I.—*An Ursuline Epic.*

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(Read May 26, 1908).

I.

In the heart of Quebec is an oblong block of houses, about a quarter of a mile long and half as broad. The streets on three sides of it bear the names of St. Ursula, St. Louis and St. Ann. But saints' names alone are nothing unusual in Quebec. It is only the crooked little street cutting off the fourth corner that shows you the sole point of contact between a convent and the outside world. This oblong is the property of the Ursulines; the houses in it all face outward; behind them stands the convent wall; and within the wall the cloisters and a garden of some seven acres.

You wonder what the nuns think and talk about during their few spare moments in that little inward-dwelling world apart, when they never leave the precincts and never read a paper. But since before Confederation they have had one topic of absorbing interest to their whole community. And now they are on the very tiptoe of expectation for the first rumour of decisive news from Rome, about the long-sought beatification of their first and greatest superior, La Mère Marie de l'Incarnation. They explain how many, many difficulties they have had to overcome; how dishearteningly slow their progress was for so many years, because they did not know the proper method of procedure; and how often they had to begin over and over again. At last, the assessors appointed by the Court of Rome appeared to put the nuns through the final cross-examination. One sister, who had made a special study of La Mère Marie's life, can tell you how she occupied the witness box for thirteen days, and that it is the hardest thing in the world to get the very best of women made a saint. But now even Rome itself must be satisfied; and the Holy Father will soon proclaim a saint throughout both worlds. Yes; the Ursulines have something to talk about, after all!

But why should La Mère Marie become a saint; and what did she really do for Canada? The following pages are an attempt to answer this question from French and French-Canadian sources and a Roman Catholic point of view. It is, in fact, her eulogy. There is no devil's advocate to plead against her; no outside public in the jury; no doubting critic on the bench. But the well-attested evidence in her favour is so strong that it would be worth stating for its own sake; while, quite apart from every question of the beatific life, she claims attention from all Canadians, because she was the prophetess, as Laval was the prophet, whose steadfast inspiration upheld Canada through the Three Years' Horror that began with the Iroquois fury of 1660 and ended with the seven months' earthquake of 1663.

II.

When Louis XI. lay on his death-bed, in his château of Plessis-les-Tours, he wished to send the holiest man he could find to bring the greatest saint of Christendom to console his last days on earth. Courtiers and populace all agreed on the same individual, the great-great-grandfather of La Mère Marie, who was accordingly sent to Rome and on to the wildest part of the Calabrian coast, whence he brought back the famous ascetic, St. François de Paule. No members of the family prized this signal honour more than the parents of Marie Guyard. Her father, who was a silk merchant, had such a reputation for piety and justice that his decisions carried more weight than those of the courts of law; while her mother was his equal in devotion and his helpmeet in good works.

Marie was born on the 18th of October, 1599, in the old royal city of Tours, amid *ce doux pays de la Touraine* which Belleforest has called *le jardin de France et le plaisir des Roys.* "Do not ask me why I love Touraine!" exclaims Balzac, when describing the valley of the Indre from Azay to Montbazón. Here, and along the Loire, are all the finest châteaux: Amboise, with its terraces and chapel; Chenonceaux, with its gardens, its white walls, its towers rising sheer from the water, and its romantic memories of Diane de Poictiers and Catherine de Medici; Azay-le-Rideau, a vision of beauty, set in the woods beside the winding river; Loches, with its ancient towers and ramparts massively rooted into its steep hill; and Chinon, where the statue of Rabelais looks down on the market-place and over the quiet quays beside the Loire, where Henry II. breathed his last, and where Charles VII. was called to the relief of Orleans by Joan of Arc. And the heart of Touraine is Tours, calm and beautiful on the southern bank of the Loire, which lingers past in slow meanderings. Here stood an archbishop's palace, here soared a great cathedral; and here was set that exquisite little gem of Gothic architecture, La Psalette, all aglow with the sacred music which so took the ear of the young Marie and wrought her heart to ecstasy.

But her deepest and most thrilling form of ecstasy came to her in visions of divinity. She had always been a religious child; and every predisposing influence carried her on toward the fulness of self-surrender and devotion. The piety of her family was a Touraine tradition; the first words she could articulate were *Marie* and *Jésus;* she had hardly learnt to read before she showed a marked preference for books of edification; her favourite work was succouring the poor; her favourite amusement was "playing nun;" and her favourite holiday was paying a visit to the Benedictine abbey of Beaumont, where the abbess was her mother's cousin. Her first vision was in a dream, when, as she afterwards wrote, she saw Heaven open and Christ come toward her in human form: *Ce plus beau des enfants des hommes, avec un visage plein d'une douceur et d'un attrait indicibles, m'embrassa, et, me baisant amoureusement, me dit: "Voulez-vous être à moi?" Je lui répondis: "Oui;" et, ayant eu mon consentement, nous le vîmes remonter au ciel.*

No wonder that a child like this longed for the life of the Benedictines whom she saw so often and who were so kind to her; nor that her cousin willingly promised to intercede with Madame de Beaumont for her future admission to the order. She then confided in her mother, who also encouraged her. But there the matter stopped. She was meditative, timid and reserved; and it never occurred to her to open her mind in the confessional beyond what she thought a penitent should say there. She knew nothing of private spiritual directors, who would certainly have led her on. So the Benedictines lost a nun, to Canada's great advantage.

When she was seventeen her parents wished her to marry a silk manufacturer, almost as pious as her father. Her answer was idiosyncratic to the last degree. *Ma mère, puisque c'est une résolution prise et que mon père le veut absolument, je me crois obligée d'obéir à sa volonté et à la vôtre. Mais si Dieu me fait la grâce de me donner un fils, je lui promets, dès à présent, de le consacrer à son service; et si, ensuite, il me rend la liberté que je vais perdre, je lui promets de m'y consacrer moi-même.* Both vows were afterwards fulfilled.

Nevertheless, her marriage was a happy one. Madame Martin, as she had now become, was a very practical mystic, and a most capable partner in her husband's business. At the same time she lost no opportunity of shepherding his employees into the one true fold and making them her daily congregation. Doubtless, her pilgrim soul was often grieved by their stay-at-home contentment with the good green earth of rich Touraine, where many a Mimnermus probably went to church, even in those ardent days, when religion was a *casus belli* for the whole of Europe.

At nineteen she was left a penniless widow by her husband's sudden death and failure. Tall, handsome and of commanding presence, capable in management and pious in every thought and deed, she had no lack of eligible suitors. But she would never consider re-marriage for a moment, and she only remained outside the cloister for the next twelve years in order that her son should be old enough to be left with the Jesuits before she made her vows. Never for a moment did she relax her self-imposed ascetic rules for the mortification of the flesh. She literally clothed herself in sack-cloth, and practised so many other physical discomforts that her spiritual directors always had great difficulty in keeping her penitential macerations within due bounds. During four years she lived in utter self-abasement, as the servant of the servants at her brother-in-law's. This relative, who was at the head of a great forwarding business, was only too glad to promote her at the suggestion of her director; and she suddenly passed from below the menials to the local superintendence of sixty horses and a hundred men. For eight years the business prospered exceedingly; and she completed an apprenticeship in practical affairs which served her well during her pioneering life in Canada.

But none of these alien years of successful business management saw any worldling interlude in her religious life. They were, indeed, only more steps up the *Scala Sancta* of her soul. Her visions were no longer childlike dreams, but such as led her Spanish prototype, St. Theresa, through the seven abodes of the spiritual castle—*el Castillo Interior o las Moradas*—and so toward divine espousal with the Son of Man. On the eve of the Incarnation, in 1620, she had recommended herself to God's providence in her usual formula—*In te Domine speravi, non confundar in æternum*—and had set out for her daily work. Then, as she walked beside the city moat, came the flash of apparition. Her whole being stood at gaze; while the panorama of her past was unrolled before her, with all her sins standing out in the shamed dark, against the accusing whiteness of the light of truth; and with the life-blood of her crucified Saviour pulsing to her feet.

The vision over, she entered the nearest church and begged the first priest she met to hear her full confession. Returning next day for absolution she determined that her true conversion was to be counted from this anniversary of the Incarnation; a circumstance which suggested her name in religion, La Mère Marie de l'Incarnation.

Some years after, in a re-birth of unquestioning hope, she was at last caught up again within the highest rapture of heavenly delight; as once before, in her first dream-vision when a child. *Je conversais familièrement avec Notre-Seigneur, et mon cœur s'élançait par un mouvement extraordinaire vers ce bonheur que je ne pouvais comprendre. Jésus-Christ me dit distinctement ces paroles: Sponsabo te mihi in fide, sponsabo te mihi in perpetuum—Je t'épouserai dans la foi, je t'épouserai pour jamais.*

Divine espousals are so essentially characteristic of convent visions that they are always the favourite point attacked by those who sit in the seat of the scornful outside the cloisters. The adverse formulary says that the devotion of all celibates is only the parental instinct of self-sacrifice gone astray, and that a Divine Spouse is only a nun's hysterical substitute for a more carnal object of affection. But this contemptuous view shuts out one obviously common-sense point of refutation, which is almost too profanely worldly-wise for mention here. It simply is that no woman would make it the object of her life to bring in as many other brides as possible for her own beloved spouse, unless her affections were truly spiritual and the object of them divinely infinite.

Opinions will always differ about the signs which mark the calling of a life apart. But all the world agrees that the essential fitness of such a life for the higher aspirations of mankind can only be tested by its resultant actions. So we, who are bent merely on estimating the good influence that La Mère Marie exerted on Canadian history, might judge her by her works alone, if it were not that her visions, faith and works together made a triune all-in-all. This being so, we cannot hope to understand any one part of her life, if we wrest it from the whole. We must reckon with faith and vision as practical determinants at every turn. And, to gain a still further insight into her peculiar case, we must call such a supremely competent witness of the beatific state as St. Theresa, whose evidence goes far to prove, by sympathetic analogy at least, how close the psychic correlations are, even if the visions be only subjectively existent. In the 28th chapter of her autobiography she gives her conclusion of the whole matter: "Like imperfect sleep, which, instead of giving more strength to the head, leaves it only the more exhausted, mere imaginings only weaken the soul. . . . . A genuine heavenly vision yields her a harvest of ineffable spiritual riches, and an admirable renewal of bodily strength. I gave these reasons to those people who so often accused my visions of being the work of the enemy of mankind and the sport of my imagination. . . . I showed them the jewels which the divine hand left with me—they were my actual dispositions. All those that knew me saw that I was changed. . . . . As for myself, it was impossible to believe that if the devil were the author of this change he could have used means so contrary to his own interests as the uprooting of my vices and the filling me with masculine courage; for I saw clearly that a single vision was enough to enrich me with all that wealth."

When she was thirty and her son twelve, La Mère Marie committed him to the Jesuits and entered the Ursuline convent of Tours. The nuns were eager to hear her expound her visions, especially one of the Trinity, which is strangely like Dante's in the final canto of his *Paradiso*:

Nella profonda e chiara sussitenza
Dell 'alto lume parvemi tre giri
Di tre colori e d'una continenza:

In that abyss
Of radiance, clear and lofty, seemed, methought,
Three orbs of triple hue, clipt in one bound;
And, from another, one reflected seemed,
As rainbow is from rainbow: and the third
Seemed fire, breathed equally from both.

She freely told all that she had seen beyond the veil of the flesh; and by her human aptitudes, no less than by her other-worldliness, she was soon in perfect harmony with the life around her.

The Ursulines were originally founded on St. Catherine's Day in 1537; two years after Jacques Cartier's discovery of Quebec; a time when the full flood-stream of Renaissance and Reformation was beating against every bulwark of the Roman faith and government. Ignatius Loyola and Angela of Merici hurried to the defence of the dangerous breach made in Catholic education, and set to work to rebuild it under fire. In 1540 Loyola drew up the constitution of the Jesuits, in which the education of boys stood first of all in relative importance. Four years later the Sovereign Pontiff approved the constitution of the Ursulines, in which the first place was given to the education of girls. "I have just given you some sisters," said Paul III. to St. Ignatius, after signing the document. How this Pope would have rejoiced to see his famous dictum so signally borne out a century later, in the distant mission field of Canada!

