

MARY ALLOWAY

FAMOUS FIRESIDES OF
FRENCH CANADA

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Mary Wilson Alloway

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PREFACE

In offering this little volume to the kind consideration of Canadian and American readers, it is the earnest wish of the Author that it may commend itself to the interest of both, as the early histories of Canada and the United States are so closely connected that they may be considered identical.

We have tried to recall the days when, by these firesides, we re rocked the cradles of those who helped to make Canadian history, and to render more familiar the names and deeds of the great men, French, English and American, upon whose valour and wisdom such mighty issues depended.

The recital is, we trust, wholly impartial and without prejudice.

It is to be hoped that the union of sentiment which the close of this century sees between the two great Anglo-Saxon peoples may cast a veil of forgetfulness over the strife of the one preceding it; and be a herald of that reign of peace, when "nation shall no more rise against nation, and wars shall cease."

Montreal, May 24, 1899

INTRODUCTION

About twelve years after the first Spanish caravel had touched the shores of North America, we find the French putting forth efforts to share in some of the results of the discovery. In the year 1504 some Basque, Breton and Norman fisher-folk had already commenced fishing along the bleak shores of Newfoundland and the contiguous banks for the cod in which this region is still so prolific.

The Spanish claim to the discovery of America is disputed by several aspirants to that honour. Among these are the ancient mariners of Northern Europe, the Norsemen of the Scandinavian Peninsula. They assert that their Vikings touched American shores three centuries before Isabella of Castille drove the Moors from their palaces among the orange groves of *Espana*. Eric the Red, and other sea-kings, made voyages to Iceland and Greenland in the eleventh and following centuries; and it is highly probable that these Norsemen, with their hardihood and enterprise, touched on some part of the mainland. One Danish writer claims that this occurred as far back as the year 985, about eighty years after the death of the Danes' mortal enemy, the great Saxon King Alfred.

Even the Welsh, from the isolation of their mountain fastnesses, declare that a Cambrian expedition, in the year 1170, under Prince Modoc, landed in America. In proof of this, there

is said to exist in Mexico a colony bearing indisputable traces of the tongue of these ancient Celts.

The term Canada first appears as the officially recognized name of the region in the instructions given by Francis I to its original colonists in the year 1538.

There are various theories as to the etymology of the word, its having by different authorities been attributed to Indian, French and Spanish origins.

In an old copy of a Montreal paper, bearing date of Dec. 24, 1834, it is asserted that Canada or *Kannata* is an Indian word, meaning a village, and was mistaken by the early visitors for the name of the whole country.

The Philadelphia *Courier*, of July, 1836, gives the following not improbable etymology of the name of the province: – Canada is compounded of two aboriginal words, *Can*, which signifies the mouth, and *Ada* the country, meaning the mouth of the country. A writer of the same period, when there seems to have been considerable discussion on the subject, says: – The word is undoubtedly of Spanish origin, coming from a common Spanish word, *Canada*, signifying a space or opening between mountains or high banks – a district in Mexico of similar physical features, bearing the same name.

"That there were Spanish pilots or navigators among the first discoverers of the St. Lawrence may be readily supposed, and what more natural than that those who first visited the gulf should call the interior of the country *El Canada* from

the typographical appearance of the opening to it, the custom of illiterate navigators naming places from events and natural appearances being well established."

Hennepin, an etymological *savant*, declares that the name arose from the Spaniards, who were the first discoverers of Canada, exclaiming, on their failure to find the precious metals, "*El Capa da nada*," or Cape Nothing. There seems to be some support of this alleged presence of the Spanish among the early navigators of the St. Lawrence, by the finding in the river, near Three Rivers, in the year 1835, an ancient cannon of peculiar make, which was supposed to be of Spanish construction.

The origins of the names of Montreal and Quebec are equally open to discussion. Many stoutly assert that Montreal is the French for Mount Royal, or Royal Mount; others, that by the introduction of one letter, the name is legitimately Spanish—*Monte-real*. *Monte*, designating any wooded elevation, and that *real* is the only word in that language for royal.

The word Quebec is attributed to Indian and French sources. It is said that it is an Algonquin word, meaning a strait, the river at this point being not more than a mile wide; but although Champlain coincided in this view, its root has never been discovered in any Indian tongue. Its abrupt enunciation has not to the ear the sound of an Indian word, and it could scarcely have come from the Algonquin language, which is singularly soft and sweet, and may be considered the Italian of North American dialects.

