings.

Once she said quite clearly—"I will not have the child. You will come to love her better than you do me."

Then she opened her eyes and fixed them on Rose, with a hard, cold stare.

"Go away," she cried. "Go away. I will not have you here to steal his love from me. You are only a child, but one day you will be a woman. And I shall be growing old, old! A woman's youth ought to come back to her for a brief while."

Rose's heart swelled within her. Was this why miladi had taken such queer spells, and sometimes been unkind to her for days? And M. Destournier had always stood her friend.

Yet she felt infinitely sorry for miladi, and that calmed her first burst of indignation. She went out to the forest to walk. The withered leaves lay thick on the ground, they had not been as beautiful as in some autumns, the drought had turned them brown too soon. The white birches seemed like lovely ghosts haunting the darkened spaces. Children were digging for fallen nuts, even edible roots, and breaking off sassafras twigs. What would they do before spring, if relief did not come!

Suppose she went away with the next vessel that came in. But then she had promised. Oh, yes, she must look after miladi, just as carefully as if there were depths of love between them. How did she come to know so much about love? Surely she had never loved any one with her whole soul. Neither had she craved an overwhelming affection. But now the world seemed large, and strange, and empty to her. She rustled the leaves under her feet, as if they made a sort of company in the loneliness. Perhaps it would not have been so bad to have taken M. Boullé's love. If only love did not mean nearness, some sacred rites, kisses. She felt if she raised her hand in permission it might still be hers. No, no, she could not take it, and she shivered. Why, it was nearly dark, and cold. She must run to warm her blood.

She came in bright and glowing, her eyes in cordial shining.

"Thank the Holy Mother that you have come," cried Mawha. "Miladi has been crying and going on and saying that you have deserted her. Wanamee could not comfort her. Run, quick."

Miladi was sobbing as if her heart would break. Rose bent over her, smoothed her brow and hair, chafed the cold hands.

"The way was so long and dark," she cried, "such a long, long path. Will I have to go all alone?" and Rose could feel the terrified shiver.

"You will not have to go anywhere," began the girl, in a soothing tone. "I shall stay here with you."

"But you were gone," complainingly.

"I will not go again."

"Then sit here and hold my hands. I think it was a dream. I am not going to die. I am really better. I walked about to-day. Is there word from Monsieur? You know we are going to France in the summer. Do you know what happens when one dies? I've seen the little Indian babies die. Do you suppose they really have souls?"

"Every one born in the world has. The priest will tell you." Rose gained a little courage. "Perhaps you would like to see Father Jamay."

"I went to confession a long while ago. The priest wanted my French books. M. Ralph said I need not give them up. I prayed to the Virgin. I prayed for many things that did not come. But we will go to France, M. Ralph promised, and he never breaks his word, so I do not need to pray for that. I am cold. Cover me up warm, and get something for my feet. Then sit here and put your arms around me. Promise me you will never go away again."

"I promise"—in a sweet, soft tone.

Then she sat on the side of the bed and placed her arm about the shoulders. How thin they were.

"Sing something. The silence frightens me."

Rose sang, sometimes like a chant, lines she could recall that had a musical sound. The leaning figure grew heavier, the breathing was slow and tranquil. Wanamee came in.

"Help me put her down," Rose said, for she was weary with the strained position.

They laid her down tenderly, without waking her.

"Stay with me," pleaded Rose. "You know when I went away M. Destournier used to come in. I do not like to leave her alone."

"It is curious," exclaimed Wanamee. "This morning she seemed so well, and walked about. Then she sinks down. How long she has been ill, this way."

Rose wanted to ask a solemn question, but she did not dare. Presently Wanamee dozed off, but Rose watched until the eastern sky began to show long levels of light. There seemed an awesome stillness in the room.

"Wanamee," she said faintly.

The woman rose and looked at the figure on the bed, standing some seconds in silence.

"Go out quietly, *ma fille*, and find Mawha. Send her in." Then she turned Rose quite around, and the girl uttered no question.

"What is the matter?" asked Pani. "Mam'selle, you are white as a snowdrift."

"I think miladi is dead," and she drew a long, strangling breath, her figure trembling with unknown dread.

Pani bowed and crossed himself several times.

Wanamee came in presently. "The poor lady is gone," she said reverently. "She was so afraid of dying, and it was just like a sleep. Pani, you must row up to the convent at once, and ask some of the fathers to come down. Stop first at the fort and tell the Governor."

That Madame Destournier should die surprised no one, but it was unexpected, for all that. It appeared to accentuate the other sorrows and anxieties. And that M. Destournier should be away seemed doubly sad. Two of the priests came down with Pani, and held some services over the body. Her ill health was the excuse of her not having paid more attention to the offices of the Church, that so far had not flourished at all well. The convent was really too far, and the chapel service had waned since the departure of Madame de Champlain.

When Rose gained courage to go into the room where a few tapers were dimly burning, she lost her fear in an instant. It was a thin and wrinkled face, but it had a certain placid sweetness that often hallows it, when pain and fear are ended. Rose pressed her lips to the cold forehead, and breathed a brief prayer that miladi had found entrance to a happier land. A new thought took possession of her. Miladi belonged wholly to Laurent Giffard now. The tie that bound her to M.

Destournier was broken, and it was as if it had never been. She remembered he had once said he would relinquish her in that other country. She had simply been given to him in her sorrow, to care for a brief while. And how grandly he had done it. Rose was too just, perhaps with some of the incisive energy of youth, to cover up miladi's faults at once. If she had been grateful to him for his devotion she would have thought more tenderly of love. Yet she experienced a profound pity.

There had been set aside a burial plot, one end for the white inhabitants. Thither the body was taken, and laid beside her true husband, with the rites of the Church. M. de Champlain headed the procession, but on the outskirts there was a curious throng.

The Héberts pressed their hospitality upon Rose, but even they were in great straits. Then Wanamee was less superstitious than most of her race, and made no demur at remaining in the house, if Rose desired to stay. It was home to the girl, and she could almost fancy the better part of miladi's spirit hovered about it, released from suffering.

How would M. Destournier take it? Would he regret he had not been here?

Day after day they waited the return of the party. Had there been a battle? Sometimes Rose felt as if she must join them, the suspense seemed the hardest of all to endure.

At last most of the Indians returned, with bags and blankets of supplies. There had been no battle. They had come unexpectedly upon a storehouse, cunningly hidden in the wood. There were no guards about. So they had entered, and after satisfying their hunger, packed corn and dried meats, onions, which would be a great treat, and nuts. They divided the party, and sent one relay on ahead, to travel as fast as possible, with the good news, and relieve the famishing people.

Quebec greeted them with the wildest joy. Savignon headed this party. They had two days' start, and though the ground was frozen, there had been no deep snow to prevent the others from a tolerably comfortable march. They would no doubt be in soon. It seemed a large addition to their scanty store. A great joy pervaded the little colony.

