

TOO STRANGE NOT TO BE TRUE.

BY LADY GEORGINA FULLERTON.

CHAPTER I.

It was not extraordinary, under these circumstances, his concession thrived, that fortune once more smiled upon him. He was glad of it, not only from a natural pleasure in success, but also from the consciousness that, as his wealth increased, so would his means of usefulness. He became deeply attached to the land which was so bountifully bestowing its treasure upon him, and displaying every day before his eyes the grand spectacle of its incomparable natural beauties. His heart warmed towards the children of the soil, and he took a lively interest in the evangelization of the Indian race, and the labours of the missionaries, especially those of his old friend Father Maret, whose church and the village which surrounded it stood on the opposite bank of the stream, on the site of which his own house was built. If his life had not been one of incessant labour, he must have suffered from its loneliness. But he had scarcely had time during those busy years to feel the want of companionship. Month after month had elapsed in the midst of engrossing occupation. On the whole, he was happier than most men are—much happier, certainly, than his poor friend, M. de Harlay, who wasted a large sum of money in building an habitation, as the houses of the French colonies were called, totally out of keeping with the habits and requirements of the mode of life he had adopted. For one whole year he tried to persuade himself that he enjoyed that kind of existence; it was only at the close of the second year of his residence in America, that he acknowledged to himself in pain that he was bored to death with the whole thing, and willing to spend as large a sum to get rid of his concession as he had already expended upon it. At last, he declared one morning that he could endure it no longer.

Maitre Simon's barge was about to descend the Mississippi to New Orleans. The temptation was irresistible, and he made up his mind to return to France, leaving behind him his land, his plantations, his horses, and the charming habitation, called the *Fortillon*, or sometimes "*La Fidele Herbe*." D'Auban, he said, might cultivate it himself, and pay him a nominal rent, or sell it for whatever it would fetch to some other planter. But in America he would not remain a day longer if he could help it; and if Monsieur Law had cheated all the world, as the latest letters from Paris had stated, the worst punishment he wished him was banishment to his German settlement in the New World. And so he stood, waving his handkerchief and kissing his hand to his friend, as the clumsy barge glided away down the giant river; and D'Auban sighed when he lost sight of it, for he knew he should miss his light-hearted countryman, whose very follies had served to cheer and enliven the first years of his emigration. And indeed, when this story begins, with the sole exception of Father Maret, he had not associated with any one whose habits of thought and tone of conversation were at all congenial to his own. No two persons could differ more in their minds than D'Auban and Harlay; and when people have mutual friends, acquaintances, and recollections, there is a common ground of thought and sympathy, which in some measure supplies the place of a more intimate congeniality of feelings and opinions.

He sometimes asked himself if this-land was really to be his portion. He had no wish to return to Europe. He was on the whole well satisfied with his lot, nay, grateful for its many advantages; but the course of a long solitary walk through the forest, such as he had taken that day, or in the evenings in his log-built home, when the wind moaned through the pine woods with a sound which reminded him of the murmur of the sea on his native coast, feelings would be awakened in his heart, which he could not resist, and then, in many persons' lives there is a pact which claims nothing from them but a transient sigh, breathed not seldom with a sense of escape—phases in their pilgrimage never to be travelled over any more, do not do but resist—but the remembrance of which affects them just because it belongs to the dim shadowy past, that past which was once alive and now is dead. This had been the case with D'Auban as he passed that evening through the little cemetery of the Christian Mission, where many a wanderer from the Old World rested in a foreign soil by the side of the children of another race, aliens in blood but brethren in the faith. A little farther on he met Therese, the catechist and schoolmistress of the village. He stopped her in order to inquire after a boy, the son of one of his labourers, whom he knew she had been to visit. There was an Indian girl, the daughter of an Algonquin chief, who, after a battle with another tribe, in which he had been mortally wounded, had sent one of his soldiers with his child to the block robe of St. Francois des Illinois, with the prayers that he would bring her up as a Christian. He had been himself baptized a short time before. The little maiden had ever since been called the Flower of the Mission. Its church had been her home; its festivals her pleasures; its sacred enclosure her playground. Before she could speak plainly she gathered flowers and carried them in her little brown arms into the sanctuary. When older, she was wont to assemble the children of her own age, and to lead them into the prairies to make garlands of the purple amaranth, or by the side of the streams to steal golden-crowned leaves from their broad beds of leaves. For our Lady's altar; and under the catalpa tree and the holly she told them stories of Jesus and of Mary, till the shades of evening fell, and the compass flower, true as a magnet, pointed to the north. As she advanced in age her labours extended; but such as her childhood had been, such was her womanhood. She became the catechist of the Indian convents, and the teacher of their children. The earnest piety and the poetic genius of her race gave a peculiar originality and beauty to her figurative language; and D'Auban had sometimes conceived him-

