

IN TREATY WITH HONOR. A Romance of Old Quebec.

MARY CATHARINE CROWLEY. Author of "A Daughter of New France," "The Heroine of the Straits," "Love Through a War," etc.

CHAPTER II. CONTINUED.

Having thus secured them in the most secluded part of the wood, we pushed on through the underbrush until we came to the edge of the road by which the cavalcade must pass. It was still and shadowy.

"This would make a pleasant sleeping-place," said Ramon, "but I wish all these trees were patriots with muskets in their hands."

"The music grew louder, and before long we saw the waving lights and the procession once more."

"Ha, ha! the dragons are hilarious and noisy," I ejaculated. "Since no rescue has been attempted, they hope to be in Montreal by daylight."

Lying prone upon the ground where the tangle of vines was thickest, we waited their nearer approach.

"The prisoners look as if they had abandoned all hope," sighed Ramon. They were followed by a small band of habitants armed with pikes and cudgels. Nevertheless, as my eyes swept over the troop, I felt the chance for a rescue was as one in a thousand.

"Yet that chance I am resolved to take," I said to myself. "Ramon will do something desperate if I am not beforehand with him, and in positions of either honor or danger we must be at least abreast."

When the redcoats were almost opposite to us, an impulse came to me. Near where we were, a tree had been felled, and chips from the woodman's axe lay among the withered leaves.

Picking up one of these bits of wood I sent it spinning into the middle of the shadowed highway.

Immediately the captain's mount plunged, reared, and started down the road at a mad gallop. Those of the other officers, frightened by its antics, dashed off the runaway, despite the efforts of their riders to curb them.

The panic spread, and there ensued a few seconds of wild confusion, during which the charettes remained unguarded. It was the golden opportunity.

Leaping into the road I seized the bridles of the horses that drew the cart, and boldly cried to the driver:

"Stop! Arrêtez! Jacques St. Malo or the next moment will be your last."

For answer he made a cut at me with his whip. I sprang to one side, and though a pistol shot cleft the air, I was untouched, and held on until I brought the beasts to a halt.

In the meantime Ramon made a dash at the cart. Happily for us, as well as for themselves, the prisoners were ironed only at the wrists. As my comrade opened a way for them, they jumped from the vehicle, while the habitants, stimulated by our audacity, rushed in and out among the frightened horses of the dragons, or running into the woods came forth at some point farther along the road.

With the swiftness of desperation the released prisoners made for the heart of the forest, whither we followed them amid a hot fire from the redcoats.

Catching up with the fugitives, we directed their flight toward the place where we had left our horses. Here we found Fen Follet and Le Soleil tranquilly grazing.

"Take my mare and get away at once," I said to one of the men. "If you can restore her to me, well and good; if not, I shall be content if she serves to save a patriot's life."

"And you are equally welcome to my horse," said Ramon to the other.

Both of the hunted men tried to thank us, but the one to whom I had spoken cried:

"No, no, good friends, we cannot take your mounts. If we do, you in turn will fall into the hands of the soldiers, and your plight will be worse than ours."

"Yes. It was brave of you to rescue us, but we cannot abandon you to the consequences of your noble folly," said his companion.

"Messieurs," I replied, "if you do not take the horses we will turn them loose."

It was all done in great haste. Anon we forced the gentlemen to the saddles. Then I caught up a stick and though my heart bled that my leave-taking with Fen Follet should be in this manner, I struck her a stinging blow which sent her off like a shot, and the pony galloped after her.

When those whom we had rescued were gone, we crouched in the underbrush.

"I'll wager what you please that we shall be captured within half an hour," said Ramon, as gayly as if he were betting on the speed of Le Soleil.

"It is a foregone conclusion," I admitted as carelessly.

By the time the dragons got their beasts under control, however, manfully concluding that the woods were filled with patriots armed to the teeth, they made good use of their spurs and rode madly toward Montreal.