Two days passed, then a third. A party, headed by Savignon, went out to meet them. They found a few men, dragging and carrying weary loads. There had been an accident to M. Destournier. He had stumbled into an unseen pitfall and broken his leg. They had carried him on a litter for two days, then he had begged the others to leave him with an attendant, and hurry onward, coming back for him as soon as possible.

Rose was all sympathy and anxiety. She flew to one of the half-breeds, who had borne the litter. Was there much injury beside the broken leg?

"He was a good deal shaken up, but he knew what to do about bandaging, and he uttered no groans. But when he attempted to walk the next morning he died for a few moments, as your women sometimes do. And when he came to life, they made the litter. He was very brave. So we rigged up a sort of tent in the woods, as he insisted on being left."

The Commandant ordered that a party be formed at once to rescue him. They could not allow him to perish there in the wilderness. He might be ill.

"He might die," Rose said to herself. And then an intense ungovernable longing came over her to see him once again. Women could minister to him better than men. And if Wanamee and Pani would go. Pani had been so much with women that he had lost many of the virile Indian traits.

Yes, they would go, but Wanamee did not quite approve of the journey. No one could tell how deep a snow would set in.

"But it will be only a six days' journey, and most of it through the forests. Savignon will be an excellent guide. And no one must speak of the great sorrow that awaits him here."

M. de Champlain opposed the plan. It was too severe for women. But curiously enough Savignon said—"The blossom of Quebec is no dainty flower, to be crushed by wind and storm. If she wants to go, I am on her side."

When Rose heard this she flew out to thank him, catching one hand in both of hers, her eyes luminous with gladness.

"Oh, I cannot truly thank you, Monsieur. I must go, even if I ran away and followed on behind. And I am no delicate house-plant."

"Thou art a brave girl," admiringly. "Thou hast been used to woods and rocks, and art strong and courageous."

To be called monsieur was one of Savignon's great delights. He had tired not a little of the roughness of savage life, and though he had caressed pretty Indian maidens he had never been much in love with them. And this girl was different from most of the white women. The courage in every line of her face, the exuberant bounding life that flushed her veins, her straight lithe figure, and the grace of every movement, appealed strongly to him.

"Thou wilt find it hard going, Mam'selle, keeping step to the men, and sleeping in the woods. But three days are soon spent, and we need not march back so hastily. Our women have stood more than that."

"You will see how much I can stand," she answered proudly. She believed the admiring eyes were for her courage alone.

Go she must. She did not stop to question. There was only one thing uppermost in her mind. If he died she must see him; if he lived, she must wait upon him, comfort him in his sorrow, for although in a vague way she knew he had not come up to the highest joy in his marriage, any more than her dear Sieur de Champlain, he had cared very tenderly for miladi, and would sorrow to know her shut out of life. And it had been so quiet at the last, just falling asleep. Her arms had been around her, her voice the last sound miladi had heard. He would rejoice in his sorrow that all had been so tranquil.

Rose and Wanamee came down in their robes of fur, with their deerskin frocks underneath. Rose's cap had its visor turned up and it framed in her beautiful face. Her hair fell in loose curls, the way she had always worn it, and the morning sun sent golden gleams amongst it. There was a small crowd to wish them God-speed.

The horses that De Champlain had brought over and a few mules that had been at Cape Tourmente were carried off in the English raid. True, they would not have been of much account in the overgrown brush of the wilderness.

"Mam'selle," Savignon said, after an hour or two, "do not hurry ahead so. You will tire before night."

"I feel as if I could run, or fly," she made answer, and she looked so.

CHAPTER XVI

A LOVER OF THE WILDERNESS

The weather was splendid, the sky cloudless, the air scented with the resinous fragrance of cedar, fir, and pine. They paused for a midday lunch and then kept on until dark. In a clearing in an almost impenetrable forest they paused, built a fire, and prepared to camp. Savignon drew some young saplings together and filled up the interstices with boughs, ordering smaller ones inside that a sort of bed should be raised off the ground. One of the men had shot some squirrels, and their broiling over the coals was appetizing.

"You and Wanamee will be quite safe," the guide said. "We shall wrap in our blankets and sleep about the fire. If you hear the cry of wolves, do not be alarmed."

"How good you are," Rose returned, her eyes glorious with grateful emotions. "M. Destournier will never forget your service. It cannot be rewarded."

"Mam'selle, a man would give his life for your pleasure. Sleep well and do not fear."

And sleep she did, with the slumber of youth and health. Naught came to alarm them.

Their second day's journey was uneventful, though it was not so clear and sunny, and again they camped for the night. Was there only one day more? Rose's heart beat with alternate fear and joy. Indeed, they might meet the cavalcade on the way.

She would not admit fatigue, indeed she did not feel it. Her grand hope gave lightness to her step and color to her cheeks, which were like a delicious opening rose, and you were fain to declare they had the same fragrance. When she talked to Wanamee, Savignon did not listen for any girlish secrets, but simply the music of her voice. That day some bird astray in the forest gave his whistle, perhaps to his mate, and she answered it with the most enchanting music. He came so near they could hear the flutter of his wings. Cadotte started up with his gun.

"You shall not kill it!" she cried. "Do you think I would lure a bird to such a cruel, treacherous death!"

Her face was bewitching in its indignation. What spirit, what strength of purpose shone in it!

"He will freeze before spring, Mam'selle," Cadotte returned sullenly.

"Then let him die as the good God intends."

"Mam'selle, I never heard a human voice so like a bird's," Savignon declared, in a tone of admiration. "Do you know other voices that range in Quebec?"

She laughed, her present anger vanishing.

"I used to tame them when I was a child. They would come at my call. I loved them so. And a tame deer knew my voice and followed me."

"As anything would. Mam'selle, sing or whistle, and it will make our steps lighter. Among the Bostonnais they march to music not as sweet as thine."

She was glad to give them pleasure.

The last day seemed long indeed, to her. Once they mistook the path and had to pick their way back. Savignon's acute eyes told him another party had crossed it, and he went on warily.

Presently, in the coming darkness, two scouts ran on ahead.

"Art thou tired, Mam'selle?" asked the well-modulated voice that had lost the guttural Indian tone.

"Not tired, but impatient. Do you suppose we have missed them? What if they should have started in some other direction?"

"I hardly think that. I have expected to meet them. M. Destournier must have been more disabled than we supposed. But we shall soon know."

Oh, what if he were dead! A blackness fell over everything. She caught Wanamee's arm for support. It was growing so dark they kept closer together. The dead leaves rustled under their feet, now and then in an opening they saw the sky in the soft, whitish-gray tints before it turns to blue.

There was a shrill, prolonged whistle.

"They are coming back with news." Savignon guessed it was not cheering. He answered through his fingers.

The two scouts came hurrying forward.

