

famous Jesuit, soon to become the King's confessor, said he thought the hand of God was pointing her to Canada. She had never even heard of such a country before; but it quickly filled her whole imagination. *Je ne vis plus d'autre pays pour moi que le Canada; et mes courses ordinaires étaient parmi les sauvages, avec les missionnaires.* A pilgrim's staff from Notre Dame de Lorette and a copy of the *Relations des Jésuites*—both coming anonymously from an unknown Canadian missionary—still further inflamed her zeal. But the convent life went on around her as usual, and she was at a loss to know whether or not she had been called elsewhere.

At this juncture another unknown friend was coming to her side. Madame de la Peltrie, née Marie Madeleine de Chauvigny, was of the *haute noblesse* of Normandy. She had been well married and left a widow, though her own inclinations had always been toward the cloister rather than the world. One day she read Father Le Jeune's appeal for a devout woman to convert the Indian girls of Canada: *et depuis ce temps, says La Mère Marie, son esprit fut plus en Canada qu'en elle-même.* But her road thither bristled with worldly obstacles. She had run away from home and taken refuge within a convent in a vain effort to escape her first marriage; and now her family were bent on making her contract another. She was noble, rich, attractive, and much sought after; and she was at her wits' end what to do. In her extremity she asked a consummate Jesuit director, who advised her to tell her troubles to M. de Bernières, a man devoted to the cause of missions, and throw herself upon his protection as her husband. The pious layman, who also desired a life-long celibacy, was astounded at this proposal. But his own spiritual director was of the same mind as hers; and many common friends were instant in proving how desirable it would be to take such means to reach so good an end for the sake of the missionary cause. Finally, as both parties were equally unwilling to marry, it was agreed that no marriage should take place; but that the world should be allowed to believe them man and wife, in order that M. de Bernières should manage Madame de la Peltrie's large property in France, while she went out to Canada as the benefactress of the Ursulines. A visit to the holy man already known as "the archangel of human charity" made her resolve irrevocable; and so the great St. Vincent de Paul must be reckoned among the founders of the convent in Quebec.

Meanwhile, M. de Bernières was writing to La Mère Marie about Madame de la Peltrie, and Father Poncet, who had sent the pilgrim's staff, was writing to Madame de la Peltrie about La Mère Marie. The two women were thus brought together under the happiest auspices, and immediately became fast friends. A third now appeared, La Mère Marie