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OUR CENTENNIAL STORY.

THE BASTONNAIS:

A TALE OF THE AMERICAN INVASION OF CANADA IN 1775-76.

By JOHN LESPERANCE.

BOOK III.

THE BURSTING OF THE TEMPEST.

XVI.

PAINFUL MEETING—(Continued.)

M. Belmont instantly complied. As Batoche signified his intention of going along, in order to see them safe within the walls, Zulma earnestly demanded permission to accompany him. M. Belmont, Pauline and Cary tried their best to dissuade her, but the old soldier silenced their objections by at once according his consent. The wounded officer having received the last attentions for the night, the party took their departure. They reached Quebec without incident, and Batoche readily found an opening for them into the town from a ravine in the valley of the St. Charles.

Zulma and Pauline embraced each other fervidly.

"Before we separate, I have a dreadful secret to tell you," said Pauline.

"What is it, my dear?"

"Do you know who pointed the gun that wounded the Captain?"

"I do not."

"Can't you guess?"

"No."

"It was Roderick Hardinge."

The eyes of the two friends exchanged sparks of fire.

On the return journey, Zulma inquired of Batoche:—

"Do you know who fired the fatal gun against you from the walls?"

"I do."

"Does Captain Singleton know it?"

"He does not."

"Why did you not tell him?"

"On account of little Pauline."

XVII.

NISI DOMINUS.

Quebec was the centre of missionary labor for years before our Atlantic coast was thoroughly settled. The church of San Domingo is older, having been founded in 1614. That of Mexico dates from 1524, and that of Havana was established at an earlier epoch still. But none of these can be said to have exercised the same influence which distinguished the city of Champlain. From Quebec came forth nearly all the missionaries who evangelized the west and north-west. The children of Asisi and Loyola, whose names are immortalized in the pages of Bancroft, all set forth on their perilous wanderings under instructions issued from the venerable college whose ruins are still seen beneath the shadow of Cape Diamond. In the list of priests who resided at Quebec, on the 1st October, 1674, is found the name of Jacques Marquette. Little did that modest man then dream of the glory which was soon to be attached to his labors and explorations. By the discovery of the Mississippi not only did he add a vast territory to the realms of his King, but he opened an immense field to the zeal of his Bishop, and extended the boundaries of the diocese of Quebec by thousands upon thousands of miles. Thus it happens that Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Louis, New Orleans, Cincinnati, Louisville, and all our Western cities, though they did not then exist, now occupy ground which was under the jurisdiction of the great Bishop, François Laval de Montmorenci, who was first raised to the See of Quebec two hundred years ago. It is no stretch of fancy, but the literal truth—and the picture is a grand one—that when Laval stood on the steps of his high altar, in that venerable fane which has since been raised to the rank of a basilica, he could wave his crozier over a whole continent, from the Gulf of the St. Lawrence to the Gulf of Mexico, and from the Red River of the North to the waters of Chesapeake Bay. Time has passed since then; and religion has progressed in such astonishing rates that sixty-one dioceses are at present said to have sprung from the single old diocese of Quebec.

The sixth successor of Laval was Briand, the last French Bishop of Quebec under British domination. All those who succeeded him were Canadian born. It was to him that M. Belmont addressed himself for final counsel. He found the prelate alone in his study, calmly reading his breviary, while a pile of documents, letters and other papers lay on a table at his side. He wore a purple cassock, over which was a surplice of snow-white lace reaching to the knees. On his shoulders was attached a short violet cape. A pectoral cross hung from his neck by a massive chain of gold. The tanned white head was covered by a small skull-cap of purple velvet. A large amethyst ring flashed on the second finger of the left hand. Monseigneur sat there the picture of serene force. While all around him was uproar, within his apartment the atmosphere of peace reigned with a visible, tangible presence. The Seminary where he resided was within a stone's

throw of the barracks in Cathedral Square, but whereas the one was the continual theatre of anxiety and excitement, the other was the scene of perpetual confidence and repose. And yet this lonely man was a principal actor in the events of 1775-76. His influence had been, and was still, omnipotent and all pervading. From his quiet retreat, he had sent forth a pastoral, at the beginning of hostilities, commanding loyalty to Britain, and exhorting all his followers to obey the teachings and example of their curates. And his voice had been heard. But for him, there is no telling how different the circumstances of the invasion of Canada would have been. If Guy Carleton was knighted for his successful defense of Quebec, surely Monseigneur Briand should have received some token of favor from those whom he so faithfully served. Without the spiritual power, the material force could not have prevailed, and the sword of the commander would have been lifted in vain but for the Bishop's crook that scattered the initial obstacles of the contest.

