

EPILOGUE

THE desolate point known as Tadoussac, at the mouth of the river Saguenay, in Canada, is the place of exile of a few officials who guard the interests of the fur trade.

Their quarters, a few storehouses, and the little church with its modest presbytère, form an outpost to the civilised world. During the summer season the wandering Indians flock down in their canoes, build their temporary huts, and a constant bustle of trade and barter sets in. Furs are examined, valued, and exchanged for guns, ammunition, clothing, and other luxuries of savage existence. The arrival of the few ships necessary to this primitive commerce makes the only other break in the monotonous existence of the little colony. At the approach of winter the Indians scatter, and the officials and the solitary priest are prisoners until the spring once more opens for them the doors of the outside world.

Here it was, on the evening of the 11th of April, 1782, that the priest sate with his companions in the house of the principal official.

At nine o'clock he rose and said good-night to his hosts in his usual manner, but suddenly his whole appearance changed. Drawing back, he raised his hand, and said, in tones of deepest earnestness :

"My friends, it is not only 'good-night,' it is 'good-bye.' Good-bye for all time, for you will never see me again alive. To-night at twelve I shall be called hence."