"They are gone. They must have taken some other road. The campfire is out, the stones are missing. What shall we do?"

Rose gave a soft, appealing cry, that she vainly strove to restrain.

"We had better go on. We must stop for the night. It is too dark to find their trail."

It seemed to Rose as if she would sink to the ground with indescribable terror.

"Oh, do you think——" She caught Savignon's arm.

"They have started on and missed the trail," he replied, in an almost indifferent tone, but he guessed in his heart there had been some surprise. "We must find the old place and camp for the night. To-morrow we will seek out the trail."

"You do not think there can have been——" Her voice faltered for very fear.

"We had best think nothing. We should no doubt come wide of the mark. Let us push on," to the men.

There were heavy hearts and slow steps. It seemed as if it must be midnight when they reached the clearing, though it was not that late. They built their fire. Cadotte and Savignon took a survey.

"Another party has been here," Cadotte exclaimed, in a whisper. "There has been a struggle. They are carried off somewhere."

"Do not speak of it to-night. The women are tired. And Mam'selle will have a thousand fears."

They found the others busy with fire and supper. Rose sat apart, her face buried in her hands, a thousand wild fears chasing one another through her mind. Life would be dreary if—if what? If he were dead? Had he suffered long with no one to cheer? Or had he been suddenly despatched by some marauding party? Then they would find his poor body. Yes, to-morrow they would know all.

She did not want any supper and crept to bed, weeping out her fears in Wanamee's arms.

They were all astir the next morning at daybreak. It was a little cloudy. The three days had been unusually fine. Savignon had been tracing this and that clew, and presently came upon a piece of wampum, with a curious Huron design at one end. And a little further on he found a trail where things had been roughly dragged. But he came to breakfast with no explanation.

Did the Rose of Quebec care so much for this man? He had been like a father to her, perhaps it was only a child's love. But now M. Destournier was free to choose a new wife—if he were alive. He was a brave man, a fine man, but if he were dead! The Hurons would show scant pity to a disabled man. Savignon had done and would do his best, but somehow he could not feel so bitterly grieved. He loved this woman—he knew that now.

They were discussing plans when a near-by step startled them. Parting the undergrowth, a torn and dishevelled man appeared. It was Paul De Loie. He almost dropped on the ground at their feet.

"I have run all night," he cried gaspingly. "The Hurons! They took us prisoners, and the stores. They are expecting another relay of the tribe, and are going up north for the winter, to join the Ottawas. But first they are to have a carouse and dance," and the three prisoners are to be tortured and put to death. He had escaped. He supposed the party would be back for M. Destournier and the stores. They must fly at once, and return if they would save their lives. And what madness possessed them to bring women!

"Wait!" commanded Savignon. "Let us go apart, De Loie, and consider the matter," and taking the man by the arm, he raised him and walked him a little distance.

"Now tell me—M. Destournier—how did he progress?"

"Well, indeed. We made him a crutch. We decided to take what stores we could manage, and resume our journey, thinking we would be met by some of the party. *Ma foi*, if we had started a day earlier! There were not many of them, but twice too many for us. There was nothing to do, we could gain nothing by selling our lives, we thought, but now they will take them. In two days the rest of the party, thirty or forty, will join them. We cannot rescue the others. Vauban could have escaped, but he would not leave M. Destournier. And now retrace your steps at once."

Savignon buried his face in his hands, in deep thought. Should he try to rescue these men? The Hurons were superstitious. More than once he had played on Indian credulity. He held some curious secrets, he had the wampum belt that he could produce, as if by magic. He was fond, too, of adventure, of power. And he imagined he saw a way to win the prize he coveted. He was madly, wildly in love with Rose. She was heroic. If she would grant his desire, the safety of three people would accrue from it. And surely she had not loved the Frenchman, who until a brief while ago had a wife. As he understood, they had been as parents to her. She was young, but if a man could inspire her with love—with gratitude even—

He questioned De Loie very closely. The trouble with Destournier would be his inability to travel rapidly. They would soon be overtaken. Escape that way was not feasible.

"I will consider. Come and share our breakfast."

Rose was walking by herself, on the outskirts of the clearing, her slim hands clasped together, her head drooping, and even so her figure would have attracted a sculptor. The Indian was enchanted with it. To clasp it in his arms—ah, the thought set his hot blood in a flame.

She turned and raised her eyes beseechingly, her beautiful, fathomless eyes in whose depths a man easily lost himself, the curved sweetness of the mouth that one might drain and drain, and never quite have his fill.

"What is it, M'sieu? Is there any hope? Can nothing be done?" Her voice went to his heart.

"What would you be willing to do, Mam'selle?"

"If I were a man I would attempt his rescue, or die with him. It would not be so hard to die holding a friend's hand."

"You love him very much?"

The love Savignon meant had so little place in her thoughts that the question did not cause her to change color.

"He was so good to me when I was little, and ill for a long while. He used to hold me on his knee, and let my head rest on his strong breast. And when I was well again we climbed rocks, and he showed me where the choicest wild fruit grew. And we went out in the canoe. He taught me to read, he had books of strange, beautiful stories. And after he married miladi he took me in his home as if I was a child. Ah, I could not help loving one so kind, unless I had been made of stone. And I wanted to comfort him in his sorrow."

Her voice, in its pathos, the eyes luminous with tears that did not fall, swept through the man like a devouring flame. He must have her. He would risk all, he would test her very soul.

"You have not said what you would give."

"My life, M'sieu, if I could exchange it for his."

"It does not need that. Listen, Mam'selle: When I first looked upon you, I was swept away with a strange emotion. I had seen lovely girls, there are some in our own race, with eyes of velvet, and lips that tempt kisses. And I knew when I helped you get your way on this expedition, what it was; that I loved you, that I would have kissed the ground you had walked on. And on our journey here I have dreamed beautiful, thrilling dreams of you. I slept at the door of your improvised tent lest some danger should come upon you unawares. Last night when I noted your tired step I wanted to take you in my arms and carry you. You have filled my soul and my body with the rapture of love. I can think of nothing else but the bliss of straining you to my heart, of touching your lips with the fire that plays about mine, like the rosy lightning that flashes through the heavens, engendered by the heat of the day. Oh, take me for your husband, and your life shall be filled with the best I can give. You shall not weary your small hands with work, they shall be kept for a husband's kisses. I will worship you as the priests do their Virgin."

She had been transfixed at the outburst and flaming, passionate tone, that in its vehemence seemed to grow finer, loftier. Was that love's work?

"But it will not save M. Destournier," she wailed.

"Listen again." He stood up, manly and strong, and somehow touched her with a subtle influence. It is not in a woman's nature to listen to a tale of passionate love unmoved. "Once, among the Hurons an old witch woman was wild to adopt me for her son. She gave me a great many secret charms, many you white people would think the utmost foolishness. Some were curious. And my

people are superstitious. I have used them more than once to the advantage of myself and others. I have brought about peace between warring tribes. I have prevented war. I will go to the Hurons, and try for M. Destournier's liberty. From what De Loie said, they mean to sacrifice the men to-morrow. There are horrid, agonizing tortures before death comes. If you will promise to marry me I will go at once and do my utmost to rescue him, them."

