

THE HEROINE OF VERCHÈRES.¹

BY SIR JAMES M. LEMOINE.

The early times of Canada teem with incidents most romantic : feats of endurance—of cool bravery ; Christian heroism in its loftiest phases ; acts of savage treachery of the darkest dye ; deeds of blood and revenge most appalling ; adventurous escapes by forest, land and flood, which would furnish the plot for fifty most fascinating romances. On reviewing which, one can readily enter into the meaning of one of our late governors, the Earl of Elgin, who, in a despatch to the Home Government, in speaking of the primitive days of the colony, describes them as “the heroic times of Canada.” The expression was as eloquent as it was truthful. The time is not far distant when the traits of Canadian history will be as familiar to our youth as they are comparatively unknown at the present time. D’Iberville, M’lle de Verchères, La Tour, Dollard des Ormeaux, Lambert Close, will yet, we opine, borrow from the magic wand of a Canadian Walter Scott a halo of glory as bright as that which, in the eyes of Scotia’s sons, surrounds a Flora McIvor, a Jeannie Deans, a Claverhouse, or a Rob Roy.

Let us for the present peer into that bright past, and present to the reader’s view a youthful figure, which graced one of the proudest epochs of Canadian history—the era of Frontenac.

It will be remembered that the Marquis de Tracy, in 1663, was escorted to Canada by one of the *crack* French corps of the day—the regiment of Carignan. Four companies (some 600 men) were shortly after disbanded in New France : the officers and privates were induced, by land grants and provisions, horses, and other marks of royal favour, to marry and settle in the new world. One of the officers, M. de Verchères, obtained in 1672, on the St. Lawrence, where now stands the parish of Verchères, a land grant of a league in depth by one in length. The following year his domain received the accession of *Ile à la Prune* and *Ile Longue*, which he had connected by another grant of a league in length. There did the French officer

¹ The author of this sketch is a well-known historian and naturalist of Quebec, and is a descendant of the Le Moine family, so distinguished in the early history of North America. The narrative, somewhat amended and improved, is substantially the same as that which appeared in Stewart’s *Quarterly*, April, 1869, by the same author.—EDITOR.