As for us, during several nights we walked on, following the course of the river until we were in the very heart of the disaffected country. By day we slept, for we had only to knock at a farmhouse door, and as soon as we uttered the enigmatical phrase "Comte qui coute," the habitants gave us food and shelter. It was martial law in the district, and we dared not travel fast.

Soon after dawn one morning we came out to the woods near St. Denis, and directed our way to the home of Dr. Nelson on the river bank, a comfortable manor overgrown with vines that now, in their autumnal foliage, hung like gay banners upon it.

At the sound of our footsteps on the walk a great tawny dog, a collie with perhaps a strain of the Newfoundland in his blood, sprang out at us with a fierce growl, and showed his teeth ominously. Another moment and he would have been upon us, had not Ramon called out to the brute in French:

"Halt, you dunce, would you attack a patriot?"

The effect was magical. If the dog did not know the meaning of the words, he recognized the language as that of his master's friends, and though he leaped upon us, it was now in an exuberant greeting. As I rapped lightly on the door, in the manner arranged by the patriots as a signal, he stood beside me panting and assuring us by every means in his power that we should meet with a cordial welcome.

The knock brought the kind doctor himself to admit us without delay, and he promptly made good the promise of his canine guard.

"Trouvez-ha welcomed you, I see," said he. "Do not think me lacking in hospitality because I lodge you in the distillery; you will be safer there."

As he led the way, we told him in hurried whispers of the skirmish at the edge of the wood, the escape of Davignon and Desmaras, and our hope that by this time they had crossed the border into the State of Vermont, and were thus beyond the reach of pursuit.

"Gentlemen, you have played the part of heroes, and you have certainly raised the de'il," he said with a laugh, as we concluded our story.

"Yet the warmth with which he pressed our hands told us of his appreciation of what we had tried to do."

When we entered the distillery, after carefully bolting the door, he conducted us to the room used as an office, brought out decanters and an loaf of bread from the cupboard, and setting glasses for us, bade us help ourselves.

"I lunch here sometimes," he said. As we were nearly famished, we needed no second invitation, but fell to at once. Never up to that time had I known bread to taste sweeter, nor found the famous elixir of St. Denis so beneficial as I did then in my exhaustion. But for this refreshment, too, I think Ramon would have fallen upon the floor from the weakness of fatigue and hunger.

After we were strengthened by the food and drink, our host pushing out his high secretary or writing-desk from its place, slid back a board in the wainscot and disclosed a narrow passage between the inner and exterior walls.

I had often read of secret passages, and sceptically regarded them as the accessories of melodramatic romance. I was now to learn that such corridors were not infrequent among the buildings of an old French-Canadian estate. They usually gave entrance to some chamber where, in the days of Indian visitations, the family might remain in comparative security during the raids of hostile red men.

Few among the English of this time knew of the existence of these former hiding-places. When Dr. Nelson lit a candle and beckoned us, we unhesitatingly followed him through the opening, along the narrow space, and down a flight of stone stairs into a small, underground room.

"Wait here a moment," said our friend, thrusting the candle into a rude sconce on the wall.

Groping his way back over the steps, he returned straightway, carrying a buffalo skin and a pair of blankets.

"These will make you a couch for the present," he said. "Later you shall be provided with a better one. Sleep now without anxiety. When you have rested, we will decide what seems best for us to do. Pardon me; for your greater security I will take away the candle."

When he was gone my comrade and I, throwing off our coats, rolled them up as pillows, cast ourselves prone on the skin which our host had spread on the floor, and each having wrapped himself in a blanket, we were soon continuing our adventures in the land of dreams.

They were long drawn out, for it must have been well into the afternoon when, rubbing my eyes, I sat up. Ramon was still asleep.