"And if you fail?" Her very breath seemed like a blast of winter cold.

"Then, Mam'selle, I can ask no reward, only a share in your sorrow. I will try to lighten their sufferings. That is all I can do."

She crossed her arms upon her breast and rocked herself to and fro.

"Oh, I cannot, I cannot," she said, with a cry of anguish. "Another man, our dear Madame de Champlain's brother asked this thing of me, and I could not. I do not want to marry."

"All women do in their hearts," he said moodily.

Was she not quite a woman yet? Had she just the soul of the little girl who had climbed trees, scaled rocks, and plunged headlong into the river to swim like a fish!

"It is three lives," he said, with the persuasive voice of the tempter.

Three lives! And among them her best friend! Something rose in her throat, and she thought she was dying.

"And if I cannot?" in a tone of desperate anguish.

"Then we must start homeward at once. When the Hurons have whet their appetite with their hellish pleasure, it is not easily satisfied. They will look about for more fuel to add to the flames. So we must decide. I cannot risk my own liberty for months for nothing. It will not make M. Destournier's death pang easier."

"Oh, go away, go away!" she almost shrieked, but the sorrow in her voice took off the harshness. "Let me think. I do not love you! I might run away. I might drown myself. I might not be able to keep my promise."

"I should love you so much that you would not want to break it. Ah, I could trust you, since you love no one else that you desire to marry."

She dropped on the ground and hid her face, too much stunned even to cry. "Three lives" kept singing in her ears. Was she not selfish and cruel? O God, what could she do!

"You know even the Sieur and the priests have approved of these mixed marriages, so there would be no voice raised against it. The children would belong to the Church and be reared in the ways of wisdom and honor. In my way I am well born. I could take you to Paris, where you would be well received. I have had some excellent training. Oh, it would be no disgrace."

They were calling to him from the group. He turned away. His intense love for her, his little understanding of a woman's soul, his passionate nature, not yet adjusted to the higher civilization, could not understand and appreciate the cruelty.

When he came back her small hands were nervously beating the dried turf. He could not see her face.

"They have decided to go at once," he exclaimed. "De Loie says there is no time to lose."

"I shall stay here and die," she said.

"That will not save any one's life."

Oh, that was the pity of it!

She rose with a strained white face. She looked like some of the beautiful carvings he had seen abroad. Not even anguish could make her unlovely.

"If you will go," she began hoarsely, and she seemed to strain her very soul to utter the words, "and bring back M. Destournier, and the others, I will marry you—not now, but months hence, when I can resolve upon the step. I shall have to learn—no, you must not touch me, nor kiss me, until I give you leave."

"But you must let me take your hand once, and promise by the Holy Mother of God."

His seriousness overawed her. She rose and held out her slim, white hand, from which the summer's brown had faded. Her lips shook as if with an ague, but she promised.

He wanted to kiss the hand, but he in turn was overawed.

She heard the voices raised in dissent around the fire. What if they would not let him go? She was chill and cold, and almost did not care. She would stay here and die. Perhaps they could take the strange, awesome journey together.

Wanamee joined her. "Savignon has determined to go to the rescue of the men," she began, "but De Loie thinks it a crazy step. And we must stay and risk being made prisoners. What is the matter, *ma fille*? You are as white as the river foam in a storm."

"I am tired," she made answer. "I slept poorly last night. Then they think there is no chance of success?"

"Oh, no, no! And we ought to escape."

She dropped down again, pillowing her head on a little rise of ground. Should she be glad, or sorry? Either way she seemed stunned.

The sky cleared up presently, and the sun came out. The few men walked about disconsolately. The rations were apportioned, some went farther in the woods, to find nuts, if possible. Now that the stores had been taken and two days added to the journey, what might be their portion.

Two of the men succeeded in finding some game. There was a small stream of water, but no fish were discernible in it. It froze over at night, but they could quench their thirst, and with some dried pennyroyal made a draught of tea.

Rose wondered if she had ever prayed before! All she could say now was: "Oh, Holy Mother of God, have pity on me."

The long night passed. De Loie said in the morning: "I think one of you had better start with the women. If we should be beset with the savages, they might find their way home. Here are some points I have marked out."

"No," returned Rose, "let us all perish together."

"*Mon Dieu!* Do you suppose they would let you perish? You would have to be squaw to some brave."

Rose shuddered. No, she could but die.

De Loie started out on the path he had come. It was mid-afternoon. A light snow began to fall, and the wind moaned in the trees. Rose and Wanamee huddled together at the fire, their arms around each other, under the blanket. It was easy to love Wanamee. But then she had begun it as a child—Was it easy to love when one was grown?

The darkness was descending when they heard a shout. Was it friend or foe? Another, and it came nearer. It was not the voice of an Indian.

De Loie rushed in upon them. "You men go and relieve those at the litter. Savignon is a wizard. He has the three men. I could not believe it at first, and I am afraid now it is a trick. You cannot trust an Indian."

Rose drew a long breath. Then her fate was sealed. Or, if they were attacked in the night, it would be some compensation to die together.

They came in at last, with Destournier on an improvised hemlock litter. The fire blazed up brightly, making a striking picture of the eager faces. The men lowered the litter to the ground, and they crowded around it. Destournier was ghostly pale, but full of thankfulness. When there was a little space open he reached out his hand to Rose.

"You two women have been very brave, but you should not have taken the journey. As for Savignon, we all owe him a debt that we can never repay."

"It is repaid already," returned the Indian, glancing over at Rose. "To have rescued you——"

"What arts and incantations you used! I could not have believed it possible to move their stony hearts."

"It was not their hearts." Savignon gave a grim smile. "It was their fears that were worked upon. I was afraid at one time that I would not succeed. But I had a reward before me."

"Quebec will pay you all honor. It is a grand thing to have saved three lives from torture and death. For there was no other escape."

That night Destournier related the surprise and capture. The stores were a great loss. But they would not let him bemoan them.

"We must get back as rapidly as we can," he said. "I do not trust the temper of the reinforcements, when they find they have been balked of their prey."

The snow had only been a light fall, and the trees in their higher branches were marvels of beauty. It had not reached the ground in many places.

After a frugal breakfast the cavalcade started. Destournier insisted upon walking at first, as he was freshened by his night's rest, comparatively free from anxiety. His broken leg was well bandaged, and he used two crutches. Rose noticed the thinness and pallor, and the general languid air, but she kept herself quite in the background. Savignon was really leader of the small party.

"Wanamee," she said, in a low tone, "will you tell M. Ralph about miladi?—I thought to do it, but I cannot. And I am so sorry she left no message for him. He was always so good to her. And you can tell him I held her a long while in my arms that night."

