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## OUR CENTENNIAL STORY.

## THE BASTONNAIS :

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

By JOHN LESPERANCE.

## BOOK III.

## THE BURSTING OF THE TEMPEST.

## IX.

## PAULINE'S DEVELOPMENT.

Insensibly a change was coming over Pauline. The sharp, varied experiences of the past month had a decisive schooling influence upon her. It is often the case that simple untutored natures like hers develop more rapidly in days of crisis than characters fashioned of sterner material. There is no preliminary work of undoing to be gone through. The ground is ready prepared for strong and lasting impressions. The process of creation is hampered by no obstacles. There is, on the contrary, a latent spontaneity which accelerates its action.

Pauline herself was hardly conscious of this change. At least she could not formulate it in words, or even enumerate its phases by any system of analysis, but there were moments when her mind surged with feelings which she knew that she had never felt before, and she caught herself framing visions whose very vagueness of outline swelled before her like the shadows of a portent. At times, too, through these mists there flashed illuminations which startled her, and made her innocent heart shrink as if they were presentiments of doom.

She had seen so much, she had heard so much, she had learned so much during these eventful weeks. The old peaceful life was gone, and it seemed ever so far away. She was certain that it would never return again. Amid her trouble, there was even a tinge of pleasure in this assurance. That was, at least, one thing of which she was positive. All else was so doubtful, the future appeared so capricious, her fate and the fate of those she loved was shrouded in such mystery.

On the evening of the day, on which occurred the incidents related in the last chapter, she was sitting alone in her room. A circumstance, which, of itself, should have excited in her emotions of pleasure, threw her into a train of painful rehearsals. Her father was singing snatches of his old French songs in the room below—a thing he had not done for weeks. This reminded her of the visit of Bouchette, and from that point her mind travelled backwards to all the scenes, and their concomitants, of which she had of late been the witness. There was the snow-storm in Cathedral Square, when her father was summoned to the presence of the Lieutenant Governor; there was the burning of Roderick's letter; there was the meeting with him at the water's edge; there was the dreadful altercation and the happy reconciliation between him and her father; there was the firing on the handsome young American from the walls; there was the visit to the Sarpy's; there was the night ride back to the town; there was the dazzling magnificence of the Governor's ball. And through all this she saw the weird form of Batoche, flitting in and out, silent, mysterious, terrible. She saw the yearning, anxious, loving face of Roderick Hardinge. She saw Zulma leaning towards her, and, as it were, growing to her with a sister's fondness. The spell of Zulma's affection appeared to her like the embrace of a great spirit, overpowering, irresistible and withal delicious in its strength. And spite of her, she saw—why should the vision be so vivid?—the beautiful, sad eyes of Cary Singleton, as he sat beside her at the Sarpy mansion, or parted from her at the Palace Gate. She remembered how noble he looked as he conferred with Roderick under the walls, when bearing the flag of truce; how proudly he walked back to the ranks of the army, nor even deigned to look back when a miscreant fired at him from the ramparts. She recalled every word that Zulma had spoken about him, so that she seemed to know him as well as Zulma herself.

When Pauline had gone over all these things several times, in that extraordinary jumbling yet keenly distinct way with which such reminiscences will troop to the memory, she felt positively fatigued, and a sense of oppression lay like a burden at her heart. She closed her eyes while a shudder passed through her frame. She feared that she might be ill, and it required all the tranquil courage of her nature not to yield outright to the collapse with which she was threatened.

At length she bethought her of a means to regain her serenity. She would write a long letter to Zulma, describing the Governor's ball. She, at once, set about the task. But when the paper was spread out, she encountered a difficulty at the very threshold. Would she write about herself? Would she speak of Roderick? Would she repeat the salutation of his Excellency? Would she narrate her interview with Captain Bouchette? If she did, she would relapse at once into the train of ideas of which it was the object of her letter to get rid. Already, two or three times, she had detected herself gliding into them, with pen poised in her hand.