The place appeared dark when the doctor took away the tallow dip, but now there was sufficient light for me to see, what I had barely noticed before, that around the walls were ranged casks of many sizes. It was, indeed, the cellar where were stored the choicest liquors of the distillery and the best wines from the St. Denis vineyards. I had not marvelled previously that the room was so well ventilated and free from dampness, but now a realization of the fact that it was also fire-lighted, though windowless, stirred my curiosity. Getting upon my feet I stumbled around among the casks which bordered the walls, that winding and turning in every direction like the passages of a catacomb, showed me at last a sunbeam shining in the distance.

At the same time I felt blowing upon my face a current of air, which could only come from some opening into the outside world.

All at once the truth broke upon me, and again I felt as if I were enacting an unfamiliar role in some drama of adventure, either in the complex life of European civilization, or of strange, new lands, far from the prosaic and dull existence of a village on the Richelieu.

Yet, after all, it was not singular that the little chamber where we were lodged should be connected with a natural cave. At all events, such was the case, and, moreover, the opening, away off where I saw the gleam of daylight, was, I felt sure, directly upon the river.

Honorable as was the master of the distillery, I suspected that, considering how the French were cheated out of their rights by the officials of the Family Compact, he thought it no wrong to send away some of his goods without being so punctilious as to ask permission of the excise officers.

"Nial! Nial!" My name, uttered softly, was repeated along the rocky walls of the passage as though spoken by men posted at intervals on the way, or else by weird guardians of the place.

After a moment, however, I realized that the sounds were but the echoes of Ramon's voice calling to me.

Abandoning the idea of pursuing my investigations, I returned to the cellar and found him groping about in darkness. I promptly told him of my discovery.

"The good doctor has brought us here, not only because it is an excellent place of concealment, but in order to afford us an opportunity of escape if we are tracked to this house," he said gratefully.

"Heigh-ho, but it is a dull hole nevertheless. Except that there is a way to get out, one might as well be in a prison. If one had but a pack of cards to while away the time!"

"Huff! There would not be light enough to see the knave of hearts from the king of diamonds," I reminded him. "Well, a chessboard and pieces; one might tell their position by the sense of touch," he persisted.

"You will have to forego both cards and chess, but possibly I can furnish you with some amusement, provided that, after all, we have some matches," said I inconsequently, as I drew a few dominoes from my pocket.

Searching his Ramon discovered several lucifers, and every time we struck one we attempted to pair the dominos, or falling in this, invented new combinations.

"We are wasting matches that we may greatly need later to find the mouth of the cave," I said after a few minutes. "If we attempt an escape it must be by night."

"Or it may be by day no more." Having thus decided, Ramon, lying on the pelt, clasped his hands behind his head and yawned prodigiously for very ennui, while I, sitting astride a wine cask, took to thinking of a future and idly wondering what fortunes, good or bad, it might bring us.

"Ma foi, it is a long time since we breakfasted on bread and wine," cried my companion at last. "For want of something better to do, I will show how the river looks at the mouth of the cave."

Before he stirred to put his words into action, a faint rustle attracted our attention. It seemed to come from above our heads, and at its repetition we both sprang to our feet.

"Dr. Nelson is coming," I exclaimed. "Or it may be a spy, creeping to learn where we are and cause our arrest."

Another moment, and he drew from his breast of his coat an object that caught and reflected the faint light of the room. I could just see that it was a dagger he had shown me once, a keen blade whose handle was of silver set with jewels.

I myself was unarmed save for a large pocket-knife, which in emergency might serve as a weapon of defence.

Yes, there was some one in the hidden passage, and now, too, a glimmer, as from the flame of a candle or a tallow-lamp flickered along the wall, coming near and near.

"It is not the doctor," whispered my comrade. "I have known enough of the intrigues of courts and army circles to recognize a man's footfall when once I have heard it. Who can this be but a spy, a boy, perhaps? No—Great Heaven! it is the step of a woman!"

CHAPTER III.

THE LADY OF THE RICHELIEU.

