

# THE COURIER

Vol. XXI.

March 31st, 1917

No. 18

## GRANDPERE NADEAU RECRUITS



*A Narrative of Old Canada and  
New Quebec*

By QUEENIE FAIRCHILD

Illustrated by H. E. Sampson

who had a good working knowledge of French, could follow the conversation fairly well.

While Captain St. Maurice explained their mission in the parish, bonhomme Nadeau looked him over, then demanded:

"Why are you not in red if you are fighting as an Englishman? And no sword! In my day the soldiers of the garrison at Quebec were a gay sight."

"But the uniforms were too conspicuous, the enemy could see us miles away," explained the young officer.

"Surely you are not afraid to let the enemy see you?" queried the old man.

Captain St. Maurice joined good naturedly in the laughter and answered:

"No, bonhomme, not afraid, but we don't fight in the open nowadays."

"You must be going back to the tricks of the Iroquois Indians."

"A story, a story, grandpere," called out half a dozen of the group. "Tell us of the days of your father and grandfather."

PETIT PIERRE leaned against his great-grandfather's knees; in his baby bottes sauvages and homemade clothes, he made a quaint picture as he twirled long "spills" made of paper to light the pipes from the fire as if such things as matches had never been invented. The child was no more eager for the coming stories than were the older people. While the storyteller smoked and thought for a few minutes, Captain Cameron looked with critical eye at the type of men in the room, commenting in English to St. Maurice.

"You don't know the stock as I do," Rene St. Maurice assured him. "These men may not seem up to an Englishman's standard of physical beauty, but they can rough it, handle an axe or a rifle equally well, live on simple fare and keep cheerful. Their greatest happiness is to gather like this to dance, sing, and to listen to stories. Half of the older people here cannot read nor write, yet it would be a stupid person who would call them unintelligent."

"Veneration is first taught for the church, and imagination is fired by the miraculous; it naturally follows that a French-Canadian shows respect for secular authority, and he has a natural love for the romantic and the heroic. His Canadian history is passed on to him in the form of stories, and the names of those who figured in history are almost household names, on account of the old Seigniorial connection between the families and their dependents."

"The songs of Normandy and Brittany had been carefully transmitted from generation to generation. Lord Northcliffe mentions in his book on the war that Captain Papineau of the 22nd French-Canadian Regiment, had called his attention to the fact that the old French peasants were astonished at hearing

CAPTAIN RENE ST. MAURICE of a famous French-Canadian Regiment, and Captain Jack Cameron, of Toronto, had been in hospital together in France, and now their short convalescent leave in Canada was soon to end. There might reasonably seem nothing the two men could have in common except their war experiences, yet the warmest friendship had sprung up between the dark, wiry French-Canadian officer, quick of speech and action, and the steady going Scotch-Canadian. Both men were lawyers by profession, the one versed in all the intricacies of French law or the Coutume Paris of the courts of Quebec, and the Upper Canadian needing no knowledge of it at all.

Jack Cameron was now paying the St. Maurices a visit at their Seigneurie of Lariviere near Three Rivers, although warned to expect nothing but the life of a small French-Canadian parish, with perhaps a bit of recruiting around the country side.

"You will find our ways very old fashioned I fear," had said Rene's father, the Sieur of Lariviere as he would have been called in the French regime, as he welcomed his son's friend, and Captain Cameron had answered that he was already under the spell of the Province of Quebec, but he looked at Juliette St. Maurice as he spoke.

For over two hundred years members of the St. Maurice family had at some time of their lives made Lariviere their home, had gone out into the world, had fought, loved, married, and been gathered in to their fathers under the Seigniorial pew of the parish church.

One week of Jack Cameron's stay at the manor had already slipped by, a week full of charm, from the moment of his arrival at the long stone house on the shore of the St. Lawrence. Rene St. Maurice was welcomed cordially in every habitant home they had visited as if censitaire (tenant) and their feudal lord were still bound to each other by laws of foi et hommage. There was no servility in the natural politeness, a good habitant respects himself as well as according it to his betters. The old world relationship delighted Jack Cameron.

They had been through other parishes all day, and Captain St. Maurice was feeling rather discouraged, as they had had no good opportunity of talking to the younger men. Old Narcisse was driving, turning around with many a quaint remark or piece of advice to "M'sieur Rene," as if he were still the school-

boy home at holiday time from the Seminaire of Quebec.

"If I could only revive the seigniorial obligation of military service to our family, what a draft I could take back to my regiment. However, I must surely get three or four men." Captain St. Maurice lighted a fresh cigarette as he spoke and turned to Captain Cameron seated beside him.

"How you must love every ancient custom and every inch of your seigneurie," said Jack Cameron.

"More than I can express in words," replied St. Maurice. "Many a moonlight night like this in France I have tried to make myself imagine the shimmer of light over a flat space of country was the light on the water of the St. Lawrence, and in the worst din I have suddenly heard the bells of Lariviere."

The man of the more emotional race stopped abruptly and both officers smoked in silence as the carriage rattled over the hard road of the early October night. An other ten minutes they drove into the single street of St. Norman, and stopped before the largest cottage, in which could be heard the pounding of feet and a violin playing the air of

"Mademoiselle voulez-vous danser?"

"Non Monsieur, je suis trop fatigue."

Several men smoking at the door came forward to show Narcisse where he could stable his horse, while some one else sought out Madame Marois to leave the Veillee long enough to get the travellers some supper at her Maison de pension.

"Mon Dieu! Just to think of Monsieur St. Maurice being here the very night of the grandpere Nadeau's eighty-fifth birthday. What an honour for him if the Messieurs would make their felicitations to him! There had been a Mass that morning, at which he had seven children, forty-five grandchildren and ten great grandchildren—A noble sight." Madame was forced to stop for breath as she rattled the plates on the table. "Such a wonderful old man, si sage, si respecte, and of such a memory for the good old times."

The crowd in the big kitchen at the Nadeau's made way politely for the two new arrivals to be led up to the grandfather, who was sitting near the open fire.

"Salut, salut," said the old habitant, using the word as a greeting without any consciousness of its one time military significance. Captain Cameron,