The novitiate over, La Mère Marie chose the conversion of St. Paul for her profession; and accordingly, on the 25th of January, 1633, she made her final vows. At the time, she seems to have chosen this day only because it reminded her of her own conversion, and not from any sense of missionary zeal. But two years later she dreamt of meeting a lady she had never seen before, and of taking her by the hand and going a long journey into a strange country, pointed out by an apostle who met them by the way. An idea that she was not to spend her life among the Ursulines of Tours kept on recurring; but it seemed so impious that she kept on as continually repulsing it. The other nuns began to notice her obsession; and one day she broached the subject to Father Dinet. This 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 missionaires.* 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 de St. Joseph, an Ursuline who also had read the *Relations des Jésuites* with awakening devotion to the same cause. Her whole family—de la Troche de Savonnières—rose in horrified protest against the idea of her going out to the dreadful heathen wilderness. But the three women stood together; and presently arrived in Paris, where the wildest rumours about their proposed Canadian mission had preceded them. They became the vogue; and when the Archbishop refused to let a Parisian Ursuline go with them, he was besieged by great ladies, headed by the Duchesse d'Aiguillon; and when he fled the capital to escape this importunity, the Queen herself pursued him with royal messengers, though all in vain. La Mère Marie had a long audience of the Queen, who seemed much interested in this daring religious venture beyond the outer seas. Anne of Austria might well have sighed for some of the peace of mind which the Ursuline leader wore like a suit of living armour, for her own life was the unhappy sport of a king and two great worldly cardinals. The King treated her with cold neglect, Richelieu pressed her with unwelcome amorous advances, and Mazarin, whom she really loved, used her heart as a stepping-stone to power. Her harmless flirtation with Buckingham, told with such gusto in the immortal *Trois Mousquetaires,* was turned to malicious account by Richelieu when first presenting Mazarin at court: "Your Majesty will like him, he has quite the air of a second Buckingham."

Several troubles beset La Mère Marie while still in Paris. M. de Bernières fell seriously ill, and her son came to implore her not to leave for Canada. The young man had been leading *la vie à vingt ans* for a few months, though his wild oats would have made a very absurd little handful in the eyes of any genuine *viveur.* The mother's influence soon prevailed, and he afterwards became the Benedictine, Dom Claude Martin, of pious memory. But new troubles followed M. de Bernières' recovery, and the arrival of the party at Dieppe. The de la Troche family sent post-haste to arrest the daughter they thought so mad. The trading company of New France said they had no more room left aboard their vessels. And the third Ursuline had not yet been found. But La Mère Marie persuaded the alarmed family to let La Mère de St. Joseph go, with their blessing on her undertaking. Madame de la Peltrie chartered a vessel of her own. And a most devoted third nun was found in La Mère de Ste. Croix, who joined from the convent at Dieppe.

On the 4th of May, 1639, the little flotilla set sail with ten passengers for the service of God in Canada: three Jesuits, three Hospitalières to found the Hôtel-Dieu in Quebec, our three Ursulines, and Madame de la Peltrie. They had hardly cleared the harbour when a new danger appeared, in the form of a hostile Spanish fleet coming up the

Channel. The French were only just in time to sheer off, stand over for the English coast and hug the shore there till the enemy got hull-down astern. The voyage was long and stormy; and just as the last verse of the office was being sung on Trinity Sunday, an alarm of *'Ware ice!* brought all hands on deck to see a berg threatening the destruction of the ship. Father Vimont even gave the general absolution. But La Mère Marie never flinched for a moment. Her letters tell us how carefully she arranged her dress, "so that it might befit her modesty when the end came;" and other witnesses relate how, with one arm round Madame de la Peltrie, she stood foremost to face apparent doom. At the last moment the vessel veered just enough to graze past the berg.

On the 1st of August the nuns were rowed up from the Island of Orleans in the Governor's barge, and landed in Quebec amid the acclamations of the whole assembled colony.

III.

The landing of La Mère Marie de l'Incarnation was indeed an event of deep national importance. She is unquestionably one of the five founders of New France; and her fame with posterity is quite as secure as that of Champlain, Laval, Frontenac or Talon. The little band of colonists could not foresee this; but they recognized her at once as their fellow-pioneer, the leader of the first *religieuses* to answer the call of their new, wild, far-off home. Canadians were then in dire need of men, money and material from the *Mère-Patrie* to safeguard their country's infant life against stark, constricting circumstances. Yet they freely gave a heartfelt welcome to a woman who brought no other wealth than that which is the only inheritance of the saints on earth. Their hopeful faith in her was amply justified by history, both before and since her time. For, besides being one of the five founders of New France, she was the third of three great nuns, whom the three great Latin races brought forth in the service of the Church of Rome, at three most critical epochs. All three had a close affinity of devotion; but this was made effectual in the widest diversity of environment. The Italian, St. Catherine of Siena, was the last of the really mediæval saints; the Spaniard, St. Theresa, was the first great woman leader against the Reformation; while in La Mère Marie colonial France found the Moses and Joshua of what proved to be the Promised Land of Canada.

St. Catherine of Siena is one of the most intimately human and intensely sympathetic of all the saints. She was all things good to every man and woman she could influence; and no one that met her could fail to be influenced by her magnetic moral genius. Her letters are full of plain speaking against ugly sins; yet none are more wonderfully persuasive. She did in very truth become the spiritual "dearest sister" of each correspondent, and the "Slave of the servants of Jesus Crucified;" and no one better understood how many different ways of holiness could lead to the one Heaven, adapted to every variety of character: "in my Father's house are many mansions" is her favourite refrain. The world had need of her in that lax age of sundering strife, which is only too well described in the chronicle of Neri di Donato for 1373:——" . . the Brothers of St. Austin killed their Provincial at Sant' Antonio, and in Siena was much fighting. At Assisi, the Brothers Minor fought, and killed fourteen with the knife. The Brothers of the Rose fought and drove six away. . . . So all Religious everywhere seemed to have strife and dissension among themselves. And every Religious, of whatever rule, was oppressed and insulted by the world. . . . It seems there are divisions over all the world. In Siena loyalty was not observed; gentlemen did not show it among themselves nor outside; nor did the Nine among themselves, nor with people outside, nor did the Twelve. The people did not agree with their leader, nor exactly with any one else."

The youngest of the twenty-five children of a common dyer of Siena, St. Catherine was only sixteen when she had already lived down the opposition excited by her precocious ecstasies, her visions, her vows and her ascetic practices. Devoted followers began to gather round her; and she threw herself into the work of rescuing errant souls from this mad flux of evil with all the effectiveness of the practical mystic. It was characteristic of her that when she started on a pilgrimage, at the age of eight, she took bread and water with her, lest the angels might forget her on the way. Her success in personal persuasion was the wonder of her own age, as it has been of all succeeding. The consummation of her visions came on the last day of the carnival of 1367, when she was divinely espoused to her Redeemer. Henceforth she knew herself "bought with a price." She had previously become a Dominican tertiary, one of those devout women who live at home under religious rule. She never sought the cloisters; but, on the contrary, became more active in domestic and social life as time went on. She quickly got into touch with people of all classes, all occupations, all opinions. There never was a wider correspondence: with two Popes, several cardinals and many humbler "religious" of both sexes; with the King of France and the concupiscent Giovanna, Queen of Naples; with the reclaimed Brother William of England, and with that redoubtable free-lance, Sir John Hawkwood; with the members of her own humble family, and with others as various as they were many. Yet it was only in 1377, when she was thirty, that she learnt to write. Before this she had been dependent on the secretaries who willingly came to her from every walk of life. She became an ambassador in bonds for the Pope. She went to Pisa and Lucca to persuade these towns not to join an anti-papal league. For the same purpose she went to Florence, where a Papal Legate was flayed alive, and where she just missed martyrdom herself in 1378, to a regret as poignant as Togo felt because Tsushima denied him a victorious death. She was sent as an Envoy Extraordinary to and from the Papal Court, on what were practically international affairs; and at Avignon in 1376 she certainly became a self-appointed Minister Plenipotentiary, and gained her ends by sheer moral suasion. This alone fixes her historical position firmly within mediæval times. It would almost be a modern parallel if the Tzar Alexander II. had sent Father John of Kronstadt to checkmate Lord Beaconsfield at the Congress of Berlin, and if Father John had nominated himself into the chair for the two Peace Conferences at Hague.

By the irony of fate she failed only in world-politics. She bent all her energies, she literally gave her very life, in a vain attempt to unite Italy and the rest of Christendom round the universal Church, centred in Rome and reformed from within. She did, indeed, do more than anyone else to bring back Gregory XI. from Avignon; and Urban VI. began with a fury of reform. But the one had the velvet glove without the gauntlet, and the other the gauntlet without the velvet glove. Besides, the times were hopelessly out of course for the nice re-adjustment of temporal and spiritual affairs from the obsolescent mediæval point of view. She was too late and too early for the work on which she had set her heart. She was too late, because the age of St. Francis was the last when any such scheme would have had a chance of acceptance throughout all Christendom. She would have made an excellent Franciscan in all departments of woman's aid, from the revivalizing tours with the saint—which did, within the Church, what Methodists and Salvationists have since done outside it—to the royal interview between "Beatus Ægidius" and St. Louis, whom she would have found a far more kindred spirit than the other King of France to whom she wrote. She was too early, because no Luther had yet aroused Loyola and Theresa to lead a counter-reformation in that part of Christendom which was naturally Roman Catholic by temperament and circumstances. And, in her own generation, she could have little affinity with the intellectual Joachites, the followers of the holy Joachim da Fiore, who thought the Church had not always been the same, and that it should develop dynamically in adaptation to the needs of a changing world. The Joachites were, in fact, empirical evolutionists, and not favoured by the upholders of static religion. Had they published a manifesto it might have waited till our own day before getting the stamp of *Nihil obstat, Imprimatur.* Protestants might suppose this privilege would never have been granted at all. But let them look at *The Priest's Studies* of Dr. Scannell, which actually recommends works based on the theory of evolution as applied to theology, and which passed the censor with flying colours in the very year of the "Modernist" Encyclical.

And so this most human of saintly women died at thirty-three, the very age of Christ, heart-broken at having failed in her Church-and-State reform; but leaving an example of mediating service between God and man that will quicken individual effort to the end of time.

St. Theresa's worldly circumstances were entirely different. She was born in 1515, of aristocratic family, at Avila, in gallant, proud, sententious Old Castile. As a child she had the true Don Quixote love of books about knight errantry. At seventeen she was a pretty *débutante;* and doubtless spoke the language of mantilla, fan and eyes as well as others of her sex and people. Even when she entered the local Carmelite convent of the Incarnation, she acquiesced, though with qualms of conscience, in the rather worldly intercourse that went on there. "For twenty years I was tossed about on a stormy sea in a wretched condition; for, if I had small contentment in the world, in God I had no pleasure. At prayers I watched the clock to see it strike the end of the hour. To go to the oratory was a vexation, and prayer itself a constant effort." It was only in her fortieth year, after her father's death, that the sight of her Saviour's wounds struck her so intensely that she fell in tears before the crucifix, while every worldly emotion died within her. In vision she saw herself as a clear but formless mirror, which shone with the inner light of Christ. She felt his bodily presence so constantly that she named herself Theresa of Jesus. An angel then appeared and pierced her heart with a fire-tipped lance; a mystic act which became a favourite subject with religious artists, and is still represented in the frontispiece of all her books of devotion. She immediately began reforming the Carmelite practice, and, of course, met with strong opposition. Finally, in 1562, she opened a little house of her own in Avila, with four poor women living under the strictest rule. Here she spent her five happiest years, following every self-denying precept, and writing her immortal works. Philip II. valued her manuscripts so highly that he kept them in the richest cabinet in the Escorial, and always carried the key about his person. She died in 1582, and was canonized by Pope Gregory XV. forty years later.

There are many curious links, historical and psychological, connecting these three saintly women with each other and with their religious affinities. St. Theresa, who did so much of the woman's work in aid of the Jesuit efforts against the Protestants, was canonized in the same year as Ignatius Loyola. La Mère Marie has been the accepted *Ste. Thérèse de l'Amérique* ever since Bossuet first called her so; Pope Paul III. told the Jesuits he was giving them sisters when he approved the institution of the Ursulines; and Jesuits and Ursulines worked together as the pioneers of education and conversion in the early days of Canada. St. Catherine of Siena is the true psychological link between St. Theresa and St. Francis, and the Franciscans were the first of all missionaries to America, whither they went with Christopher Columbus on his second voyage in 1493.