"You were an angel to her, *ma fille*. I used to wonder sometimes——"

"I suppose it was being ill so long, and trying so hard to get well, that made her unreasonable. It is better to go out of life suddenly, do you not think so?"

"I should like to know a little about the hereafter. You see our nation believe we go at once to another land, and do not stay in that miserable place they tell of. But many of the braves believe there are no women in the happy hunting grounds. One is swung this way and that," and Wanamee sighed.

Rose's mind was torn and distracted by her promise. Now and then an awful shudder took her in a giant grasp, and she thought she would drop down and ask them to leave her. Savignon would stay behind, if she proposed that. What if he had not gone to the Hurons? Frightful stories of torture she had heard rushed to her mind. Old Noko had witnessed them. So had some of the men at the fort. Death itself was not so hard, but to have burning sticks thrust into one's skin, to have fingers and toes cut off, piecemeal—oh, she had saved him from that. Yes, she would marry Savignon, and then throw herself into the river, after she had kept her promise.

The weather was growing colder. They halted for the night, and made a fire. They had shot nothing, but the supper was very light, indeed.

"Little Rose," said Destournier, "come over beside me, since I cannot well come to you. I have hardly seen you, and have not asked what has gone on at the fort. I feel as if I had been away half a lifetime. And miladi——"

"Wanamee will tell you, I cannot." She drew away the hand he held, and gently pushed the Indian woman forward, going out of the clear sound of her voice. Oh, would it be a great sorrow to him?

Wanamee's recital of that last night set a halo about Rose in the man's mind. He had known for years that he had not loved miladi as a man could love, but he also questioned whether such a light, frivolous nature could have appreciated the strong, earnest affection. Her great effort to keep herself young had led to a meretricious childishness. She had a vain, narrow soul, and this had dwarfed it still more. Many a night he had watched over her, pained by her passionate beseeching that he would not let her die, her awesome terror of death. He felt God had been merciful not to allow her to suffer that last rending pain. He had really become so accustomed to the thought of her dying that it did not seem new or strange to him, but one of the inevitable things that one must endure with philosophy. He realized the sweetness and patience of Rose through these last months.

When Wanamee came back she was snugly tucked in her blanket, and feigned sleep. She did not want to talk. She fancied she would like to lie beside miladi in the little burying ground. Young sorrow always turns to death as a comforter.

That night an adventure befell them, though most of them were sleeping from exhaustion. It was the Indian's quick hearing that caught a suspicious sound, and then heard a stealthy rustle. He reached for his gun, and his eyes roved sharply around the little circle. The sound came from nearly opposite. The fire was low, but his sight was keen, and presently he espied two glaring eyes drawing nearer Wanamee and her charge. There was a quick shot, a shriek, almost human, and a rush farther in the forest.

They were all awake in an instant. "An attack!" shouted two of the men.

"A wolf," rejoined Savignon. He took up a brand and peered about in the darkness. The body was still twitching, but the head was a mangled mass. There were no others in sight, but they heard their cry growing fainter and fainter.

Rose sat up in affright. How near it had been to her. Was she always to be in debt to this Indian?

"Go to sleep again," he said, in a low tone. "We shall have no more alarms to-night. I am keeping watch. I would give my life to save you from harm."

Wanamee drew the trembling, shrinking figure closer. Rose felt as if her heart would burst with the sorrow she could not confess.

CHAPTER XVII

THE PASSING OF OLD QUEBEC

They ate their last crumbs for breakfast. A fine, cutting sleet was in the air, but they kept quite inside of the forest, except when they were afraid of losing the trail. There was no stop for a midday meal, and they pushed on, carrying Destournier in a litter. Must they spend another night in the woods?

Suddenly a shout reaches them, the sound of familiar French voices, and every heart thrilled with joy, as they answered it. Blessed relief was at hand.

Being alarmed at the long delay, a party had been sent out to search for them. They halted, for

indeed it seemed as if they could go no further. Weak and hungry, some of the men sat down and cried, for very joy.

"I have hardly been worth all the trouble," Destournier said, in a broken voice.

"It was not altogether you," replied one of the men. "And to have rescued some of our men from those fiendish Hurons was worth while. Savignon must have had some wonderful power to make them give up their prey."

The relief party were provided with food, dried meat that had come down from some friendly Indians. After they had eaten, they resolved to push on, and started with good courage. The storm had ceased and the stars were pricking through the blue. The moon would rise later on. But it was midnight when they came in sight of the fort. The warm welcome made amends for all.

Wanamee took Rose under her protection. She was nearly exhausted. M. de Champlain insisted upon caring for Destournier, and examining the leg, which was much swollen, but had been very well set. The story of the wonderful escape was told over, to interested listeners.

"We owe Savignon a great debt, and are too poor to pay it," said the Governor sorrowfully.

Poor indeed they were. It was the hardest winter the colony had known. The dearth of news was most trying, and the fear of the English descent upon them racked the brave heart of the Commandant, who saw his dream of a great city vanishing. Jealousy had done some cruel work, and the misgovernment of the mother country stifled the best efforts.

Rose lay listless in bed for many days. How could she meet Savignon, who haunted the place hourly, to inquire, and begged to see her? One day she told Wanamee to send him in, and braced herself for the interview.

Semi-famine had not told on him, unless it had added an air of refinement. That he was superior to most of his race, was evident.

He was not prepared for the white wraith-like being who did not rise from her chair, but nodded and motioned him to a seat at a distance.

"Oh, Mam'selle, you have been truly ill," he said, and there was a tender sort of pity in his tone. "I have been wild to see you, to hear you speak. Mam'selle, you must not die. I cannot give you up. I have been starved, I have been half-crazy with impatience. Oh, can you not have a little pity on me, when I love you so? And you have no one who has a right to protest. You will keep your promise? For I swear to you that I will kill any man who marries you. I cannot help if it brings grief upon you. It would be the sorrow of my life not to have you! Oh, let me touch your little white hand"—and he started from his seat with an eager gesture.

She put both behind her. "I do not love you," she began bravely. "It would take time——"

"I said I would wait, Rose of Quebec, wait months, for your sweetness to blossom for me. But I cannot see you go to another."

"There is no other. There will be no other." She was sure she told the whole truth. "But if you insist now, I shall die before a marriage comes. I could slip out of life easily. Perhaps when I am strong again, courage may come back to me. You must go away and let me be quite by myself, and think how brave you were, how patient you are. Then when you come again——"

She would be in her white winding sheet, then, and he would be afraid to kiss her.

"But I won you fairly, Mam'selle. And I had great trembling of heart, for the Huron chief was obdurate. I succeeded at length. *He* has had a wife, he does not need another. He might be your father. And you have repaid him for all care by giving him back his life, by saving him from torture you know little about. For if the party joining them had discovered the robbery of their storehouse, there would have been little mercy. Oh, Mam'selle, how can so sweet a being be so cold and unyielding?"