self behind the wall of the school hut and listened to the Algonquin maiden's simple instruction. "How is Pompey's son today?" he asked, as they met near the church. "About to depart for the house of the great spirits," she answered. "He wants nothing now, angels will soon bear him away to the land of the hereafter. We should not grieve for him."

"But you look as if you had been grieving. Therese, do not hurry away. Cannot you spare me a few minutes, even though I am a white man? I am afraid you do not like French people."

"Ah! if all white men were like you it would be well for them and for us. It is for one of the daughters of your tribe that I have been grieving, not for the child of the black man."

"Indeed, and what is her name?" "I do not know her name. She is whiter than any of the white women I have seen—as white as that magnolia flower, and the scent of her clothes is like that of bay when newly mown."

"Where did you meet her?" "I have seen her walking in the forest, or by the side of the river, late in the evening; and sometimes she sits down on one of the tombs near the church. She lives with her father in a hut some way off, amongst the white people, who speak a harsh language than yours."

"The young colony, I suppose? Is this woman young?" "She must have seen from twenty to twenty-five summers."

"When did they arrive?" "On the day of the great tempest, which blew down many trees and unroofed our cabins. A little boat attached to Simon's barge brought them to the shore. They took shelter in a ruined hut by the side of the river, and have remained there ever since."

"Have they any servants?" "A negro boy and an Indian woman whom they hired since they came. She buys food for them in the village. The old man I have never seen."

A few days after his conversation with Therese, d'Auban rode to a place where some Saxon colonists were clearing a part of the forest. He wished to purchase some of the wood they had been felling, and walked to a spot where the overseer who was directing the work. Whilst he was talking to him, he noticed an old man who was standing a little way off, leaning with both hands on a heavy gold-headed cane. He wore the ordinary European dress of the times, but there was an elaborate neatness, a studied refinement in his appearance singularly enough amidst the rude settlers of the New World. His ruffles were made of the finest lace, and the buckles on his shoes silver gilt. There was nothing in that man's exterior, his face or attitude of this stranger, nothing that would have attracted attention at Paris or perhaps at New Orleans; but it was out of keeping with the rough activity of the men and the wild character of the scenery in that remote region. His pale eyes, shaded with white eyebrows, wandered listlessly over the busy scene, and he gave a nervous start when a tree fell with a louder crash than usual. One of the labourers had left an axe on the grass near where he was standing. He raised it as if to measure its weight, but his feeble grasp could not retain its hold of the heavy implement, and it fell to the ground. D'Auban stepped forward to pick it up and restore it to him. He thanked him, and said in French, but with a German accent, that he would not accept of it. This little incident served as an introduction, and the old man seemed pleased to find somebody not too busy to talk to him. His own observations betrayed great ignorance as to the nature of the country or the general life of the colonists. He talked about the want of accommodation he had met with in America, and the dirty state of the Indian villages, as if he had been travelling through a civilized country. He told d'Auban that he intended to purchase land in that neighbourhood, and to build a house.

"I begin to despair," he said, "of finding one which would suit us to buy or to hire. I suppose, sir, you do not know of one?"