Instances might easily be multiplied; and many comparatively trifling coincidences added, such as that Diego de Yepez, Philip II's confessor, published the Life of St. Theresa in 1599, the year La Mère Marie was born. But what is most significant to the Church's universal work is that the three women were not really so much alike as complementary. St. Catherine was of lowly origin, only learnt to read after she was grown up, and to write three years before her death. She embodied the best traditions of mediæval sanctity, and yet was almost Pauline in her exhortation and persuasiveness. St. Theresa was highly born, well educated, and the first of modern female saints. She did not write so much to exhort and persuade directly as to reveal and justify. She did not live in the tumultuous world as St. Catherine did, and her only statesmanship took the special form of expanding and consolidating her Theresian Carmelites. The St. Catherine we know from her quick-worded letters is a woman appealing to soul after soul to help the Mother Church with their own salvation and re-union. The St. Theresa of the autobiography and *El Castillo interior* is a steward of the mysteries of God, a high priestess who enters the Holy of Holies alone, and afterwards re-tells to the faithful the message revealed to her beside the Ark of the Covenant, in presence of the Cherubim.

La Mère Marie was neither highly nor lowly born, though very well connected on her mother's side. She was more statesmanlike than St. Catherine, more practical in worldly matters than St. Theresa. They were of mediæval and modern Europe: she was a pioneer and missionary in the sternest of the New-World wilds. There, when the colony was still in its impressionable youth, her cunning hand fashioned the moulds for the same work that her two sister saints had done within their own spheres of usefulness, and fashioned them in a spirit at once akin to and adaptively different from theirs. Her pen, too, completed their accounts of Church activities, from a nun's standpoint, by telling the first story of convent life in North America. It is true that she wrote no formal work, and that her letters are rather documents than history. And it must be admitted that her writings are not, and never will be, French classics, as St. Catherine's are Italian classics to a certain extent, and St. Theresa's are Spanish classics altogether. They are just a little like very good dispatches, and by just so much they miss the saving grace of a native style. They were generally written under great pressure of time, amid many distractions, and partly as reports. So their very nature prevents vivid presentation, and keeps them on the lower literary level of description. The spiritual passages are always excellent; but here the lack of a sustained context and of the trained instinct for the one inevitable word combine to prevent the expression from doing full justice to the ideas. The saint, in fact, was greater than the author.

It is her life, rather than her letters, that is the important point even to-day. And this was of still more importance at the time she came to Canada. For she came as the inheritor of a great tradition, as the third of a trio of nuns who played a great interdependent part in the history of their Church, as the foundress of the first convent, as the first educator of Canadian girls, and as the first white woman to evangelize the Indians. And what heightened the importance of all this was that the French-Canadians were then, as they are now, by tradition, training and consent, the most Roman Catholic community in the world. She had no dire troubles within the Church to strain her heart to death, as St. Catherine had; no challenging Protestants to confute, like St. Theresa. Her spiritual warfare was the universal one against the powers of evil, and her earthly work was against savagery and the forces of nature. In both she was prepared to acquit herself excellently well. And her landing at Quebec was indeed an event of profound significance.

IV.

Quebec was then but a tiny outpost on the edge of an unknown, illimitable wilderness. It had been in precarious existence for only some thirty years. Its founder, the staunch and pious Champlain, had died a little over three years before, leaving it with barely a hundred inhabitants. It had only three small public buildings, Fort St. Louis, the store-house of the *Cent Associés*, and the parish church of Notre Dame de la Recouvrance, from whose belfry he caused the angelus to be rung three times a day—a custom still religiously observed in Quebec. Beyond this one narrow foothold of France, on the mighty river which came from no one knew what vast inland wilds, Canada was little but a name. Only ten years before La Mère Marie arrived, the Kirkes had taken Quebec without a blow; because they had a handful of men to serve the few tiny guns aboard their two little ships, while Champlain despaired of standing a siege on a barrel of fish and half a dozen sacks of potatoes. New France had hardly become even a footnote to history. With what an airy charm of royal condescension does Charles I. add the unconsidered trifle of "The County and Lordship of Canada," to the *other* estates of good Sir William Alexander, Earl of Stirling and Baronet of Nova Scotia!

But, among her few, Quebec counted almost as many heroes as early Rome or Sparta. And bravest of the brave, the Jesuits. Here was an untamed, new, defiant world to wrestle with. And here the Church, Antæus-like, rose stronger from each fresh contact with the primal earth. Nothing could stop her indomitable pioneers; neither cold nor heat, hunger, thirst and fatigue; not the lurking danger which dogged their every step, nor the fiendish death by torture which so many of them suffered; nor yet the silent, awful isolation in which their work was done. They crossed a waste of waters to enter an even wilder waste ashore. Quebec was, in fact, as much a point of departure and landfall for an inland journey as a coast sea-mark is for an ocean voyage. Within each new horizon, far and near, the forest veiled the mysteries of Earth as closely as the sea; and, like the sea, lay still in calm, or surged in wash and back-wash of green surf beneath the storm. And, whether in calm or storm, it closed impenetrably round each man who ventured within its labyrinthine depths. The Iroquois—so tiger-like in craft, stealth, spring and wild ferocity—filled with mortal dread everyone else whose way led through the woods. But not the Jesuit. He had no human hand to help him there; yet the bravest soldier was never more confidently eager at the front. As, in the time of Cæsar, every Roman legionary knew that the might of a whole empire lay waiting for his call at need; and as, in Nelson's day, every blockading British man-of-war went boldly into action, single-handed and against any odds, sure that every consort would soon be sailing to the sound of the cannonade; so every Canadian Jesuit pressed forward undauntedly, among all the ambushes and strongholds of a pitiless foe, ever upheld by the confident belief that he was no mere lost and isolated man, but one of the pioneers and vanguard of the advancing army of the Lord of Hosts.

The Ursulines held their first triennial election, and their choice naturally fell on La Mère Marie. Their first convent was a mere hovel, near the site of the present Notre Dame des Victoires, and their first Indian school in it was broken up by a terrible attack of small-pox. In 1641, the first stone was laid on the site of the present convent. But the next spring Madame de la Peltrie, burning to carry the cross still further into the wilderness, followed Maisonneuve to the founding of Montreal, and left the Ursulines of Quebec almost penniless in their half-finished building. Even M. de Bernières answered La Mère Marie's appeal by advising her to send away her pupils and workmen, give up everything and come home, unless Providence should raise up a second benefactress. However, she immediately wrote back to say that having once put her hand to the heavenly task she would never give it up alive. She kept her Indian pupils, urged on her workmen, and, in every detail of duty and leadership, plainly showed how fully confident she was that Canada was only at the beginning of assured success, instead of at the end of utter failure.

After an absence of eighteen months Madame de la Peltrie came back, never again to leave Quebec. She found the new convent inhabited, the school open, and La Mère Marie as full of determined hope as ever. There was little comfort in the new home, a building 92 feet long and 28 feet wide. Two open fires barely took the frost out of the air—stoves were only introduced twenty-six years later. Yet the devoted life went on with increasing vigour. New nuns came out: some from the mother-house at Tours; another from Ploërmel, in the Breton "Land of Pardons." In 1648 the convent was at last finished, after seven years of hard work and much anxiety from lack of funds.

Meanwhile, Quebec grew slowly: half mission, half trading post, and wholly bureaucratic. On New Year's Eve, in 1646, the first play performed in Canada, Corneille's *Le Cid*, was given before the Governor and the Jesuit Fathers. Two years later the Governor-in-Council appointed Jacques Boisdon—bibulous cognomen!—first and sole innkeeper, on the following conditions:—"That the said Jacques Boisdon settles in the square in front of the church, so that the people may go in to warm themselves, and that he keeps nobody in his house during High Mass, sermons, catechism or vespers." In 1663, the population had increased to 500 souls, of whom 150 belonged to the religious communities.

The thirteen disastrous years from 1650 to 1663 were the nadir of Canada's fortunes. More than once the colony nearly lost its flickering life altogether. The Iroquois scourged the land like a plague. Not a man was safe outside a fort. All that were left of the once powerful Hurons crouched miserably under the protection of Quebec. La Mère Marie was ever foremost in succouring them and bringing their children into her school. She took lessons herself in Huron from Father Bressani, who had escaped death at the hands of the Iroquois as by a miracle, after having suffered the extremity of torture. But, just as her classes were well established, the convent was burnt to the ground. The nuns hardly escaped with their lives, running out barefooted and half-clad into the intense mid-winter cold. La Mère Marie issued her orders as calmly as if going through her regular routine. She went all over the building to make sure that everyone was safe, paused one reverential moment before the altar, and then walked out as the flames met behind her.

Next day the Hurons assembled in full council to see how they could help the "Paleface Virgin Saints." To their grief they found that the whole merchantable wealth of their nation now consisted in two long strings of porcelain beads, each containing twelve hundred. But, headed by their chief, they went in procession to the Hôtel-Dieu, where they were received by La Mère Marie, surrounded by her Ursulines, the Hospitalières, and Father Raguenau, who records the address delivered by Taicaronk. "Saintly sisters, you see here but the walking corpses of a mighty nation, which is no more. In the country of the Hurons we have been eaten and gnawed to the bone by famine, war and fire. Alas! your misfortune recalls our own, and with your tears we mingle ours. In our old home the custom was to give one present to unfortunates like you, to dry their tears, and then another to fortify their hearts anew. All that we have we offer you. First, a string of beads to comfort you, and root your feet so firmly in this land that all your friends across the great water will never be able to draw them out and take you away. And next, another string, to plant a new House of Christ to outgrow the old one, and be a place of prayer and teaching for our children." After the chief had ended there was a long, sad silence, before La Mère Marie responded in words which breathe the very spirit of the Book of Ruth. She told the Hurons how she never would desert them, but fill her days with willing service for their need, and how, when she died, her body would remain among them in Quebec, as her heart and soul did while she was alive.

Other friends pressed to her aid. Father Vignal, her chaplain, though now an old man, set to work on the Ursuline farm near the famous Plains of Abraham, and was rewarded by a bountiful harvest, which fed the teachers and scholars for the succeeding winter. Madame de la Peltrie sheltered the whole community in her own house, which was no more luxurious than the convent, though she was a very rich woman. The Governor, the Jesuits, in fact, the whole colony, did everything in their power. But their power fell far short of their good will. Men were scarce, money scarcer; so La Mère Marie and her zealous nuns cleared away the débris with their own hands, and prepared the site for rebuilding. The new convent rose quickly from the ruins of the old. Within a year the nuns were back: all, except La Mère de St. Joseph, whose delicate frame at last had given way under repeated hardships, and whose epitaph might be fitly taken from the letter La Mère Marie wrote home: *Ma douce et angélique amie.*

In 1660 Canada was apparently doomed. Only four years had passed since the Iroquois had swooped down on their prey again, and nearly killed out the last, palsied remnant of the Hurons at the Island of Orleans. The lines of war-canoes had glided snake-like down the St. Lawrence to their vindictive massacre, under the very guns of Quebec, the crews screaming savage defiance at the bewildered Governor, who cowered behind the walls of Fort St. Louis. And now every threatening war-path was once more astir with painted Iroquois, wild for a final glut of blood. The rumour ran that their grand council had decreed the extermination of all the Christians in Canada, and that their whole assembled horde was coming hot-foot down the valley of the Ottawa. Night and day the shadow of death closed in from the vast encircling forest, darkening the terror of suspense. All Quebec stood to arms. The Ursuline convent was garrisoned by eighty men and twelve huge watch dogs, trained to hunt down and tear in pieces the hostile Indians. La Mère Marie, resourceful as ever, told off her nuns to different duties, and reserved for herself the most dangerous of all—the carrying of powder and shot in action.