The prelate received M. Belmont with the utmost kindness, for they were old friends. Placing his thumb within the closed leaves of his breviary, he asked his visitor to unfold to him freely the object of his coming, although there was an expression in his countenance which showed that he divined that object. M. Belmont, who was agitated at first, gradually acquired sufficient self-possession to give a full explanation of his case. He detailed his grievances, his apprehensions, and explained the radical change which he had undergone in his political opinions. He ended by pointedly asking the Bishop whether he was not justified in taking a decided stand.

Monseigneur had listened unmoved to the whole history, occasionally smiling languidly, occasionally looking very serious. His reply was given in the kindest tones, but there was the conscious authority of the chief pastor in every word which he uttered.

"I too am a Frenchman, my friend," he said. "I have my feelings, my prejudices, my aspirations, like every other man. If I consulted only my heart, I believe you can guess where it would have led me. But I consult my head. I remember that I have a conscience. I am reminded that I have stern duties, as Bishop, to fulfil. The responsibility of them is something terrible. The cardinal doctrine of our theology is obedience to legitimate authority. The whole logic of the church is there. This principle permeates every department of life, from the highest to the lowest. It shines out through all our history. In the present instance, its application is plain. The English are our masters. They are such by the right of conquest—a sad right, but one which is thoroughly recognized. They have been our masters for sixteen years. In that time, they have not always treated us well. But there was ignorance rather than ill-will. Of late, they have guaranteed the rights of our people and of the church. The Quebec Act is a standing proof of a desire of justice on the part of the English Government. And how do these Boston people regard the Quebec Act? Judge for yourself."

The Bishop here produced from among the papers on the table a pictorial caricature of the Act.

"See," he continued. "This represents Boston in flames and Quebec triumphant, and the print explains that thus popery and tyranny will triumph over true religion, virtue and liberty. Among the other personages, look at the kneeling figure of a Catholic priest, with cross in one hand and gibbet in the other, assisting King George, as the print again says, in enforcing his tyrannical system of civil and religious liberty. What do you think of that? Does it look like the real fellowship for us which they profess in their proclamations? Liberty and independence are fine words, my friend. I love them. But they may be catch-words as well, and we have to beware. Who assures us that the revolted Colonies are sincere? After all, they are only Englishmen rebelling against their country. Even if they are justified in rebelling, does that fact justify us in joining them? And what good reason have we to believe that they can better our lot? Will they respect our religion, language and laws more than do our present masters? Reflect on these things. Do nothing imprudent. Remember your family. Respect your reputation. You have a fortune, but it is not yours to waste by useless confiscation. It belongs to little Pauline. I respect your sympathies, and believe that you will soon have occasion to display them, without premature action. This town will soon be attacked. Either the besiegers will succeed or they will not. If they do not succeed, you will be able to ease your heart by attending to the sick and wounded prisoners among them. If they do succeed, and Quebec is taken, then Canada is theirs, and they will become our masters instead of the English. Then the duty of us all will be clear and you will have no difficulty in making your adhesion."

The Bishop smiled as he laid down this common-sense proposition, and so did M. Belmont who was thoroughly convinced by its logic. He thanked Monseigneur for his strong advice, and promised in most fervent language that he would carry it out.

"Do so, my son," added the Bishop. "I am pleased with your submission. Before a fortnight has elapsed, you will have reason to thank me again for the counsel."

M. Belmont got down on his knees, and the prelate, rising, pronounced the episcopal benediction over his bent brow, giving him at the same time the pastoral ring to kiss.

"Pray," said the Bishop, advancing a few steps with M. Belmont towards the door, "pray and ask your pious daughter to double her supplications that the right may triumph, and peace be soon restored. The shock will be terrible."