"Certainly not of one to let," d'Auban answered with a smile, for the idea of hiring a house in the backwoods struck him in a ludicrous light.

"But I have had a concession left on my hands by a friend who has returned to Europe, and which has upon it a house very superior to any thing I have ever seen of the world. Many thousand francs have been spent on this little pavilion, which is reckoned quite a curiosity, and goes by the name of the *Vicinate de Harlay's Folly*. The purchaser of the concession would get the house simply thrown into the bargain, and I have made up my mind to sell it."

"That sounds very well," exclaimed the old man; "I think it would suit us."

"Well, M. de Harlay has empowered me to dispose of his land and house. It is close to my plantation, a few leagues up the river. I should be very happy to let you it, and to explain its advantages as an investment. I am going back there this morning, and if you would like to visit it at once, I am quite at your orders. We have still the day before us."

"Am I by any chance speaking to Colonel d'Auban?" "Yes, I am Colonel d'Auban, *pour vous servir*, as the peasants say in France."

"Then indeed, sir, I am irrepressibly honoured and delighted to have made your acquaintance. I have been assured that in this country an honest man is a rarity which Diogenes might well have needed his lantern to discover. A merchant at New Orleans, to whom I brought letters of introduction, told me that you were about to purchase the purchase of a plantation, and not hesitate a moment about following his advice. I therefore gratefully accept your obliging proposal, but I must beg you to be so good as to allow me first to inform my daughter of our intended excursion. I will be with you again in a quarter of an hour, my amiable friend, ready and happy to surrender myself to your invaluable guidance."

"Who is that gentleman?" asked d'Auban of the German overseer; as the little old man had trotted away. "He is called M. de Chamblé. Though his name is French, I think he is a German. Nobody knows whence he comes, or why he is coming to this country. He is living in France or in Saxony. I wish him joy of the villa he will find here. And then he speaks to the Indians and the negroes for all the world as if they were Christians."

"I thought as they were Germans that some of our countrymen might have written about them."

"We are a poor set here now that M. Law's grand scheme has come to naught. We do a little business on our account by felling and selling trees, and it is lucky we do so, for not a son of his money have we seen for a long time. It is impossible to maintain his slave, and the plantation is going to ruin. Ah! there is M. de Chamblé coming back; did you ever see such a figure for an *habitant*? One would fancy he carried a hair-dresser about, his hair is always so neatly powdered."

"Will a long walk tire you?" asked d'Auban as his new acquaintance joined them. "Or will you ride my horse? Do not have any scruples. No amount of walking ever tires me."

"Dear sir, we might both walk I should like it better," answered M. de Chamblé, glancing unobtrusively at the horse, who, weary of the long delay, was pawing in a manner he did not quite fancy. "If you will now and then lend me your arm, I can keep on my legs without fatigue for three or four hours."

D'Auban crossed the horse's bridle over his arm, and led the way to an opening in the forest, through which they had to pass on their way to the Pavilion St. Agathe, which was the proper name of M. de Harlay's habitation. Whenever they came to a rough bit of ground he gave his arm to his companion, who lent upon it lightly, and chattered as he went along with a sort of child-like confidence in his new friend. D'Auban's concession, and the neighbouring one of St. Agathe, were situated much higher up the river than the German settlement. His own house was close to the water-side. The pavilion stood on an eminence in the midst of a beautiful grove, and overlooked a wide extent of prairie land bounded only in one direction by the outline of the Rocky Mountains. The magnificent scenery surrounded this little oasis, the luxuriant vegetation, the grandeur of the wide-spreading trees, the domes of blossom which here and there showed amidst masses of verdure, the numberless islets scattered over the surface of the broad bosomed river, the shady recesses and verdant glades which formed natural alleys and bowers in its encircling forest, combined to make its position so beautiful, that almost accounted for M. de Harlay's short-lived but violent fancy for his transatlantic property. It was a lovely scene which met the eyes of the pedestrians, when about mid-day they reached the brow of the hill. A noontide stillness reigned in the Savannas, where heads of buffaloes reposed in the long grass. Now and then a slight tremulous motion, like the ripple on the sea, stirred that boundless expanse of green, but not a sound of human or animal life rose from its flowery depths.