As Canada turned despairingly at bay, her necessity brought forth a champion, the faithful, undauntable Daulac. He and sixteen others in Montreal volunteered to go up the Ottawa and hold the Iroquois by a life-and-death defence, long enough to let the colony have some time for preparation. At the Long Sault, Daulac was joined by a hundred Christian Hurons under Anahotaha. The allies then took post in an old Algonquin fort, which, unfortunately, was too far from water. Symbol-loving souls afterwards saw a mystical assurance of salvation in the strange recurrence of the sacred number, seven. For seven days and seven nights, seven hundred Iroquois furiously attacked the seventeen Frenchmen who defended the stockade. The attackers fell in heaps under the steady fire. A letter of La Mère Marie's tells how those seventeen fought for Christ and Canada: *Dès que l'ennemi faisait trève, ils étaient à genoux; et sitôt qu'il faisait mine d'attaquer, ils étaient debout, les armes à la main.* Worn out by unceasing vigils and tortured by thirst they still held out. But resounding war-cries announced the arrival of another five hundred Iroquois; and they then prepared to sell their lives as dearly as they could. The enemy advanced and called a parley, during which some apostate Hurons persuaded most of their Christian tribesmen that an immediate change of sides was the only way of escaping certain death by torture. This desertion reduced the garrison to the seventeen Canadians with only eighteen Indians. In the thick of the final assault some Iroquois got in so close that they could chop at the foot of the stockade without being exposed to the fire from the loop-holes. Daulac then tried to dislodge them with a barrel of powder. But this, unfortunately, miscarried. The barrel blew up inside the fort, killed and wounded several of the defenders, and left a breach wide open. The Iroquois at once swarmed in from all sides, though, even then, they could not close with their steadfast opponents. Anahotaha, worthy comrade of Daulac, charged and killed five with his tomahawk. But, as he regained the ranks, he fell, mortally wounded, beside the burning palisade. "Lay my head on the fire," he implored with his dying breath, "the Iroquois must never get my scalp!" Daulac fell next. A last desperate scuffle, and all was over. The Iroquois were dumbfounded at the resistance they had met with and disheartened by their enormous losses. Their next council broke up after deciding that a country defended by such heroes was too dangerous to attack. They slank back to their wigwams, while a contrite apostate Huron escaped to carry the tale of death and victory throughout the waiting settlements. Thus ended Canada's Thermopylæ.

The Colony dragged through the misery of three more years. Then came the memorable earthquake which threatened an almost greater ruin. One effect of this stupendous and widespread upheaval may still be seen at Les Eboulements, where the whole face of a mountain fell headlong into the St. Lawrence. In Quebec the shocks recurred violently for seven months, and the terrified people thought it was the end of the world. The first great shock scared the roisterers at the carnival out of their senses. The second threw all the Ursulines to the ground while they were singing matins. Throughout this long, heart-shaking ordeal trembling women and children kept coming to La Mère Marie, as to the one human sanctuary that could preserve them from the Avenging Angel. Not since the Great Famine, nearly four hundred years before, when long processions of naked Flagellants scourged themselves through every high street and market square in Europe, had there been such universal contrition. The priests could scarcely leave the thronged confessionals, even to eat and sleep. Again the cry of "Back to France!" went up, and was piteously echoed from the whole stricken colony. But two winged souls rose to the foreseeing heights of prophecy, and two clear voices called on the people to stay their panic and have steadfast faith in Canada. One was the voice of Laval, the first bishop, who set a supreme example by founding, in this terrible 1663, the great seminary which still bears his name and carries on his work with undiminished vigour. The other was the voice of La Mère Marie, who, for the third time in her life, stood between a discouraged people and apparent ruin, and nerved them to one more effort for the salvation of their country.

The unshaken faith of both was fully justified. The tide of fortune was already on the turn. This very year New France became a Royal Province. And in 1665 de Courcelles, the new Governor, arrived. With him was his lieutenant, the Marquis de Tracy, and Jean Talon, the great Intendant, well called the Colbert of Canada. The pitifully weak garrison was strongly reinforced by the famous *Régiment de Carignan*, fresh from its victorious Hungarian campaign against the Turks. Two hundred and twelve new colonists of title or fortune came out to take up concessions of land. And, most important of all, perhaps, there was a very much larger number of more humble immigrants, who were destined to a long and successful career under the well-known name of *habitants*. With these arrivals a different régime began. The first great hero-age was over.

V.

La Mère Marie had a deep, though indirect, influence on the new order of things. All the women of the old order had passed through her school, all the girls of the new were her pupils. Her reputation for sanctity and wisdom extended over people of both sexes and all classes. And she never failed to throw the whole weight of this wider influence into the scale on the side of Laval, in his fights for the missionary system against the parochial one favoured by the Governors, and for Indian prohibition against the indiscriminate brandy traffic favoured by the traders. Laval was the living embodiment of the Church militant, and was inclined to stretch his authority rather far over spheres of public influence which are generally understood to be within the province of the civil power. But his missionary system, worked under his own eye, and through his seminary, undoubtedly met the needs of a new and extending population better than the fixed cures which the Governors vainly tried to establish. Laval wanted his shepherds to keep continual touch with him and each other, while they followed their flocks about the ever-opening pastures; but the Governors preferred to find each individual shepherd sitting ready for inspection inside an isolated fold. As for the brandy trade, it was simply debauching the Indians, body and soul. And when La Mère Marie supported Laval on these two burning questions, she proved herself as statesmanlike in the first as she was philanthropic in the second.

Her letters show how many human interests she touched, and with how sure a hand she set each interest in its due relation to her belief and practice. She was an indefatigable writer: in one autumn she sent home over 600 letters. Her correspondents range from Royalty down;

but most of her spiritual letters were to her son or the Ursulines. In theology she had some lively passages with the Jansenists, who did their best to persuade her to adopt their views. But she was an everyday and deeply sympathetic eye-witness of the work of the Canadian Jesuits, and that was enough. In religious advice and prayer she was the constant support of an Ursuline of Tours, whom she had initiated before leaving France, and who was aunt to *cette touchante Duchesse de la Vallière, dont la destinée sera l'éternel attendrissement de l'histoire.* She had special devotions and penances in Canada, on behalf of the errant Duchess, who was, like herself, a native of Tours; and the celebrated conversion at court was held to be greatly owing to the ardent intercessions at Quebec.

She evidently never thought she had any written message to leave to the world. She let all her spiritual memoirs, destined for her son's eye alone, be burnt with the convent, rather than run the risk of letting them fall into other hands in the confusion. Perhaps she felt that the divine afflatus would not take literary form in her as it did in St. Theresa. It is certain that she wrote less and less about the inner life, though her reasons for her growing silence are themselves excellently expressed. "Au reste, il y a bien des choses, et je puis dire que presque toutes sont de cette nature qu'il me serait impossible d'écrire entièrement, parce que dans la conduite intérieure que Dieu tient sur moi, il y a des grâces si intimes et des impressions si spirituelles, que cela ne se peut dire. C'est en partie ce qui me donne de la répugnance à traiter de ces matières, quoique ce soient mes délices de ne point trouver de fond dans ce grand abîme, et d'être obligée de perdre toute parole en m'y perdant moi-même. Plus on vieillit, plus on est incapable d'en écrire, parce que la vie spirituelle simplifie l'âme dans un amour consumant, en sorte qu'on ne trouve plus de termes pour s'en expliquer." Nevertheless, in response to divine orders to comply with her son's renewed appeals, she rewrote the lost letters, on condition that he promised not to show them to anyone. Dom Martin has a prettily turned simile to express their influence on his life—"ces grandes grâces m'excitent à suivre ses traces, comme l'aigle mère excite ses aiglons à voler après elle."

Though her worldly interests were always strictly subordinated to her spiritual ones, she wrote many admirable letters on public affairs. European news is discussed with a good knowledge of its bearings on Church and State. The troubles of the Fronde, the peace of the Pyrenees, the death of Charles I. of England, all find their place in her correspondence. But Canada comes first. Indeed, her letters in 1654, 1655 and 1656, form the best documentary history of those troublous years. She notes the natural wealth of the country and the abounding fertility of

the population. "M. Boucher a dit au roi qu'on peut faire au Canada un royaume plus beau et plus grand que celui de la France. C'est là le sentiment de ceux qui disent s'y connaître. Il y a des mines en plusieurs endroits; les terres y sont fertiles. Il y a surtout un grand nombre d'enfants; ce fut un des points sur lequel le roi questionna le plus M. Boucher. Un pauvre homme en aura huit et plus, qui l'hiver vont nu-pieds et nu-tête, avec une petite camisole sur le dos, qui ne vivent que d'anguille et d'un peu de pain; et, avec tout cela, ils sont gros et gras." No doubt some of these eels came from the Ursulines' fishery at the Anse des Mères, just above Cape Diamond. How many little *habitants* are still to be found in one family, and how many of them still get "gros et gras" on this very warming winter diet! Who that knows the story of the French-Canadian will dispute the wisdom of this: "Au fond, tandis que les habitants s'amusent à la traite des castors, ils n'avancent pas tant leurs affaires que s'ils cultivaient le sol et s'attachaient au trafic de la pêche et des huiles de loups-marins et de marsouins." La Mère Marie knew a good deal more about the future of Canada in the seventeenth century than Voltaire did in the eighteenth, with his *quelques arpents de neige.*

Nothing useful is too small for her attention, nothing great too difficult for her judgment. She sends home to Tours "une certaine bourre qui ressemble au coton, afin de tenter en plusieurs façons ce qu'on en pourrait faire." There spoke Marie Guyard and Madame Martin. And here, again: "C'est une chose merveilleuse d'entendre parler de la beauté et de la bonté de ce pays-là . . . . les épis ont une grande coudée, et chaque épi donne plus de quatre cents grains." "Sa Majesté nous a donné deux belles cavales et un cheval, tant pour la charrue que pour le transport." Talon's introduction of new industries—weaving, tanning and others—excites her warm approval, and she rightly concludes that "le pays est plus fait et les affaires ont plus avancé depuis que M. Talon est ici, comme intendant, que depuis que les Français y habitent." The Marquis de Tracy is equally praised for excellence of another kind. "Nous allons perdre M. de Tracy . . . . Cette nouvelle Eglise, et le Canada en général, perd plus en lui qu'il n'est possible de dire; car il a mené à bonne fin des expéditions qu'on n'aurait jamais osé entreprendre ni espérer." Marie was emphatically a woman of light and leading, both in Church and State.

With the Indians she was, of course, thoroughly at home; and the wisdom of many bluebooks is concentrated into her pithy comments on the grand-paternal royal edict which ordered them to be immediately "civilized," as well as christianized. "They must see the woods and follow their parents to the chase. It is the nature of the Indian. He cannot submit to constraint. Loss of liberty makes him sad, and sadness makes him sick. We have more experience on this head than anyone else, and we freely confess that we have not civilized one in a hundred. Nevertheless, if it be the will of our Sovereign, we shall attempt the task." On the other hand, she can find no words too strong to explain how successful the nuns were in converting them. "Quatre d'entre elles communièrent à Pâques; elles s'y préparèrent avec tant de désir de s'unir à Notre-Seigneur, que, dans l'attente de le recevoir, elles s'écriaient: 'Ah! quand sera-ce que Jésus nous viendra baiser au cœur.'" 'Thérèse la Huronne' was faithful through three years of captivity with the implacable Iroquois, during which she openly confessed to her fellow-prisoner, Father Jogues, though she saw him tortured in a way that might have shaken many a stout heart. These five were Indian girls who had been a considerable time under convent influences. But the full-grown braves and squaws, once converted, were quite as staunch. The baptismal rite appealed to them with peculiar force, as the conditions under which its liturgy originally reached full growth in the fourth and fifth centuries were being reproduced in Canada. The Indians, like most early converts, came straight from ingrained adult Paganism. And so their initiation was very different from the short and simplified ceremony through which the infant heir of Christian ages is taken to-day. The Ursulines often gave the first instruction to the *audientes*. Afterwards came the immediate preparation of the *compétentes*: a lenten education in the new supernatural, in which great emphasis was laid on exorcising the demons of the old. The command *dæmonia ejicite* was never forgotten. And no sooner were the heathen demons cast out by many ritual solemnities, than the Jesuits warned the catechumen against the myrmidons of Satan, who took the warpath against unwary Christians. The good Fathers believed in object-lessons, and several times sent urgent messages to France for pictures of still more terrifying devils. Finally, the brave was baptized, during the regenerating joys of Easter, and sent forth, with the armour of Christ fast girt upon him by all the symbols of the Church.

La Mère Marie often encouraged the braves to give their own views on Christianity: "et lorsque j'entends parler le bon Charles Pigarouich, Noël Négabamat ou Trigalin je ne quitterais pas la place pour entendre le premier prédicateur de l'Europe." No legitimate means of conversion were neglected. She nursed the sick, quite in the spirit of Luke, the beloved physician. And though there probably were some "blanket Christians" in that as in other ages, yet she never had cause to regret her continual hospitality. "Comme la faim est l'horloge qui leur fait juger de l'heure du repas, il nous faut songer à ceux qui peuvent survenir, et tenir de la sagamité toujours prête." On the contrary, she found a genuine aid to conversion even in the serio-comedy of a regular *festin de gala*. "Pour traiter splendidement soixante ou quatre-vingts de nos sauvages on y emploie environ un boisseau de pruneaux noirs, quatre pains de six livres pièce, quatre mesures de farine de pois ou de blé d'Inde, une douzaine de chandelles de suif, deux ou trois livres de gros lard, afin que tout soit bien gras, car c'est ce qu'ils aiment. Voilà ces pauvres gens contents et ravis d'aise, bien qu'il y ait parmi eux des capitaines qui, à leur égard, passent pour des princes et des personnes de qualité. Ce festin, qui leur sert tout ensemble de boire et de manger, est un de leurs plus magnifiques repas; c'est ainsi qu'on les gagne, et qu'à la faveur d'un attrait matériel, on les attire à la grâce de Jésus-Christ."