"I have told you the secret of it. I do not love you. I do not want you for a husband. But I will keep my promise. Give me time to get well. It may not look so terrible to me then."

How lovely she was in her pleading, even if it did deny. He could have snatched her to his heart and stifled her with kisses, yet he did not dare to touch so much as her little finger. What strange power held her aloof? But if she was once his wife——

"A month," he pleaded.

"Longer than that. Three months. Three whole moons. Then you may come again and I will answer you."

His face paled with anger, his eyes were points of flame, his blood was hot within him.

"I will not wait."

"Then you may have my dead body."

"But you break your promise."

"I ask you to wait," she said, in a steady tone. "That is all."

"And you will not seek to die, Mam'selle?"

"I will be your wife then. Now go. I am too tired to argue any more."

A sudden ray of hope kindled in the Indian's heart. He would see M. Destournier, and lay the case before him, and beg his assistance. Surely he could not refuse, when his life had been saved!

Rose leaned back in a half-faint. Oh, surely God would take her before that time. But she had promised in good faith. Matters might look different to her when she was strong once more.

Savignon meant to be armed at all points. He went up to the St. Charles and laid his case before one of the fathers. His fine bearing and intelligence won him much favor.

"Men often married Indian women, who made good wives. In this case if the woman desired to take him for her husband, there could be no real objection; it was between the two parties. No over-persuasion was to be used. And if her friends or parents consented, it would be right enough. Only they must truly love each other."

He knew now she did not truly love him. You might beat an Indian woman into obedience—he had never struck one since he had come to manhood. But this beautiful being, who was like a bit of flame, would be blown out by harshness or force, and one would have only the cold body left. If he could not make her love him at the end of the three months—

Then he sought Destournier, and laid the tale before him. He had won Mademoiselle honorably. She had given her promise. At the end of the three months he would come for her. Now he had resolved to go to the islands, since it would be wretched to stay here and not see Mam'selle.

"Yes, the best thing," Destournier said, but he was stunned by the bargain. Was his life to cost that sacrifice? There must be some way of preventing it.

As the days went on he considered various plans. This was why Rose was so languid and unlike herself. Perhaps the hard winter and poor food had something to do with it. She had bought his life at too great a sacrifice. And then came the sweet, sad knowledge that he loved her, also.

The spring was quite early. Men began to work in their gardens and mend the damages of the winter, but with a certain fear of what was to come. And one day Destournier found Rose sitting in the old gallery, where she had run about as a child. But she was a child no longer. The indescribable change had come. There were womanly lines in her figure, although it was thinner than of yore, and the light in her eyes deeper.

He had given up the house to her and the two Indian women, with Pani for attendant. M. Pontgrave had been a great invalid through the winter, and besought the younger man's company. The Sieur often came in and they talked over the glowing plans and dreams of the earlier days, when they were to rear a city that the mother country could be proud of.

He understood why Rose had shunned him, and whenever he resolved to take up this troublous subject his courage failed him. Saved from this marriage she surely must be. In a short time Savignon would return. He had known of two women who had cast in their lots with the better-class Indians at Tadoussac, and were happy enough. But they were not Rose.

He came slowly over to her now. She looked up and smiled. Much keeping indoors of late had made her skin fair and fine, but her soft hair had not shed all its gold.

"Rose," he began, then paused.

She flushed, but made a little gesture, as if he might be seated beside her.

"Rose," he said again, "in the winter you saved my life. I have known it for some time."

Her breath came with a gasp. How had he learned this, unless Savignon had come before the time?

"And you paid a great price for it."

"Oh, oh!" she clasped her hands in distress. "How did you know it?"

"Savignon told me before he went away. He asked my consent to your marriage. I could not give it then. He will soon return. I cannot give it now."

"But it was a promise. Monsieur, your life was of more account than mine."

"Do you think I will accept the sacrifice? I have been weak and cowardly not to settle this matter before, not to give you the assurance that I will make a brave fight for your release."

"I was very sad and frightened at first, partly ill, as well, and I hoped not to live. But the good God did not take me. And if He meant me to do this thing, keep my word, I must do it. I asked Father Jamay one time about promises, and he said when one had vowed a vow it must be kept. And I have prayed for courage when the time comes. See, I am quite tranquil."

She raised her face and he read in it a nobly spiritual expression. He recalled now that she had gone up to the convent quite often with Wanamee, and that more than once she had slipped into Madame de Champlain's *prie-dieu*, that her husband never would have disturbed. Was she finding fortitude and comfort in a devotion to religion that would strengthen her to meet this

tremendous sacrifice? She looked like a saint already.

She could not tell him that he knew only half, that he might still be the object of Savignon's vengeance, if she failed to keep her word.

"Perhaps the Sieur will have something to say, if my wishes fail. Unless you tell me you love this Indian, and that seems monstrous to me, this marriage shall never take place."

"It must, it must," she said, though her face was like marble, where it had been human before. "M'sieu, what is right must be done. I promised, and you were saved."

"Of your own free will? Rose," he caught both hands in a pressure that seemed to draw her soul along with it, "answer me truly."

"Of my will, yes, Monsieur." Her white throat swelled with the anguish she repressed.

"You have left out the 'free,'" but he knew well why she could not utter it.

"Monsieur, I think you would be noble enough to give your life for a friend"—she was about to say "whom you loved," but she caught her voice in time.

Was this heroic maiden the little girl who had run wild in the old town, and sung songs with the birds; who had been merry and careless, but always a sweet human Rose; the child he had taken to his heart long ago, the girl he had watched over, the woman—yes, the woman he loved with a man's first fervent passion! She should not go out of his life, now that God had made a space for her to come in it. Miladi he had given up to Laurent Giffard, she had never belonged to him in the deep sacredness of love. And as he watched her, his eyes seeming to look into her soul, through the motes of light that illumined them, he knew it was not simply that she had no love for the Indian, but that she loved him. It seemed the sublime moment of his life, the sweetest consciousness that he had ever known.

"You gave something greater than life. Listen," and he drew his brows into a resolute line. "When that man comes we will have it out between us. For I love you, too. I owe you a great reward that only a life's devotion can pay. I am much older, but I seem to have just awakened to the dream of bliss that sanctifies manhood. My darling, if a better man came, I could give you up, if I went hungering all the rest of my days. But you shall not go to certain wretchedness. And he must see the truth. That is the way a man should love."

Her slender, white throat rose and fell like a heartbeat. With Savignon she would be loved with a fierce passion, for the man's supreme joy; this man would love for the woman's joy.

"Monsieur, I have studied the subject, and I think it is right. I pray you, do not disturb my resolve. It has been made after many prayers. If the good Father should change His mind—but that is hardly to be thought of. Do not let us talk about it," and she rose.

