

# FOR FAITH and KING

## a Romance of Ville-Marie

By BLANCHÉ L. MACDONELL.

### CHAPTER IV.—Continued.

She inspected everything curiously, fathomed intentions and analysed motives, listened and smiled suavely, but made no secret of the fact that her sympathies were not with the priest party.

Anne Barroy, a cousin and poor relation of the Le Ber family, who acted as attendant to the recluse and who was the only person who ever came into direct personal contact with Jeanne, headed the priestly faction. Anne had a stealthy way of moving noiselessly, with eyes modestly cast down and hands folded piously, as she groaned ostentatiously *Aves*, but Nanon boldly declared that Mam'zelle Anne had eyes in the back of her head and a nose long enough to reach the utmost limit of everybody's business. Mademoiselle Barroy entertained profound convictions of the worthlessness and wickedness of the world in general, and seriously disapproved of Madame de Monestrol and her niece in particular. She was ever in active antagonism to Nanon, whose sauciness, audacity and power of sharp retort rendered her a formidable antagonist.



NANON.

"With foutanges and paniers, coquetry and late suppers, they have no regard for their souls," Anne muttered enviously. "Forgetting the promises of their baptism, like the unhappy Prelexta, spoken of by our holy bishop, who had her hands suddenly withered and died five months afterwards, and was immediately precipitated into hell, because, by order of her husband, she curled the hair of her niece and attired her after a worldly fashion."

In reality Anne was a dull, narrow-minded woman, desperately loyal to her own convictions and jealously aware that her only chance of distinction rested upon the claims of her saintly charge to superior sanctity.

"They feast these sinners while that angel eats only the food left by the servants, and that only after it has become unfit for human consumption—mouldy, indeed. A horse hair shirt and belt, shoes of corn, clothed in rags,—but I leave them to the wrath of God and the saints."

A youth of noble family, who had been sent out to the colony on a *lettre de cachet*, was also a member of Jacques Le Ber's household. It was whispered that Louis de Thevet, Sieur d'Ardeux, had incurred the enmity of his uncle, a great noble, by a series of graceless escapades. His own stories were always plausible. Having the misfortune to lose his father, so his tale ran, he was in hopes of succeeding him as *Lieutenant-Général des Eaux et Forêts* of the Duchy of Valois, a hereditary office in his family, when his uncle and younger brother compelled him to sell it, promising him that the *Duc de Guise* would give him a lieutenancy of infantry. He was secretly arrested and taken to the Citadel de Guise, at Châteaux Thierry, whence he was soon removed in a chain gang to the Islands. Afterwards sent to Canada, he was left by his relatives entirely without resources. An effort had been made to send him to Louisiana, but he resolutely refused to serve as a private soldier, alleging as a reason that he was of noble birth. Backed by Le Ber's powerful influence he contrived successfully to elude all efforts to dispose of him contrary to his own inclinations, and regarding his hopes, aspirations and desires the Sieur d'Ardeux had not the slightest hesitation about taking the whole colony into his confidence.

"The youth has expectations, nor can his uncle live forever. He may yet be a great noble with powerful influence at Court," decided Le Ber, when he offered the young man the shelter of his own roof.

