

A DAUGHTER OF NEW FRANCE.

BY MARY CATHERINE CROWLEY.

PREFACE.

To-day, as the voyager from the Atlantic States, having sailed over the white-capped Lake Erie, enters upon the broad, shining expanse of the Detroit River, the Gateway of the North-West, he can scarcely fail to be impressed by the singular atmosphere of stillness which hangs over the Straits and invests the scene with a charm that has in it a quality of mystery.

Silently the commerce of the world passes through these Gates—a tonnage greater, it is said, than that which annually leaves our seaboard ports; silently, save when in a deep-voiced call one heavily laden vessel greets or turns aside for another. The din of the city's marts, of the many industries along the strand, dies away at the waters' edge.

Silently, even as Time passes into Eternity, the great pleasure-steamer, too, and the light yachting craft glide on; and it may be that the voyager, under the spell of the tranquil hour, queries to himself: "What were the thoughts, the emotions of the first civilized men who navigated this beautiful Strait, and found it to be the connecting chain of waters between the Inland Seas beyond, the Lower Lakes, and the Cataracts of the Niagara?"

What manner of men were the hardy French Canadians who colonized these productive shores? What was the personality of their bold and dashing leader? Who were the women, the wives of the settlers, who made the first homes in the old palisaded fort upon the river bank?

These questions it is the object of this narrative to answer in part; to go back to the treasure-houses of French Canadian history, Quebec and Montreal—the former more especially; to sketch in its annals the society of the city of Champlain at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries; to picture the brilliant Gascon cavalier, who laid the foundations of our American city of Detroit, with his company of sturdy voyageurs, coureurs de bois, the Jesuit Relations, Charlevoix, Margry, Le Moyne, Hennepin, the Chronicles of the Ursuline Convent, the Abbe Tanguay, Garnier, the Abbe Casgrain, Shea, Sheldon, and Parkman.

A story woven from threads of reality, "A Daughter of New France" follows closely the historical and biographical records of the period and of later writers upon the subject, all available data having been carefully studied.

These authorities consulted include La Hontan, the Cadillac Papers, the Jesuit Relations, Charlevoix, Margry, Le Moyne, Hennepin, the Chronicles of the Ursuline Convent, the Abbe Tanguay, Garnier, the Abbe Casgrain, Shea, Sheldon, and Parkman. The author wishes to express her indebtedness also to the invaluable researches and articles upon the early history of Detroit by Mr. Clarence M. Barton, the Rev. Christian Denissen, and Mr. Richard B. Elliot; Pareme's History, Ross and Catlin's Landmarks of Detroit, Caroline Watson Hamlin's charming collection of legends, Bancroft, Lambert, Danman, Campbell, Moore, and others.

Although the recital keeps to fact in all important points, "A Daughter of New France" claims, however, to be only a novel. Therefore the author asks that she be not taken to task by severe historians if in one or two minor instances she has availed herself of the novelist's privilege of romancing.

Dated from "The Sparrow's Perch under the Eaves," The first day of the Twentieth Century.

CHAPTER I.

"I AM FOUND WANTING."

It happened one afternoon in the latter part of May, 1877, I, Denys Normand Guyon, a youth of eighteen, student and clerk, was at work in the book room of the old Recollet Monastery at Quebec. The old monastery, I say, meaning not the fine edifice that looks out from its sanctuary of ancient trees upon the Place d'Armes, opposite to the new Chateau of St. Louis, but the first small home of the brothers of St. Francis, which was situated at the foot of the cliff, on the margin of the little River St. Charles.

My task was the copying of some manuscript notes on the tongues of the Indian nations, set down by a Recollet missionary, after much painstaking observation and study, during his years of labor among the savages.

Usually I loved well the occupation, having a talent for the acquiring of languages and an ambition for the adventures of a life in the wilds, albeit no great longing to exchange my scalp for the crown of martyrdom. It was the author of this aboriginal grammar had done. For he was most earnestly put to death by the treacherous Iroquois, notwithstanding his message of peace and good will, and his bones lie somewhere in the trackless forest, sepulchred only by the leaves and mosses and the tangled vines of the wilderness.

Of this I could not help thinking as I counted the elegant characters upon the page before me, recalling the strange contrasts in the existence of this man, bred at the Court of France, and dying far from the haunts of civilization, a victim to savage hate and his own sublime zeal.

There was a fascination even in trying to imitate the lettering as closely as possible, and upon my readiness with the quill I prided myself not a little. But the more my thoughts dwelt upon the heroic Recollet, the oftener my gaze strayed through the window near to which I had carried my writing table—to gain a better light, I told myself. And yet there was need of no excuse to draw one to the contemplation of the scene that outstretched before me in the plain.