Those who claim for it a French origin, say that the Normans, rowing up the river with Cartier at his first discovery, as they rounded the wooded shores of the Isle of Orleans, and came in sight of the bare rock rising three hundred feet from its base, exclaimed "*Quel bec!*" or, What a promontory! The word bears intrinsically strong evidence of Norman origin.

Cape Diamond received its name from the fact that in the "dark colored slate of which it is composed are found perfectly limpid quartz crystals in veins, along with crystallized carbonate of lime, which, sparkling like diamonds among the crags, suggested the appellation."

THE CHATEAU DE RAMEZAY

A few yards from the busy municipal centre of the city of Montreal, behind an antique iron railing, is a quaint, old building known as the Château de Ramezay. Its history is contemporary with that of the city for the last two centuries, and so identified with past stirring events that it has been saved from the vandalism of modern improvement, and is to be preserved as a relic of the old *Régime* in New France. It is a long one-storied structure, originally red-tiled, with graceful, sloping roof, double rows of peaked, dormer windows, huge chimneys and the unpolished architecture of the period.

Among the many historical buildings of America, none have been the scene of more thrilling events, a long line of interesting associations being connected with the now quiet old Château, looking in its peaceful old age as out of keeping with its modern surroundings as would an ancient vellum missal, mellowed for centuries in a monkish cell, appear among some of the ephemeral literature of to-day.

A brilliant line of viceroys have here held rule, and within its walls things momentous in the country's annals have been enacted. During its checkered experience no less than three distinct *Régimes* have followed each other, French, British and American. In an old document still to be found among the archives of the Seminary of St. Sulpice, it is recorded that the

land on which it stands was ceded to the Governor of Montreal in the year 1660, just eighteen years after Maisonneuve, its founder, planted the silken Fleur-de-Lys of France on the shores of the savage Redman, and one hundred years before the tri-cross of England floated for the first time from the ramparts.

Somewhere about the year 1700 a portion of this land was acquired by Claude de Ramezay, Sieur de la Gesse, Bois Fleurent and Monnoir, in France, and Governor of Three Rivers, and this house built.

De Ramezay was of an old Franco-Scottish family, being descended by *Thimothy*, his father, from one Sir John Ramsay, a Scotchman, who, with others of his compatriots, went over to France in the 16th century. He may have joined an army raised for the French wars, or may have formed part of a bridal train similar to the gay retinue of the fair Princess Mary, who went from the dark fells and misty lochs of the land of the Royal Stuarts to be the loveliest queen who ever sat on the throne of *la belle France*. De Ramezay was the father of thirteen children, by his wife, Mademoiselle Denys de la Ronde, a sister of Mesdames Thomas Tarieu de La Naudière de La Pérade, d'Ailleboust d'Argenteuil, Chartier de Lotbinière and Aubert de la Chenage, the same family out of whom came the celebrated de Jumonville, so well known in connection with the unfortunate circumstances of Fort Necessity. The original of the marriage contract is still preserved in the records of the Montreal Court House; with its long list of autographs of Governor, Intendant,

and high officials, civil and military, scions of the nobility of the country, appended thereto. The annals of the family tell us that some of them died in infancy, several met violent and untimely deaths, two of the sisters took conventual vows in the cloisters of Quebec, two married, having descendants now living in France and Canada, and two remained unmarried.

De Ramezay came over as a captain in the army with the Viceroy de Tracy, and was remarkable for his highly refined education, having been a pupil of the celebrated Fénélon, who was said to have been the pattern of virtue in the midst of a corrupt court, and who was entrusted by Louis the Fourteenth with the education of his grandsons, the Dukes of Burgundy, Anjou and Berri. Had the first named, who was heir-presumptive to the throne, lived to practice the princely virtues, the seeds of which his preceptor had sown in his heart, some of the most bloody pages in French history might never have been written.

De Ramezay, for many years being Governor of Montreal, held official court in the Council chamber to the right of the entrance hall of the Château, which is now a museum of rare and valuable relics of Canada's past.

The Salon was the scene of many a gay rout, as Madame de Ramezay, imitating the brilliant social and political life as it was in France in the time of *Le Grand Monarque*, transplanted to the wilds of America some reflection of court ceremonial and display as they culminated in that long and brilliant reign. From the dormer windows above, high-bred French ladies looked at

the sun rising over the forest-clothed shores of the river, on which now stands the architectural grandeur of the modern city. How strange to the swarthy-faced dwellers in the wigwam must the old-time gaieties have appeared, as the lights from the silver *candelabres* shone far out in the night, when the old Château was *en fête* and aglow with music, dancing and laughter.

