

Under the King's Bastion

A ROMANCE OF QUEBEC

Serial Story written for the
CANADIAN HOME JOURNAL By "HAROLD SAXON"

CHAPTER XV.—Continued.



HEN, if you go round by the King's Bastion, you may see, to your astonishment, a soldier wildly waving his arms skywards above the parapet. On coming nearer you discover he is not mad, as you have feared, but simply, with small flags, signalling to a comrade, who replies by frantically agitating two specks away down in the Lower Town market place.

Besides all this, there is always drilling inside the walls, and fatigue parties of all kinds, so that the man who wrote, "soldiers in peace are like chimnies in summer," had not lived for a season within the walls of Quebec.

But all the time we have been doing the military routine of the town, Aline and Edith have been standing at the Frontenac Gateway. When the pageant had passed round the curve of St. Louis St., Aline went on her way down to Sous le Cap, and painted steadily for a couple of hours, surrounded by a crowd of grimy little street arabs, who were not backward in making any remark that occurred to them, complimentary or otherwise, about her work.

A little before one o'clock, she was leisurely putting a few last touches to her sketch, when a voice, well-known now, made her turn hastily, with a slight accession of color, to find Sinclair looking over her shoulder.

"This is the third sketch you have made of this place, is it not?" he asked, looking fondly and appreciatively at the *living* picture. He was going up "Dog Hill," he remarked, and was happy he had come in time to carry up some of her belongings.

Just then a calèche came rapidly along the narrow alley, and the horse, taking fright at Aline's easel, shied, and knocked down a pretty baby girl, who had been prattling to the young artist all morning. The man coolly drove on, but the screams of the child brought the whole female population of the street to their doors and windows, whence they screamed enquiries and advice which set a dozen dogs barking, and pandemonium reigned supreme. Carleton lifted the child and carried her into a house pointed out by the mother, where Aline dried its tears, and was partially successful in amusing the baby with her trinkets. As soon as it was quieted a little, Carleton, who had some knowledge of surgery, said he thought no bones were broken. "Don't be frightened, the child is only bruised," he told the mother. "However, I will send a doctor over to see; there is one two or three streets from here. But I am afraid I shall not have the pleasure of walking up with you to-day," smiling at Aline.

"I feel as if it were my fault, and it will be awfully kind of you to send a doctor," she returned.

After he had gone she remained a few minutes talking to the Irishwoman, and then had to hurry away, as they were to have an early luncheon; but she left in the baby's chubby hand a gift which its mother was much more likely to appreciate when she saw it.

Edith's comment when she heard what had happened was, "Well, my dear, if he missed his lunch for your sake, he has given even a greater proof of devotion than before."

Next day, Sunday, they were lingering with the true characteristics of their nation, to see the Vice-regal Court, then visiting the city, come out of the cathedral. After having a good look at His Excellency the Governor-General, the Countess, and the Aides, and having seen the soldiers return from their church parade, headed by the band, they were entering the hotel, when they met Carleton, who somehow or other was frequently to be seen in that vicinity in those days.

"I suppose you have not heard anything about the little child?" said Aline.

"Yes," he replied, "I went round that way last night, and there was nothing the matter, as I thought; so you needn't worry about it."

"It was very good of you." Aline thanked him with a lovely smile, and to herself she said, "How kind and thoughtful he is for anyone."

CHAPTER XVI.

Mrs. Fortescue had expected some friends from Boston to join them on their trip up the Saguenay, but these now wrote they should be unable to come, so the girls at once settled a day, and took their passage tickets, as it was already late in the season. They had often discussed whether they should go up to Lake St. John by train, and return by boat, but finally decided, as they were all fond of being on the water, to make the round-trip by boat.