At the base of the gray rock of Quebec, and bordering the silver river, lay the blooming enclosure of the monastery where I was at work, the pleasing grounds of the Jesuits, and the Gardens of the Intendant's Palace. Beyond

them extended wide meadows, and still farther to the west rose the dark forests, mysterious and impressive in their primeval repose.

On this May afternoon, now waxing late, the view seemed to me as a glimpse of paradise; for over all the landscape was the beauty of spring, and the rays of the setting sun shot golden arrows into the sombre woods, gilded the rude houses of the villages of Lovette and Charlesbourg across the river, and touched as with the blessing of a holy hand the lofty mountains of Bonhomme and Taconothuan.

My father, Denys Guyon, a wealthy bourgeois, much respected in the town, had early married Elizabeth Boucher, a bright-eyed and thrifty Canadiane of his own rank in life. Being blessed with many sons and daughters, they, after the manner of the provident parents of New France in that day, laid out the future of these children according to their own best judgment, with but slight reference to the designs of Providence or the wishes of those most concerned, it appeared to me afterwards, although until within a few months of this memorable day I had not ventured, even in thought, to dispute their choice for myself.

Me they had from my childhood destined for the Church, not only because I early recognized the splendor and dignity of the sacred ritual, the music of the holy office, but because I had ever loved the beauties of Nature.

"Normand will be a priest and a missionary," they said.

Of a restless mind, eager for new ideas to feed upon, I took kindly to study, and dreamed many a dream of floating away down the St. Lawrence in a canoe manned by two hardy Algonquins, or of crossing the smiling plain whereon I now looked out, to plunge boldly into the forest, bearing the message of the Cross to the red man, who but awaited my coming to receive it with docility and faith.

In these visions there were pictures of peril, of strange lands and faces, of hardship, hunger and cold; but, alack among them all there was no dream of martyrdom!

On the contrary, of late, a doubt had sometimes crossed my mind as to whether there was in my soul a capability for so grand a mission as that for which I was designed; but until to-day I had always put away the question as a temptation from the Evil One.

Although my father had placed me with the Recollets, I had not yet been formally accepted by them, nor had I entered upon my theological studies; nevertheless, despite the occasional disquietude whereof I have spoken, I thought to continue to the end in the path my good parents had selected for me.

My work forgotten, I continued staring out upon, yet only half seeing, the beautiful panoramas lying before me in the sunshine. So absorbed was I in my reflections, that I took no notice of the entrance of some one into the shadowy room, until close beside me a rich voice reproving but not unduly stern, said,—

"Dreaming again, Normand?"

I started, and pushing the table from me, rose to my feet, crimsoning at having been thus caught dallying, and by Frere Constantin, who in mild firmness, virtue and charm of manner ever seemed to me the living, breathing spirit of the blessed Francis of Assisi himself.

On this occasion his smile assured me that my fault was not past condoning, and with his hand upon my shoulder, as a real brother might caress a younger, he drew me to the window once more.

A love of Nature is, indeed, a characteristic of the sons of the gentle saint who was wont to hold converse with the birds and fishes, and the creatures of the field—and in this respect at least, I am glad to think, I was not altogether unfitted to be numbered among his followers.

"The heavens and earth declare the glory of God," murmured Frere Constantin, softly. "Tell me, boy, whether has your roving fancy sped to day?"

At his words of indulgence my diffidence gave way, and I returned a reserved temperance, but he was and has ever been one of my heroes; furthermore, I was much wrought up over the remembrance of the murdered Recollet, the manuscript of whose scholarly legacy to the monastery was still as fresh as when it came from his hands.

Therefore, casting constraint to the winds, I poured out my heart, with all its minglings and fears to my kind friend.