The arrival of the Marquis de Tracy inaugurated a more sheltered life for the inhabitants of Quebec. But La Mère Marie was beginning to sink under the strain of the terrible years that went before. Gradually she was forced to give up her activities, one by one. But what she could do she did with a will. She could no longer teach the Indians under the old tree in the garden; so she had them brought indoors. She wrote a sacred history and a glossary in Algonquin, and a catechism for her old fierce enemies, the Iroquois. Her relations with these last blood-thirsty braves had gone through every phase. She had received their ambassadors with all due honour, and made an attempt to convert them. She had stood guard against them when they threatened Quebec. And now, having rightly drawn the sword at the proper time, she was again trying the persuasive arguments of the Church.

In 1671 she received a great shock in the death of her life-long friend. Madame de la Peltrie was suddenly struck down with pleurisy early in November: she took the news that it was fatal with perfect calmness; called in the Intendant Talon, to witness her will, and thanked him with as much grace as if he had been paying her a visit of state. M. de Bernières, nephew of her old protector in France, gave her the last rites; and, on the evening of the 19th, as the *Angelus* was sounding across the square from the parish church, she died, murmuring the words so often on her lips during her illness—*Lætatus sum in his quæ dicta sunt mihi; in domum Domini ibimus.—I was glad when they said, we will go into the house of the Lord.*

The following Easter, the year Frontenac first came out to Canada, La Mère Marie was in the throes of a mortal malady herself. She had all the girls in the convent called into the infirmary to receive her last benediction, which she gave to each one separately as they knelt beside her. She entrusted her last message for her son to Mère St.

Athanase—*dites-lui que je l'emporte en mon cœur dans le paradis.* Nor was public duty forgotten. One of her last acts was to dictate a letter to an influential personage in France, urging the completion of her well-considered scheme for the re-union of all branches of the Ursuline Order throughout the world. To the great regret of everyone Bishop Laval was then absent from Quebec. But the veteran Père Lallemant, who had served in every post of danger since the time of Champlain, gave her the last consolations of the faith. For some hours on the day of her death she neither spoke nor heard—rapt in ecstasy between both worlds. The evening *Angelus* was sounding, as it had for her fellow-labourer five months before, when she opened her eyes for one final look at the Ursulines kneeling round her, and then gently closed them again forever. All who were present saw a ray of celestial light rest on her face as her soul took flight for Heaven, and believed it to signify her consummated union with her Lord. The Ursulines commemorate this to the present day, by singing a special *Te Deum* on the last night of each recurring April. Père Lallemant preached the funeral sermon, pronounced the benediction, and the congregation dispersed. Then the Governor and Intendant, with the clergy and nuns, approaching the bier, were so struck by her expression that they sent for an artist to perpetuate it. The original of this portrait was burnt in the second fire; but a contemporary copy sent to France was afterwards returned to Canada, and is now in the convent. The portrait taken, the coffin was closed and this inscription placed upon it: *Ci-gît la Révérende Mère Marie Guyart de l'Incarnation, première supérieure de ce monastère, décédée le dernier jour d'avril* 1672, *âgée de* 72 *ans et* 6 *mois. Religieuse professe, venue de Tours. Priez pour son âme.*

The night she died in Quebec her Ursuline niece in Tours distinctly saw her laid out in a winding sheet, while a voice breathed close by, " Elle est morte." The other nuns were averse from believing this story next morning; but the first ship from Canada brought the confirmation of it. The whole Ursuline Order deplored the loss of such a saintly life. The Jesuits and all who knew her bore equally ready witness to her surpassing virtues. While Dom Martin's filial piety and religious zeal prompted him to publish her life and letters a few years later: "C'est ici un livre de reconnaissance envers Dieu et de piété à l'égard d'une personne à laquelle je dois, après lui, tout ce que je suis, selon la nature et selon la grâce."

Her cult began forthwith and has grown ever since. Fifty years after, Father Charlevoix hoped to hasten the day of her beatification by a new account of her merits. In 1752 a Quebec Ursuline writes: " Nous avons eu quelque espérance de voir notre vénérable mère mise sur les rangs pour la béatification; mais la personne qui avait pris la chose à cœur n'est plus. . . . ." And so it went on, at intervals, for more than a hundred years. Everyone who examined her life freely admitted that she ought to become Ste. Marie de l'Incarnation, yet nobody appeared with sufficient influence at Rome to get a place on the calendar for this remote Canadian saint. In 1867, the year of Confederation—so long ago as that—Archbishop Baillargeon of Quebec succeeded in getting her cause definitely begun. Some of the *lettres postulatoires* sent to Rome on her behalf are rather remarkable documents. The Canadian Zouaves, who went to uphold the Temporal Power in 1870, might perhaps be expected to address Pio Nono thus: "Nous, laïques, aimons à signaler que cette grande servante de Dieu est venue la première arborer sur nos plages le drapeau de l'éducation chrétienne, et que cette éducation, perpetuée par les imitatrices de son zèle, fait les femmes fortes et chrétiennes dont notre jeune pays se glorifie. Très-saint père, c'est au nom des mères chrétiennes qui ont donné leurs fils avec tant d'amour et de générosité pour la défense du saint-siège, que nous demandons avec instance la béatification de la Mère Marie de l'Incarnation." But the following is a curiously telling appeal, coming as it does from the cabinet ministers of Her Britannic Majesty for the Province of Quebec: "L'action bienfaisante de son œuvre se fait encore sentir de nos jours, et est pour toute la province une source de biens incalculables à tous les points de vue. . . . . . Chargés d'une grande responsabilité dans le gouvernement de cette province qu'habita la Mère Marie de l'Incarnation nous sentons le besoin de nous appuyer sur son intercession pour bien remplir les devoirs qui nous incombent." In 1877, she was pontifically declared 'venerable.' But for thirty years more the process for her beatification—which the Quebec Ursulines longed for even before the British conquest of Canada—has not been ended in her favour. Yet it was known to be in its final stage of all in 1907. No wonder the faithful Ursulines are on the tiptoe of expectation for the latest news from Rome!

The process may have been wearyingly long; but what French-Canadian, viewing her with the transfiguring eye of faith, could ever have doubted the result? The impulse towards sanctification has come spontaneously, and from the mass of the people, who still feel the exalting touch of this most effectual mystic. No doubt she had a share of personal faults and human failings. An age like ours would not be lenient in criticising either. But—unless all tradition, record and corroboration be untrue—even our age cannot deny her a befitting eulogy. Her actions and outlook were certainly bounded by the limitations of her Church. But, within those limits, she gave new lustre to the golden truth that there is more variety in virtue than in vice. And we Canadians of 1908, who are now entering the fourth century of our country's history, who, like the rest of mankind, prefer amusement to interest and incident to character, and who are now more than ever apt to mistake comfort for civilization:—we, in this twentieth century, can certainly not afford to neglect the example of all the zeal, devotion and self-sacrifice which went to the making of that well-wrought career.

VI.

La Mère Marie's influence has always remained inspiringly alive; and the tradition of her service has been greatly strengthened by many personal links between the passing centuries. Only three nuns had died during the first Ursuline generation; and some of the twenty-five on the roll in 1675 lived long enough to connect Frontenac's first administration with the first capture of Louisbourg in 1745.

Indian converts were as eagerly sought for as ever. Frontenac used to bring back the brightest Iroquois girls he could find whenever he went to Kataraqui, where Kingston is now. The Algonquins, Abenakis and Hurons were in still closer touch with the convent. The books of the "Séminaire," as the Indian classes were always called, contain many entries like these. "On the 15th of July, 1682, Marie Durand left the seminary after having been provided with board and clothing for a year." "La Petite Barbe, of the Mohawk tribe, who has been six years in the seminary, has returned to her parents at Ancienne Lorette." In 1686 an Indian girl called Marie Rose laid the foundation stone of a new wing; she was "dressed in white and represented the Infant Jesus." An Abenaki called Agnes Wes-k-wes even found the call of the cloister more compelling than the call of the woods. Only death prevented her from taking the veil; and the fame of her piety drew every Christian Indian near Quebec to her funeral.

Within four months of the day the corner stone for this extension was put in position the convent was burnt again. A brave lay sister, Marie Montmesnil, nearly lost her life in rescuing the precious relics. The *Hospitalières* again offered shelter in their cloisters, where the Ursulines intoned a *Laudate* and sang a *Memorare* to their perpetual superior, the Blessed Virgin, in token of resignation and thanksgiving. The *Hospitalières* greatly cheered the homeless Ursulines by remembering to make a special celebration of the feast of St. Ursula the following day. As before, every one in Quebec showed the greatest kindness, and a return visit of acknowledgment was headed by the Mother Superior, who called on the Marquis de Denonville at the Château St. Louis and on the Intendant at his palace. After going to see the eight sisters who had remained on guard in an outbuilding of the burnt convent, the little deputation re-entered the Hôtel-Dieu, and their records state that "the peace of the cloister was delightful after a day of such fatigue and dissipation." In November they all went into Madame de la Peltrie's house, near which a barn was converted into a temporary chapel, "not"—as their annalist quaintly says—"in the style of the Renaissance, but in that of the Naissance." The makeshift cloister and chapel were all that was most uncomfortable. "I see everything here to make you suffer," said the kindly bishop. The nuns, however, rejoiced at re-union under any circumstances: *Ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum habitare fratres in unum.*

1689 was a year big with the fate of empires. The Great Imperial War between France and England had just begun. It was to be renewed at intervals for more than a century, to culminate in both the Old World and the New in 1759, and to continue till Trafalgar had confirmed the British command of the sea for more than another hundred years. In Canada Frontenac began by a bold swift stroke at New England. In the British colonies, Peter Schuyler was formulating the original "Glorious Enterprise" of conquering New France that Pitt found the means of carrying out seventy years later.

In the midst of these wars and rumours of war, the Ursulines completed their present convent and celebrated their first jubilee. All of the original three were dead; but a nun who came out in 1640, and so was in her fiftieth year of service, took part in all the proceedings. Longevity has always been distinctive of this community. At every succeeding jubilee there have been nuns who had already assisted at a previous one. And the senior nun in 1908, the tercentennial year of Quebec, was not the junior in 1839, the bicentennial year of the convent. The Indians were already receding before civilization in 1689; and there were fewer at the jubilee feast than there used to be round the hospitable tables of La Mère Marie. The nearby friendly tribes had begun to wither at the touch of the town; the hostile war-paths stopped farther and farther west. The massacre of Lachine sent a shudder of apprehension through the whole colony. But no Indians ever again threatened the safety of Quebec. Frontenac, on the contrary, carried the war into the Iroquois country. And the Ursulines, who had drawn the sword at need in 1660, did so again for the common good in 1696, by equipping a tiny though efficient contingent of two men. But their favourite weapon was and remained conversion.