"But the town is very strong," replied M. Belmont.

The Bishop smiled again, and raising his finger in sign of warning, he repeated solemnly and slowly the grand lesson:

"Nisi Dominus custodierit civitatem. Unless the Lord keep the city, in vain they watch who stand guard over it."

XVIII.

LAST DAYS.

Zulma spent the next morning in the exclusive company of Cary. Batoche bustled in and out of the cabin, while little Blanche was kept busy at household work. The wounded man had had a good night, and, thanks to the lotions and poultices of his old friend, felt much easier. About noon, the whole circle was most agreeably surprised by the arrival of Sieur Sarpy who drove up with his servant. He had come expressly to see Cary, and, while condoling with him on his accident, testified to his joy that he was on a fair way of recovery. He specially commended the conduct of his daughter under the circumstances, and, in a long conversation with Batoche, took occasion to declare his cordial approval of the cause which he had thought fit to pursue in the war. This commendation was very precious to the aged solitary, and he stated that it would serve as an encouragement to persevere doing all in his power to keep his countrymen in the sacred cause of liberation.

Towards evening, Zulma returned to Charlesbourg with her father, but on the following morning they both came to Montmorency again, and thus for several days, until Cary having been pronounced by Batoche quite able to travel, they prevailed upon him to pass the remainder of his convalescence at the Sarpy mansion. Batoche, who had been kept in idleness by the illness of his friend, favored the removal, as it gave him the opportunity of once more resuming his self-imposed military duties. For the same reason, he readily allowed little Blanche to accompany Zulma.

Cary remained five days with the Sarpys and it is needless to say that the time rolled by as if on wheels of gold. What added to his enjoyment was that, through the medium of Batoche, Zulma managed to communicate daily with Pauline and to receive answers from her, in every one of which she tenderly inquired about the health of the young officer.

He would willingly have tarried longer in this delicious retreat, but at the end of the five days, having learned that stirr up events were being prepared in camp, he decided that he was sufficiently recovered to take part in them. Indeed, he declared that he would take part in them even if he had to go on crutches. Zulma did not attempt to detain him. There were tears in her eyes when she bade him farewell, but the beautiful smile on her lips was an incentive to go and do his duty.

"If I fear anything, it is on your account," he said.

"Fear nothing," she replied. "I feel certain that we shall meet again."

On reaching camp, where his return was acclaimed by all his comrades, Cary learned that the end was approaching. The great blow was at last to be struck. The whole month of December had been wasted in a fruitless siege, and Montgomery determined that, for a variety of imperative reasons, he must attempt to carry the beetling fortress by storm. It was a desperate alternative, but the single gleam of success which attended it was all sufficient to cause its adoption.

XIX.

PRES-DE-VILLE.

Everything was in readiness. The only condition to be waited for was a snow-storm. It came at length in the early morning of the 31st December. The army fell into line at once, and by two o'clock, Montgomery's arrangements were all perfected. Ladders, spears, hatchets and hand grenades were in readiness. The plan of battle was this. Montgomery, at the head of one division, was to attack Lower Town from the west; Arnold, at the head of the second division, was to attack Lower Town from the east; and they were both to meet at the foot of Mountain Hill which they would ascend together, force the stockades on the site of Prescott gate, and pour victoriously into Upper Town. In the meantime, Livingston, with a regiment of Canadians, and Brown, with part of a Boston regiment, were to make false attacks on Cape Diamond Bastion, St. John and St. Louis Gates which they were to fire, if possible, with combustibles prepared for that purpose.

Let us first follow Montgomery. Advancing from his quarters at Holland House, he crossed the Plains of Abraham, descended to Wolfe's