"I am glad you have told me this, Normand," said he, when I had finished, "for upon this very subject I am sent to speak to you. Do not fancy that the task you have noted in yourself has escaped the watchful eyes of those in whose hands your future has been to a certain extent placed. You know that in the advocacy of a summer position of the most assiduous care, and have served to choose those who are stalwart and strong, brave and amenable to the rigid discipline, that the troops of the king may be invincible. Especially is this true of those sent out from the Old World to encounter the rigors of the climate and the perils of savage warfare here in New France. Do you think there is less solicitude bestowed in the selection of the soldiers of the King of Kings? No, my Normand, far from it. Now, you are a fair student, and you love our revered traditions; but this affection, it has been noted, is rather the romantic love of a poet than the zeal of a votary. Your disposition is too dreamy and inclined to melancholy; and though, thanks to your fondness for the winter sports of our Canadian youth and the summer pastimes of fishing, bathing and fishing, you have the frame suited to a missionary, yet I fear me your strong right hand grasps more eagerly at the sword than at the Cross. Moreover; grave and quiet as you are, it has been remarked that even during the Sunday services, Normand your glance has been wont to stray somewhat toward the young demoiselles, the pupils of the Ursulines, who by reason of the recent havoc wrought by fire in the Convent Chapel came to our church for the grand Mass; also that you do not altogether shun the society of those, among these same bright-eyed,

large garden wherein grew cherry and other trees and fragrant shrubs. Here during the mild weather we spent many hours; for the people of New France love to pass the too brief summer in the open air, whereas in winter 'tis ever "the smaller the cote the snuggler the birds."

This evening, upon reaching the house, I found my family at the supper-table. At first I wondered with alarm if he had already received the communication relating to me from Frere Constantin; but as he rose to go out, I heard him say to la bonne mere, that he had just bought a rich cargo of goods from his brother at Bauport, the freight of a galleon captured on the Spanish Main.

Thereafter the interest of my mother seemed for the time engrossed by this purchase, no doubt she was planning how to induce the prudent man to serve a fair number of lengths of the silk stuffs for her daughters, with purchase a gold chain in addition for herself, notwithstanding the demand there would be when it became known that a new supply of fine fabrics and trinkets of novel style and workmanship were to be obtained in the town.

It was not a favorite hour to broach so unwelcome a topic as my dismissal by the Recollets and the frustration of all her designs for me.

"If Therese were only here," I muttered under my breath. Yet even so, would not she also have been too dazzled by the glamor of the gay apparel in prospect, to spare me any but a wandering attention, did I attempt to whisper to her my story? Nevertheless, it was ever to this sweet sister—years younger than myself, but the oldest daughter of my parents—that I was wont to come with my confidences sure of a ready sympathy and much good counsel. And 'twas she who knew me better than any one else, unless, perhaps, Frere Constantin.

But Therese (Marie Therese) was away on a visit to Bauport, at the home of our uncle Francois Guyon, from whom my father had bought the goods intended by the shippers for the Court of Spain.

I missed her; I missed the musical laughter of the merry-hearted demoiselles her companions who were wont to gather about her in our garden under the cherry-trees—a company I was sometimes not loath to join, though how news of this reached the ears of the Recollets I know not.

Seeking distraction for my own thoughts, I went out into the street. On the whole, I was glad there was no need to disclose to any one the change in my expectations that night.

CHAPTER II.

AT THE WIDOW ST. ARMAND'S.

For a time I strolled idly, loitered beneath the trees that line the battery at the edge of the river, and then continued across the Market Place and on without object through the narrow streets of the Lower Town.

The strong magazines where the merchants housed their peltries, stores and casks of brandy, were shrouded in gloom below, but twinkled with lights above when, as was usually the case, the dwelling of the proprietor was under the same roof as the storerooms. There was, besides, plenty of life in the quarter, for the wine shops were all open and, as ever, doing a thriving business.

Not all of these cabarats, or public houses, were low drinking-places however; a number were "cercles," or meeting-rooms of the raconteurs and wits of the day. Here the privateer told of his wondrous adventures on the high seas; the members of the famous regiment of the Carignan Salieres recalled their happy life in old France, or narrated their exploits in the campaign against the Turks. Here at times, even an official of the civil government so far forgot his dignity as to taste of a wine of rare vintage, obtained very possibly from the plunder of an enemy's ships; or, if nothing better offered, here he condescended to pass judgment upon a particularly fine grade of Canadian "cote de vie."

As I passed the Widow St. Armand's, a shop of this better class, a glimpse of the company within caused me to pause before the door, which was set open because of the mildness of the evening, and also the more to attract customers.

A party of officers from the fort were seated at the first of the tables. Before each stood one of the brightly polished goblets in which the wine was served, and at whose entrance I entered quietly, took a seat in a corner, and for an excuse to remain, ordered a measure of cider.

Among the group whose presence had attracted me were Lieutenant Jacques Sabrevois of Captain Desquenac's company, whom I knew as a suitor for the hand of my sister Therese, and his friend De la Parolle.

They spoke aloud, as not caring who might hear; and their talk and badinage was of so general a character that I did not scruple being an auditor, the less since they could see I was there and might moderate their tone if they wished.