"No," she murmured with a slight laugh. "I will do nothing of the kind. I will write like a

milliner. I will give a detailed account of the dress worn by every lady in the chateau. This may amuse Zulma, or it may disgust her, according to her mood when she reads the letter. But no matter. It will answer my purpose. Zulma has often scolded me for not being selfish enough. I will be selfish for once."

With this plan well defined, the writing of the letter was an easy and a pleasant task. As the pen flew over the paper, Pauline showed that she enjoyed her work. At times, she would smile, and her whole face would light up. At other times, she would stop and reread a passage with evident approbation. Page after page was covered with the mystic language of the *modiste*, in which Pauline must have been an adept—as what young woman is not?—for she made no erasures, and inserted no corrections.

"Now that I have come to my own costume, shall I describe it?" she asked herself, and almost immediately added:

"It would be affectation if I did not."

She forthwith devoted a whole page to the description.

Were we not right in saying that a great change had come over Pauline? She, who, only a few weeks ago, was the simplest and most unsophisticated of girls, now knew the meaning of that dreadful word—affectation. She not only knew what it was, but she knew that it must be avoided, and she took particular pains to avoid it.

A little later on, she asked herself again:

"Shall I make any mention of Roddy?"

The query was apparently not so easily answered as the other. She passed her left hand wearily over the smooth hair that shaded her temple. Her eyes were fixed vacantly on the green baize of the table. There was just the slightest trace of hardness, if that were possible, on her features.

At length she whispered:

"Zulma would think it strange if I did not. Besides, I know she admires Roddy. Yes, I must tell her about the Lieutenant—oh, beg pardon, the Captain," and she smiled in her natural way. "Of course she must hear of his promotion. Poor Roddy! How proud he was of it. And he seemed to cling to me closer afterwards, as if he meant that I should share half of the honour."

After detailing that circumstance, she added a few words about Carleton and Bouchette, and wound up by expressing the regret, which was sincere with her, that Zulma had not been present at the festival. She wrote:

"Captain Bouchette was kind enough to name some one whom you know as the belle of the ball. That was flattery, of course. But had some one whom I know been there, not only M. Bouchette, but the Governor himself and all the company, not excepting Roderick, would have acclaimed her queen."

This was not an idle compliment from one girl to another. It was a courtly tribute from woman to woman. Clearly, Pauline was making rapid progress.

The letter was immediately folded and addressed. Holding it in her hand, as she rose from the table, Pauline felt wonderfully refreshed. She glanced through the window, on her way down stairs, and a new horizon spread before her. Her misgivings for the time had departed, her doubts were dispelled, and all that remained was a certain buoyant hopefulness, which she could not explain.

She met her father below and inquired after Batoche.

"He is not here, my dear, but may return to-night."

"I have a letter for him."

"A letter for Batoche?"

"That is, a letter which I would wish him to carry?"

"For whom?"

"For Zulma Sarpy."

"Oh, that is very well. Write to Zulma. Cultivate her friendship. She is a grand girl."

Batoche did call again at M. Belmont's that night, but it was only for a moment, as he was about to betake himself once more out of the town. He accepted Pauline's commission with alacrity.

"I will deliver the letter myself," he said. "I am glad of the chance to see that magnificent creature again."

X.

## ON THE CITADEL.

The next day, instead of experiencing the usual reaction, Pauline continued in precisely the same state of mind as when she handed the letter to Batoche. She was not by any means gay. For instance, she could not have sung a comical song with zest. But she was more than merely calm. There was a quickening impulse of vague expectancy within her which led her to move about the house with a light step and a smiling face. Her father was much pleased, as he too had not outlived the effect produced upon him by the visit of Bouchette. Furthermore, the weather may have contributed to the pleasantness that reigned in the house. The sun

was shining brightly, the wind had fallen, and the snow lay crisp upon the streets inviting to a promenade.

Hardinge called about noon for the purpose of asking Pauline to accompany him in a little walk.

"I have a couple of hours before me—a thing I may not have every day—and a ramble will do both of us good," he said.

