

IN TREATY WITH HONOR A Romance of Old Quebec.

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CHAPTER XVII. STRANGE JOURNEYINGS.

The reprieve by no means meant that I was to be set at liberty, however, as I was soon to discover. Unfortunately for my fellow-prisoners and myself, the burning of the Canadian steamer "Robert Peel" at Well's Island by a band of patriots disguised as Indians caused us to be treated more rigorously than before.

This it was that, twenty-four hours after Jaquette brought me the glad news that I was to live, I was awakened in the middle of the night by the flash of a lantern in the corridor. As I sat up on my pallet, half blinded by the sudden light, I heard the rattling of keys and the grating of the lock. The next moment the flickering rays of the lantern sent weird shadows, like the ghosts of former occupants of my cell, shuddering along the walls, and Tummas entered.

"You have to rise hat once, sir," he said, "hand prepared to be taken away."

Had I been deceived? Was the reprieve but a sham, after all? Was it intended I should be secretly put to death, now in the darkness of the night when the city slept and my friends, happy in having as they thought, paved the way for my speedy release, were resting tranquilly, unconscious of the fate that menaced me?

The first part of the gaoler's injunction was unnecessary, for I was already on my feet. Tummas had not waited to say more, but went down the passage, leaving his lantern outside my door. As I dressed, I commended my soul to God, thinking that, perhaps, within the next half hour I might be before the bar of His judgment.

My natural supposition that I was to be speedily hustled out of this world was, nevertheless, presently changed, as I heard the turkey arising others in the same row of cells. It could not be possible that all the patriots in the goal were to be led forth to execution thus, the others without even the form of a trial.

Yet, if we were merely to be transferred to another prison, why this secrecy and haste? Why could not the journey be put off until the morning? I put the question to Tummas when he returned.

"Look, sir, I don't know, but I suppose hit his thought as to send you hin this way," was the only answer he vouchsafed me.

Brought out into the large room I found myself once more among my former companions. Chained together in pairs, we were before long led out of the building and presently found ourselves marching down to the wharf. A steamboat lay waiting and, by the flare of the torches, we saw a gray line of smoke escaping from her funnel and knew she was ready to start. Our escort down to the boat had been a company of negroes, her majesty's black guards, and we presently found we were to have them during the voyage. The regulars could not be well spared from the garrison, and we were thought too popular with the volunteers, who might be tempted to desert across the lines to the States, taking us with them. The blacks being originally slaves who had run away from the south would be sure to keep clear of the border, lest they should be caught and sent back to their masters.

There were twenty of us, literally and figuratively, in the same boat, and huddled together aft, with a barricade of barrels of flour in front of us and the sentinels behind. As the steamer put off, the white officer in charge of the party informed us that we were to be placed in care of the military at Fort Henry, at the end of the lake. He then went into the cabin and made himself comfortable.

Though it was now early in June, at this season in the north the temperature is cool at night, but we had no shelter, beds, nor blankets. Still chained together two and two, some of my companions seated themselves upon the deck, peered up the barrels, others leaned against the gunwales. Among these, but a little apart from the rest, with my involuntary mate, I stood peering through the gloom at the sky and the tossing waters. Alas, every moment carried me farther away from all chance of rescue, from the friends whom my misfortunes had made for me in Toronto, and, worst of all, to my thinking, far from my beloved Jaquette, whom I was leaving without a spoken word of farewell.

The most I had been able to do was to write a few words, which I intrusted to Tummas, telling him to take the letter to her and he would surely be well rewarded. Of course in addition I gave him as generous a pre-ent as I could. Thanks to the success of an acquaintance in smuggling into the prison a small sum of money sent to me from the States, I had a little coin at my disposal.

Would Tummas deliver the letter? How it would grieve my darling! Yet if it failed to reach her, how shocked she would be when the news got abroad in the town that, with the other prisoners, I had been hurried away thus without warning.