Cove, and thence marched up the narrow road between the river and the towering crag of Cape Diamond. The night was dark as ink, a blinding snow-storm raged, and the sharp wind heaped the way with banks of drift. Silently the heroic column moved on, in spite of the terrible weather, until it reached a spot called Pres-de-Ville, the narrowest point at the entrance of Lower Town. There it was stopped by a barrier which consisted of a log house containing a battery of three pounders. The post was under the command of two Canadians, Chabot and Picard, with thirty militiamen of their own nationality, and a few British seamen acting as artillerymen under Captain Barnsare and Sergeant McQuarters. Montgomery did not hesitate. Ordering his carpenters to hew some posts that obstructed the way to the barrier, he pulled them down with his own hands, then drawing his sword, he put himself at the head of a handful of brave followers, leaped over heaps of ice and snow, and charged. Sharp eyes were glaring through the loop-holes of the block house, the match was lit, the word trembled on tight-pressed lips. When the Americans were within forty paces, Barnsare shouted "Fire!" and a volley of grape swept down the open space. Only one volley, but certainly the most fateful that was ever belched from a cannon's mouth. No shot was ever more terribly decisive. The air was heavy with the groans of the wounded and dying. Thirteen bodies lay stretched in a winding sheet of snow. Foremost among them was that of Montgomery. There was a moment of silence, then the guns and muskets of the block house poured forth a storm of missiles. But all to no purpose, as the assaulting column, stunned by this first disaster, fell back in confusion and retreated precipitately to Wolfe's Cove.

When daylight appeared, and news of the combat reached the authorities of the Upper Town, a party under James Thompson, the Overseer of Works, went out to view the field. As the snow had continued falling, the only part of a body that appeared above the surface was that of Montgomery himself, part of whose left arm and hand stood up erect, but the corpse was doubled up, the knees being drawn up to the face. Beside him lay his brave aids, McPherson and Cheeseman and one sergeant. The whole were frozen hard. Montgomery's sword was found near by. A drummer boy snatched it up, but Thompson secured it for himself and it is kept to this day as an heirloom in his family.

Meigs, who served with him, pays this affecting tribute. "He was tall and slender, well-limbed, of a genteel, easy, graceful, manly address, and had the voluntary love, esteem and confidence of the whole army. His death, though honorable, is lamented, not only as the death of an amiable, worthy friend, but as an experienced, brave general; the whole country suffers greatly by such a loss at this time. The native goodness and rectitude of his heart might easily be seen in his actions. His sentiments, which appeared on every occasion, were fraught with that unaffected goodness which plainly discovered the goodness of the heart from whence they flowed."

Montgomery had said: "We shall eat our Christmas dinner in Quebec."

Alas!

XX.

SAULT-AU-MATELOT.

Arnold moved his division from the General Hospital in the St. Roch's Suburb, but not so secretly as Montgomery had done. The roar of cannon, the ringing of bells, the rattle of drums aroused and alarmed the slumbering town. His men crept along the walls in single file, covering the locks of their guns with the lappets of their coats, and holding down their heads on account of the driving snow storm, until they reached the point of their attack in Sault-au-Matlot street. This is one of the legendary streets of Quebec. It lies directly under the Cape, and is supposed to derive its name from a sailor who leaped into it from above. Creuxius has a prosier explanation. "*Ad confluentem promontorium assurgit quod saltum navale vulgo vocant ab eam hujus nominis qui se alias ex eo loco precipitum dedit.*" Of Arnold's followers the most notable were Morgan's brave riflemen, and the whole column consisted of five hundred men. He marched in advance of them, animating their courage by word and example. His impetuous bravery led him to needless exposure in the attack on the first barrier, in front of which he was at once struck down by a musket-wound in the knee, and carried off the field back to the General Hospital where, to his intense chagrin, he soon learned the defeat and death of Montgomery. The command then devolved on Morgan, who, after a gallant charge, carried the first barrier, taking a number of prisoners, and pushed to the second and more important one further in the interior of Lower Town. On the way, his men scattered and disarmed a number of Seminary scholars, among whom was Eugene Sarpy. Many of these escaped to Upper Town and were the first to acquaint Carleton with the grave condition of affairs. He instantly despatched Caldwell with a strong force of his militiamen, including a body commanded by Roderick Hardinge. Thus reinforced, the defenders of the second barrier made so stout a resistance that Morgan was completely baffled. In the darkness and confusion occasioned both by a murderous enfilading fire and the fury of the snow-storm, he could scarcely keep his men together. In order to recognize each other the Continentals wore a band of paper around their caps, with the words *Mors aut Victoria*, or *Liberty for Ever*, conspicuously written. But