Not so in the grove round the pavilion. There the ear was almost deafened by the multitudinous cries of the birds, the chirping of insects, the hum of myriads of bees, the chirping of crickets, the whirring of butterflies, the rustling of squirrels darted every instant out of the thickets, and monkeys grined and chattered among the branches. Winged creatures of every shape and hue were springing out of the willow grass, hovering over clusters of roses, swinging on the cordages of the grape vine, flying up into the sky, diving in the streamlets, fluttering amongst the leaves, and producing a confused murmur very strange to an unaccustomed ear.

While other European adventurers in America sought distinction by cruelty and rapacity, Cartier obtained fame by justice and moderation. Thus with a name so honored and a career so honorable opens the first page in our history. In 1541 peace was once more proclaimed between the rival monarchs of France and Spain. De Roberval had not, amid the pre-occupations of war, forgotten Canada, and in 1547 organized a second expedition for the exploration and colonization of that country. But the expedition never reached Canada, the vessels meeting with adverse weather, all on board, including De Roberval and his brother, perished at sea.

The spread of Calvinism in many portions of France had, meantime, given rise to so much discontent, the signs of emigration in large bodies seized on the Huguenots, as the partisans of the new religion were called. Coligny, their leader, gave encouragement to this design, and solicited the royal patronage for the successful inauguration of a scheme of emigration. The king readily consented to the plan proposed by Coligny as an easy means of restoring harmony to a divided people and a distracted State by the removal of the element of discord.

De Villegagnon, a knight of Malta, who had embraced the reformed religion, set sail for Brazil with a body of Huguenot colonists. The colony, however, failed of success. Under the counsel and direction of Co-

ligny, Jean de Ribant, an ardent Huguenot, made, in 1602, a determined effort to establish a French colony in the New World. After taking possession in the name of the French King, of Florida and Georgia, he erected a fort on the Island of Santa Cruz.

Returning in 1603 to France, he left the infant colony under the command of a subordinate whose arbitrary conduct provoked ill-will, anarchy and bloodshed. The scarcity of provisions and the despair of seeing Ribant return induced the colonists to construct a rude vessel and trust themselves to the deep. They were after much suffering rescued by an English ship.

Even this failure did not disconcert Coligny, who seemed bent on the establishment of Calvinist colonies in the New World. Having obtained from the king a flotilla of three vessels he determined once more to essay the founding of a colony. He entrusted the command on this occasion to Henri de Coulon de Landoumiere, a skillful mariner and devoted Calvinist.

De Landoumiere sailed in the spring of 1604 for the same spot abandoned by the colony of de Ribant. He built a fort to which he gave the name of Carolina. But these frequent attempts at colonization in proximity to the Spanish dominions in the New World soon gave offence to that power.

The Spaniards at once took the field and laid siege to Fort Carolina—reducing it in a very short time. The French loss was heavy, eight hundred of their men perishing in the various encounters with the Spaniards, who looked on the contest, not as between Spanish and French soldiers, but between Catholics and heretics.

M. de Gouges, a brave French commander, shortly afterwards avenged the massacre of the French by the total destruction of the Spanish force in Fort Carolina. He did not, however, seek to make any permanent establishment in America.

Foreign wars and the turbulence of the colonists at home occupied the attention of French statesmen to the exclusion of all prospects of colonization. But the British and Norman seamen continued their traffic with the north-eastern coast of America. The fishery and peltry trades assumed, during the latter half of the sixteenth century, extended proportions. In fishing for cod along the banks of Newfoundland, and in whaling the Gulf of St. Lawrence, French seamen displayed a commendable activity; French traders in furs were not less active—they were to be found in all the maritime regions of Canada, and even ascended the St. Lawrence above Stataleona. It was not till 1598 that any serious attempt was made to colonize Canada. In that year the Marquis de la Roche obtained from the French king the title of viceroy of Canada, Acadia and adjacent territories, with the most absolute powers. The Marquis landed his colonists, forty in number, on Sable Island, and proceeded himself to Acadia. Returning to Sable Island he was overtaken by a furious storm which drove him to France.