"My poor Jaquette, am I destined ever to see you again?" I mentally soliloquized. "I must no longer dream of a time when I may call you by the sweet name of wife. If I ever regain my freedom, doubtless it will be as a gray-haired man, coming out of prison to find I have been long forgotten by the world."

I dared dwell no longer upon these sombre thoughts. "Shall we mingle with the men?" I proposed to Culver, my companion. "Being shackled together, wherever we move we must go in company."

Among the others I had noticed and saluted Sutherland. Several times I had sent him messages of cheer in the goal, and occasionally little presents of the dainties sent in to me, at rare inter-

vals, by several kind ladies who on gala days remembered our loneliness. But this was the first time I had seen him since the day when, in his picturesque uniform, he had posed as a general at Bois Blanc. We now drew near him, and I conversed with him as cheerfully as I could, finding him no with him a while but, returning to my own thoughts.

About 3 o'clock in the morning, our guards growing tired of watching us, and sure we could not get away, piled their muskets and cartridge boxes on the other side of the cabin and went forward to amuse themselves, leaving only one sentinel at his post. This was our chance.

"I'll wager the officer is asleep," I whispered to Culver. "If we rush upon the sentinel we can bear him down, seize the arms, take possession of the boat, and run her across to the American shore of the lake."

"Chained though we are, I believe we can do it," he replied, for he was mettlesome and resourceful. "When you give the signal, major, I will act."

Cautiously, we communicated our plan to the others. They were, to a man in favor of it, with the exception of Sutherland.

"I flatly refuse," he declared. "Then remain quiet and keep yourself out of danger!" I exhorted him. "We will ask no more of you."

"It is folly I shall all be shot down. It is better to await the chance of release. If you do not at once abandon your design I shall warn the sentinel," he said sullenly.

Time was wasted in arguing with him. Toward daybreak, as the boat came within sight of Fort Henry and the town of Kingston, the guards turning took up their arms, the officer came on deck to make a bold dash for liberty was lost.

One thought had served in some degree to buoy up my sinking spirits during the voyage. "Perhaps it was to this place my dear comrade was sent," I said to myself. "Possibly here, far from the friends who are free and happy, he and I, by a fortunate chance, or still better, a kind dispensation of Providence, may be reunited."

Soon after our party landed, I found the hope was vain. "There are no other political prisoners here," said the officer in charge of us, when I put the question to him. "But only the Canadians among your company are to remain at Fort Henry. You, and the nine other Americans, are to be sent on to Quebec."

It was not cheering news that I was to be still farther separated from Jaquette and every one whom I knew. During the evening the soldiers of the garrison showed themselves eager to pay us any little attention in their power, and the supper furnished us was the best that had been provided since our imprisonment.

Early the next morning, after we had breakfasted on prison fare, we Americans were called out and our chains were stricken off, a consideration for which we were truly grateful. Having taken an affecting leave of the patriots destined to remain here, and whom we might never see again, we were placed once more under our black escort and marched to the boat waiting to take us down the Rideau Canal to Lower Canada.

During this new voyage we had the freedom of the boat and remained most of the time on deck, charmed with the romantic scenery of the country. Our guards were ever on the alert, however, and when occasionally the boat put into shore for wood, or stopped at some little village, we were requested to go below. Evidently, it was still feared the people might attempt to rescue us.

At last we reached a town on the boundary of the two provinces, at the point where the canal joins the lake. Here the lumber sent over the waterway on rafts is divided into small cages, to be passed through the locks, and once floated through, is made up again to be carried over the swift current to the Ottawa. The notables of the place came on board, curious to see us. At first I kept to the cabin, but a strapping young captain of a logging gang sought me out.

"Lord Darham, the new governor-general, has already arrived at Quebec," he told me. "Whether that may be for your advantage or not, it is impossible to say, sir, but at least in the Canadas you have many friends like these." As he spoke he pointed to the wharf where a throng of his men and others stood watching us with axes and logging-poles in their hands, excellent weapons indeed for an emergency. So our ship's captain clearly thought, for he ordered all visitors ashore and steamed out into the river. As we floated down the current, we were followed by a chorus of cheers from the lush throats of the lumbermen.