Amidst these conflicting elements Lydia Longlois con-

trived to steer her course dexterously and to win golden opinions from all. In her own home she had been taught to regard the French as blood-thirsty Pagans, but she was compliant and adaptable and was quite as ready to adopt these people's faith and opinions as their fashions and manners. Père Henri de Mercil, of the Seminary, who spoke English and devoted himself especially to the conversion of heretics, declared that she was the most interesting convert it had ever been his privilege to instruct. If the English captive were occasionally betrayed by the levity of youth, it was the worldliness of the Demoiselle de Monestrol that was alone to blame. It would be sacrilege to blame the pretty creature's innocent frivolity and simplicity for other than childish vanity. A beguiling innocence was one of her characteristics, and Lydia had an easy way of explaining herself to be always in the right. She had a gift of tact and a surface gentleness that enabled her to accommodate herself readily to her surroundings. Her soft amiability and her teachableness were flattering and touching. Her pure and simple beauty would have shone alike at a cottage door or in the hall of princes,—every glance was an appeal, every smile a poem. During the long illness that followed the English girl's removal to Ville Marie, Diane nursed her with tender devotion. Lydia's trials and sufferings invested her with a mysterious halo of romance. The Demoiselle de Monestrol's generous imagination conferred upon the stranger qualities of which the Puritan maiden had formed no conception. Hating pain, she was only too well pleased to be allowed to forget the past; finding herself flattered and caressed she asked nothing better than to enjoy the delights of the present. Lydia had no enthusiasm; no spiritual insight; no warm, human sympathy to render the strict, severe rule of her childhood endurable. An orphan, thrown upon the charity of distant and reluctant relatives, she had ever been at variance with her own environment. She hated to think of the unloveliness of those early years, of the repression of all her natural inclinations. Without in the least realizing the fact Lydia had been bored to extinction. Her shortcomings had been disdained and sharply chidden by her thrifty New England kindred. She had only had a dim suspicion that she was beautiful; she had never worn costly and tasteful raiment; she had never listened to the voice of flattery. Now, when she had escaped from the account of her own misdeeds, which had always been so heavily visited upon her, and which were to be still more actively rued later in fire and brimstone, the Puritan settlement of Grotton, near Boston, with its memories of friends and neighbours, precise restraint and rigid formality, became merely an unpleasant remembrance to be crushed out of sight. All the severe discipline of her New England training fell from her like a cast-off garment. Lydia learned French with marvellous rapidity. She donned powder and patches, fans and feathers as though to the manner born. She acquired a deliciously arch imitation of the Marquise's superb *a's*, and if she missed Diane's dainty grace her coquetry had yet a touch of sweet naturalness as of a child's affectation and extravagance. The two whose favour she failed to win and who quietly arrived at a very distinct perception of the situation, were Madame de Monestrol and Nanon.

"Plebeian to the core," smelling at her *flacon* as if to keep off infection, Madame nodded her stately head sagaciously. "Dame! all that will count for nothing. This English girl will keep all she gets and is clever at getting. The little one waters a barren field."

"Bah! that crocodile blonde demoiselle," Nanon bristled up fiercely. "There are two words to a bargain, and our demoiselle will always be a loser, for she is of those who give, the other—a sponge, indeed—of those who absorb all and yield nothing in return."

### CHAPTER V.

"Il faut un peu légèrement et supérieurement couler ce monde et le glisser, non l'enfoncer."—MONTAIGNE III, 10.

A frontier town, at the head of the colony, Ville Marie was the natural resort of desperadoes of every description, offering a singular contrast between the rigor of its clerical seigneurs and the riotous licence of the wild crews that invested it. While a portion of the population were given up to practices of mystical piety, others gambled, drank and stole; if hard pressed by justice they had only to cross the river and place themselves beyond seigneurial jurisdiction. The citizens of Montreal were mostly disbanded soldiers, fur traders and *couteurs de bois* a riotous and turbulent tribe, whose control taxed the patience, tact and ingenuity of its priestly governors to the utmost. Scarcely more than a village in dimensions, limited as was the sphere of action, here existence offered many striking contrasts. In love with an exquisite ideal, men and women struggled to attain purity and unselfishness, nursed the sick and fed the hungry, loved and forgave, lived in godly fear and died fortified by eternal

hope, side by side with those who yielded themselves up to a most boundless licence.

Beautifully situated as it was between Mount Royal and the St. Lawrence, at that early date, Ville Marie could scarcely be termed imposing in appearance. It was busy and bustling, having once been described as "a place which makes so much noise, but is of such small account." The town wore an aspect half military, half monastic. At sunrise and sunset a squad of soldiers paraded in front of the Citadel, patrols marched through the streets at night, church bells, deep and sweet-mouthed, rang out the Angelus daily. Quaint steeples and turrets cleft the misty pallor of the sky, and the preponderance of large buildings, churches and convents imparted a substantial appearance to the town, which the number of its population and its scanty resources scarcely warranted. A row of small compact dwellings extended along a narrow street, then, as now, known as St. Paul street. The streets were well laid out. Some few of the houses were of stone, but most were of wood, with gables of stone as required by law, and roofs covered with shingles. All outlying houses were pierced with loop-holes and fortified as well as the slender means of their owners would permit. The gardens were mostly fenced by pointed cedar stakes and with poles firmly tied together. On the right hand and on the left, gloomy and silent, arose the primeval woods. Boats and canoes were drawn up on the shore, and there voyageurs swaggered and swore, and Indians, whom, what Charlevoix quaintly terms "a light tinge of Christianity," had scarcely reclaimed from savagery, squatted in sullen apathy or quarrelled with brutal ferocity. Fields, studded with scarred and blackened stumps, between which crops were growing, stretched away to the edges of the bordering forest, and the green, shaggy back of the mountain towered over all.