Hardly had Ramon spoken these last words when a flood of light burst upon us and turning toward it we each uttered an ejaculation of surprise. For on the stair stood a young girl who, in her white frock, might have been taken for a vision of the saintly queen Elizabeth of Hungary, who in her charity was wont to steal away from the pleasures of the court to bring consolation and food to those in need of her bounty.

In one hand the gracious visitant to our dungeon grasped a basket, while with the other she held high a lantern whose rays, to my fancy, formed a kind of halo around her head.

Another moment, and I half believe, in our dazed fascination we would have knelt to her, as to an apparition, as she paused and peered down into the dimness of the room.

But at sight of our faces whereon our astonishment and incredulity must have been plainly depicted, she broke into a low, musical laugh, that had nothing supernatural about it, but was more charming than the notes of the thrush of the wood.

"Gentlemen, I am not a ghost; there are no spirits here but those imprisoned in the casks," she cried gayly, stepping slowly and daintily, and looking not at the stair but at us.

It was now that my comrade showed the ready self-possession of his high breeding.

"Mademoiselle, permit me," he said, and therewith he relieved her of the basket, while I stood gazing like a lover, with a smile that made the hot blood rush to my face for jealousy.

"And now, if you, sir, will take the lantern, I think I can get down," she added, turning to me.

Nothing would please Ramon, however, but to hand her down and this he did with the air of a courtier attending upon a princess.

She stood between us, smiling again, now one now at the other, with the naive frankness of a child who has successfully carried out a daring escapade.

Her smiles went to my head, as if I had tasted of the ardent spirits that lay in the cave. For she was the same beautiful girl whom we had seen on the balcony at the meeting round the liberty pole, the charming coquette who had roughly tossed the bit of ribbon that Ramon. At the same time her bright glance had shot through my heart like an arrow, indicating a wound from which my inner consciousness told me, I should never recover, and causing a strange pain that yet I would not have missed for all the world.

"Gentlemen, I have brought you your dinner," she said, in a cordial, matter-of-fact tone before which I found my diffidence disappearing, like hoar frost before the sunlit breeze.

Picking up the basket, that my friend had put upon the floor, she took from it a square of spotted damask. This she threw over one of the casks, making of the latter a little table, whereon she proceeded to set forth silver plate, two or three pieces of china, a salad, and some confections. In spite of his gallantry, Ramon cast a rueful look at the display, which, although well suited in dining, was rather meagre fare for hungry men.

The sprightly witch intercepted the glance, and it appeared to amuse her mightily.

Clapping her hands together and bending toward him with a laugh, "Ah, you poor gentleman, do not think this is

all. My uncle is bringing the substantial part of the meal. But this village is so dull, more's the pity to have two cavaliers locked up in my uncle's wine cellar, isn't it? And in my impatience to see if the refugees hidden here were as young and handsome as he told me, I ran away from him."

"Unluckily, or perhaps I should say luckily, for us, this delightful girl did not confide to us the result of her quick, birdlike observations; for now the voice of the doctor was heard in the passage, calling cautiously, 'Jacquette, Jacquette, are you there?'"

Instead of answering, the young lady caught up the lantern and swung it like a signal, so that its light flashed upward. Dr. Nelson understood, and in a few moments he also appeared, carrying a still larger basket.

"Jacquette, ma'tite chou, how shall I punish you for stealing a march upon me!" he cried. "Gentlemen, you will forgive me for confiding to my niece the fact of your presence here. It was necessary, in order that she might spirit away the food without attracting the attention of the servants, Jacquette is indeed a wonderful girl. I—yes—I really believe she can even keep a secret."

"I am sure she will never betray a friend," said Ramon, as he bowed low to her with courtly grace. "Mademoiselle, our lives are safe in your hands."

"Safer than your hearts would be, young men," said the genial master of the place, sotto voce, as he brought from a locker in a recess a bottle of his choicest wine, while the girl disposed the various dishes upon the improvised table.