In 1690, New England made her counterstroke. On the 7th of October the vanguard of the American fleet was sighted below Murray Bay. Quebec stood aghast, defenceless; for Frontenac was much further off inland than Phips was by the St. Lawrence. The Ursulines were

instant in prayer, "seeking in every way to appease the divine judgement and obtain the favour of God for their country." And the townsfolk thought these intercessions had been accepted, when contrary winds so delayed Phips that Frontenac arrived first and flung back defiance at the summons to surrender:—"I have no answer to give, except from the mouth of my cannon." Phips at once began his bombardment, and the convent received its baptism of fire. "The first day a cannon-ball burst through a shutter and finally lodged at the bedside of one of our boarders; another cut a piece of her apron off one of our sisters. Others fell in the garden and court-yard. . . . .
Our house was crowded with women and children, so that we could hardly pass to and fro, but had to take our food standing and in haste, like the Israelites when they ate the Paschal Lamb. . . . We lent our picture of the Holy Trinity to be hung on the steeple of the cathedral, to show under whose protection we were fighting." On the 21st—Trafalgar day—the festival of St. Ursula was duly observed. Father de la Colombière seized the opportunity to extol the heroism of the virgin martyrs as worthy of present imitation. And Bishop St. Valier had just intoned, with vibrant solemnity, *Maria Mater gratiæ*. . . .
. . . . *Et mortis horâ* . . . .
when the hush that followed the benediction was suddenly rent by the crash of artillery. But, this time, Phips was only covering his retreat; and Quebec went wild with exultant joy. Frontenac became a hero of the people, and has remained so ever since. The church built beside the St. Lawrence, on the site of Champlain's *Abitacion*, became *Notre Dame de la Victoire*. And, three thousand miles away, in famous France, *Le Roi Soleil*, in the hey-day of his European renown, commanded a special medal to be struck in commemoration of this Canadian feat of arms—*Kebeca liberata, MDCXC, Francia in nova orbe victrix.*

The 18th century opened with famine, pestilence and war. Fever and small-pox carried off a fourth of the population of Quebec. Funeral knells became so frequent and so depressing to the spirits of the living that they were forbidden altogether. Five epidemics in eleven years scourged the town and turned the convent into a hospital. The last was in 1711, the year Sir Hovenden Walker's armada made its disastrous attempt against New France. The convent resounded with the noise of warlike preparations, close beside the cloisters. The nuns again prayed fervently for the French arms. And the British expedition, ill found and badly led, retired discomfited and alarmed by the many shipwrecks it suffered far down the River. *Notre Dame de la Victoire* was henceforth called *Notre Dame des Victoires*. Two years later the Treaty of Utrecht freed Bishop St. Valier from the Tower of London, where he had been nine years prisoner of war. This time the cannon roared in greeting, and every bell in Quebec was rung as the bishop landed amid the acclamations of the people, who all went down to the water side to bid him welcome home. The convent annals of the 18th of August, 1713, record his first visit to the Ursulines since his captivity. "In the course of the afternoon we had the pleasure of seeing our good bishop and hearing him express his joy. For our part, great is our gratitude to the God of all goodness, who has vouchsafed to grant us such consolation after our long and heavy trials."

In 1708, a very different prisoner of war had appeared at the convent. This was Esther Wheelwright, the twelve-year-old great-granddaughter of John Wheelwright, one of the most honoured of New England Puritan ministers. The child had been carried off in the raid against the little village of Wells, five years before. The Abenaki chief who took her had adopted her; and she had almost forgotten her English when Father Bigot came into the camp on a missionary tour. It was no easy matter to rescue her. An Indian chief thought pale-face prisoners were trophies of war, quite as much as objects of ransom. And it was only after long diplomacy and many seductive presents that Esther was given up to the *Great Captain of the French*, the Marquis de Vaudreuil, who sent her to school at the Ursulines' with his own daughter. Was it the contrast between the savage restlessness of the forest, as well as the civilized restlessness of French society at the Château St. Louis, on the one hand, and, on the other, the calm of the convent, that revived her childish memories of home and school and the happy orchard beside which she was torn away that midsummer morning, more than half her life ago? Who knows? But when the peace that restored the bishop to his diocese had let her family write for her return to them, she had learnt a second separating language, and found a new home and a new faith, and had taken the white veil among the Ursulines as Sister Esther of the Infant Jesus. She petitioned the Governor, as her adopted father, to allow her to make her final vows. The bishop approved; and Father Bigot preached the sermon at her admission. Letters were exchanged with the family, and the portrait then painted for them in her nun's dress is now in the possession of the seventh generation from the one to whose members it was sent.

But Esther was not the only, nor even the first of the Puritan Ursulines. Mary Davis, carried off from Salem in 1686, entered the novitiate in 1698. And, twenty-four years later than this, Mary Dorothea Jordan also found her happiest earthly home in the "House of Jesus," which the French missionaries had so often described to the three little captives among the Indians as the great sanctuary of the "pale-face virgins" in Quebec.

Forty-two years of comparative peace followed the return of the bishop from the Tower. The life of cloister, school and chapel went on with little disturbance from the outside world. Indeed, the outside world of Quebec was more moved by convent interests in 1739 than the convent was disturbed by worldly intrusions. A whole year had been devoted within the cloisters to preparing a *fête* worthy of the centennial year of the Ursuline order in Canada. The community now consisted of fifty-three nuns. Exactly fifty-three had died during the century. And their annalist rejoiced to think there was an evenly divided number to make an antiphon of praise in earth and Heaven. All pious observances were prolonged; all relaxations were shortened; silver plate was melted down to make a sanctuary lamp; and a general "retreat" heralded the approach of the famous first of August. The canons of the cathedral celebrated; the Jesuit Fathers preached; the Bishop constantly attended; and Pope Innocent X. granted an indulgence to all who took part—clergy, nuns and laity alike. The Indians were not forgotten. A special High Mass was celebrated for them, at which they sang the *Kyrie* and *Credo*. A feast of such abundance as to recall the best of those given to their predecessors by La Mère Marie brought their part of the ceremonies to a triumphant close. It was their last great entertainment at the Ursulines'. They had receded much further since the jubilee of 1689. At the time of the next jubilee the world was going very differently, far and near. The French Revolution had begun; a British sovereign had held the allegiance of Canada for thirty years; and the Indians were only at home beyond the ever-expanding frontiers of that *Western Country*, which was, in its turn, to be succeeded by a still farther-off *Far West* before the bi-centennial year had come.

The second quarter of the 18th century was the halcyon day of the old *régime* at Quebec. The kindly Marquis de Beauharnois governed the colony for fifteen years. A great "Father in God" was then bishop, Count Henri de Pontbriand. The *seigneurs* lived in homely affluence among their *censitaires*. One of them enjoyed the manor and vast domains of the baronies of Portneuf and Becancour. His house and chapel bore the insignia of nobility. Royal letters patent gave him "the right of arms, heraldic honours, rank and precedence, like the other barons of the Kingdom of France." His daughter Anne had all the colony could give her in the way of social amenities and distractions. Yet three years of society disgusted her with what she called the "gay follies" of "bowing and courtseying in the middle of an illuminated hall." She became contented only when she took the veil, and could summon the community to its daily duties by ringing the bell at four o'clock in the morning—an office she performed without a break for forty years. Another nun of this period, who came from the most comfortable home the colony then had, was Geneviève de Boucherville, whose father's note-book contains the significant entry:—"The land being mine, I think it my duty to settle there as a means of being useful to society." This anti-absentee landlord, Pierre Boucher de Boucherville, was the father, grandfather and great-grandfather of Ursuline nuns; for, besides Geneviève, three of the next and four of the following generation took the veil. His piety was proverbial, and its memory was kept alive for many years by the custom his descendants had of meeting to hear his "spiritual will" read aloud on the anniversary of his death. They were a long-lived family. Pierre Boucher was born during the life-time of Shakespeare; yet his Ursuline daughter did not die till the life-time of the Duke of Wellington.

The other classes of society shared the novel pleasure of this time of peace and comparative plenty. From the convent windows the nuns could see the snug little whitewashed cottages strung along the Côte de Beaupré—that well-named "shore of the beautiful meadow," which rose two hundred feet or more in one bold bluff from the St. Lawrence, and then, in evenly rising uplands, swept back to the Laurentians, twenty miles away. Or they could look out to the left of this, across the valley of the St. Charles, over a still greater natural glacis, sloping up and up to the blue ramparts of the same Laurentian mountains further west. Here the cottages were clustering round the churches into little straggling villages, which tamed the wild woodlands with fruitful spots of greenery. Or they could see the harbour, in the right foreground of the Côte de Beaupré, with, beyond, the rich Island of Orleans, bearing at first such native produce that the early settlers chose it as the garden of Quebec, and afterwards bearing such crops that every traveller's eye was taken with the scene of bright fertility at this seaward gate of Canada.

The very troubles of that time were those inflicted by prosperity. Church and State cried out against the increase of luxury. There were laments over the good old times of more frugality, when the *habitants* stayed on their farms, instead of crowding the wharves and warehouses to spend their savings, whenever a ship came in from France with a cargo of men's and women's frippery. Young men of more stirring natures turned to the wilds for profit and adventure. The paternal government was horrified to see hundreds of *coureurs des bois* "absent without leave." And the Church was more justifiably grieved to find how many of them were active as "the devil's missionaries" in the brandy trade among the Indians.

An education at the Ursulines' offered the acknowledged corrective to social excesses and the best preparation for the future mothers of the colony. Civil and ecclesiastical dignitaries were always willing to lend their countenance to such a school *fête* as the one recorded in the annals for the 23rd of August, 1752. Geneviève de Boucherville, now nearing her eightieth year, receives the distinguished guests with all the grace of the salon without any of its empty compliments. Duquesne, the last great Governor, and the Bishop and Intendant, with their suites, are there, surrounded by everyone whom the society papers would have mentioned next day, had there been any papers then. At the end of the reception room is a grove, from which the nymphs and shepherdesses issue in procession to greet the Governor-General with a triumphal ode, comparing his services for the king in Canada to those performed by his ancestors for the kings in France. There was no lack of poetastic incense; but Duquesne had won the right of patriotic homage, as had the bishop, who was addressed next. This good prelate's visitations into the further wilderness were duly chronicled in glowing verse. "All Olympus' faded hierarchy" was pressed into unwonted fellowship whenever the occasion seemed to warrant it, and some very quaint "conceits" were the result. When the Quebec Ursulines heard what yeoman service the bishop had done after their Three Rivers sisters were burnt out they gave him a place among the gods of Greece, quite in the effusive spirit of the fashionable pastorals of the day. The translation made for a later generation of English-speaking pupils is even quainter than the original.

Among the gods, if poets' lays are true,
Deeds most surprising were not rare to view;
And all Olympus did the feat admire,
When bright Apollo cast aside his lyre,
Forbore to sing and seized the heavy spade,
Or with the mason's trowel mortar laid.
Like him, my Lord, you put the apron on,
And soften hearts, while you are laying stone.

But very different days were coming; days when the heart of New France was failing it for fear; when the land was eaten up with corruption and gaunt with famine.

Before the middle of the century there came a new Intendant, a man at once so consummate and so outrageous in all dishonesty that even the last hundred and fifty years of public life in the United States and

Canada has failed to produce his superior in villainy. This was Bigot, whose sinister influence is seen even inside the convent, in the letter he wrote the Superior, forbidding her to sell or give away any food during the famine, except through him. A few years later the younger Vaudreuil became Governor-General, and gave the plausible and insinuating Bigot a free hand, while spitefully thwarting the great and incorruptible Montcalm at every turn. No former miseries had been so bad as these; for New France now had worse false friends at home than open enemies abroad.

In 1755 the Ursulines saw their sisters in the General Hospital burnt out, with loss of life. Messages were instantly sent offering a return of the kindness shown to the homeless Ursulines in the previous century; and presently the Hospitalières arrived. One of their number had been burnt alive; another was dying. She was nursed with all possible care in the infirmary, and when she died the Ursulines buried her in their own vault, "in order," as their annals say, "that her ashes, mingling with ours, may serve to make still more enduring that union which has ever bound us together."

The next three years were years of ever-increasing apprehension. The French arms were often victorious; but victory became more and more barren. Braddock's defeat at the Monongahela was the last real check to the British advance. Montcalm's battles were desperate rear-guard actions, in which his skill snatched victory for the time being from forces whose reserves were always closing up the ranks of his enemies and pushing the lines of converging invasion one step further into the doomed colony. The Ursulines were devotedly patriotic, and looked upon race and religion as almost one and the same. The contrast between New France and the English-speaking world was, indeed, a striking one. Not a heretic was to be found in Canada; while Roman Catholic disabilities were a striking reality in England, and the *Bostonnais* were the straitest Protestants in the world. But, even apart from religion, French priests and nuns have always been French of the French abroad; so much so, indeed, that their services to French influence were freely used by atheists like Paul Bert and Gambetta, who agreed that "Anti-clericalism is not an article of export." Montcalm, a frank and unswerving believer, looked upon the final struggle as somewhat of an Armageddon, though he was man-of-the-world enough to know that the British side was not in the service of an Anti-Christ. His Ticonderoga letter to the Superior of the Ursulines shows the bond of sympathy between the cloister and the sword in that great crisis. "Continuès, madame, à m'accorder vos prières et celles de votre sainte communauté . . . . . Je me flatte que celui qui a pris Chouagen saura repousser à

Carrillon les ennemis de la religion. C'est *Dieu* qui a fait un vrai prodige dans cette occasion. Je ai voulu Le servir, je Lui raporte tout, et je reçois avec reconnaissance votre compliment et celui de votre Illustre Communauté."

