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OUR CENTENNIAL STORY.

THE BASTONNAIS.

A TALE OF THE AMERICAN INVASION OF CANADA IN 1775-76.

By JOHN LESPERANCE.

BOOK I.

THE GATHERING OF THE STORM.

XVIII.

RODERICK HARDINGE.

It was a little before nine o'clock when Hardinge entered his quarters at the barracks. He had passed through an eventful day, and he felt weary. The interview which he had just held with M. Belmont was, however, so absolutely the object of his pre-occupation that he appeared nowise disposed to seek the rest required by his exhausted physical powers. Mechanically divesting himself of his civilian costume and assuming the undress uniform of his rank, he moved absently about his little room, muttering to himself, humming fragments of song, and occasionally breaking out into low laughter. Arnold and his rebel crew were clean forgotten, the military events through which he had passed, during the preceding few days, were blotted from his mind, and the coming and going of the troops in the courtyard below completely escaped his attention. It has been said, and with easily assignable cause, that the soldier on the eve of battle is more sensitive to the softer passions of the heart and the oblivion of all else which these passions induce, than any other mortal. Such was the case with Roderick on this evening. He keenly appreciated the extent of the dangers which he had experienced, and the importance of the victory which he had won within the last hour. What to him would have been the glory of arms, the fame of patriotic service, if he had lost Pauline? And—if the whole truth must be told—would the country itself have been worth saving without her?

Roderick Hardinge was seven and twenty years of age. He was a Scotchman by birth, but the best part of his life had been spent in Canada. His father was an officer in Fraser's famous Highland regiment whose history is so intimately associated with the conquest of New France. After the battle of the Plains of Abraham, in which it took a leading part, his regiment was quartered in the city of Quebec for some time, and when it finally disbanded, most of its members, officers as well as men, settled in the country, having obtained from the Imperial Government large tracts of land in the Gulf region. This colony has made its mark in the history of Canada, and to the present day the Scotch families of Murray Bay rank among the most distinguished in the public annals of the Province. While retaining many of the best characteristics of their origin, they have thoroughly identified themselves with their new home, and by intermarriage with the French natives, have almost completely lost the use of the English language.

Roderick's father imitated the example of many of his brother officers, and in the autumn of 1760, a few weeks after the capitulation of Vaudreuil at Montreal, and the definitive establishment of British power in Canada, he resigned his position in the army and settled on a fine domain in Montmagny, a short distance from Quebec, on the south shore of the St. Lawrence. Thither he summoned his family from Scotland. Roderick, his only son, was twelve years of age when he landed in Canada, and thus grew up as a child of the soil. He never left the country afterwards, and, on the death of his parents, he succeeded to the paternal estates which he greatly improved and cultivated with considerable success. Much of his leisure time was spent in the city of Quebec where his position, wealth and accomplishments procured him admission into the most select circles of the small but exclusive capital. From the circumstances of the times, the French language was almost more familiar to him than the English, and the reader will have readily understood that most of the conversations which we have represented him as holding were carried on in that language. This was more particularly the case in his intercourse with Pauline and her father, neither of whom spoke a word of English.

When the first news of the invasion of Canada by the Continentals reached his ears, he immediately abandoned his estates to the care of his old servant Donald, and buckling on his father's sword, rode in haste to Quebec, and enrolled himself in the service. The remnants of Fraser's Highlanders, with other recruits, were formed into a regiment, called the Royal Emigrants, under Colonel Allan MacLean, and we should naturally have expected that Roderick would have joined it, but for some reason or other, he did not do so. He took a regular commission in a regiment of Quebec militia, commanded by Colonel Caldwell. It was in this capacity that he performed the notable services which we have recorded in the preceding chapters.

Roderick Hardinge was tall, robust, athletic and active. He was very fond of field sports. He had made many a tramp on snow-shoes with the

coureurs des bois far into the heart of the wilderness. He had often wandered for months with some of the young Hurons of Lorette in quest of the deer and the bison. He was a magnificent horseman as his ride to Three Rivers has proven.