Having finished her self-imposed task, she bestowed upon us another of her radiant smiles, and flitted away up the stair.

During the time she was in the room it had seemed bright as a banquet hall, but now I noticed how dim was the light of the lantern. However, at the doctor's urging, we did full justice to the repast so temptingly put before us by the pretty, but so fascinating, niece.

In fact it seemed to me like an ambrosial feast.

Meanwhile our host talked with us of pleasant, impersonal matters. But when we had dined, his conversation took a more serious turn.

"My friends," he began, "a half-breed runner has brought me word that the doughty soldiers whom you routed, reported on their return to the city, that the whole district of the Richelieu has risen in rebellion. A large detachment of troops is already on its way up the cote with orders to put down our poor habitants with the sword. As their early aim will be to institute a more thorough search for you than has so far been made, I fear you will not long be safe here. Since the first duty of hospitality is the protection of one's guests, I have planned to send you to a more secure retreat."

Notwithstanding the gravity of our situation, at this juncture the rustle of a woman's gown sent Ramon's eyes and mine wandering again to the stairs. Perhaps he felt only a passing interest and curiosity, but my own heart beat faster when we saw once more the charming vision of the young girl, as she returned and stood beside the doctor.

"Yes, gentlemen," she said eagerly, as he concluded his advice, and while she spoke her lithe form became alert and her beautiful eyes shone with animation. "All the arrangements have been made for your departure, sorry as we shall be to miss the pleasure of your company. Possibly you have already discovered that the cave communicates with the river? When you no longer see the gleam of daylight at the end of this passage, you will know the dusk has come. Wait for two or three hours after dark, and then, taking the lantern to guide you, make your way to the opening of the cave. In the bushes you will find a canoe with paddles, and provisions for a two days' journey. By this means you may escape the spies who infest every part of this neighborhood to watch for you. Push boldly out into the middle of the current, and thus paddling on, you may go up the river to St. Charles. From there the habitants will help you onward, and following the course of the Yamaska to the eastern townships, you may take the by-roads and the woods until you reach the boundary line and cross into Vermont."

"Ha, ha, ha," chuckled Dr. Nelson, pleased at her earnestness, and not a little proud of her clever management.

"Jacquette has arranged all the details of the plan, you see my friends. You have only to trust yourselves to her guidance, and obey her, as knights of old gave chivalrous heed to the lightest command of a lady."

The mysterious current of sympathy by which mind speaks to mind without the medium of words was strong from the first between my comrade and myself. So now, I not only saw my own admiration for the spirit of the girl reflected in his glance, but became aware of the resolution he had made on the spur of the moment, as well as I knew what I myself intended to do. "Mademoiselle," I answered, "for, after a swift appeal to him, her eyes rested on me as she ceased to speak—"Mademoiselle, I can never forget your great kindness. Believe me, I am as grateful for it as if I were already saved from prison by the means you have devised with such care; as if I were at this moment living in the States. Nevertheless—"

"What, monsieur, you hesitate?" she exclaimed, as a little frown of puzzled surprise gathered upon her white brow.

"Mademoiselle, I too thank you with all my heart," said Ramon.

Making bold to take her hand, the audacious fellow raised it to his lips, and added, "The remembrance of this moment will always be dear to me—but—"

"Uncle, they will not go," she broke out in incredulous dismay and anxiety. "Tell them they must go. Are you not named commander of the patriot forces in this district? Order them to go, sir."

Our friend smiled at her ardor, yet even while the smile lingered on his lips he sighed.

"How can I order my guests to leave my home, Jacquette?" he protested, with something of sadness. "Moreover, we cannot surely say that the manner by which we hoped to secure their escape might not prove the luckless chance that would deliver them over to the redcoats. They must choose their own course. Gentlemen, my house and this room, known only to one trusted person besides Jacquette and myself, are at your disposal. The longer you remain with us, the more pleased we shall be to have your society; but if you wish to go, to-night will be your last opportunity. Already the habitants of the neighborhood are leaving their own houses and seeking shelter on my farm. I am fortifying this distillery and the outbuildings. By to-morrow we shall probably find ourselves besieged by the authorities, and then you will not be able to get off."