The next day we landed and were marched across the country toward the St. Lawrence. That night at a blockhouse we mended and slept with our officer. The guards being encamped at a short distance we were, in a manner, on our parole. The following morning we continued our march to Carillon, where we embarked again upon a steamboat. Soon after noon we came to Montreal. At the prison we were served with a fine dinner provided by the French prisoners still incarcerated there. After a night's rest, we were again marched through the streets to the Quebec steamer, crowds of the people, many of them friendly turning out to see us.

It was afternoon when we approached Quebec. The boats riding at anchor in the harbor, the landing-place, and the streets through which we marched were thronged with the hostile portion of the population who cried out insultingly to the Canadians among these crowds. The narrowness of the thoroughfares, their steep ascent and the heat of the day made the trudge up La Montague and the length of St. Louis Street seem interminable, even though at its end we knew we should find again a prison.

"Ah, with what different feelings we would have approached this citadel had our fortune been to attempt its capture," said Culver, aside to me. "Yes, even though those frowning batteries belched fire, and we should fall in a mad effort to scale the wall like the American general, my brave countryman," answered I.

While we spoke we entered the gate of the fortress and were halted, perhaps that we might take breath. The sentinels saluted our officer. Several soldiers of duty, who were standing about the door of the barracks to the right of the gate, stared at our black guards with astonishment, and I caught the eyes of more than one among them fixed upon us with a certain interest.

Feeling sure my companions, like myself, must be suffering from thirst after our climb up the hill, I asked that we might be given water to drink. Without waiting to be sent by the officer in charge of our escort, one of these soldiers started off and straightway returned with a bucketful of cool water and a tin cup. For each of us in turn he poured a draught that was most refreshing.

"Forward," came the order, crisp and sharp. Across the parade, purposely left uneven and stony, that the regiments who drilled here might become used to the rough surface of the country hereabouts, were conducted by a corporal's guard toward an angle in the fortifications, shut off from the parade by a high board fence. At a gate in the fence stood a sentinel. Passing him, we entered the enclosure, and found ourselves before a bomb-proof building whose door was studded with iron nails.

Another sentinel paced up and down before it. A sergeant inserted a great key in the lock, turned it, and threw open the door. Entering we glanced about us with dull indifference, conscious that we should know our surroundings only too well as time went on.

We were in a room about fifty feet long and twelve broad, with a high arched roof from which the moisture dripped. There were two strongly barred windows and the walls, which were very thick, had loopholes for musketry. The donjon had evidently been used as a military prison. The settles were of iron, and boards placed across two of them formed a table. The beds were of iron too, but now they were folded up against the wall. We afterwards discovered that to each was allowed a thin pallet and a soldier's blanket. There was a stove in the place, also, and on the floor near it lay a pile of brushwood.

Warm as the air had been outside, here it was chill and damp, and the thought crossed my mind that had I been the man whom I described at the farther end of the room, I would have started a fire. The chamber was ill-lighted and his back was towards us, but clearly he was a fellow-prisoner, else he would not have been locked up here. His position was an odd one, I whimsically reflected. It was hardly fitting he should bid us welcome, since we had no wish to be here, and yet the instinct of courtesy would have impelled him to extend to us a greeting.

Seated amid the shadows, at first he had seemed to me one of them, for he did not even turn his head at the sound of the opening door. Now, however, apparently aroused to the fact that others beside the prison rounds had come in, he slowly rose to his feet and wheeled about.