What a contrast to the burden-bearing squaws were the dainty French women in stiff brocade and jewels, high heels, paint, patches and tresses *à la Pompadour*, tripping through the stately measures of the minuet to the sound of lute or harpsichord!

"O, fair young land of *La Nouvelle France*,
With thy halo of olden time romance,
Back like a half-forgotten dream
Come the bygone days of the old *Régime*."

The servants and retainers, imitating their lords, held high revel in the vaulted kitchens; while dishes and confections, savoury and delicious, came from the curious fireplace and ovens recently discovered in the vaults. These ancient kitchen offices, built to resist a siege, are exceedingly interesting in the light of our culinary arrangements of to-day. They were so constructed that if the buildings above, with their massive masonry, were destroyed, they would afford safe and comfortable refuge. The roof is arched, and, like the walls, is several feet thick, of solid stone, lighted by heavily barred windows, with strong iron shutters. In clearing out the walled-up and long-forgotten ovens,

there were found bits of broken crockery, pipe-stems and the ashes of fires, gone out many, many long years ago. As indicated by an early map of the city, the position of the original well was located; in which, when it is cleaned out, it is intended to hang an old oaken bucket and drinking cups as nearly as possible as they originally were.

Some time after the death of de Ramezay, which occurred in the city of Quebec in 1724, these noble halls fell into the possession of the fur-traders of Canada, and many a time these underground cellars were stored with the rich skins of the mink, silver fox, marten, sable and ermine for the markets of Europe and for royalty itself. They were brought in by the hunters and trappers over the boundless domains of the fur companies, and by the Indian tribes friendly to the peltrie trade. As these hardy, bronzed men sat around the hearth, while the juicy haunch of venison roasted on the spit by the blazing logs, relating blood-curdling tales and hairbreadth escapes, they were a necessary phase of times long passed away, but which will always have a picturesqueness especially their own.

Instead of the white man's influencing the savage towards civilized customs, it was often found, as one writer has said, that hundreds of white men were barbarized on this continent for each single savage that was civilized. Many of the former identified themselves by marriage and mode of life with the Indians, developed their traits of hardihood and acquired their knowledge of woodcraft and skill in navigating the streams. In

pursuit of the fur-bearing animals in their native haunts, they shot the raging rapids, ventured out upon the broad expanse of the treacherous lakes, and endured without complaint the severity of winter and the exposure of forest life in summer.

Their ranks were continually increased by those who were impatient of the slow method of obtaining a livelihood from the tillage of the soil, when the husbandman was frequently driven from the plough by the sudden attack of Indian foes, or interrupted in his hasty and anxious harvesting by their war-whoop, or perhaps was compelled to leave his farm to take up arms, if the occasion arose, so that in many instances the homesteads were left to the old men, women and children. The excitement of the chase and the wild freedom of the plains had a fascination that many could not resist, so much so that the king had to promulgate an edict, to stop, under heavy penalties, this roving life of his Canadian subjects, as their nomadic tendencies interfered with the successful settlement of the colony.

To the lover of the quaint architecture of other centuries, there is an indescribable charm in these time-worn walls, which are still as substantial as if the snows and rains of two centuries had not beaten against them. The interior is equally interesting in this regard, as the walls dividing the chambers and corridors, though covered with modern plaster and stucco, are found to consist of several feet of solid stone masonry, while the ornamental ceiling covers beams of timber, twenty inches by eighteen, which is strong, well jointed and placed as close as

flooring. Above this is heavy stone work over twelve inches thick, so that the sloping roof was the only part pregnable in an assault with the munitions of war then in use. Upon removing a portion of the modern wainscotting in the main reception room, there was discovered an ancient fireplace, made of roughly hewn blocks of granite. A crescent-shaped portion of the hearthstone is capable of removal, for what purpose it is not known. With old andirons and huge logs, it looks to-day exactly as it must have done when Montgomery and his suite, in revolutionary uniform, received delegations in this chamber, and when Brigadier General Wooster, who succeeded him, wrote and sent despatches by courier from the French Château to the Colonial mansion at Mount Vernon.

The rooms of state in those days were, it is said, all in what is at present the back of the house, the rear of the building being the front, facing the river, down to which ran the gardens.

It may be that the moonlight cast on these panes the shadow of the noble Sir Jeffrey Amherst, in his red coat, as looking out over the river he may have seen the smoke of the fire lighted by de Lévis, where he burnt his colours rather than let them fall into the hands of the English.

HEROES OF THE PAST

On the river bank below the Château, tradition says, was the spot trodden by Jacques Cartier, who gave the river its name. Born at the time when all Europe was still excited over the tales of Columbus' adventures, he left the white cliffs and grey docks of St. Malo, where he had learned the sailor's craft, to search for the western route to the Indies.

