

After a tedious voyage across the Atlantic, the new Company arrived at Quebec in August, 1641. The lateness of the season caused them to abandon the hope of reaching Montreal that year, and they were obliged to spend the winter at Quebec. They proved to be both unexpected and unwelcome guests to the Quebec colony.

They were given shelter for the winter by Monsieur Puyseau at Sillery, and we read of Mlle. Mance plodding to the town, five miles away, to visit Mme. de la Peltrie at the Ursuline Convent, which, by this time, was established on its present site.

On the 17th of May, 1642, a pinnace, a flat-bottomed boat, moved by sails, and two row-boats, approached Montreal. All on board raised in unison a hymn of praise. Montmagny, the Governor, was there to deliver the Island, on behalf of the Company of One Hundred Associates, to Maisonneuve, representative of the Association of Montreal. Here, too, were Monsieur Puyseau and Father Vimont, Superior of the Missions; for the Jesuits had been prudently invited to accept the spiritual charge of the young colony. Madame de la Peltrie, who hoped to establish a branch of the Ursulines in Ville Marie, was also a member of the party.

The scene is thus described by Parkman: "Maisonneuve sprang ashore and fell on his knees. His followers imitated his example; and all joined their voices in enthusiastic songs of thanksgiving. Tents, baggage, arms and stores were landed, and an altar raised.

Now all the company gathered before the shrine. They kneeled in reverent silence as the Host was raised aloft, and when the rite was over the priest turned and addressed them. . . . Then they pitched their tents, lighted their bivouac fires, stationed their guards, and lay down to rest. Such was the birthnight of Montreal."

"In the morning they fell to their work, Maisonneuve hewing down the first tree, and laboured with such good will that their tents were soon enclosed with a strong palisade and their altar covered by a provisional chapel, built in the Huron mode, of bark. Soon afterwards their canvas habitations were supplanted by solid structures of wood, and the feeble germ of a future city began to take root." Mme. de la Peltrie, finding no scope for her project, returned to Quebec.

Some time elapsed before the Iroquois discovered Ville Marie, but at length ten fugitive Algonquins, chased by a party of them, made for the friendly settlement as a safe asylum. "From that time forth the colonists had no peace; no more excursions for fishing and hunting, no more strolls in the woods and meadows." The men went armed to their work and returned at the sound of a bell, marching in a compact body prepared for an attack.