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indeed, in New France, and women are plenty as eggs at Easter!" "The foreign gentleman had much assurance to say it, even if it were true: he were much better employed picking up weeds and putting them in his book!" exclaimed Babet, hotly.

"Come! come!" cried Le Gardeur, interrupting this debate on the population; "Providence knows the worth of Canadian women, and can not give us too many of them. We are in a hurry to get to the city, Jean, so let us embark. My aunt and Amelie are in the old home in the city; they will be glad to see you and Babet," added he, kindly, as he got into the boat.

Babet dropped her neatest courtesy, and Jean, all alive to his duty, pushed off his boat, bearing the two gentlemen and their horses across the broad St. Charles to the King's Quay, where they remounted, and riding past the huge palace of the Intendant, dashed up the steep Cote au Chien and through the city gate, disappearing from the eyes of Babet, who looked very admiringly after them. Her thoughts were especially commendatory of the handsome officer in full uniform who had been so polite and generous in the morning.

"I was afraid, Jean, you were going to blurt out about Mademoiselle des Meloises," remarked Babet to Jean Jean on his return; "men are so indiscreet always!"

"Leaky boats! leaky boats!" Babet! ne rowing them with a woman abroad! sure to run on the bank. But what about Mademoiselle des Meloises?" Honest Jean had passed her over the ferry an hour ago, and been sorely tempted to inform Le Gardeur of the interesting fact.

"What about Mademoiselle des Meloises?" Babet spoke rather sharply. "Why, all Quebec knows that the Seigneur de Repentigny is mad in love with her."

"And why should he not be mad in love with her if he likes?" replied Jean; "she is a morsel fit for a king, and if Le Gardeur should lose both his heart and his wits on her account, it is only what half the gallants of Quebec have done."

"Oh, Jean, Jean! it is plain to see you have an eye in your head as well as a soft place!" ejaculated Babet, recommencing her knitting with fresh vigor, and working off the electricity that was stirring in her.

"I had two eyes in my head when I chose you, Babet, and the soft place was in my heart!" replied Jean, heartily. The compliment was taken with a smile, as it deserved to be. "Look you, Babet, I would not give this pinch of snuff," said Jean, raising his thumb and two fingers holding a good dose of the pungent dust,—"I would not give this pinch of snuff for any young fellow who could be indifferent to the charms of such a pretty lass as Angelique des Meloises!"

"Well, I am glad you did not tell the Seigneur de Repentigny that she had crossed the ferry and gone—not to look for him, I'll be bound! I will tell you something by and by, Jean, if you will come in and eat your dinner; I have something you like."

"What is it, Babet?" Jean was, after all, more curious about his dinner than about the fair lady.

"Oh, something you like—that is a wife's secret: keep the stomach of a man warm, and his heart will never grow cold. What say you to fried eels?"

"Bravo!" cried the gay old boatman, as he sang,—

"Ah! ah! ah! frit a l'huile,
Frit au beurre et a l'ognon!"

and the jolly couple danced into their little cottage—no king and queen in Christendom half so happy as they.

CHAPTER X.

AMELIE DE REPENTIGNY

The town house of the Lady de Tilly stood on the upper part of the

Place d'Armes, a broad, roughly-paved square. The Chateau of St. Louis, with its massive buildings and high, peaked roofs, filled one side of the square. On the other side, embowered in ancient trees that had escaped the axe of Champlain's hardy followers, stood the old-fashioned Monastery of the Recollets, with its high belfry and broad shady porch, where the monks in gray gowns and sandals sat in summer, reading their breviaries or exchanging salutations with the passers-by, who always had a kind greeting for the brothers of St. Francis.

The mansion of the Lady de Tilly was of stone, spacious and ornate, as became the rank and wealth of the Seigneurs de Tilly. It overlooked the Place d'Armes and the noble gardens of the Chateau of St. Louis, with a magnificent sweep of the St. Lawrence, flowing majestically under the fortress-crowned cape and the high, wooded hills of Lauson, the farther side of the river closing the view.

In the recess of an ornate mullioned window, half concealed by the rich, heavy curtains of a noble room, Amelie de Repentigny sat alone very quiet in look and demeanor, but no little agitated in mind, as might be noticed in the nervous contact of her hands, which lay in her lap clasping each other very hard, as if trying to steady her thoughts.

Her aunt was receiving some lady visitors in the great drawing-room. the hum of loud feminine voices reached the ear of Amelie, but she paid no attention, so absorbed was she in the new and strange thoughts that had stirred in her mind since morning, when she had learned from the Chevalier La Corne of the return to New France of Pierre Philibert. The news had surprised her to a degree she could not account for. Her first thought was, how fortunate for her brother that Pierre had returned; her second, how agreeable to herself. Why? She could not think why: she wilfully drew an inference away from the truth that lay in her heart—it was wholly for the sake of her brother she rejoiced in the return of his friend and preserver. Her heart beat a little faster than usual—that was the result of her long walk and disappointment at not meeting Le Gardeur on her arrival yesterday. But she feared to explore her thoughts: a rigid self-examination might discover what she instinctively felt was deeply concealed there.

A subtle, indefinable prevision had suggested to her that Colonel Philibert would not have failed to meet Le Gardeur at Beaumanoir, and that he would undoubtedly accompany her brother on his return and call to pay his respects to the Lady de Tilly and—to herself. She felt her cheek glow at the thought, yet she was half vexed at her own foolish fancy, as she called it. She tried to call upon her pride, but that came very lag-gardly to the relief of her discomposure.

Her interview, too, with Angelique des Meloises had caused her no little disquiet. The bold avowals of Angelique with reference to the Intendant had shocked Amelie. She knew that her brother had given more of his thoughts to this beautiful, reckless girl than was good for his peace, should her ambition ever run counter to his love.

The fond sister sighed deeply when she reflected that the woman who had power to make prize of Le Gardeur's love was not worthy of him.

It is no rare thing for loving sisters who have to resign their brothers to others' keeping to think so. But Amelie knew that Angelique des Meloises was incapable of that true love which only finds its own in the happiness of another. She was vain, selfish, ambitious, and—what Amelie did not yet know—possessed of neither scruple nor delicacy in attaining her objects.

It had chimed the hour of noon upon the old clock of the Recollets, and Amelie still sat looking wistfully over the great square of the Place d'Armes, and curiously scanning every horseman that rode across it. A throng of people moved about the square, or passed in and out of the



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great arched gateway of St. Louis. A brighting the crown and fleur mounted the gate, and edged, with military pace, sentries, their muskets flashing out in the sun they wheeled to return. Occasionally there was drums: the whole guard and presented arms, as of high rank, or ecclesiastical, passed through respects to the Governor business at the vice-Gentlemen on foot, with