He was tall, straight, and broad-shouldered, and I remember, as he came forward, apparently in puzzled uncertainty as to what this intrusion on our part might mean, I thought it a pity so fine a figure of a man, and one plainly accustomed to much exercise in the open air, should languish in captivity. I could not distinguish his features, though mine must have been visible to him, because, as it chanced, I stood where the light from one of the windows fell full upon me. He therefore I was at a loss to understand the sudden change in his demeanor, the quick start, the eager stride forward. Not until he was with in a few feet of me did I know I had ever seen him before.

Then indeed I echoed his cry of delight and amazement, and seizing his outstretched hands wrung them rapturously; then indeed was my heart uplifted with joy. For the man who thus came to greet me in this new prison-house was my dear friend Ramon.

CHAPTER XVII. THE CITADEL. When we calmed down somewhat after the excitement of this unexpected meeting, Ramon told me he had only that afternoon been transferred to this large room from a small cell under the same roof, and he was cogitating what this change might mean when we were brought in.

"Until late in the night he and I talked together, as at our reunion under such different circumstances near Le Detroit. Now in our heart to have a conference, instead of avoiding the name of Jaquette I spoke of her frankly telling him of her presence at my trial, her visit to me in my prison accompanied by her maid, and finally of our betrothal, a strange love truth, truly, since I was still under sentence of death.

"Ah, Nial, from my soul I congratulate you upon having won her love," he cried, when I had finished my story. Jaquette is a pearl among women. For her sake now, as well as for your own, we must make every effort to obtain your release."

"My dear comrade," said I, "not even for Jaquette shall I ever go forth from this place without you, unless it be to mount the scaffold." He looked pleased at my thus putting my friendship for him apparently before even my love for my darling.

Then, I, too, must make haste to regain liberty," he declared lightly. "In order that I may dance at your wedding. Truly, I must begin to practise a pas seul to-morrow."

From that time he was so gay it was with difficulty he kept to the subdued tone of voice in which we conversed to avoid waking our companions or calling forth a warning from the sentinel outside one of the windows. Once or twice a suspicion flashed across my mind that his buoyant spirits were, in part, assumed as if he strove to divert my thoughts and cause me to forget how long it might be before I could claim Jaquette as my bride.

"But, one thing is evident," I said to myself, "he is glad of my happiness and by giving him the wherewithal to drink our health at the canteen, we soon had him in our power."

Nancy, his wife, attended to our marketing. Through her I was able to communicate with several gentlemen of the city whom we knew to be friendly to the patriot cause. In reply they sent us a purse. Nancy was not aware, however, that once, in a loaf of cake, she again in a wonderful party, she brought us letters from these gentlemen. Trusty friends, they said, would be on the watch to take us, if we should have a chance to take "French leave" of our present lodgings and make our way across the border to the United States.

While we were breakfasting one morning shortly after this, we were surprised by a visit from the adjutant accompanied by a guard.

"Sir, I demand the key of your trunk," he said, confronting me peremptorily. "Sir, you shall not have it until you tell me the meaning of your request," I answered with equal terseness. For some minutes we argued the matter, for I wished to gain time to re-fleet upon the possible reason for this investigation. Had the sergeant betrayed the fact that we had received a present from half a dozen of the citizens? Did he suspect they had written to us? The letters I had at once destroyed, but was there anything among my scant belongings which would incriminate myself or any one else?

"If you do not give up the key immediately, I shall have the trunk broken open," declared the officer, losing patience. "We have full knowledge of your schemes, gentlemen."

As he spoke he held up before my eyes a piece of an old broken saw. At sight of it, I laughed, and at once gave up the key.

By his order the sergeant-major not only searched through the trunk, but examined the lining, the pockets of my clothes, and every corner where anything could possibly be concealed. In the same manner he went through the effects of Sutherland, Ramon, the clothes of our fellow-prisoners, and the whole scene, scrutinizing the saw with interest, cried testily—

"Well, Mr. Adair, you have evidently seen this tool before. Will you be so good as to tell me where?"

"Certainly," I replied. "For some time it lay on the sill of one of the windows here, and the other day I threw it out as useless. The sentinel picked it up, and no doubt took it to the guard-house. I am sorry the circumstance occasioned such a commotion."