His education had not been neglected, and his good natural parts were well cultivated by the instruction of his father and the best tuition which the learned French ecclesiastics of Quebec could impart. He was very fair complexioned, with flossy hair and flaxen beard. As man is usually ruled by contrast, this was probably the reason why he loved the dark-tressed, brown-eyed Pauline. He was ten years her senior, and had known her from her childhood, but his florid air and perfect health made him look much younger, and, as the two walked together, there appeared no undue disparity of age.

Roderick had just fastened the last button of his fatigue jacket when there was a call at the door and Donald entered the room. After a few words of hearty greeting, he informed his master that his reconnoitering of the rebels was over and that they would speak for themselves the next day. He stated that he had just come from the Chateau, where he had conveyed that intelligence to the Lieutenant-Governor. Hardinge thanked him for his diligence and fidelity, and as a first recompense, in answer to an inquiry of Donald, ordered him not to return to the farm but to remain in the city to take part in its defence. While the country was in danger the Montmagny estate might take care of itself.

XIX.

THE FRIGHTENED DOWNS.

Pauline had few or no misgivings. Her little being was all heart, and her mind could not grasp the significance of the political events which passed before her eyes and on which her future more or less depended. For her, loyalty to France consisted simply in reverence and obedience towards her father. For her, fealty to the King did not extend much beyond love for his handsome, manly representative, Roderick Hardinge. Happy woman that need not walk beyond the beautiful round of the affections. Noble woman whose heroism is purely of the heart, not of the head. There are many species of martyrdom, but that of mere love is the grandest in the concentration of its own singleness.

After Roderick's departure, Pauline felt the need of being alone for a brief period in order to go over quietly in her own conscience all the varied pathetic scenes of that evening. It was not a process of analysis. Her mind was incapable of that. It was merely a quiet rehearsal of all the facts, that their vividness might be made more vivid and their effect brought home more tenderly to her heart. For a long hour she sat on the foot of her bed, now weeping, now smiling, now tossing her lovely head backwards, then burying her sweet face in her hands. At times a shadow would flit over the delicate features, but it would soon be replaced by a glow of serenity, until finally her whole demeanor settled into an air of prayerful content. Her hands joined upon her knee, her brow was bent, and her lips murmured words of gratitude. Beautiful Pauline! Sitting there with inclined body and her whole being divided between her love on the earth and her duty to heaven, she was the true type of the loveable woman.

It was eleven o'clock at the small ivory clock over the mantel, when a scratch was heard at the door. What was Pauline's surprise, on answering the call, to see little Blanche step into the room.

"Why, my little wood flower, what could have brought you here to-night?" she exclaimed.

The child sidled up to her grandmother and did not answer at first, but there was that in her eye which at once led to suspicion that everything was not right. Her very presence there at such an hour was the indication of an unusual event, for Pauline knew that Blanche had never passed a night out of Batoche's cabin.

"Are you alone, my dear?" she asked.

"Oh no, grandmother. Grand father is with me."

"Where?"

"Down stairs."

"And is any one with him?"

"Yes, M. Belmont is with him. He came to see M. Belmont."

These words somewhat reassured Pauline. She knew that Batoche seldom, if ever, came to the city, but probably the circumstances of the time forced him to do so this night, and he had carried his granddaughter with him in case he should have to tarry too long. She therefore proceeded to unfasten the child's hood and cloak.

"Come to the fire," she said, "and warm yourself while I get you some cakes and sweets from my cupboard."

As she said this, she noticed the same peculiar look in the eyes of the little girl.

"Tell me, Blanche, what is the matter?" she asked.

"I don't know, grandmother, except that I must spend the night with you."

"Spend the night with me? Well, that is right. I will take good care of you, my dear. But are you sure of what you say? Who told you so?"

"M. Belmont himself."

"My father sent you up to me?"

"Yes, and he said I must remain with you until he and grandfather called for me."

"And they are both downstairs?"

The child's face put on that strange look again, as she answered:

"They were there just now, but—"

A great fear fell on the heart of poor Pauline. She knew instinctively that something was amiss.