A little higher up, less than a century later, Champlain, to push on actively his operations in the fur-trade, built his fort, the name which he then gave the spot, "*Place Royale*," being recently restored to it. In his wanderings for the further pursuance of this object, he discovered Lakes Ontario, Huron and Champlain.

Being betrothed to a twelve year old maiden, Hélène Bouillé, the daughter of a Huguenot, he named the island opposite the city, which lies like a green gem among the crystal waters, Hélène, in affectionate remembrance of her who, at the end of eight years, was to join him in his adventurous life.

The winding length of quiet, old St. Paul street, then an Indian trail, following the course of the river through the oak forest, must often have known the presence of this picturesque warrior in his weather-beaten garments of the doublet and long hose then in vogue. "Over the doublet he buckled on a breastplate, and probably a back piece, while his thighs were protected by cuisses of steel and his head by a plumed casque. Across his shoulders

hung the strap of his *baudolier* or ammunition box, at his side was his sword, and in his hand his arquebuse. Such was the equipment of this ancient Indian fighter, whose exploits date eleven years before the Puritans landed," among the grey granite hills of New England.

He was an armourer of Dieppe, who, though "a great captain, a successful discoverer and a noted geographer, was more than all a God-fearing, Christian gentleman." He was more concerned to gain victories by the cross than by the sword, saying: – "The salvation of a soul is of more value than the conquest of an empire."

The year 1620 was a red letter day in the history of the Colony, when, from a little vessel moored at the foot of the cliff, he led on shore at Quebec his young bride, who with her three maids had come to the western wilderness, the first gentlewoman to land on Canadian shores. He conducted her to where is now the corner of Notre Dame and Sous-le-Fort streets, to the rude "*habitation*" he had prepared for her reception, which was poorly furnished and unhomelike in comparison to the one which she had left over the sea. But history tells of no word of complaint nor disappointment coming from the gentle lips; but, as the youthful *châteleine* sat by her hearth, it shed a light among the huts of the settlers and dusky lodges of the natives, as her example of patience and duty performed by the first refined, civilized fireside in the land does to the thousands who have succeeded her. After almost three hundred years, the "charms of her person, her elegance and

kindliness of manner" are still remembered. The chronicler tells us that the "Governor's lady wore in her daily rambles, amongst the wigwams, an article of feminine attire, not unusual in those days, a small mirror at her girdle." It appealed irresistibly to the simple natures around her, that "a beauteous being should love them so much as to carry their images reflected close to her heart."

"The graceful figure of the first lady of Canada, gliding noiselessly along by the murmuring waters of the St. Lawrence, showering everywhere smiles and kindness, a help-mate to her noble lord, and a pattern of purity and refinement, was indeed a vision of female loveliness" which time cannot obliterate nor forgetfulness dim. The domestic life of the colony dates from about the time of her arrival, the first regular register of marriage being entered in the following year; two months after the first nuptial ceremony was performed in New England. The first christening took place in the same year, 1621, the ordinance being administered to the infant son of Abraham Martin, *dit L'Ecosais*, pilot of the river St. Lawrence. This old pilot, named in the journal of the Jesuits as *Maître* Abraham, has bequeathed his name to the famous Plains, on which was decided the destiny of New France.

It was indeed a sorry day for the settlement when the inhabitants, on the 16th of August, 1624, saw the white sails of Champlain's vessel disappear behind what is now Point Levis, carrying back, alas! forever, to the shores of her beloved France,

Madame de Champlain, sighing for the mystic life of the cloister, tired out by the incessant alarms and the Indian ferocities spread around the Fort during the frequent absences of her husband and her favourite brother, Eustache Bouillé. The daintily-nurtured French lady must have found the quiet of the old-world convent a very haven of peace and rest. She died at Mieux, an Ursuline Nun, in the order which subsequently was to be so closely identified with the religious history of her wilderness home.

But monastic retreat had no attractions for the founder of Fort St. Louis. Parkman says: "Champlain, though in Paris is restless. He is enamoured of the New World, whose rugged charms have seized his fancy and his heart. His restless thoughts revert to the fog-wrapped coasts, the piney odours of the forests, the noise of waters and the sharp and piercing sunlight so dear to his remembrance."