Day by day new stories of British preparations against Quebec were told through the grille at the convent. The taking of Louisbourg left New France shrunken, starved and isolated in the grip of a hostile sea. Three hundred French ships were taken on the Atlantic that year. No mail came out from France for eight silent months of disappointment. And when Bougainville arrived in the spring of 1759, the convent historian significantly praises his skill and bravery in having "penetrated the enemy's lines." Even the scanty fare usual in the refectory had to be reduced to four ounces of bread a day. Clothes, books, household necessities—everything—were lacking. Montcalm had only a little horseflesh at his dinners, his army was on half rations, the *habitants* often on less. Only Bigot and Vaudreuil fared sumptuously and gnawed the people to the bone.

On the 26th of June the British fleet appeared in the South Channel of Orleans; and the Ursuline annalist that evening closed her entry with the words: "The colony is lost!" From the convent there was a full view of Montcalm's seven miles of entrenchments along the Beauport shore, from the mouth of the St. Charles to the Falls of Montmorency. The British men-of-war could be seen feeling their way into the harbour; Wolfe's soldiers landing in detachments at the Island of Orleans, and afterwards, in great strength, just beyond the Falls. At nine o'clock on the night of the 12th of July the bombardment from the Levis batteries, across the St. Lawrence, suddenly began; and "at the first discharge from the English batteries the convent was struck in many places. We passed the night before the Blessed Sacrament, in such terrors as may be imagined." The next morning the Superior, La Mère Migeon de la Nativité, headed a sorrowful procession to the General Hospital, each nun carrying all she took with her in a little bundle. Ten volunteers remained to safeguard the convent, as best they could, under the brave Mère Davanne, and with the assistance of their chaplain, Father Resche, and two of his friends.

The General Hospital had already become a sanctuary for 800 people, including the nuns of the Hôtel-Dieu, who, like the Ursulines, immediately took the harassing duty of nursing the sick and wounded in overcrowded wards and with hardly any proper hospital appliances. Wolfe's unsuccessful assault on the Heights of Montmorency sent in many patients. Among them was Captain Ochterloney, of the Royal Americans, who had been wounded in a duel the day before; had left hospital to take part in the battle, saying he could never let a private quarrel stand between him and his public duty; had been shot through the lungs while leading his company of Grenadiers, had refused to leave the field after such a defeat, and had been rescued from a scalping party by a French soldier of the Regiment of Guienne. Two days later a messenger came out, under a flag of truce, for Ochterloney's effects, which Wolfe sent in, with twenty guineas for the soldier who had saved him. But Vaudreuil theatrically refused to allow any money to be given for this gallant deed. So Wolfe replied, thanking Vaudreuil, and promising Madame de Ramesay, directress of the hospital, that he would grant her special protection if victory should crown the British arms. This promise soon became known, and the hospital was more crowded with refugees than ever. Towards the end of August Ochterloney died, having been tenderly nursed by the good sisters to the last. And both sides ceased firing for two hours, while Captain de St. Laurent came out of Quebec to announce his death and return his effects.

In September hopes began to revive. It was thought the Canadian autumn would compel the British fleet to raise the siege. Wolfe's restless energy had to be reckoned with. But Montcalm's skill was depended on to keep him at arm's length. And so it might have, though ultimate conquest was only a question of time, if Vaudreuil's meddling counter-orders had not thwarted Montcalm's foresight. Suddenly, on the morning of the 13th, Quebec gasped at the desperate news that the red wall of the British army was on the Plains of Abraham, cutting off the town from the west as the British fleet cut it off from the east. Within four hours the French army had marched up from its entrenchments, formed line of battle, attacked, and been broken in defeat. The Ursulines in the General Hospital saw the fugitives flying for their lives down the Côte d'Abraham and across the valley of the St. Charles. By midday the overcrowded hospital had to receive hundreds more of their wounded friends. At midnight a detachment of wild-looking Highlanders took possession and guaranteed protection. The next morning the British wounded were brought in, and every nook and corner in the hospital and all its outbuildings was filled with friend and foe, now drawn together by the sympathy of common suffering, and become but man and man once more under the ministering hands of the good nuns.

While the Ursulines in the General Hospital were busily struggling to do this service in the thickest of all the crowding horrors of war, the little garrison left behind in the convent was racked by still further suspense. The dire news that Wolfe was on the Plains had reached them early in the morning. Their straining ears had heard the sharp, knelling clap of volley after volley from that steadfast British line; then the confused noise of hand-to-hand fighting, yells that might have come from Iroquois, followed immediately by loud, exultant British cheers, and, as they strained their eyes to see if their ears deceived them, the foreboded truth struck them to the heart when a mob of white and blue and grey fugitives fled in mad haste for the bridge of boats leading back to the French entrenchments. Even as they watched they heard of another disaster from the street beside them. Montcalm had just ridden through St. Louis' Gate, mortally wounded—and this news touched the quick of anguish. Some terrified women, seeing him pass by between two Grenadiers, who supported him in the saddle, had shrieked out: "Oh, Mon Dieu—le Marquis est tué!" And he had tried to reassure them by replying: "Ce n'est rien! Ne vous affligez pas pour moi, mes bonnes amies!" The surgeon told him he had only a few hours to live:—"So much the better. I shall not live to see the surrender of Quebec." But he attended to the last details of his public duty before he let his memory turn to his beloved family circle among the happy olive groves of his home at Candiac. He sent a farewell message to every member; and then, as his life was ebbing fast away, he made his final peace with God. Often, in that dreadful night, he was heard praying and rendering thanks for the consolations of the Catholic faith. Just as the dreary day was breaking he breathed his last.

What desolation met the eyes of the nuns that morning! The seven miles of French defences stretched as usual along the Beauport shore to the heights of Montmorency; but no one manned them. The guns were dumb and deserted. There was no stir of life about the empty tents. Nothing moved along the road which had so lately bristled with ten thousand bayonets. The houses were as desolate as the camp. Death had struck peace as well as war.

Bad news kept coming in all day long. All the other French generals had fallen in the battle, with no one knew how many officers whose daughters were pupils of the convent. In the afternoon the death of two Ursulines was reported from the General Hospital. One was La Mère Charlotte de Muy de Ste. Hélène, daughter of a Governor of Louisiana. She was the convent annalist who lived just long enough to see the fulfilment of her foreboding entry for the 26th of June: "The colony is lost." By a strange coincidence the other was Mary Jordan, a Puritan, whose former compatriots were represented by the American Rangers in Wolfe's triumphant army. But she was "La Mère de St. Joseph," heart and soul, when the battle was joined the day before, and she died, just after Montcalm, as French, as patriotic, and more intensely Roman Catholic than he.

The day wore on, and the nuns in the convent had more time than those in the hospital to realize what a desperate pass the colony had come to. A homeless and despairing people, a broken and fugitive army, and the last half-mile of the rock of Quebec, close beset by victorious forces on land and sea:—and this was all that was left of the Canada they knew!

That night a funeral procession stumbled its way through the encumbered street to the convent, bearing the great and unfortunate Montcalm to his last resting place in the Chapel of the Saints. The town had been in such confusion all day that no one could be found to make a coffin, except an old servant of the Ursulines, "le bonhomme Michel," who wept bitterly as he worked at his makeshift of a few rough boards. At nine o'clock the mourners entered by the fitful glare of torchlight. De Ramesay and every man in the garrison that could be spared from duty were there, with many civilians and women and children. One little girl, who held her father's hand as she felt the awestruck silence when that rude coffin was lowered into the shell-torn ground, afterwards became La Mère Dubé de St. Ignace, and used to tell the story of that memorable night to successive nuns and pupils, down to the Ursulines' bi-centennial year of 1839; and one of her most attentive listeners, both as pupil and nun, is still alive to repeat the tale in Quebec's ter-centennial year of 1908. *Libera me, Domine,* chanted Father Resche and his two companions; while the little choir of siege-worn nuns replied from behind the screen. It was one more fulfilment of the family tradition: *La Guerre est le Tombeau des Montcalm.*

On the 18th Quebec capitulated. Three days later the Ursulines returned to their shattered home. On the 27th an Anglican memorial service was held for Wolfe, in the same chapel where Montcalm lay buried, and the funeral sermon was preached by the Rev. Eli Dawson, chaplain to H.M.S. *Stirling Castle.* The style of this oration is too inflated; but the preacher was right in his estimate of the immense importance of the victory. "Ye Heralds of fame already upon the wing, stretch your flight and swell your Trumpets with the Glory of a military exploit through distant worlds! An Exploit which for the fitness of Address in Strategem, the Daringness of the attempt, and the Spirit of its execution shall take rank with the choicest Pieces of ancient or modern Story in the Temple of Fame, where it remains immortal."

The Mothers winced at the unwelcome necessity of having to yield up their altars to what they thought unhallowed rites. And the conquerors had the usual Protestant predisposition to take the mass for superstitious mummery. But personal experience and many amenities on both sides made each more tolerant after that long, hard winter.

General Murray, now in command of the British army of occupation, quickly won golden opinions by his justice and generosity. He and his men cheerfully gave up a whole day's rations every week for the benefit of the poor, and always paid religious processions of all kinds "the compliment of the hat." And it soon became known that, before leaving for England, Townshend, though obliged to borrow money from the fleet for the needs of the army, had yet sent Bougainville enough to help the French sick and wounded.

Murray established his headquarters in the convent, which was also used as an officers' hospital and had a guard of Highlanders. The sanctity of the cloisters was religiously observed, and not a single complaint was ever made against the British garrison. On the contrary, the officers and men did all they could for the nuns, shovelling the snow for them, seeing they got the best food that could be had, and generally making them as happy as possible under the circumstances. As the winter began to set in the annalist records that the Highlanders, "exposed by the peculiarities of their costume to suffer severely from the climate, became objects of compassion to the nuns, who set to work to knit long thick stockings to cover the legs of the poor strangers." Captain Knox, of the 43rd, records another pleasant amenity in his journal for the 30th of November. "The nuns of the Ursuline convent having presented the Governor and other Officers with a set of crosses of St. Andrew, curiously worked, they were displayed in compliment to this day: in the corner of the field of each cross was wrought an emblematical heart, expressive of that attachment and affection which every good man naturally bears to his native country."

Thus passed the terrible 1759. How different from 1659, when La Mère Marie de l'Incarnation was writing home to France her patriotic congratulations on the Peace of the Pyrenees and the rising glories of His Most Christian Majesty, *Le Grand Monarque* and *Roi Soleil*!

French hopes began to revive with the spring of 1760. The gallant de Lévis was gathering his forces at Montreal; his army was to be joined by all the able-bodied manhood of the country as he came down; and the *Fleur de Lys* was to float from the Citadel again. On the 21st of April Murray ordered all the inhabitants, except the nuns, to leave Quebec. All private property left behind was stored in the Récollet church, on the site of the present Anglican cathedral, watched by two delegates chosen by the townsfolk, and placed under a strong guard. On the 23rd the ice moved down and navigation opened. On the 25th Lévis' vessels began to arrive at Pointe-aux-Trembles; and a desperate struggle was seen to be imminent. On the 28th every British soldier that could be spared from actually manning the walls marched out to prevent Lévis from closing in to the commanding heights at decisive ranges. A desperate fight ensued; far bloodier than the first battle of the Plains, and in a few hours the little British army staggered in, beaten back to its walls, with the loss of more than a third of its numbers. The French army had lost even more men; and the convent was presently filled with the wounded of both sides. Lévis opened his batteries: all the dangers of a siege began again, and at much closer quarters than the year before. The vanguard of a fleet was reported coming up stream under a press of sail. It rounded into harbour after dark; and a French officer on the Beauport shore sent off a message to Lévis to say the French reinforcements had arrived at last! The rumour flew round and fired the besiegers to instant action. But just as they were about to carry the town by assault they found they were mistaken, and that the whole British fleet was coming to relieve Quebec and cut off their own retreat. They at once raised the siege, retired in all haste on Montreal; and there, brought to bay by irresistible forces on land and water, they laid down their arms forever. Three years later the convent annals record the momentous change of sovereignty in these few and simple words:—"On the 24th of May, 1763, a treaty of peace was signed between the Kings of France and England. Canada is left to the English. God grant religion may continue to flourish there!"

This devout wish seemed at first destined to disappointment, in the sense desired by the annalist. The good and great Bishop de Pontbriand died before the final surrender, and the Canadian branch of the Church was bereft of its ordinary head, at the very time that the State was wrested from its *Mère-Patrie*. For eight years, from 1758 to 1766, not a novice joined the thinning ranks; and the novitiate, consequently, soon ceased to exist. "To add to our difficulties, all commerce with France is forbidden: yet what credit could the Canadian merchant, even if not already ruined, hope for in London? And how many articles of prime necessity, especially for the Church and altar, and for the apparel of persons living in religious communities, are no longer to be found on the list of English manufactures, since their proscription by the law of the land!"