For instead of throwing herself in the river, as she had thought in her wildness, she could cross to France, and enter a convent, if she could not endure it.

Ralph Destournier saw that argument was useless. When the time came, he would act.

But May passed without bringing the lover. Quebec was beginning to take courage, and what with hunting and fishing, semi-starvation was at an end. Emigrants came back and all was stir and activity in the little town.

There came a letter to Rose, after a long delay. Savignon had joined a party of explorers, who were pushing westward, and marvelled at the wonderful country. He had pondered much over his desires, and while his love was still strong, he did not want an unwilling bride. He would give her a longer time to consider—a year, perhaps. He had wrung a reluctant assent from her, he admitted, and taken an ungenerous advantage. For this he would do a year's penance, without sight of the face that had so charmed him.

Was he really brave enough to do that? Rose thought so. Destournier believed it some new attraction to the roving blood of the wilderness.

But Rose would not wholly accept her freedom. Still she was more like the Rose of girlhood, though she no longer climbed or ran races. The Sieur was whiling away the heavy hours of uncertainty by teaching several Indian girls, and Rose found this quite a pleasure.

The servant came in with some news. Not the French vessel they hoped for, but an English man-of-war, with two gunboats, was approaching.

If defence had been futile before, it was doubly so now. The fort was out of repair, the guns useless from lack of ammunition, there was no provision to sustain a siege. A small boat with a flag of truce rounded the point, and with a heavy heart Champlain displayed his on the fort.

The two brothers of Captain David Kirke, who was now at Tadoussac, had again been sent to propose terms of surrender. The English were to take possession in the name of their king.

It was a sad party that assembled around the large table, where so many plans and hopes had stirred the brave hearts of the explorers and builders-up of new France. Old men they were now, Pontgrave a wreck from rheumatism, a few dead, and Champlain, with the ruin of his ambitions before him. There was some vigorous opposition to the demands, but there was clearly no

alternative but surrender. Hard as the terms were, they must be accepted. And on July 20, 1629, the lilies of France ceased to wave over Quebec, dear old Quebec, and Captain Louis Kirke took possession of the fort and the town, in the name of His Majesty, King Charles I, and the standard of England floated quite as proudly over the St. Lawrence.

Did they dream then that this scene would be enacted over again when a new Quebec, proud of her improvements and defences, that were considered impregnable, should fight and lose one of the greatest of battles, and two of the bravest of men, and again lower the lilies! A greater romance than that of old Quebec, the dream of the Sieur de Champlain.

But it seemed a sad travesty that the mother country should send succor too late. A French vessel, with emigrants and supplies, came in sight only to fall into the hands of the victorious English.

Captain Emery de Caen insisted that peace had been declared two months before, but the Kirkes would not admit this. It was said that all conquests after that date were to be restored. A new hope animated the heart of the brave old Commandant. If it were true, the lilies might replace the flaunting standard.

Many of the citizens preferred to remain. They had their little homes and gardens, and the English proved not overbearing. Then there was an end to present want. A hundred and fifty men gave the town a new impetus, and when the next fleet came, with the large war-ships, there was a certain aspect of gayety, quite new to the place.

After some discussion, Champlain resolved to return to France, and thence to England, to understand the terms of peace, and if possible, to win New France once more.

Ralph Destournier was a Frenchman at heart, though a little English blood ran in his veins. He had a strong desire to see France.

"Will you go?" he asked of Rose.

"Not until the year is ended," she said gravely. "But if you will go—Wanamee and Pani can care for me. I am a little girl no longer."

It was true. There was no more little girl, but there was no more old Quebec. It had already taken on a different aspect. Officers and men in bright uniforms climbed the narrow, crooked streets, with gay jests, in what seemed their rough language; there were little taverns opened, where the fife and drum played an unmelodious part. Religion was free, for there had come to be a number of Huguenots, as well as of the new English church. The poor priests were at their wits' end, but they were well treated.

Eustache Boullé was to go with the Sieur, but he never returned. He took a rather fond farewell of Rose. "If you would go, we might find something of your family," he said. "I once had a slight clew."

"Is it not worth looking after?" asked Destournier, as he and Rose were walking the plateau, since known as the Plains of Abraham. "If you were proved of some notable family—there have been so many over-turns."

"Would you feel prouder of me?"

"No. Do you not know that you are dearer to me as the foundling of Quebec, and the little girl I knew and loved?"

She raised luminous eyes and smiled.

"Then I do not care. No place will seem like home but this."

He would not go to France, but busied himself with his fields and his tenants. He came back to the old house, altered a little, the room where miladi had spent her fretful invalid years was quite remodelled. Vines grew up about it. The narrow steps were widened.

Autumn came, and winter. The cold and somewhat careless living carried off many of the English. But Madame Hébert had married again, and Thérèse had found a husband. There was Nicolas Revert, with some growing children. Duchesne, a surgeon, they had been glad to welcome. Thomas Godefroy, Pierre Raye, and the Couillardards formed quite a French colony. They met now and then, and kept the old spirit alive with their songs and stories.

June had come again, and the town had begun to bloom. There were still parties searching for the north sea, for the route to India, for the great river that was said to lie beyond the lakes. The priests, too, were stretching out their lines, especially the Jesuits, about whom still lingers the flavor of heroic martyrdom. Father Breibouf coming back for a short stay, to get some new word from France, told the fate of one unfortunate party. Among them he said "was that fine Indian interpreter, Savignon, who you must remember went to the rescue of a party the last time he was in Quebec. He was a brave man, and a great loss to us. He had come to an excellent state of mind, and was one of the few Indians that give me faith in the salvation of the race."

Rose's eyes were lustrous with tears as she listened to this eulogy. He had proved nobler than his first passion of love. She had some Masses said for his soul, but it pleased her better to give thanks to God for his redemption.

"Now you belong to no one but me," Destournier said to her some weeks later, when she had recovered from her sorrow. "Yet I feel that it is selfish to take your sweet youth. I am no longer young. I shall always be a little lame, and never perhaps realize my dream of prosperity. But I love you. I loved you as a little girl, you have always, in some fashion, belonged to me."

"I am glad to belong to you, to take your name. Do you remember that I have no other name but Rose? You are very good to shelter me thus. I think I could never have gone gladly to any one else. We are a part of old Quebec, we are still French," and there was a little triumph in her tone.

It was true the English had taken possession after peace had been declared, and had not the right to hold the country. When France demanded the recession King Charles held off, and the Kirkes were unwilling to yield up the government, as they found great profit in the fur trade. But needing money sorely, and as the Queen's dowry as a French princess had only been half paid, he made this a condition, and Richelieu accepted it.

So in 1632 Acadia, and all the important points in Canada, were ceded back to France.