Seized on his arrival by a rebellious nobleman, he was detained in prison five years without being able to make any report to the king. Meanwhile the colonists on Sable Island bore almost incredible sufferings. De la Roche immediately on his release brought the fact of their abandonment under the notice of the king, who despatched a vessel to their succor. Twelve were found surviving. These, reduced to a state of semi-barbarism, were brought to France, and introduced to the monarch, Henry IV., who treated them with a kindness worthy his chivalrous nature. If these first efforts of the French to establish a colonial empire in the new world were unsuccessful, those of the English were not less fruitless. Their first attempt at settlement was made in 1585 by Sir Humphrey Gilbert, who had received ample powers from Queen Elizabeth to take possession in her name and colonize vast tracts of American territory. Sir Humphrey perished in endeavoring to carry out the wishes of his royal mistress. In 1604, Sir Richard Grenville established a colony composed of one hundred and eighty persons on Roanoke Island, but these colonists lost heart under the severity of their trials and returned home within twelve months. Three other fruitless attempts then followed in quick succession. In 1602, Bartholomew Gosnold began, but soon abandoned, the colonization of Elizabeth's Island near Cape Cod. Shortly after his accession to the throne, James I. granted charters to the London and Plymouth companies to colonize Virginia, which, according to the charters, included the entire territory from lat. 45° to lat. 34°.

The first successful colony formed within the territory of the London Company was that of Jamestown in 1607, while the vast and fertile sister association was not so favored till the sixteenth century to establish French colonies in America it seemed meet that the commencement of the seventeenth should bring success to efforts renewed with the same laudable purpose. This century marks a new era in French history, an era of progress and centralization at home, of activity and aggressiveness abroad. Feudalism was vanquished, protestantism overthrown, French influence on the continent fully restored. That an age marked by achievements so momentous should witness an unwonted activity amongst the friends and promoters of American colonization is not surprising. The value of the American fisheries and the lucrativeness of the peltry trade had long attracted the attention of the busy seafaring population of the trading towns in the provinces of Normandy and Brittany.

At length the Sieur de Pontgravi succeeded in forming an association of traders to open traffic with the new world and establish colonies wherever it might be advantageously practicable. Samuel de Champlain, a trusted naval officer, was favored with the command of the expedition formed under the auspices of the new association. He set sail with three small vessels in 1608, and explored the St. Lawrence as far as St. Louis. On his report, which impressed the king most favorably with the advantages offered by New France for colonization, The Sieur des Monts having succeeded to the control of the company of traders which M. de Pontgravi had formed, was instrumental in forming, sailed in March, 1604, from Havre de Grace with a body of colonists whom he proposed to settle in Acadia. A settlement was accordingly formed at Port

Royal (now Annapolis), in Nova Scotia. This colony, after various trials, having at length fortunately fallen under the control of Jesuit missionaries, whose humane exertions enabled the colonists to overcome many of the privations incidental to their position, gave great promise. But the establishment of a French Catholic colony in America provoked the hostility of the Government of Virginia, which despatched Captain Argall with three vessels to destroy Port Royal. He burnt the town, whose inhabitants were engaged in tilling their fields a few miles distant. They returned to see their dwellings wrapped in flames, the product of so much industry and self-denial, reduced in a few moments, to ashes, and scattered to the winds, a fitting prelude to the greater disaster immortalized in that undying verse, an enduring monument to the heroism of a noble race in the hour of its overwhelming sorrow. We leave the sorrows of Port Royal to witness the early struggles of Quebec. To this latter city we may justly apply the distinction of cradle of Catholic civilization in North America. Its founder was the immortal Champlain, who, among the confessions of an empire small as compared with the salvation of a human soul. Could such a founder leave to his infant city any other heritage, but that of disseminating truth to the uttermost bounds of those regions on whose eastern shores the piety of Cartier had more than seventy years before planted the sacred standard of redemption.