Among these he was destined to lay down his well worn armour at the command of death, the only enemy before whom he ever retreated; for on Christmas Day, 1635, in a chamber in the Fort at Quebec, "breathless and cold lay the hardy frame which war, the wilderness and the sea had buffeted so long in vain. The chevalier, crusader, romance-loving explorer and practical navigator lay still in death," leaving the memory of a courage that was matchless and a patience that was sublime.

For over two hundred and sixty years, no monument stood to celebrate this true patriot's name, but now his statue stands in his city, near to where he laid the foundations and built the Château

St. Louis. Most unfortunately his last resting place is unknown, notwithstanding the laborious and learned efforts of the many distinguished antiquarians of Quebec.

The Fort which Champlain built in 1620, and in which he died, was for over two centuries the seat of government, and the name recalls the thrilling events which clothed it with an atmosphere of great and stirring interest during its several periods. The hall of the Fort during the weakness of the colony was often, it is said, a scene of terror and despair from the inroads of the ferocious savages, who, having passed and overthrown all the French outposts, threatened the Fort itself, and massacred some friendly Indians within sight of its walls.

"In the palmy days of French sovereignty it was the centre of power over the immense domain extending from the Gulf of St. Lawrence along the shores of the noble river and down the course of the Mississippi to its outlet below New Orleans.

The banner which first streamed from the battlements of Quebec was displayed from a line of forts which protected the settlements throughout this vast extent of country. The Council Chamber of the Castle was the scene of many a midnight vigil, many a long deliberation and deep-laid project, to free the continent from the intrusion of the ancient rivals of France and assert her supremacy. Here also was rendered, with all its ancient forms, the fealty and homage of the *noblesse* and military retainers, who held possessions under the Crown, a feudal service suited to those early times, and which is still performed by the

peers at the coronation of our kings in Westminster Abbey."

Among the many dramatic scenes of which it was the theatre, no occurrence was more remarkable than an event which happened in the year 1690, when "Castle St. Louis had assumed an appearance worthy of the Governor-General, who then made it the seat of the Royal Government, the dignified Count de Frontenac, a nobleman of great talents, long service and extreme pride, and who is considered one of the most illustrious of the early French rulers." The story is, that Sir William Phipps, an English admiral, arriving with his fleet in the harbour, and believing the city to be in a defenceless condition, thought he might capture it by surprise. An officer was sent ashore with a flag of truce. He was met half way by a French major and his men, who, placing a bandage over the intruder's eyes, conducted him by a circuitous route to the Castle, having recourse on the way to various stratagems, such as making small bodies of soldiers cross and re-cross his path, to give him the impression of the presence of a strong force. On arriving at the Castle, his surprise we are told was extreme on finding himself in the presence of the Governor-General, the Intendant and the Bishop, with a large staff of French officers, uniformed in full regimentals, drawn up in the centre of the great hall ready to receive him.

The British officer immediately handed to Frontenac a written demand for an unconditional surrender, in the name of the new Sovereigns, William and Mary, whom Protestant England had

crowned instead of the dethroned and Catholic James. Taking his watch from his pocket and placing it on a table near by, he peremptorily demanded a positive answer in an hour's time at the furthest. This action was like the spark in the tinder, and completely roused the anger and indignation of his hearers, who had scarcely been able to restrain their excitement during the reading of the summons, which the Englishman had delivered in an imperious voice, and which an interpreter had translated word for word to the outraged audience.

A murmur of repressed resentment ran through the assembly, when one of the officers, without waiting for his superior to reply, exclaimed impetuously: – that the messenger ought to be treated as the envoy of a corsair, or common marauder, since Phipps was in arms against his legitimate Sovereign. Frontenac, although keenly hurt in his most vulnerable point, – his pride – by the lack of ceremony displayed in the conduct of the Englishman, replied in a calm voice, but in impassioned words, saying loftily: – "You will have no occasion to wait so long for my answer, – here it is: – I do not recognize King William, but I know that the Prince of Orange is an usurper, who has violated the most sacred ties of blood and religion in dethroning the King, his father-in-law; and I acknowledge no other legitimate Sovereign than James the Second. Do your best, and I will do mine."

The messenger thereupon demanded that the reply be given him in writing, which the Governor haughtily refused, saying: —
"I am going to answer your master at the cannon's mouth; he

shall be taught that this is not the manner in which a person of my rank ought to be summoned."

Charlevoix seems to have very much admired the lordly bearing of Frontenac on this occasion, which was so trying to his self-control, but, with an impartiality creditable to a Frenchman, he justly chronicles his equal admiration for the coolness and presence of mind with which the Englishman signalized himself in carrying out his mission, under insults and humiliations scarcely to be looked for from those who should have known better the respect due to a flag of truce.