"Do you think this is the time for soldiers to run away, sir?" I said humorously, and turned to the lady.

But the doctor replied in all seriousness. "Tut, tut! At the worst we shall only get a beating for defending our property, if he insisted; but if you are apprehended, young men, I am afraid it will go hard with you. Remember, you have taken two prisoners out of the very hands of the law. You have not only sympathized with those who are regarded as traitors because they love their country, but, in your bold rescue of the patriots, you have committed an act that will surely be construed as treason, and—"

"Oh, gentlemen, go I beg of you," cried Jacquette, clasping her hands beseechingly and fixing her luminous eyes in eloquent pleading now on Ramon and again upon me. "Think of the good you can do in the States for the cause! If you remain here to fight, there will be but two of you; if you go you may call thousands to our aid. Go, sir," she added, appealing directly to me, "tell your countrymen we French of Canada wish to be free, and surely they will come and help us."

"Mademoiselle, I wish you could tell them," I broke out; for in her enthusiasm she seemed, herself, the impersonation of the fair spirit of liberty. "Sometime, indeed, I hope to stir the hearts of the Americans as you ask, but now, I think heaven, my duty lies not so far away. When this place is in danger of attack, it would ill become us to go paddling up the river, or yet to lurk here in the cellar."

"Yes, Dr. Nelson," interposed Ramon. "We have counted the cost of the little we have been able to do for the cause so far, or what may be allotted for us to do in the future. If the patriots are to make their first stand here, we demand of you the honor of being assigned to guard some position."

"Give us any post so there may be fighting in it," I urged impetuously.

"My sons, I wish the Patriot Cause had a hundred thousand soldiers like you," declared the doctor, much moved. "Yes, like Jacquette, I would sooner see you go than have you stay. No, I will not bring you into the house now. Consider the matter well; on reflection you may see it will be better to take the canoe and make your escape to-night. If you do, this lady and I will, for your sakes, be glad in the morning to find that you have gone. Come, Jacquette, my dear."

Jacquette swept us a charming courtesy.

"Adieu, messieurs," she said gravely, as if uttering a prayer.

Ramon and I bowed low.

"Let it rather be au revoir, mademoiselle," I cried, to let her know my resolution was unshaken.

But Ramon, looking deep into her beautiful eyes, said, with a hand upon his heart:

"A demain, mademoiselle. We meet again, to-morrow."

"My word, is she not charming? And what a spirit she has too," exclaimed my comrade, when our host and his captivating charge had vanished up the stair and we heard the sliding door behind the secretary closed softly behind him. "The lady is sure to have looked my fair countryman, the little Countess Potocka, over whose portrait all Europe has raved."

"Herism like hers belongs not to the old world but to the new," I said somewhat curtly. "It is not only the courage inherited from stout-hearted ancestors, but a fearlessness that is as the breath of life here in our Canadian forests and upon the shores of our broad rivers. I have heard that years ago the doctor's sister married a seigneur of the Richelieu. Mademoiselle is a daughter of the chivalry."

"Ha, ha, Nial!" Ramon laughed banteringly. "You read the little beauty marvellously well during one brief interview. But I'll wager she made good use of the moments, too. Her glance as she turned it on you said as plain as day, 'Ma foi, but this is a pleasing young man. His erect form, broad shoulders, and soldierly bearing are quite to my mind. I like the poise of his head, too; his wavy hair of the color of the hazel-nut, his fair skin, and the flush of red in his cheek. His frank smile shows me the necessity of holding my heart fast by its wings, lest presently it may fly away from me like a bird. His eyes are a little too serious, yet I more than half believe they could be tender as well.'"

