

all Canadians, because she was the prophetess, as Laval was the prophet, whose steadfast inspiration upheld Canada through the Three Years' Horror that began with the Iroquois fury of 1660 and ended with the seven months' earthquake of 1663.

II.

When Louis XI. lay on his death-bed, in his château of Plessis-les-Tours, he wished to send the holiest man he could find to bring the greatest saint of Christendom to console his last days on earth. Courtiers and populace all agreed on the same individual, the great-great-grand-father of La Mère Marie, who was accordingly sent to Rome and on to the wildest part of the Calabrian coast, whence he brought back the famous ascetic, St. François de Paule. No members of the family prized this signal honour more than the parents of Marie Guyard. Her father, who was a silk merchant, had such a reputation for piety and justice that his decisions carried more weight than those of the courts of law; while her mother was his equal in devotion and his helpmeet in good works.

Marie was born on the 18th of October, 1599, in the old royal city of Tours, amid *ce doux pays de la Touraine* which Belleforest has called *le jardin de France et le plaisir des Roys*. "Do not ask me why I love Touraine!" exclaims Balzac, when describing the valley of the Indre from Azay to Montbazou. Here, and along the Loire, are all the finest châteaux: Amboise, with its terraces and chapel; Chenonceaux, with its gardens, its white walls, its towers rising sheer from the water, and its romantic memories of Diane de Poitiers and Catherine de Medici; Azay-le-Rideau, a vision of beauty, set in the woods beside the winding river; Loches, with its ancient towers and ramparts massively rooted into its steep hill; and Chinon, where the statue of Rabelais looks down on the market-place and over the quiet quays beside the Loire, where Henry II. breathed his last, and where Charles VII. was called to the relief of Orleans by Joan of Arc. And the heart of Touraine is Tours, calm and beautiful on the southern bank of the Loire, which lingers past in slow meanderings. Here stood an archbishop's palace, here soared a great cathedral; and here was set that exquisite little gem of Gothic architecture, La Psalette, all aglow with the sacred music which so took the ear of the young Marie and wrought her heart to ecstasy.

But her deepest and most thrilling form of ecstasy came to her in visions of divinity. She had always been a religious child; and every predisposing influence carried her on toward the fulness of self-surrender and devotion. The piety of her family was a Touraine tradition; the