

further into the wilderness, followed Maisonneuve to the founding of Montreal, and left the Ursulines of Quebec almost penniless in their half-finished building. Even M. de Bernières answered La Mère Marie's appeal by advising her to send away her pupils and workmen, give up everything and come home, unless Providence should raise up a second benefactress. However, she immediately wrote back to say that having once put her hand to the heavenly task she would never give it up alive. She kept her Indian pupils, urged on her workmen, and, in every detail of duty and leadership, plainly showed how fully confident she was that Canada was only at the beginning of assured success, instead of at the end of utter failure.

After an absence of eighteen months Madame de la Peltrie came back, never again to leave Quebec. She found the new convent inhabited, the school open, and La Mère Marie as full of determined hope as ever. There was little comfort in the new home, a building 92 feet long and 28 feet wide. Two open fires barely took the frost out of the air—stoves were only introduced twenty-six years later. Yet the devoted life went on with increasing vigour. New nuns came out: some from the mother-house at Tours; another from Ploërmel, in the Breton "Land of Pardons." In 1648 the convent was at last finished, after seven years of hard work and much anxiety from lack of funds.

Meanwhile, Quebec grew slowly: half mission, half trading post, and wholly bureaucratic. On New Year's Eve, in 1646, the first play performed in Canada, Corneille's *Le Cid*, was given before the Governor and the Jesuit Fathers. Two years later the Governor-in-Council appointed Jacques Boisdon—bibulous cognomen!—first and sole innkeeper, on the following conditions:—"That the said Jacques Boisdon settles in the square in front of the church, so that the people may go in to warm themselves, and that he keeps nobody in his house during High Mass, sermons, catechism or vespers." In 1663, the population had increased to 500 souls, of whom 150 belonged to the religious communities.

The thirteen disastrous years from 1650 to 1663 were the nadir of Canada's fortunes. More than once the colony nearly lost its flickering life altogether. The Iroquois scourged the land like a plague. Not a man was safe outside a fort. All that were left of the once powerful Hurons crouched miserably under the protection of Quebec. La Mère Marie was ever foremost in succouring them and bringing their children into her school. She took lessons herself in Huron from Father Bressani, who had escaped death at the hands of the Iroquois as by a miracle, after having suffered the extremity of torture. But, just as her classes were well established, the convent was burnt to the ground. The nuns hardly escaped with their lives, running out barefooted and half-clad into the