"Ramon, do not mock me," I cried. "A fellow cannot help his outward showing, yet he does not wish to be held up to ridicule."

"Truly! I mean no mockery at all," averred the gay tormentor. "Not being blind, I can see when good looks and a winning personality are a passport to a lady's favor. But now, since our visitors have gone, I may as well set out upon the explorations their coming delayed."

He began to make his way among the casks toward the glimmer of daylight that marked the opening of the cave.

"If you have decided to avail yourself of the means of escape so skillfully provided by the lady, wait, at least, until twilight," I said warningly.

"Do you go noisunderstand me? Adair, I would not go on all the world except upon some soldier duty," he cried, stopping short and flaring up in momentary anger. "Thank Heaven, honor keeps me here. Though you are so in-

different, I would risk everything else for the chance of seeing her to-morrow."

"Pouh! so the wind blows," I soliloquized, while, I suppose, my brows gathered into a frown, for Iyerski suddenly laughed.

"My word, you look like a thunder-cloud, Nial," he exclaimed. "But spare your indignation. Do you know me so little as to think I could desert you? Have you not left in you enough of the love of adventure to want to see what the river exit from this place is like? Then, too, before one is besieged, is it not well to become acquainted with the character of every loophole toward which one may, in case of need, lead others to safety as well as secure it oneself? But you are right; we will wait a while."

The generous fellow did not divine the true cause of my ill-humor. He did not know that, despite what he was pleased to call my indifference, I wished him well out of the way in some secure place. For I too had begun to look forward with no little ardor to meeting Mademoiselle Jacquette the next day, and was already so much in love as to wish to have her smiles and her pretty words all to myself.

Throwing himself upon the buffalo pelt, Ramon either slept or pretended to sleep. But I, seated on a blanket and leaning comfortably against a cask, abandoned myself to the power of my fancies, "the bright banditti" of delightful daydreams that steal away our time and savor thoughts.

After a while his heavy breathing assured me he had sunk into a genuine slumber. It must have been dark outside in the open air when he awoke, for the gleam of light was gone from the mouth of the cave.

Pulling himself together sufficiently to realize that we were still in the underground room, he was eager as before to explore the passage. Setting our lantern on a shelf, therefore, that since we dared not take it with us we might yet be lighted by its rays, we groped our way cautiously, and with no little difficulty, toward the spot where we had seen the daylight.

As we advanced the roof of the passage grew lower, and finally, from scrambling onward in a stooping posture, we had to creep on our hands and knees. I had insisted upon going in advance, Ramon was so rash, I feared, if some spy of the redcoats should be lurking outside, he would spring out and throttle him without a thought that it is sometimes wiser to retreat before an enemy than to plunge forward to a vain self-destruction. As I have said, he and I were of about the same age, yet I already felt toward him like an older brother whose care it should be to protect him from the needless peril he brought upon himself by his own bravery. Being ahead of him, accordingly, all at once I uttered an exclamation in an undertone and stopped short.

"What is it?" he asked, impatient at being halted.

"Look!" I said.

He peered over my shoulder and saw the objects at which I stared—two sparks of fire near the entrance of the cave, and close to the ground like ourselves.

TO BE CONTINUED.

THE CURES OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE.

BY FRANCIS D. MCGARRY, C. S. C. Catholic World for June.

If there is any one thing which should incline thinking man towards realizing the necessity of some authoritative religion, it is the recent rise of innumerable sects that, upon purely natural or preternatural phenomena, are striving to build up anew the true Christianity, as they call it. In Europe especially, the materialist has been forced by evidence the most convincing to give up his former position and to accept the belief in an unseen, and little-known world. In America we also have our modern Christianity in the form of untold numbers of curative agencies, professing beliefs vastly different, but experiencing cures from disease through means seemingly unproportionate or invisible. Great as may be their differences in belief, they all agree in making Christ the great