In the spring of the next year Champlain was again commissioned Governor, and he set sail from Dieppe, with three vessels freighted with goods, provisions, and the farming implements of that day, clothing and some of the new hand-looms, beside seeds of all kinds. Two hundred persons, many of them married couples, and farmers were to found a new Quebec.

One May morning, just at sunrise, there was a great firing of bombards, and for a brief while all was consternation and fear. But persons sent out to explore, brought the welcome news of Champlain's return. Then went up a mighty shout of joy, and the lilies of France were once more unfurled to the breeze. There stood the stalwart old commander, whose life work was crowned with success. All was gratulation. He must have been touched by the ovation.

M. and Madame Destournier were among the throng, while Wanamee carried the little son, who stared about with wondering eyes, and smiled as if he enjoyed the glad confusion.

Even the Indians vied with the French, as he was triumphantly escorted up the cliff, with colors flying and drums beating, and once more received the keys of the fort. The spontaneous welcome showed how deep he was in the affections of the people. He had been thwarted in many of his plans, neglected, traduced, but this hour made amends.

"Little Rose," he said, "thou art a part of old Quebec, but thy son begins with the new régime. Heaven bless and prosper thee and thy husband. I should have missed thee sorely had any untoward event happened."

The settlement at the foot of the cliff had been burned, but the upper town, as it came to be called, had stretched out. The Héberts were on the summit of the cliff, that part of the town where the ancient bishops' palace stood for so long. Many of the former settlers had come up here.

"I had hoped Madame de Champlain would return with him," Rose said. "I wonder if any time will ever come when I shall love myself better than you."

He bent over and kissed her. He had never quite understood love or known what happiness was until now.

When the Indians learned of the return of their beloved white chief, they planned to come in a body, and salute him. Algonquins, Ottawas, Montagnais, and the more friendly Hurons, came with their gifts, and smoked the pipe of peace.

In the autumn Champlain commenced the first parochial church, called, appropriately, Notre Dame de Recouvrance. The Angelus was rung three times a day. For now the brave old soldier had grown more religious, there were no more exploring journeys, no more voyages across the stormy ocean. He had said good-bye to his wife for the last time, though now, perhaps, he understood her mystical devotion better.

It was indeed a new Quebec. There was no more starvation, no more digging of roots, and searches for edible food products. Their anxious faces gave way to French gayety. Up and down the steep road-way, leading from the warehouses to the rough, tumble-down tenements by the river, men passed and repassed with jests and jollity, snatches of song or a merry good-day, for it was indeed good. There were children of mixed parentage, playing about, for Indian mothers were no uncommon thing. The fort, the church, and the dwellings high up above, gave it a picturesque aspect. You heard the boatmen singing their songs of old France as they went up and down the beautiful river. Stone houses began to appear, though wigwams still remained. New streets were opened, but they were loth to level the hills, and some of them remain to this day.

Ralph and Rose Destournier had a happy life. Children grew up around them. A large, new house received them presently, but they kept a fond remembrance for the old one that seemed somehow to belong exclusively to Miladi and a dreamy sort of old life.

A mixed population it was, shaped by the sincerity of their religion. There were priests in their gray and black cassocks, officers in brave trappings, traders, Indians, farmers, stout and strong, and the picturesque *coureurs de bois*, that came to be a great feature, and added not a little to the romance of the place. They were not all mere adventurers, but they loved a roving life. Settlements were made here and there, an important one at Three Rivers, where the Récollets

established a mission. The summers were given over to work and business, thronged with traders and trappers, but they found time in the winters for much social life.

If the Sieur missed his old friend Hébert, there were others to take an active interest in horticulture. Pontgrave was no more, but his grandson kept up the name. A few years later the earnest young René de Robault gave his fortune for the building of a college, and this kept the young men from returning to old France for an education. Convent schools were established, and Indian girls were trained in the amenities and industries of social life. Montreal spread out her borders as well, the Beauport road came to be a place of fine estates. All the way to the mouth of the great river there were trading stations. The fur company's business was good, there were new explorations to Lake Huron, Georgian Bay, Lake Michigan, up to the Fox river.

Of the sons and daughters growing up in the Destournier household, Hélène, who should have been a devotee, was a merry madcap, who exceeded her mother in daring feats, a dark-eyed, laughing maid the Indian girls adored. She could manage a canoe, she could fly, they said, she took such wonderful leaps. Rose could sing like a bird and had a fondness for all animals. Little Barbe was a dainty, loving being, always clinging to her mother, and three sons were devoted to their father whose snowy white hair was like a crown of silver. They loved to hear the old tales, and fired with resentment when the lilies of France had to give way to the flag of England.

"But they will never do it again," Robert Destournier would exclaim, with flashing eyes.

But they did almost a century later. Robert was not there to strike a useless blow for his beloved land. That belongs to the story of a newer Quebec, and now all the romances are gathered up into history.

In the autumn of 1635 the brave, beloved Champlain passed away in the heart of the city that had been his love, his ambition, his life-dream. The explorer, the crusader, the sharer of toils and battles, his story is one of the knightly romances of that period, and his name is enshrined with that of old Quebec. Other heroes were to come, other battles to be fought, much work for priest and civilian, but this is the simplest, the bravest of them all, for its mighty work was done at great odds.

To-day you find the Citadel, the old French fort, but the wharves and docks run out in the river, and there are steamboats, instead of canoes. There is the Market Place and the City Hall, the Grande Allée St. Louis Place and Gate, the crowded business-point, with its ferries, the great Louise basin and embankment. The city runs out to St. Charles river, and stretches on and on until you reach the Convent of the Sacred Heart. There are still the upper and the lower town, and the steep ways, the heights that Wolfe climbed, the world-famed Plains of Abraham.

Everywhere is historic ground, monuments of courage, zeal, and religion. The streets have old names. Here on a height so steep you wonder how they are content to climb it, juts out a little stone eyrie, just as it stood a hundred years ago. Three or four generations have lived within its walls, and they are as French to-day as they were then. They want nothing of the modern gauds of the present. Grandmothers used the clumsy furniture, and it is almost worth a king's ransom, it has so many legends woven around it.

There is the Château Frontenac, that recalls romance and bravery. There are churches, with their stories. There are the old Jesuit barracks, out of which went many a heroic soul to face martyrdom, there is the Chien d'Or, with its stone dog gnawing a bone, and the romance of Nicolas Jaquin Philibert, the brave Huguenot.

There are old graveyards, where rest the pioneers who prayed, and hoped, and starved with Champlain. All the stories can never be written, all the monuments that speak of glory do not tell of the sufferings. Yet there were happy lives, and happy loves, as well. The storms die out, the light and sunshine dry up the tears, and courage is given to go on.

The old French days have left their impress. Champlain will always be a living memory, as the founder of one of the marvellous cities of the world. Gay little girls run about and climb the heights, they dance and sing, and have their festivals, and are happy in the thrice-renewed Quebec. Many a Rose has blossomed and faded since the days of Destournier.

THE END

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