

## THE JESUIT'S WELL.

BY WILLIAM WILFRED CAMPBELL.

### I.

IN the early seventies, when I was a clerk in the Civil Service at Ottawa, where I had charge of the old Upper Canada Official Papers, my fellow-clerk, an eccentric old Frenchman named Lombard, died suddenly, leaving me, as a legacy, a package containing a memorandum, which read as follows:

"For John Bertram: Read papers in package tied with red tape in section 38. Open French, English inside. Marry the girl. Pierre Lombard."

When opened, it also disclosed an exquisite miniature painting on ivory of a very beautiful young woman of a past century, and on the back of the miniature was written in faded ink: "My great-grandmother, the Countess of Lombardy. P. Lombard."

I searched in section 38, and found the French papers, and on my opening them out fell a small bundle of letters. They were in English, and were written by one, John Gillis, manager of a branch of the old Canada Bank at a place called Northampton, on Lake Huron. They were, for the most part, on business matters, relating to monies, land, patents, etc.; but, examining them carefully, I came to a short one addressed to "Donald Gillis, Ayr, Scotland." It was the strangest letter I had ever seen, and contained the following meaningless jumble of words: "Left drawer in bottom first chart well get in Jesuit's ring the sunset the well pull a over half league boat west take dead from landing alternate back. J. Gillis."

After studying it for the whole night, I had a sudden inspiration that the last two words were a direction to be followed, and reading the rest backwards and alternating the words, got the following: "From landing take boat dead west, half a league over the sunset. Pull the ring in the Jesuit's Well. First get chart in left bottom drawer."

All was clear so far. This was a clue to a secret, no doubt, which I intended to fathom. I next found Northampton on the map, and went to bed to dream of buried treasure and a beautiful face that looked at me from an ivory portrait, and to study out, sleeping or waking, for evermore, the mystery of the Jesuit's Well.

Three days afterwards I arrived in Northampton. Next morning I stepped out in front of the tumble-down hotel and found the great sweep of lake and drifted beaches before my gaze, and I made up my mind that if a secret were hidden anywhere, it was here it would keep its history inviolate.

The whole atmosphere of haze-wrapped lake, sky and drifted sand shores, with these storm-blown battered buildings, seemed to belong to a remote past.

Upon enquiring as to the whereabouts of the former residence of Gillis, the bank, I discovered, had been closed for some years, and the residence, sold for a rectory, was now vacant.

The church clerk, a garrulous little man, accompanied me to the house, and then left me to my ruminations, after having informed me that at the top of the house were some articles belonging to the former owner.

I trod some rickety stairs and entered an old garret dimly lighted, and there in front of me, with its dust-covered, time-stained drawers partly open, stood the desk that my hopes were builded upon.

Trembling with excitement, I opened the left hand lower drawer, only to find emptiness and much dust. I could have cried out in my angry disappointment. I had feared that the desk might be gone, but never dreamed the papers could be missing.

I took out my package and studied it anew. Undoubtedly this was the right desk, but there it stood with the important left hand drawer empty. My chagrin was complete. Was the whole thing a dream of Lombard's?