"Come down with me, Blanche," she whispered, taking the child by the hand and leading her, on tip-toe, to the lower rooms. There was silence in the passage. The lights in the parlor were extinguished. The sitting apartment behind was deserted. Her father's cap and great coat were gone from their hooks in the hall. She went to the maid's room and found the girl fast asleep, in consequence of which there was no information to be obtained from that quarter. She went to the front door and looked out upon the street. She could easily distinguish the footprints of men in the snow on the steps, and the trace of a carriage's runners describing a sharp curve from the edge of the sidewalk.

"They are gone," she murmured.

And folding Blanche in her embrace, she returned to her chamber.

"Don't cry, little grandmother," said Blanche, throwing her arms around Pauline's neck. "Grandfather told me he would come for me before dawn."

Just then the muffled tread of soldiers was heard along the street, and low words of command reached the listening ears of Pauline. She understood that something momentous was going on. She closed her shutters tight, drew down the heavy curtains of her windows, mended the fire on the hearth, and crouching there, on low seats, like two frightened doves, she and Blanche awaited the coming of the dawn.

XX.

THE SPECTRAL ARMY.

After leaving the banquet hall, the Lieutenant Governor immediately set about acting upon the important intelligence which he had received from Donald. Now that the long suspense was over, and that the threatened invasion of the Bastonnais had become a reality, he felt himself imbued with the energy demanded by the occasion. Some of the ancient chroniclers, Sanguinet more particularly, have accused Mr. Cramahé of remissness in preparing for the defence of Quebec, but the researches we have made in the composition of the present work, convince us that the charge is only partially true. He acted slowly in the earlier stages of the campaign because he shared the general disbelief in the seriousness of the Continental attack. Montgomery's movement from the west he had no pressing reasons to dread, inasmuch as that officer was confronted in the Montreal district by the Governor General and Commander-in-Chief, Guy Carleton himself. Carleton had nearly emptied Quebec of regular troops for his army, and as long as he employed them in keeping back Montgomery, Cramahé had really little or no responsibility to bear. Arnold's march from the east, through the forests of Maine, was known to be aimed directly at Quebec, but the Canadians of that day, who understood all the hardships and perils of winter in the primeval woods, had no idea that Arnold's column would ever reach its destination. And, as we shall see, in the next book, when describing the principal episodes of this heroic march, there was every good reason for the skepticism.

But when at length, after many contradictory rumors and much false information which would have bewildered any commander, Cramahé learned from the intercepted letters of Arnold, and from the volunteer reconnoitering of such faithful men as Donald, that the Continental army was really approaching Quebec, it is due to the memory of a worthy officer, even in these pages of romance, to say that he acted with judgment and activity in making all the preliminary preparations necessary to protect Quebec, until the arrival of Governor Carleton, and reinforcements of regular troops.

After leaving the banquet hall, he put on his uniform and wrapping himself closely in his military cloak, he resolved upon making a personal inspection of all the defensive posts of the city. He first repaired to the barracks in Cathedral square where he had a brief conference with the principal officers. He next visited every gate and the approaches to the citadel where he was pleased to find that the sentries were unusually alert, and quite alive to the exigencies of the situation, without precisely knowing what it was. The Lieutenant Governor then walked down into the darkness of Lower Town and wandered a long time in silence along the dark bank of the St. Lawrence.

About three o'clock in the morning a sleigh drew up at the door of a large square house in a retired street. Two men issued from it, one middle-aged, erect and dressed in rather costly furs; the other old, thin, and arrayed like an Indian hunter, with a large fox-skin cap on his head. As they stepped across the footpath from the sleigh to the front steps of the mansion, a tall muffled figure stalked slowly on the other side of the street.

"It is the Governor," whispered the younger

man to his companion. "I know his stature and carriage! Let us enter."

"I wonder what Belmont is doing out at this unseasonable hour," muttered the tall man in the folds of his cloak. And he walked on, while the door of the mansion closed with a thud upon the two sleighmen.

