

sleep, the blue waters of the Richelieu hiding beneath a fast-forming icy covering, and the signs of tumult and disturbance in the very air, desolation seemed to claim it for its own.

Here it was at a spot about midway between the little villages of Chambly, at the head of navigation, and Sorel, at the mouth of the river where it opens into the St. Lawrence, that the leaders of the "*Patriotes*," as they were called, had gathered what number they could muster of the *habitants* of the district and persuaded them—ill-equipped as they were—to make a stand and offer armed resistance to the authorities. It is not our purpose here to discuss the political questions that disturbed the country at the time, suffice it to say that the French party did suffer under substantial grievances, which, however, the more thoughtful of their leaders did not despair of overcoming by constitutional means, and strongly discountenanced the more hot-headed in their wild appeals to the last resort of the oppressed. A skirmish had already taken place at St. Denis a few miles below, the day before our story opens, and the forces under Col. Gore were compelled to retire temporarily on their base at Sorel. Encouraged by what appeared to be the victory of their cause, the people of the neighboring village of St. Charles were being aroused to a more determined attitude, and now awaited what might follow such an—probably on both sides—unexpected opening of the campaign. Such in brief was the situation; and now let us take a look at him of the fiery and eloquent tongue discovered in the opening sentences recorded above.

Raoul de Bienville, the son of the *seigneur* of the district, was now in his twenty-first year. He had been sent, as was, and still is, the custom with the wealthier country folk, while very young, to the classical College of Montreal, and having completed the eight years' course, was entered to study law in the office of one of the best known French practitioners. Quickly falling in with the custom of his young compatriots, he joined a political club, and, being specially gifted among men all born orators, was soon in demand on occasions of elections and meetings, where his eloquent speech was noticed by the leaders of his party, and he was marked as a rising young man. The ardent, emotional, and

passionate characteristics of his race being intensified in his nature, he was soon drawn into the advanced rank of the *Patriote* cause, and on the first mutterings of revolt he, disregarding the wiser counsels of his friends in the city, hurried off to his native county to wait developments.

See him now as he paces excitedly up and down the stretch of road before his father's house in the gathering twilight!

The house stands a little back from the road and overlooking the river; a prominent object; a veritable *enfant-du-sol*; the creation of a past century; a long, low building with a frontage of perhaps eighty feet, its massive four square stone walls, three feet thick, pierced by four many-paned French windows on each side of a wide centre door with its columned portico. Rising above the single storey on the ground floor, stretches the high-pointed, shingled roof, with its double row of little dormer windows, flanked by the solid chimney which forms the apex of each gable end wall. A row of tall Normandy poplars is planted just inside the low paling fence. In one corner of the house lot stands the familiar well frame, with its long, overhanging sweep, and solid iron bound well bucket attached. In the other, surrounded by a low railing, rises a tall wooden cross with its little glass front shrine inserted at the junction of the arms, and, radiating from this centre in the form of a star, are seen the spear, the reed, and other emblems of the Crucifixion; above these a wooden tablet bearing the inscription INRI; the whole surmounted by the Cock, and, in more peaceful times, an object of devotion to the passing *habitant*.

Who would know the natty law student from the city in his strange dress—half uniform, half that of the ordinary farmer of the district—adopted by the insurgents as a patriotic badge? On his head was the well-known faded blue *tuque* of the farmer which, though now pulled down over his ears to protect them from the cold, did not conceal his handsome, clear-cut features and glossy black hair worn long and flowing. His dark eyes flashed out in his excitement from their setting in the rich olive of his face, which was devoid of hair, save for the long, dark and gracefully curving eyebrows. His coat, cut after the fashion of the time, was made of



A LITTLE BACK FROM THE ROAD AND OVERLOOKING THE RIVER.