

Chapter One

her father, and the head Factor of all this region, paced back and forth across the veranda of the factory, caressing his white beard; up by the stockade, young Achille Picard tuned his whistle to the note of the curlew; across the meadow from the church wandered Crane, the little Church of England missionary, peering from short-sighted pale blue eyes; beyond the coulee, Sarnier and his Indians *chock-chock-chocked* away at the seams of the long coast-trading bateau. The girl saw nothing, heard nothing. She was dreaming, she was trying to remember.

In the lines of her slight figure, in its pose there by the old gun over the old, old river, was the grace of gentle blood, the pride of caste. Of all this region her father was the absolute lord, feared, loved, obeyed by all its human creatures. When he went