It was five o'clock on the morning of the 10th November 1775. The first faint light of the morning was touching the tops of the far mountains. The air was frosty, with indications of snow.

Two men stood at an angle of the ramparts, on the highest point of the citadel of Quebec. They were looking eastward.

"See, Lieutenant," said one pointing his gloved hand across the river.

"Ay, there they are, Your Excellency, issuing from the woods and ascending the hill," replied the other.

"They are on the hill, swarming up in hundreds," rejoined the Governor.

Cramahé pressed the hand of Hardinge, and the two descended rapidly but silently into the city. On their way, they heard the confused mutter of the streets:

"The Bastonnais have come!"

Yes, there they were. Arnold's men stood like a spectral army on the Heights of Levis.

END OF BOOK THE FIRST.

THE PRINCESS BEATRICE.

At this time twelve months ago currency was obtained for a story aunt the choice of a husband for Princess Beatrice in the person of the late Emperor Napoleon's son and heir, through the correspondence of an Ohio journal. Of that alleged matrimonial arrangement nothing was heard by the persons most intimately concerned, or by those who should have been familiar with the plan, until the story was reproduced from America. The youngest daughter of the Queen is still unfettered, and without suitors. And thus, it is stated, she proposes to continue, unless she is left wholly at liberty to choose for herself, or circumstances conspire to produce a change of mind on the subject. *On dit*—but I do not pretend "they" are above the grade of Her Majesty's personal attendants—that the Princess takes exceedingly practical views of the future; that she notices with unaffected scorn the puerile excuses of the starveling princes for making the British taxpayer sustain the burden of their indolence and their vices; that she is moved by feelings of pity and contempt when she observes the desperate pinching of the Marquis of Lorne and the Princess Louise to make ends meet, and yet preserve high status in society; and that rather than become a victim to any similar arrangement, dispensing with status she will marry a tradesman! Is this any way probable? I cannot say that it is, and I hand you the gossip as it comes to me, for so much as it may be worth. But the remark may be made, *en passant*, that the Princess might do much worse. Marriage with a tradesman of the millionaire class she would be at all likely to know anything about would surround her with a far purer atmosphere and associations freer from carking care than she could find in circles usually affected by persons of the blood royal, and she might well sigh for the opportunity which the law denies her in the absence of the sovereign's explicit consent. Meanwhile, as no knight-errant comes from beyond the seas to woo her after the manner pursued in such exalted spheres, the lady accepts the situation with the happy indifference which best becomes her.

AFFECTING SCENE IN A DEAF MUTE SCHOOL.

A beautiful incident is related to us which occurred only a few days ago in the Home School to teach mutes articulation and lip-reading at Mystic River. Miss P., an interesting graduate of one of the oldest institutions for the education of deaf mutes, having a desire to learn to speak and to read the lips of her speaking friends, was recommended by her old principal to try Mr. Whipple's school, and she entered it last term. She made rapid progress, and was much aided by the natural alphabet, the invention of her teacher. This alphabet curiously suggests sounds, or the right position of the organs to utter sound, as well as form; and whenever a mute pupil can read and write it, he or she can generally give any of the forty sounds of our difficult language with great precision and discrimination, and often with remarkable correctness. This young lady, filled with enthusiasm at every step, mastered the alphabet with little difficulty, and one day came to her teacher with something written on her slate, which she asked him to correct, her mind being agitated with emotion. It proved to be the Lord's Prayer, put in the language of articulation. Perceiving her agitation the teacher could scarce retain his own tears as he corrected a few unimportant errors of pronunciation, and delicately returned it. The next morning the young lady came exultingly to her teacher, exclaiming: "I prayed last night for the first time with my voice," and neither of them could restrain their emotions. He ventured to ask her if she had ever prayed before. "Oh, yes; I have thought my prayers, but I never spoke them before." "My lips shall praise Thee, O God!" "Attend to the voice of my supplications, O Lord." The earnestness and satisfaction of the devout mute who had now realized one of the bright dreams of her life admitted of no question, and called for no reproof, if she was something of a literalist in her interpretation.