Crowning the hill on the right stood the wind mill of the Seigneurs, built of rough stone and pierced with loop-holes to serve in time of need as a place of defence. This mill had a right to claim one-fourth of the grain brought to be ground. Of this the miller received one-third as his share, and the Seminary required that the inhabitants should have all their corn ground there or at one of the other mills owned by the priests. On the left, standing on an artificial elevation, at an angle formed by the junction of a swift glancing rivulet with the St. Lawrence, was a square, bastioned fort of stone. This was the Citadel of Ville Marie. About 1640 M. d'Aillebout had removed the palisade of stakes that had formerly protected it and erected two solid bastions. The fort was provided with artillery, and here, in command of soldiers of the regiment of Carignan Salière, resided the military governor appointed by the Seminary. Overlooking the river, pictured in the limp waters beneath, appeared the Church of Notre Dame de Bonsecours, whose walls of rough, gray stone had presented a symbol of hope to the yearning eyes of many a weary voyageur, many a travel-stained emigrant.

The Hotel Dieu, founded in 1644 by Madame de Bouillon, fronted on both St. Paul and St. Joseph streets, and was the abode of much charity, tender devotion and heroic self-abnegation. The nuns, a brave sisterhood, were nobly conspicuous in the annals of the colony, excelling in those acts of self-denial which had become symbols of faithful obedience to God and loving brotherhood with man. Beneath the snow-white wimples of these women beat hearts as courageous as ever stirred under robe of statesman or gorget of soldier. The buildings consisted of hospital, convent and church. The latter stood on St. Paul street and was in stone, in Tuscan style, surmounted by a triangular pediment and cross. On a gently swelling knoll, west of the Citadel, was the edifice erected by M. Charon as a hospital. The buildings of the Congregation of Notre Dame faced St. Paul street, while the back windows overlooked the river, the whole surrounded by a high stone wall. Here Marguerite Bourgeoys, assisted by a band of noble women, who for the love of certain eternal verities, always abiding in faithful hearts, patiently reasserting themselves, generation after generation, in the face of scorn and doubt, yet ever ready to be revealed to pure and loving souls in infinite sweetness and consolation, had laboured for the conversion of the savages, and here the young girls of Ville Marie received all the instruction they were likely to obtain.

Back of the settlement, from the Citadel out past the Parish Church, ran a rough country road. Fronting the river, on the line of the street, were the inclosures and buildings of the Seminary, fortified as was the Hotel Dieu to resist an Iroquois attack. The ancient edifice was the same shape as the present, forming three sides of a square with spacious grounds. The priests' gardens were already renowned in the settlement for the delicious quality of their pears and apples. In their case, order, method, industry and frugality had borne abundant fruit; the air of thrift and comfort which characterized all the Seigneur's belongings presented a painful contrast with the extreme penury of the colonists. The Parish Church of Notre Dame was directly in the centre of Notre Dame street,—in front of the site of the present church. It was a low edifice, built of rough stone, pointed with mortar, the high-pitched, tin-covered roof reflecting the sunshine in a dazzling fashion. The principal entrance was at the south end, and on the southwest corner was a tower surmounted by a belfry.

The public market was close to the St. Lawrence, directly facing the Seminary property; it was a favourite rendezvous for all the loiterers of the town, as were also the public pumps, which, for the convenience of citizens, were placed near the cemetery, at the Market Place and in the Jesuits' garden.

(To be continued.)