

"It is contrary to my wishes," replied she, relaxing her clutch of his arm. "Le Gardeur de Repentigny can speak for himself. I will not allow even my brother to suggest it; still less will I discuss such a subject with the Chevalier Bigot."

"I hope you will pardon me, Made-moiselle—I will not call you Angeli-que until you are pleased with me again. To be sure, I should never have forgiven you had you conformed to your brother's wishes. It was what I feared might happen, and I—I wished to try you; that was all!"

"It is dangerous trying me, Chevalier," replied she, resuming her seat, with some heat. "Don't try me again, or I shall take Le Gardeur out of pure spite," she said. Pure love was in her mind, but the other word came from her lips. "I will do all I can to rescue him from the Honnetes Gens, but not by marrying him, Chevalier—at present."

They seemed to understand each other fully. "It is over with now," said Bigot. "I swear to you, Angeli-que, I did not mean to offend you—you cut deep."

"Pshaw!" retorted she, smiling. "Wounds by a lady are easily cured; they seldom leave a mark behind a month after."

"I don't know that. The slight repulse of a lady's finger—a touch that would not crush a gnat—will sometimes kill a strong man like a sword-stroke. I have known such things to happen," said Bigot.

"Well, happily, my touch has not hurt you, Chevalier. But, having vindicated myself, I feel I owe you reparation. You speak of rescuing Le Gardeur from the Honnetes Gens. In what way can I aid you?"

"In many ways and all ways. Withdraw him from them. The great festival at the Philiberts—when is it to be?"

"To-morrow! See, they have honored me with a special invitation." She drew a note from her pocket. "This is very polite of Colonel Philibert, is it not?" said she.

Bigot glanced superciliously at the note. "Do you mean to go, Angeli-que?" asked he.

"No; although, had I no feelings but my own to consult, I would certainly go."

"Whose feelings do you consult, Angeli-que," asked the Intendant, "if not your own?"

"Oh, don't be flattered—the Grand Company's! I am loyal to the association without respect to persons."

"So much the better," said he. "By the way, it would not be amiss to keep Le Gardeur away from the festival. These Philiberts and the heads of the Honnetes Gens have great sway over him."

"Naturally; they are all his own kith and kin. But I will draw him away, if you desire it. I cannot prevent his going, but I can find means to prevent his staying," added she, with a smile of confidence in her power.

"That will do, Angeli-que—anything to make a breach between them!"

While there were abysses in Bigot's mind which Angeli-que could not fathom, as little did Bigot suspect that, when Angeli-que seemed to flatter him by yielding to his suggestions, she was following out a course she had already decided upon in her own mind from the moment she had learned that Cecile Tourangeau was to be at the festival of Belmont, with unlimited opportunities of explanation with Le Gardeur as to her treatment by Angeli-que.

The Intendant, after some pleasant badinage, rose and took his departure, leaving Angeli-que agitated, puzzled, and dissatisfied, on the whole, with his visit. She reclined on the seat, resting her head on her hand for a long time—in appearance the idliest, in reality the busiest, brain of any girl in the City of Quebec. She felt she had much to do—a great sacrifice to make—but firmly resolved, at whatever cost, to go through with it; for, after all, the sacrifice was for herself, and not for others.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Merovingian Princess.

The interior of the Cathedral of St. Marie seemed like another world, in comparison with the noisy, bustling Market Place in front of it.

The garish sunshine poured hot and oppressive in the square outside, but was shorn of its strength as it passed through the painted windows of the Cathedral, filling the vast interior with a cool, dim, religious light, broken by tall shafts or columns, which swelled out into ornate capitals, supporting a lofty ceiling, on which was painted the open heavens, with saints and angels adoring the Lord.

A lofty arch of cunning work, overlaid with gold, the masterpiece of Le Vasseur, spanned the chancel, like the rainbow round the throne. Lights were burning on the altar, incense went up in spirals to the roof; and through the wavering cloud the saints and angels seemed to look down with living faces upon the crowd of worshippers who knelt upon the broad floor of the church.

It was the hour of Vespers. The voice of the priest was answered by the deep peal of the organ and the chanting of the choir. The vast edifice was filled with harmony, in the pauses of which the ear seemed to catch the sound of the river of life as it flows out of the throne of God and the Lamb.

The demeanor of the crowd of worshippers was quiet and reverential. A few gay groups, however, whose occupation was mainly to see and be seen, exchanged the idle gossip of the day with such of their friends as they met there. The fee of a prayer or two did not seem excessive for the pleasure, and it was soon paid.

The perron outside was a favorite resort of the gallants of fashion at the hour of Vespers, whose practice it was to salute the ladies of their acquaintance at the door by sprinkling their dainty fingers with holy water. Religion, combined with gallantry, is a form of devotion not quite obsolete at the present day, and at the same place.

The church door was the recognized spot for meeting, gossip, business, love-making, and announcements; old friends stopped to talk over the news, merchants their commercial prospects. It was at once the Bourse and the Royal Exchange of Quebec; there were promulgated, by the brazen lungs of the city crier, royal proclamations of the Governor, edicts of the Intendant, orders of the Court of Justice, vendues public and private—in short, the life and stir of the City of Quebec seemed to flow about the door of St. Marie as the blood through the heart of a healthy man.

A few old trees, relics of the primeval forest, had been left for shade and ornament in the great Market Place. A little rivulet of clear water ran sparkling down the slope of the square, where every day the shadow of the cross of the tall steeple lay over it like a benediction.

A couple of young men, fashionably dressed, loitered this afternoon near the great door of the convent in the narrow street that runs into the great square of the market. They walked about with short, impatient turns, occasionally glancing at the clock of the Recolets, visible through the tall elms that bounded the garden of the Gray Friars. Presently the door of the Convent opened. Half a dozen gaily-attired young ladies, internes or pupils of the Convent, sallied out. They had exchanged their conventional dress for their usual outside attire, and got leave to go out into the world on some errand, real or pretended, for one hour and no more.

They tripped lightly down the broad steps, and were instantly joined by the young men who had been waiting for them. After a hasty, merry hand-shaking, the whole party proceeded in great glee towards the Market Place, where the shops of the mercers and confectioners offered the attractions they sought. They went on purchasing bonbons and ribbons from one shop to another until they



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