The commander of the fleet, finding the place ready for resistance, concluded that the lateness of the season rendered it unwise to commence a regular siege against a city whose natural and artificial defences made it a formidable fortress, and which, when garrisoned by troops of such temper and mettle, it appeared impossible to reduce. It must also be considered that Phipps had been delayed by contrary winds and pilots ignorant of the river navigation, which combination of untoward circumstances conspired to compel him to relinquish his design, which under more favouring conditions he might have carried out with success, and conquered the place before it could have been known in Montreal that it was even in danger.

"Without doubt Frontenac was the most conspicuous figure which the annals of the early colonization of Canada affords. He was the descendant of several generations of distinguished men who were famous as courtiers and soldiers." He was of Basque

origin and proud of his noble ancestry. He was born in 1620, and was distinguished by becoming the god-child of the King, the royal sponsor bestowing his own name on the unconscious babe, who was in after years to be a sturdy defender of France's dominions over the ocean. He became a soldier at the age of fifteen, and even in early youth and manhood saw active service and gave promise of gallantry and bravery.

In October, 1648, he married the lovely young Anne de la Grange-Trianon, a "maiden of imperious temper, lively wit and marvellous grace." She was a beauty of the court and chosen friend of Mademoiselle de Montpensier, the granddaughter of King Henry the Fourth. A celebrated painting of the *Comtesse de Frontenac*, in the character of Minerva, smiles on the walls of one of the galleries at Versailles.

The marriage took place without the consent of the bride's relatives, and soon proved an ill-starred one, the young wife's fickle affection turning into a strong repulsion for her husband, whom she intrigued to have sent out of the country.

Her influence at court, and some jealousy on the part of the King combined to bring about this end, and Frontenac was appointed Governor and Lieutenant-General of *La Nouvelle France*.

Parkman says: – "A man of courts and camps, born and bred in the focus of a most gorgeous civilization, he was banished to the ends of the earth, among savage hordes and half-reclaimed forests, to exchange the splendour of St. Germain and the

dawning glories of Versailles for a stern, grey rock, haunted by sombre priests, rugged merchants, traders, blanketed Indians and wild bushrangers." When he sailed up the river and the stern grandeur of the scene opened up before him, he felt as he afterwards wrote: —

"I never saw anything more superb than the position of this town. It could not be better situated for the future capital of an empire."

But the dainty and luxurious *Comtesse* had no taste for pioneer life, and no thought of leaving her silken-draped *boudoir* for a home in a rude fort on a rock; she therefore accepted the offer of a domicile with her kindred spirit, Mademoiselle d'Outrelaise. The "*Divines*," as they were called, established a *Salon*, which, among the many similar coteries of the time, was remarkable for its wit and gaiety. It set the fashion to French society, and was affected by all the leading spirits of the Court and Capital.

Although an occasional *billet* came from the recreant spouse to her husband in the Castle St. Louis, no home life nor welcoming domestic fireside threw a charm over his exile. The glamour with which affection can glorify even the rudest surroundings was denied him in his long life of seventy-six years.

To avoid the confusion to which the terms Fort St. Louis and Castle St. Louis might lead, it must be understood that they in a measure were the same, as the one enclosed the other.

In the year 1834, two hundred and fourteen years after the foundation of this Château, a banquet was prepared for the

reception of those invited to partake of the official hospitality of the Governor; when suddenly the tocsin sounded, – the dreaded alarm of fire. Soon the streets were thronged with citizens, with anxious enquiries passing from lip to lip, and ere long the cry was uttered: "To the Castle, to the Castle!"

The entire population of merchants and artisans, soldiers from the garrison, priests from the monasteries, and citizens, rich and poor, joined hands with the firemen to save the mediæval fortress from destruction, and its treasured contents from the flames. Old silver was snatched from the banquet table by some who had expected to sit around the board as guests.

At the head of the principal staircase, where it had stood for fifty years or more, was a bust of Wolfe, with the inscription upon it: —

"Let no vain tear upon this bust be shed,
A common tribute to the common dead,
But let the good, the generous, the brave,
With God-like envy sigh for such a grave."

Fortunately, in the confusion of the disaster it was not overlooked, but was carried to a place of safety. While every heart present could not but be moved with the deepest feelings of regret at the loss of its hoary walls, yet the beholder was forced to admire the magnificent spectacular effect of the conflagration which crowned the battlements and reflected over crag and river, as the old fort, which had stubbornly resisted all its enemies

during five sieges, fell before the devouring element.