Pauline was soon ready with the cordial consent of her father.

After wandering through the streets for some time, and stopping to speak to friends whom they met, the two wended their way towards Cape Diamond. On the top of that portion of the Citadel they were quite alone, and they could commune together without interruption. They both appeared to be pleased with this, each probably feeling that he had something to say to the other, or rather that they might touch upon topics, untouched before, which might lead to better mutual understanding. Roderick was a trifle graver and more reserved than his companion. Pauline made nothing of that, attributing it to his military anxieties, a supposition which his conversation at first seemed to justify.

"This is an exposed point," said he, "which in a few days none of us will be able to occupy. When the whole rebel army moves up from Pointe-aux-Trembles, they can easily shell us out of this side of the Citadel."

"But it is a good point of observation, is it not?" asked Pauline.

"Capital, though not so good as that one higher up which is well guarded and where double sentries will always be posted."

As he spoke, Roderick caught view of moving figures on the high way near the Plains of Abraham.

"Look Pauline," he said. "Do you know those fellows?"

"I do not. Are they soldiers?"

"They call themselves Virginia riflemen. They are the advance guard of the rebel army. They have been prowling around for the past two days."

"Virginia riflemen, Roddy?" said Pauline looking up with an expression of languid inquiry in her dark eyes.

"Yes. You ought to know something about them. Don't you remember the young officer who escorted you to the gates the day before yesterday?"

"Oh," replied Pauline, with no attempt to conceal her surprise or interest, "you don't mean to say that he is down there among those poor unsheltered men?"

"I do, certainly, and I am sure he enjoys it. I would in his place. He has plenty of room to rove about in. It is not like being cooped up, as we are, within these narrow walls."

"Well, he is strong and hearty and can stand a little hardships. That's some comfort," said Pauline wagging her little head sympathetically.

This evidently amused Roderick, who replied:

"Yes, he is a stout, tough fellow."

"And so brave," pursued Pauline with growing warmth while her eyes were fixed on the plain beyond.

"Every soldier ought to be brave, Pauline. But I must allow that this man is particularly brave. He has proved it before our eyes."

Pauline answered not, but her attention remained fixed on the distant sight before her. Roderick burst out into a hearty laugh and said:

"Surely this is not all you have got to say about him. He is strong, he is brave, and— isn't he something else, eh, Pauline?"

She turned suddenly and answered Hardinge's laugh with a smile, but there was the tell-tale blood in her cheek.

"Come now, dear, isn't he handsome?" continued Roderick, proud of his triumph and full of mischief.

"Well, yes, he is handsome," answered Pauline with a delicious pout and mock-show of aggressiveness.

"And what else?"

"Modest."

"What else?"

"Refined."

"What else?"

"Educated."

"What else?"

"Kind."

"Kind to you, dear?"

"Particularly kind to me."

"Thank him for that. He could choose no worthier object of his kindness. Excuse my teasing you, Pauline. It was only a bit of fun. I quite agree in your estimate of this American officer. He and I ought to be friends, instead of enemies."

"You will be friends yet," said Pauline with a tone of conviction.

"Alas!"

A pause ensued during which despondent thoughts flashed through the brain of Roderick Hardinge. All the horrors of war loomed up in a lump before him, and the terrible uncertainties of battle revealed themselves keenly. He had never felt his position so deeply before. This rebel was as good as himself, perhaps better. They might have met and enjoyed life together. Now their duty was to do each other to death, or entail as much loss as possible upon one another. Losses! What if one of these losses should be that of the lovely creature at his side? That were indeed the loss of all losses.

But no, he would not entertain the thought. He tossed up his head and drank in the cold air with expanded lungs. He felt Pauline's small

hand upon his arm. The touch thrilled his whole being.

"Look, Roddy," she said pointing to the plain.

XI.

