

"I suppose the child has some sort of story?" he said to Champlain as they sat in the evening smoking their pipes.

"The child? The reputed mother came over with some emigrants sent by the King, and as a widow she married Jean Arlac. He, it seems, was much disappointed at not having children of his own and was not over-cordial to the little girl. Rather more than a year ago his wife was taken ill, she had never been robust. And in her last moments she confessed the child was not her own, but that of a friend, and before she told the whole story a convulsion seized her. Jean was very angry and declared the child was nothing to him. He brought it to Mère Dubray and then went off to the fur regions, from whence the tidings came that he had married an Indian woman and taken a post station. She is a bright little thing, and I think must have come of gentle people. Her only trinket is a chain and locket, with a sweet young face in it."

"But there is no chance here for any sort of education. She seems naturally intelligent."

"There will be soon. There is a plan to bring out some nuns, and we shall build a chapel. We cannot do everything at once. The mother country cannot be roused to the importance of this step. It is not simply to discover, one must hold with a secure hand. And we must make homes, we must people them."

Pontgrave was to return to France. Ralph Destournier had half a mind to accompany him, but he was