Its stones were permeated with the military and religious history of the "old rock city," for, in the fifteen years of its occupancy by Champlain, it was as much a mission as a fort. The historian says: — "A stranger visiting the Fort of Quebec would have been astonished at its air of conventual decorum. Black-robed Jesuits and scarfed officers mingled at Champlain's table. There was little conversation, but in its place histories and the lives of the saints were read aloud, as in a monastic refectory. Prayers, masses and confessions followed each other, and the bell of the adjacent chapel rang morning, noon and night. Quebec became a shrine. Godless soldiers whipped themselves to penitence, women of the world outdid each other in the fury of their contrition, and Indians gathered thither for the gifts of kind words and the polite blandishments bestowed upon them."

The site where the old Château St. Louis once stood, with its halo of romance and renown, is now partially covered by the great Quebec hostelry, the Château Frontenac, which in its erection and appointments has not destroyed, but rather perpetuated, the traditions of the "Sentinel City of the St. Lawrence."

"Château Frontenac has been planned with the strong sense of the fitness of things, being a veritable old-time Château, whose curves and cupolas, turrets and towers, even whose tones of gray stone and dulled brick harmonize with the sober quaint architecture of our dear old Fortress City, and looks like a small bit of Mediæval Europe perched upon a rock."

Under the promenade of Durham Terrace is still the cellar of the old Château; and standing upon it, the patriot, whether English or French, cannot but thrill as he looks on the same scene upon which the heroes of the past so often gazed, and from which they flung defiance to their foes.

On almost the same spot upon which Champlain had landed at Montreal, and about seven years after his death, a small band of consecrated men and women, singing a hymn, drew up their tempest-worn pinnace, and raised their standard in the name of King Louis, while Maisonneuve, the ascetic knight, planted a crucifix, and dedicated the land to God.

The city as it stands on this spot is a fulfilment of his vow then made, when he declared, as he pitched his tent and lighted his camp-fire, that here he would found a city though every tree on the island were an Iroquois. On an altar of bark, decorated with wild flowers and lighted by fireflies, the first mass was celebrated, and the birthnight of Montreal registered.

From the little seed thus planted in this rude altar, a mighty harvest has arisen in cathedral, monastery, church and convent, representing untold wealth and influence. The early French explorer, with a "sword in his hand and a crucifix on his breast," was more desirous of Christianizing than of conquering the native tribes. So completely has this creed become identified with the country's character and history, that the province of Quebec is emphatically a Catholic community. So faithfully have its tenets been handed down by generations of devout followers

of this faith, that even the streets and squares bear the names of saints and martyrs, such as St. Francis Xavier, St. Peter, St. John, St. Joseph, St. Mary, and in fact the entire calendar is represented, especially in the east end of the town. St. Paul, which was probably the first street laid out, is called after the city's founder himself, – Paul Chomedy de Maisonneuve.

NOTRE-DAME-DE-LA-VICTOIRE

A few rods to the west of the Château, through a vaulted archway leading from the street, in the shadow of the peaceful convent buildings is a little chapel called *Notre-Dame-de-la-Victoire*. The swallows twittering under its broken eaves are now the only sign of life; and its rotting timbers and threshold, forgotten by the world, give no suggestion of the martial incident to which it owes its existence. While the American Colonies were still English, the British Ensign floated over Boston town, and good Queen Anne was prayed for in Puritan pulpits, an expedition was fitted out under Sir Hovenden Walker to drive the French out of Canada. In the previous year, 1710, the Legislature of New York had taken steps to lay before the Queen the alarming progress of Gallic domination in America, saying: —

"It is well known that the French can go by water from Quebec to Montreal; from thence they can do the like through the rivers and lakes, at the risk of all your Majesty's plantations on this Continent, as far as Carolina."

In the command of Walker were several companies of regulars draughted from the great Duke of Marlborough's Army. While he was leading it from victory to victory for the glory of his King, his wife, the famous Sarah Jennings, was making a conquest at home of the affections of the simple-minded and susceptible Queen. It is remarkable that the coronet of this

ambitious woman should now rest on the brow of an American girl, and that a daughter of New York should reign at Blenheim Castle. At that period France possessed the two great valleys of North America, the Mississippi and the St. Lawrence; to capture the latter was the aim of the expedition.

As the hostile fleet sailed up the St. Lawrence, a storm of great severity burst upon the invaders. Eight of the transports were wrecked on the reefs, and in the dawn of the midsummer morning the bodies of a thousand red-coated soldiers were strewn on the sands of *Isle-aux-Œufs*. It has been said that an old sea-dog, Jean Paradis, refused to act as pilot, and in a fog allowed them to run straight on to death; and also that among those who perished was one of the court beauties who had eloped with Sir Hovenden.