Clifford announced his intention of accompanying them, as he said it might be useful to have a man with them. Carleton also wished intensely to see the place with Aline, and renew former impressions through her eyes. When he said something about it to Edith one evening, she declared it would be delightful, and pressed him so warmly to join them, that he felt sure that he would be welcome, and understood, too, from her manner that she had read his secret, and was his friend. What Aline thought of the arrangement she did not express very forcibly, but her face proved that she was thoroughly happy and pleased with life.

Her pleasure was clouded, however, the evening before they were to start, for Carleton came into the hotel after dinner, looking very glum, and said he was afraid he would not be able to get away from business, as the head of the firm was on his way out from England, and the ship had not yet come in. Sinclair did not wish to be absent on his arrival, so the case seemed hopeless. Mrs. Fortescue and Edith were loud in their regrets, but Aline could not say a word, lest her great disappointment should be apparent, and her silence seemed hateful to herself, and made poor Carleton very dispirited, as he walked home thinking "She does not care in the least whether I go or not."

Aline hoped that at the last minute something might occur to alter the circumstances, but the crowded boat left the wharf next morning without his appearing, and she resigned herself to a spoiled excursion.

The day was beautifully clear, and after passing the lofty Cap Tourmente, they settled themselves comfortably on deck to enjoy the rural beauty of the scenery on the Lower St. Lawrence. They sat in one group, for Edith

did not mean to be drawn into a tête-à-tête with Clifford, and Aline pretended to be immersed in a book, but her thoughts often wandered to the city out of sight up the River; she wondered what "he" might be doing now, and if "he" would come to see them immediately on their return, two whole days from that time.

For a moment she was a little resentful. "He might have managed it somehow surely, if he had cared very much," she argued with herself, but a moment after murmured loyally, "I am sure he did his best, and I know he was disappointed. I admire him for not sacrificing duty to pleasure."

So all day they steamed on the broadening St. Lawrence, stopping at Murray Bay, and other resorts, where Indians came down to the wharfs with their baskets of curiosities, and all the summer population collected to "meet the boat," and exchange greetings with city friends on board. At last, with a gorgeous sunset trailing over the water behind them, they put into Rivière du Loup, and there on the pier, eagerly scanning the vessel, stood Carleton Sinclair. Aline recognized him before he saw her, and so had a moment to control her amazement and welcome before their eyes met. He was quite satisfied with her smile, however, and lost no time in springing on board before the gangways were lowered. Amid a chorus of surprised exclamations he explained that the ship and his employer had arrived late the previous night, that he found that he would not be needed, and had just time to catch the train, and join the boat at Rivière du Loup.

"My landlady will be advertising for me," he laughed, "for I came off without having time to go up and tell her," and his eyes glanced happily at Aline, but hers were carefully examining the structure of the deck flooring in its minutest details. His coming had brightened everything for her, and she thoroughly enjoyed the rest of the evening, for Carleton's happiness overflowed in every look and tone, and he was so jolly and entertaining that it was quite a revelation to Mrs. Fortescue, who had not seen him in this mood before, and Fred Clifford found himself, to his disgust, decidedly playing "second violin." So they crossed the river, rather rough here in its thirty miles of width, to Tadoussac and the mouth of the gloomy Saguenay. And Carleton told them the legend of the naming of the country; how Jacques Cartier, seeing some Indians here on his first voyage, had pointed to the shore, enquiring the name of their land, and they, thinking he meant their bark wigwams, had answered by their word for huts, "Kanata," and so Francis I. was told that the name of his new dominions was Canada.

When the girls retired to their state-room, Edith's last mischievous remark made Aline blush hotly. She said sleepily: "Why, Aline, I do believe I forgot to say Good-night to my future cousin," to which impertinence Aline designed no reply.

The men were smoking a last pipe on deck, and were not very talkative. After a while Clifford abruptly asked Carleton if he were "going in for matrimony." "I intend to ask a lady to marry me if she will have me," he answered shortly.

"Oh, she'll have you all right. You owe me one for introducing you. But I am not certain of the other one. I think she likes me enough, but you see there's a fortune