As I lingered thus, unwilling to go home lest the inevitable scene with my father might come that night after all, in the doorway, of a sudden appeared a remarkable figure, at whose entrance I sprang up, and then fell back in my place, my eyes riveted upon the newcomer in a species of fascination.

The new guest crossed the room with an impatient stride, and, seating himself at a table apart from the others, called for a cup of wine in the imperious tone of one whose temper has been ruffled and not with impunity by the offender.

Even in those days of strange Indian apparitions from the forest, of half-savage coureurs de bois, and gayly garbed habitants, of gorgeously apparelled civil and military functionaries and

richly vested ecclesiastics, even in those days I had never beheld so picturesque a personality.

The stranger was a man of some twenty-six years of age, a trifle above the middle height, but of so commanding an aspect as to appear taller. His well-developed physique was displayed to perfection by his blue uniform, which was that of a lieutenant; instead of a peruke, he wore his own hair loose and unpowdered, and as he cast upon the table his cavalier's hat adorned with a long white feather, I noted how shapely was the head set upon the broad square shoulders.

His complexion was swarthy, betokening a Gascon origin, and I should have said at the time that his eyes were black, but afterwards knew them to be the color and glint of steel, and very keen and piercing. He presented in many points a contrast to the officers at the other table; particularly to Sabrevois, who was a military exquisite given to posing before the demoiselles of the distinguished society of the town, until of late he had fixed upon my sister Therese as the object of his amorous devotion.

Being, as I learned later, slightly acquainted with the solitary convent, and no doubt wishing to convey an impression of his own importance, Sabrevois accosted him.

"My friend, Quebec is now to you," he called loftily from the end of the room near the door. "Come with us and we will show you the sights of the town."

The invitation was fair enough, but the accents were those of a too familiar familiarity; moreover, the speech was greeted by an untimely laugh from his companions, who had begun to wax jocular from the effects of the wine they had drunk.

For answer the foreign officer vouchsafed the coxcomb merely a scowl, and turning away his gaze, looked into his goblet, indifferent to the presence of any one in the room; yes, indifferent even to the admiring glances the handsome Widow St. Armand, the charming "marchande de vins," who, albeit a met exemplary woman, was wont to enhance the bouquet of her wines by smiles the most bewitching and coquetry the most beguiling, yet solely in a general way and with a cool eye to the prosperity of her business.

"So ho! monsieur lieutenant!" cried Sabrevois, angry that his offer should be thus ignored. "Manifestly it is not from the Court of France you come with such manners; and the same are additional evidence that you are an alien in Quebec. Here it may be a kindness to inform you, are somewhat more formal and gracious of address."

Every word of this satirical outburst was intended to cut like a sword-thrust.

While thus giving expression to his resentment, the speaker had risen and now stood facing the still silent stranger with the scornful air of a gamecock, as he flicked an imaginary speck of dust from his costly coat with his lace-bordered handkerchief, and waved his hat plume downward in an elaborately ironical bow, as though preparatory to departure.

The cavalier whom this display of elegance and haughtiness was meant to disconcert, had shifted his position and was now surveying the reticent Sabrevois with an amused smile.

"Thanks monsieur, for your disinterested counsel, and, withal, your courteous invitation, he condescended to say at last, with mocking politeness; "but I would not venture to stroll with you through the town in the moonlight, lest I might thereby be put at a great disadvantage. Were I Captain Desquenac—if my memory fails me not, you were presented to me as belonging to his command—were I Captain Desquenac, I should feel compelled to confine you to your quarters at the fort."

"And wherefore, pray may I ask?" demanded Sabrevois, thrown off his guard by the other's nonchalance.

"Therefore," repeated the officer, who was unknown to me, "because I would not think it safe to have so gallant a coxcomb strutting about among the ladies. You are much too dangerous a rival for the favor of the fair sex to be permitted to go at large, my bravo lieutenant."

"Sacre! if you had a lady love, monsieur, I should of a surety outlive you," broke out Sabrevois, with new fury.

"That he would," interjected the young Marquis de Parolle, "and you would never have the wit to perceive it until given your dismissal by the fair one."

"Wit? Pardon, that is your inheritance, I presume, my good marquis," retorted their adversary forthwith, also starting up; and to Sabrevois he added with a sneer: "As for you, my friend, were I unknown to me, because I would not think it safe to have so gallant a coxcomb strutting about among the ladies. You are much too dangerous a rival for the favor of the fair sex to be permitted to go at large, my bravo lieutenant."