## HORSEMAN AND AMAZON.

What they both saw was this. A band of some twenty men, members of Morgan's corps, stood in groups on the extreme edge of the plain. At a given signal a horseman issued in a canter from their midst. The animal was almost pure white, with small well-proportioned head, small clean hoofs, long haunches, abundant mane and sweeping tail. Every limb was instinct with speed, while the pricked ear, rolling eye and thin pink nostril denoted intelligence and fire. The rider was arrayed in the full uniform of a rifleman—grass-green coat and trousers, trimmed with black fur through which ran a golden tape; crimson sash with white powder horn attached; a black turban-shaped hat of medium height, flanked over the left temple with a black aigrette of short dark feathers which was held by a circular clasp of bright yellow metal. The rider trotted around leisurely in a long ellipse until the snow was sufficiently beaten for his purpose. He then indulged in a variety of extraordinary feats, each of which seemed to be demanded of him by one or the other of his companions. Among these the following may be worth enumerating. He launched his horse at full speed, when suddenly loosening his feet from the stirrups and his hand from the bridle, he sprang upwards and threw himself with both legs now on the left, then on the right of the saddle. He leaned far forward on the horse's neck so that the two heads were exactly parallel, and next fell back into the saddle facing the crupper and holding on to nothing. He stopped his horse suddenly and made him stand almost perpendicular on his hind legs. Then, without the assistance of bridle, stirrup, or pommel, he secured his position and made the animal plunge wildly forward as if he were clearing a high hurdle, while he no more swerved from his seat than if he had been pinioned to it. Setting his horse again at his topmost bent, he took his pistol, threw it into the air, caught it on the fly, and finally hurled it with all his might in front of him. Then slipping one foot from the stirrup, he bent his body over to the ground, seized the weapon as he passed, recovered his position and replaced the pistol in its place, before reaching the end of his round.

The friends of the rider were not more intent in their observation than were the two spectators on the slope of the Citadel.

"Marvellous horsemanship," exclaimed Hardinge with enthusiasm. "The animal must be an Arabian or some other thorough-bred. Whose can he be? There is no such horse in these parts or I should have known it. And yet it is hardly possible that he should have come along with Arnold's expedition."

"And the rider?" murmured Pauline, advancing several steps in the earnestness of her gaze.

"Yes, the rider," continued Roderick. "See he lives in the horse and the horse in him. They seem to form part and parcel of one another. A magnificent fellow."

"Impossible!" said Pauline, shading her eyes with her hand to sharpen her vision. "It cannot be."

"What?" queried Roderick.

"I thought perhaps..."

"But it is, Pauline."

"You don't mean it?"

"It is no other."

"Cary Singleton!"

Forgetful of everything, in her transport, she applauded with her gloved hands. Roderick took off his cap and saluted.

"This is a brave sight, Pauline, and well worth our coming thus far to see."

The girl was silent, and when at length she diverted her eyes, it was not to encounter those of her companion. A slight trouble arose within her which might have increased into an embarrassment, had not another incident almost immediately occurred to give her distraction.

The rider, having finished his gyrations, returned to his friends who after a brief parley dispersed, leaving him alone with a small group of two or three among whom appeared to be a lady on horseback. At least, so thought both Roderick and Pauline. They did not mind the circumstance, however, and were on the point of retracing their steps homeward, when they noticed that two riders detached themselves from the rest and took the direction of the plain. It was easy to recognize Cary Singleton, and, in a few moments, as easy to see that he was accompanied by a lady. The twain went along at a gentle walk directly towards the St. Lawrence. The sun was still shining brightly, and as they rode, they were sometimes in light and sometimes in shadow, according as they passed the leafless maples that skirted the path. When they reached the high bank overlooking the river, they stopped for a few moments in conversation, Singleton evidently describing something, as indicated by the movement of his arm along the line of the stream and again in the direction of the town.

While they were thus engaged, the couple on the Citadel watched them closely without uttering a word. The reader will readily guess that Pauline watched the man, and Roderick, the woman. Of the two, the latter was far more intent in his observation, the former looking on in rather a dreamy way.

At length, the officer and the amazon turned their horses' heads on their backward journey. As they did so, they both happened to look directly toward the town. Whatever it was that