The officer swore under his breath. "God, sir, I beg your pardon," he broke out frankly after a moment. "The sergeant took it to the armorer, who said it was such a saw as is used to cut iron, and the report came to me that you political prisoners had tools with which you were trying to cut your way out of the fortress."

He ordered the guard away forthwith, and departed with them. Afterwards we learned that carpenters who were making repairs in the building had probably left the piece of the saw there, long before our coming. Also that the adjutant was much twitted by his brother-officers for his mistaken zeal, and the opinion he had formed of our prowess that in face of so strong a guard, with only a rusty bit of saw for a weapon, we might charge through two battalions of her majesty's troops and make our way to the States. I mention the incident because it had much to do with what happened later.

To make amends for the annoyance he had caused us, the adjutant permitted us to go out on the ramparts earlier and to remain longer than usual. Ramon and I were never permitted to go together. On this day I was of the band that went out last.

As from the highest point of the citadel I gazed around me, I thought I had never beheld a lovelier scene than the panorama that unfolded from beneath my feet. From the west the sun shot golden arrows among the sombre woods, against the spires of the Charlesbourg church, and into the Indian village of Lorette, and made the stream of the St. Charles a gleaming ribbon of silver winding through the green meadows.

Beyond the little river I traced the white farmhouses of Beauport, the old settlement of Breton and Norman sailors that stretches its serpentine length along the shore of the St. Lawrence. The white mists arising from a cleft in a neighboring hill showed me that here was the Montmorency Fall. Thence, travelling across the marshes, my eyes rested at last upon the blue Laurentian range, where the rays of golden light touched, as with the blessings of a holy hand, the mountain of Ste. Anne, and brought out into relief the lofty peaks of Bonhomme and Trounouthan.

Coming back to the foreground of the picture I saw below me the quaint old city of Quebec, the antique gables and sloping roofs of the Lower Town; halfway up the height the towers of the basilica, the Laval University, and the long front of the Jesuit college. From here, as well as from the Recollet monastery, then sheltered beneath the cliff, went out the first missionaries to carry the message of the Cross to the Indian tribes, even as far as the Great Lakes and the Mississippi.

Yonder, too, I beheld the Ursuline convent, so linked with the story of the past, and at the edge of the cliff the ancient Chateau of St. Louis. Crowned on the summit of Cape Diamond, was this fortress where I was a prisoner, this citadel, founded by Champlain, above which for a hundred and fifty years had floated the white standard of the fleur de lis in token of the supremacy of France in the New World.

From beneath these ramparts Duluth and La Mothe Cadillac set forth to found French military posts in the great North-west. Beyond, on the Plains of Abraham, was fought the battle wherein Wolfe and Montcalm fell, when France lost Canada and the French Canadians a country.

But from the contemplation of the beauty that, on this midsummer afternoon, lay over the town, the fields, and the sunlit mountains bounding the west, I turned eagerly toward the eastern prospect, even though it was in shadow.

For in that direction, across the noble tide of the St. Lawrence, now dotted with shipping, beyond the heights of Levis, upon the distant horizon I could see the hills of the State of Maine, the hills of freedom. Would I ever reach them? Or was I destined to die thus in sight of the promised land?

On this evening, as many times afterwards, I felt, if I were fated to meet my end in Quebec, I would pray that I might be shot on the ramparts with my face turned toward the country of my adoption, which I loved even as I loved the country of my birth.

Now, as my eyes lingered in fascination upon the deep purple outline of those hills against the sky, my thoughts went back to Jaquette. I wondered if she was still in Toronto, and for the hundredth time I conjectured as to whether she had received my hastily scrawled letter. The dearest thing in life to me was her love; and yet often I felt I could not bear to have my heart and soul and my life given to be my wife. And in the exaltation of this emotion, I told myself, I would willingly endure any trials in store for me, if I could but lift the burden of anxiety from her spirit and know that she was happy.