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candlestick in which lights were burning. Beside himself with rage, and on the impulse of the moment, he caught up the massive piece of metal and hurled it at the head of the foppish lieutenant.

Sabrevois fell to the floor with a groan, and the room was left in darkness.

As the lights went out, I had seen the Marquis spring toward De la Mothe, but the latter must have eluded him. There was an authoritative call for candles, and the confusion was enhanced by the means of the wounded man.

From their voices I know that the party were still between me and the door, gathering about their fallen comrade. In another moment a light would have struck, or the widow, having raised an alarm in the neighborhood, would lead the watch hither with their lanterns.

To me no one had paid any heed from the beginning. My opportunity was now come, however. Near me I heard a sound as of some breathing.

Although I heartily disliked Sabrevois, I had no wish to see him murdered. Nevertheless, he had provoked the altercation and the odds had been against the stranger.

Moreover, so strong was the attraction which this mysterious De la Mothe had already begun to exert upon me, that I could not let pass the occasion to serve him.

Again came that deep respiration, as of a lion at bay. I whispered very low, stealing along by the wall to the spot whence the sound came, "there is an exit in the rear; come with me I beg of you."

I stretched out my hand; it touched his sleeve. He drew back, but I clung to him with silent persistency; and he yielded after a second, yet almost as one humor's child.

By groping along the side of the room, I had him swiftly to the door which opened upon a little passage communicating with a narrow street behind that whereon the shop faced; for who knows better than I the rambling, climbing lanes as well as the more pretentious thoroughfares of the old town of Quebec?

Whether the officers had a knowledge of this exit I cannot say; but if so, in the commotion they must have forgotten it. We got away without being intercepted. Still in silence I guided the stranger by a circuitous route, until we had put half a mile between us and the scene of the quarrel.

At length, being a few paces in advance, I waited for him to come up with me and then turning said—

"Monsieur, will you come home with me? There is a summer house in our garden where you can lie concealed for a brief interval, or while we contrive a way to get you to the home of my uncle Francois Guyon, at Bauport; thence you may obtain transportation to some port where you will be in no danger from the friends of the man down yonder."

At the mention of my uncle's name, I thought the cavalier started, but when I had finished speaking he broke into a laugh.

"Ha! ha! You are a staunch youth," he exclaimed. "How it grieves me I have unexpectedly found so loyal an adherent! I do not know, but your friendly act in disentangling me from an unpleasant dilemma I gratefully acknowledge and hope I may have the good fortune to requite some day. Yet do not imagine I have killed the coxcomb; he cried out much too lustily for that. I aimed but to graze his features, as perchance have marred them a bit; for the nonce and spoiled his fine coat, since such as he bleed easily at the nose. As for flight? Nonsense! I will go to my lodgings, where I can be found if I am wanted. Even the unenviable notoriety of a fray in a wine-shop is preferable to sneaking away like a poltroon. Nevertheless, boy, I am as much in your debt; as though the matter were graver. Accept my thanks, I will not forget you." His clasped his hand warmly. "So Francois Guyon is your uncle? My compliments to him when you see him again. Good-night."

And with a light laugh he started up the street, waving me an adieu as he went, and trilling a stanza of "La Jolie Canadienne" as unconcernedly as though that massive candlestick had been but a feather-weight.

TO BE CONTINUED.

CATHOLIC LANCAHIRE IN THE PAST.

In former times Lancashire received the proud title of "God's Own Country." Its struggle for the preservation of the Faith was heroic, and probably there is no part of these islands more prolific of interesting and touching incidents during the penal days. We are glad to notice that progress is being made in unfolding the records of that struggle. Mgr. Gradwell has done much in this domain, affording lights and leading, and placing his co-religionists under a deep debt of obligation. Mr. John O'Dea has taken Manchester and the district in hand, and the pictures he draws of the events of the penal days will adhere to fact have the charm of romance. When published in book form, they will, no doubt, attract the attention of Catholics generally. Another valuable work dealing with Lancashire in the past, we gather from the admirable "Handbook of the Catholic Conference," is about to appear. Father Robert Smith has in the press a "History of Catholicity in the Hundred of Blackburn."

Blackburn has had its martyrs and he tells of their sufferings; but he also tells of the success with which spies and informers were evaded. In the mansions of the Catholic owners of the soil, the chapel was a feature and a priest a constant inmate. There the Catholic peasantry heard Mass Sunday after Sunday in spite of threatened pains and penalties.

"It is not by fine speeches, nor by prayers even, that Justice may be made to reign," said Monsignor Langens of Wimping, the other day. "We must pray, but we must also know how to act."