TO BE CONTINUED.

OUR LORD ON THE CROSS.

It is commonly supposed, writes the historian of the Mass, Father O'Brien, that our Lord's feet were separately nailed to the cross and not placed one over the other and fastened by a single nail, as is the tradition in the Greek Church. Pope Benedict XIV., commenting on this point, pertinently remarks that it would be almost impossible to avoid breaking some of the bones of the feet if one rested on the other and a nail driven through both. There would be danger in that case of making void the scriptural saying to the effect that not a bone of our Saviour was to be broken. Before the twelfth century the paintings representing the crucifixion always exhibited our Lord's feet nailed separately, and therefore four nails instead of three were the number which fastened Him to the cross. St. Gregory of Tours and Durandus speak of four nails, but the latter writer also alludes to three without saying which number he inclines to ("Rationale Divinorum" p. 367). From time immemorial the Latin Church has kept up the tradition, and four nails were employed, and not three, and she represents our Lord as thus crucified. (See "Notes, Ecceological and Historical, on the Holydays of the English Church," p. 172.) It is commonly believed that one of the nails used in the crucifixion is kept in the Church of the Holy Cross at Rome, and that the cathedrals of Paris, Treves, and Toul have the others. When St. Helena first discovered them it is said she attached one to the helmet of her son, Constantine the Great, and another to the bridle of his horse. Tradition has it that she threw a third into the Adriatic Sea to appease a storm. The crown of Italy contains a portion of one of these nails, and things from them are kept as precious relics in many churches of Europe.

AS A SPECIES OF SACRILEGE.

At each elevation the little bell is rung to remind the people that our Lord is now present on the altar; and the end of the priest's chants is lifted up by the server, who kneels for this purpose (just as consecration is about to take place) on the highest step. This ceremony of lifting the end of the chalice is not observed now through any necessity whatever—for, if so, there would be as strong a reason for doing it at every other part of the Mass as that the priest genuflected—but is kept up merely as a vestige of that ancient custom of having the deacon and sub-deacon hold up the priest's robes at this place when the ample and long-flowing form of his chasuble is lifted up by the server, who kneels then in order that the priest might not be impeded in any way at the solemn moment of consecration, when the slightest accident might cause an incalculable amount of distress. In some places the practice of lifting the chasuble here is going, or has already gone, into disuse; but this should not be tolerated for a moment, for it is a flagrant act of supreme disobedience which no authority in the Church, short of the Pope himself, could sanction. We do not know an instance in which the Rubrics are departed from without a sacrifice of real beauty, for which reason alone, to pass over many others, the slightest innovation in this respect should be looked upon as a species of sacrilege, and should in no case be allowed.—Father O'Brien's History of the Mass.

SOLID VIRTUE.

A practical treatise on solid virtue may be welcome as a profitable contribution to our sacred library in those days of emotional piety, and this contribution has been made by Father Bellecens, S.J., whose work on "Solid Virtue" has been translated into English by a member of the Ursuline Community, Thurles, Ireland. Two many persons seek an escape from the inextinguishable self-consumption in multiplied acts of external devotion. They give much time to prayer, and rise from their knees to quarrel with their best friends; they kiss their crucifix with every sign of tender compassion, and the next thing which they do is a manifestation of an unforgiving spirit; they listen in tears to a sermon on *Maria Desolata*, and within three days they are guilty of some extravagant foolishness which puts their very faith in jeopardy.

PROTESTANT TRIBUTE TO CARDINAL MANNING.—Edmund Yates says of Cardinal Manning:—"In the case of Cardinal Manning, exemplary blamelessness is united with the most admirable public activity. That impressive and ascetic presence, with the face whose sharp outline takes us back into the Middle Ages, is well known on every platform on which social improvements are advocated, and is a power with the English public."

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