CHAPTER XVIII. LOVE AND A TRAITOR. It has been said that friends and lovers when separated can sometimes actually communicate by thinking intently of each other. Perhaps it was some such sympathy of mind acting upon mind, or, more truly of soul crying out to soul, that made Jaquette so, almost constantly, present to my thoughts on the particular evening of which I have just spoken.

The next day Nancy, the sergeant's wife, returning from her marketing in the town, sought to entertain me with her woman's gossip, to which I paid little heed.

"Well, well, sir, I see you are not listening," she said at last. "But I have one more story of the forenoon, which perhaps will interest you. As I stood awaiting my turn at one of the market stalls a lady, who was waiting too, happened to speak to me. As I chatted with her I came to say I was exchanging some small commissions for Major Adair, one of the Yankee prisoners at the citadel."

"Poor man, I have heard of him," she exclaimed. "How lonely he must be, shut up in the fortress here, in a strange country, far from his home—and I suppose he is in his prime too, and has a wife in the States?"

"I ded he is scarcely turned five-and-twenty and is no wife," said I. "Is he good-looking?" she asked. "As fine a god-figure of a man as you would wish to see," says I. "At this, she hesitated a bit, sir, and then said in the kindness of her heart—

"Although I am a stranger I should like to contribute a little to his comfort. Now here is a loaf of white bread, I was taking two to a friend of mine to prove my skill in cookery, but one will serve as well. I will slip the other into your basket for the young man; only you must never tell him where it came from, will you? Of course I promised, but la, sir, the story is too amusing to keep. All a body has to do is to tell a girl a man is well-favored and directly she is interested in him."

"Ah, Nancy, why did you so deceive your kind little countrywoman?" said I, lightly.

Nancy tossed her head. "Gentlemen get no fine speeches from me," she cried. "As for the bread, I could make better myself."

Unpacking the basket while she spoke, Nancy laid the loaf, with the other provisions she had brought, upon my table. I believed she had chattered on in the hope of being told to keep the odd sixpence of the silver she had brought back in change. When this matter being settled to her satisfaction, she disappeared, I proceeded to examine her purchases.

As my eyes fell upon the little gift the stranger had sought to bestow upon me without my knowledge, I realized that Nancy's tale was something more than the creation of a vivacious and a garrulous tongue. When I unfolded the snowy cloth in which the loaf was wrapped, I scrutinized it closely, but could find no initial or marking that gave a clue to the identity of the sender. The bread looked most appetizingly light and wholesome.

"We will toast the strange lady and also her loaf at supper," I said to myself, and crossed the room to put the provisions into the cupboard, for I was commissary-general of our mess. As I did so there flashed upon me the remembrance of the cake and the pastry that had contained something which had done plums for us; namely, bits of wit from the friends outside in the city, who had been raised up to us, as it were, in our need. What if this present, apparently a chance offering from a stranger, should be a ruse to convey to us some important information?

Following this thought I broke the loaf in halves. Ah, yes, I was right. In the middle of it was a small folded paper. Plucking out the note, I secreted it in the breast of my coat, and said nothing to my companions of the discovery, turned idly to the window. It was fully half an hour before I ventured to open the paper though all that time it seemed like a coal of fire against my heart, so anxious was I to know the news it must contain. At last I managed to withdraw it without attracting any attention.

My first glance at the contents nearly betrayed me into an audible exclamation of astonishment. "Glad!" I ejaculated under my breath. "The writing was Jaquette's! My dear love was in Quebec. It was she who had spoken to the sergeant's wife; it was she who had played the little comedy of the white loaf and made the unsuspecting Nancy her messenger.

After a few tions, during tight clasped together glances to get it, bit gleaned. It is what I said. Nial, my may something a message. Will wish to be Wolford, or Dr. Nelson, French Canada, in the new government. At parting he has written whom he has released. K. Nial, and tr

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