The disabled vessels retreated before the artillery of the elements, and left Bourbon's *Lilied Blue* to wave for half a century longer over Fort St. Louis. This bloodless victory for the French was attributed by them to the intervention of the Virgin, in gratitude for which this chapel was vowed and built, as was also another on the market place, Lower Town, Quebec. The miraculous feature of the defeated invasion was considered certain from the fact that a recluse in the convent near the chapel, and who was remarkable for her piety, had embroidered a prayer to the Virgin on the flag which the Baron de Longueuil had borne from Montreal in command of a detachment of troops.

Some of the original interior fittings of the chapel still exist, but the bell which chimed its first call to vespers, when the great

city was a quiet, frontier hamlet, has long been silent. It is to be regretted that from its historical character it has not been preserved from decay, but looks as time-worn and mouldering as does the rusty cannon in the hall of the Château, which was one of the guns of the ill-fated fleet, and over which the river had flowed for almost two hundred years. Seven of England's sovereigns had lived, reigned and died, and in France the Royal house had fallen in the deluge of blood that flowed around the guillotine. Quebec had changed flags – the Tri-color had been unfurled over the *Hôtel-de-Ville* at Paris, and the Stars and Stripes over the new-born nation.

The thrones of Europe had tottered at the word of the Corsican boy, – he had played with crowns as with golden baubles, and had gone from the imperial purple to the mist-shrouded rocks of St. Helena. Eugenie, the Beautiful, had ruled the world by her grace, and fled from the throne of the haughty Louis to a loveless exile – while the old gun, with its charge rusting in its mouth, lay in silence under the passing keels of a million craft.

LE SÉMINAIRE

Still more ancient is a venerable postern in the blackened wall of the Seminary of St. Sulpice, near by, which is now the oldest building in the city, being erected some fifty years before the Château. It leads by a narrow lane to the gardens of the Monastery, which bloom quiet and still here in the heart of the throbbing life of a city of to-day. Generations of saintly men, under vows, have trodden in the shade of its walks, trying with the rigours of monastic life to crush out the memories of love and home left behind among the sun-kissed vineyards of France. For two hundred years and more no woman's footstep had fallen here among the flowers, until recently the wife of a Governor-General was admitted on a special occasion. On the cobble-stones of the courtyard, pilgrims, penitents, priests and soldiers have trodden, the echoes of their footsteps passing away in centuries of years. Above the walls, blackened by time and pierced by windows with the small panes of a fashion gone by, the bells of the clock ring out the stroke of midnight over one-third of a million souls, as it did the hours of morning when the great-great-grandfathers of the present generation ran to school over the grass-grown pavements of young Ville-Marie.

"The inimitable old roof-curves still cover the walls, and the Fleur-de-Lys still cap the pinnacles" as in the days when Richelieu, the prince of prelates, sought to plant the feudalism

and Christianity of old France on the shores of the new. They still rise against the blue of Canadian skies unmolested, while in France, in the early years of the century, popular frenzy dragged this symbol of royalty from the spires of the churches and convents of Paris.

CATHEDRALS AND CLOISTERS

The Order of the Gentlemen of St. Sulpice is supposed to be very rich, the amount of the immense revenues never being made public. They were the feudal lords of the Island of Montreal in the earlier chapters of its history. Through their zealous efforts and the generosity of their parishioners was opened in the year eighteen hundred and twenty-nine the grand church adjoining, that of *Notre Dame*, built on the site of the original parish church. Viewing it from the extensive *plaza* in front, its imposing proportions fill the beholder with the same awe as when looking at some lofty mountain peak, but its symmetry is so exquisite that its size cannot at first be appreciated.

In imitation of its prototype, *Notre Dame de Paris*, twin towers rise in stateliness to a height of two hundred and twenty-seven feet, and are visible for a distance of thirty miles. The façade is impressive, the style a modification of different schools adapted to carry out the design intended. Three colossal statues of the Virgin, St. Joseph and St. John the Baptist are placed over the arcades. The sublime structure belongs to a branch of the Gothic, in the pointed arch type of architecture which was brought home from the Crusades, – a style which has come down from the time-honoured architecture of the old world, when religious thought that now finds expression in books was written and symbolized in stone.

From a vestibule at the foot of the western tower, an ascent of two hundred and seventy-nine steps offers a most enchanting view of mountain, river, street and harbour, with such a wilderness of dome, steeple and belfry, that the exclamation involuntarily arises – this is truly a city of churches!

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