However, the nuns faced every privation with undaunted courage. They did Indian bark work, which they sold to the British officers' families. Perhaps they were taught by Esther Wheelwright, who was elected Superior in 1761, and who might still have retained the art she learnt in her five years' wanderings in the forest, between her Puritan home and the convent. They earned a little money from their own people by embroidery and gilding and other work useful in restoring religious service in the ruined churches. They were poorer than they had ever been, even in the worst days of a hundred years ago. The present of a little seed grain is thankfully recorded as likely to enable them to tide over the next winter without losing their pupils.

In 1761, there were 37 boarders, and English names appear for the first time. Some years later the annals say:—"It has been a great consolation to us, in the midst of so many difficulties and trials, to see our classes always well filled, there being often as many as sixty boarders, French and English. The latter are naturally very gentle and docile; but it is sad not to be allowed to bring them up in our Holy Faith." There are very few Anglo-Canadian families, of any social standing during the first century of British rule, whose daughters did not get at least some of their education from the Ursulines. And was not St. Ursula herself the daughter of a Prince of Britain?

1766 was a turning point in Ursuline history. The novitiate was re-opened; Monseigneur Briand, the Vicar-General, arrived out after being consecrated as fourth Bishop of Quebec; and the foundress of their Order was beatified as St. Angela of Merici. "The happy event was celebrated with as many outward demonstrations of joy as if the whole country had still been under Catholic rule." The breach between French and French-Canadian public life was already widening. In 1767, La Mère Marchand de St. Etienne writes to the Ursulines in Paris: "The news we have had from France this year grieves us profoundly. Although expatriated by the fate of war our hearts are as French as ever, and this makes us doubly sensitive to the decline of that dear motherland. I cannot help saying that it is as well to be in Canada, where we enjoy the greatest tranquillity. We are not in the least molested on the score of religion. We have a Governor, who, by his moderation and benignity, is the delight of every one, and a bishop who is the joy and consolation of his flock." This juxtaposition of British commander-in-chief and French-Canadian bishop speaks for itself. A little later on La Mère de St. Louis de Gonzague writes:—"Religion is perfectly free. People say it is not the same in Paris, where religious communities suffer persecution. We are told that you were even obliged to celebrate the beatification of our Blessed Mother Angela in secret. We have no such difficulties here under British rule."

In 1773 the Jesuits, hereditary friends of the Ursulines, were suppressed in France. In 1774 the British Parliament passed the Quebec Act, favouring French-Canadian rights and privileges. In 1775, an army of American Revolutionists invaded Canada and besieged Quebec. Bishop, clergy and nuns all saw the peril of intolerant assimilation staring them grimly in the face; and all stood as firmly British as they did against the third American invasion, in the war of 1812. And in 1799, when Monseigneur Plessis preached a sermon in the Basilica to celebrate Nelson's victory at the Nile, no church in Canada responded with heartier alacrity than the Ursuline chapel to the Bishop's *mandement* ordaining a general thanksgiving for the blessings ensured to the French-Canadians by the just laws and protecting arms of the British Crown.

And this appreciation of British right and prowess was not wrung from any assemblage of mere frightened women, cowering for protection beneath the first strong hand; but sprang spontaneous from the well-proved heroines of three sieges and four battles.

VII.

St. Ursula is reverenced in the cloisters as a great patroness of learning. St. Angela founded the Ursulines as a teaching order in 1537. And La Mère Marie de l'Incarnation and her successors have always looked upon their school as the prime object of all their work in Canada. Ursuline teachers and boarders are always drawn from the best social classes in their respective communities; and these female Etons exert considerable influence in different parts of the Roman Catholic world, with their 500 convents, their 12,000 nuns, and their 100,000 pupils.

Quebec society offered a fair field and much favour to the Ursuline teachers in the 18th century. Charlevoix found it very much to his taste in 1720. " . . . . . a little world where all is select. . . . . . A Governor-General with his staff, nobles, and troops; an Intendant, with a Superior Council . . . . a Commissary of Marine, a Grand Prévôt, a Grand Voyer; a Superintendent of Streams and Forests, whose jurisdiction is certainly the most extensive in the world; merchants in easy circumstances, or at least living as if they were; a bishop and a large staff of clergy; Récollets and Jesuits; three old-established communities of nuns; and other circles almost as brilliant as those surrounding the Governor and Intendant. . . . . There are abundant means of passing the time agreeably. . . . . Current news is confined to a few topics. News from Europe comes all at one time; but then it lasts a whole year. . . . The arts and sciences have their turn, so that conversation never languishes. The Canadians breathe, from their earliest years, an air of good will which makes them very agreeable in social intercourse. Nowhere else is our language spoken with greater purity. . . . There are no really rich people here. . . . Very few trouble themselves about laying up riches. They live well; that is, if they can also afford to dress well. But they will stint themselves at table in order to dress the better for it: and it must be admitted that dress is becoming to our Canadians. They are a fine-looking people, and the best blood of France runs in their veins. Good humour and refined manners are common to all; and even in the remoter country places the slightest approach to boorishness is quite unknown." In 1757, Montcalm found the ladies "spirituelles, galantes, dévotes," and notes in his journal that "Quebec is a town of distinctly good society. . . . at two splendid balls I saw more than eighty charming ladies, all beautifully dressed." So, perhaps, the "good old times," which form the theme of a lament written from the convent in 1785 were not so very different from the new as the writer would have her Parisian Sisters believe. "There is liberty to profess our holy religion; but there is little care for living piously, young girls are not brought up so well as they used to be. Some of our pupils are taken from us and allowed to go to the theatre before the age of fourteen. We hear many complaints of the vanity and luxury which are becoming prevalent in society; yet there are many good people who persevere faithfully in the path of duty." Society was probably getting more complex in Quebec, and throwing off its froth and depositing its dregs as it always has since social complexities began. But the fair field and much favour were there, for all that. Very few convent schools have ever enjoyed such opportunities, and none have used them better.

Yet in one important respect the Ursulines were at a very serious disadvantage. All communication with France was cut off by the British conquest in 1759, by the War of the American Revolution in 1778, and again by the long wars of the First Republic and Empire; while no French book was printed in Canada till 1765, and very few of any general educational value appeared there during the next fifty years. The only source of supply was from a French bookseller in Paris whose London correspondent managed to forward a few text-books, from time to time, as occasion served.

This separation from many forms of French life in those troublous times of universal questionings, and the difficulty of getting secular text-books, combined to throw the whole soul of the teaching more than ever into the religious sphere. But this overwhelming preponderance of one aspect of instruction did not crush out all other aptitudes, as some might think. Literature was certainly not taught on modern comparative lines; but there are many books in use to-day which are of an altogether lower world of literature than the Roman liturgy, with its profoundly intimate adaptability to so much human yearning, and its perennial grandeur of expression. How those Ursulines would have rejoiced exceedingly to see the fulness of knowledge uniting with the charm of the best French prose in praise of the æsthetics of the liturgy, in Dom Cabrol's *Conférences* at the Institut Catholique de Paris on *Les Origines Liturgiques*! "Ainsi l'Eglise s'est servie des sens, des cérémonies extérieures, pour vous élever vers Dieu; c'est le premier degré vators of religion? Look at this French version of his *De Spec,* c. xxxix, P.L., t. 1, col. 735, and be convinced forever:—"Vous avez des spectacles saints, perpétuels, gratuits; cherches-y les jeux du cirque, regarde le cours des siècles, les temps qui s'écoulent, compte les espaces, attends qu'on touche la dernière borne, défends les sociétés des églises, ressuscite au signe de Dieu, lève-toi à la voix de l'ange, glorifie-toi de la palme du martyre. . . . . Nous avons, nous aussi, cette littérature, nous avons de la poésie, des sentences, même des cantiques en grand nombre, des chants;—pas de fables par exemple, mais des vérités. . . . . . ."

But how could there ever have been any place for English-speaking pupils, and, above all, for Protestants, in such an atmosphere? The only answer is that there always has been room for both creeds and both races in all matters of secular instruction and that the class-room *entente cordiale* has remained unbroken from the appearance of the first English pupils to the present day. As English schools became established, however, fewer Protestants attended. Now-a-days the boarding school is mainly French-speaking and almost entirely Roman Catholic; while the Roman Catholic equivalent of Sunday-School work is carried on among the girls of the public schools, who attend the convent for that purpose only. Education moves within certain limits in all branches; but, within those limits, it is thorough. The facilitative amenities of life are nowhere better understood; and the feminine of "manners maketh man" is nowhere better put in practice.

Religion is very naturally made pervasively attractive to every Roman Catholic; and the nuns and pupils are generally the best of friends. Many a girl leaves in tears: but these do not recruit the ranks of the novices nearly so much as those who leave less regretfully, "have their fling," and then return for consolation from a hollow world.

A childish impression is sometimes fixed for life by the beautiful commemoration which marks the fête-day of La Mère Marie, when every hand helps to strew her grave with roses. And what pupil ever forgets the end of her first Christmas term? Long before daylight, while the little girls in the junior dormitories are still asleep, soft, distant music floats through the open doorway, stealing over each warm coverlet, to take the ear between dream and waking. *Noël! Noël!* are the first words soaring on the wings of that glad melody. And, presently, the now expectant eyes discern the first tall, white, gliding form, with taper-lit blonde head, leading the undulant, long procession of the elder choir girls. Voices, violins and organ—a swelling tide of sound—flow on and in, until the very air of the whole vibrant room thrills with sympathetic harmonies. A few sweet, rapt moments of full ecstasia . . . . . . and the choir is passing through the farther door . . . . and the music, The great renunciation made, the *Postulante* leaves the chapel, while the nuns remain in continual intercession. Presently she returns, robed as a sister; and makes her vows of service. Then, like a living crucifix, she prostrates herself before the Throne of God. There, while her sisters chant thanksgiving to the Mercy Seat of faith, there—in a long, enraptured vision—she lies, prone, all else shut out. . . . . . . She is so still . . . . . . so still in silent adoration . . . . you hardly know if she is drawing human breath.

At length she rises, turns toward the rest of her community, slowly passes down the waiting lines, where each nun greets her with the kiss of peace; and then, as they file out, she follows, last of all, never again to leave the cloisters in either life or death.

VIII.

Who does not want to pass that massive inner door, which guards the inviolate cloisters of one of the most romantic buildings in the world, which has been a gate of honour for every Governor-General of French or British empire, and for every Royal party that has set foot in Canada, and which the personal command of kings and viceroys alone can open?

Visits are rare and visitors of high distinction; and the whole convent is astir to give befitting welcome. A word through the double-screened wicket to the left, a word in reply from the invisible nun on watch, two strong turns of solid, double locks; and the door is flung wide, and reveals a semi-circle of bowing and smiling Sisters. You enter, and it instantly swings to; both keys turn firmly, and you stand there a wondering moment, with the same sense of mingled strangeness and familiarity as you had when your first glimpse through a telescope at night carried you off to the scene of things unrealized.

The next minute a nun is asking if this is your first visit to Quebec, and if you had a rough crossing. The Superior is a little ahead, doing the honours with inimitable grace. The corridor is high and well-lighted; it looks into the sunshiny garden; the pace is quickened, and you move on, a willing captive to the charm of such unexpected gaiety. You turn a corner—what can you be coming to now—a ball-room? The same *brou-ha-ha* of intervolving sound, and the same little puffs and gusts of laughter—only with less forced notes, the same fleeting little calms! You step in, just in time to catch the point of that capital story about the shy visitor who got lost in the cloisters, and mistook the right door, and . . . . . and here, at your very elbow, actually is a nun with whom you have danced in many a ball-room, and who remembers perfectly how often that splendid two-step was encored!

Over at the other end of the room the respectful little semi-circle has been instinctively re-formed, as some more nuns come forward to be presented to the guest of honour and make sweeping curtseys that could not be excelled at court. A pathetically happy group is standing beside one of the deep-set windows. It is a nun with her father and sister, who have permission to follow *à la suite* on this occasion, and who are seeing her in the same room, instead of through the grille, for the first time for—"ever so long," they say, indefinitely, though they remember well enough the exact dates of such rare events. But that nun pities her sister in the cold world outside, and is really sorry that as you are a man you can never experience the joys of her cloistered life.

This is the private reception room, where the visitors' book is kept; and the nun who holds it open while you write notices that by having paid two visits within a month you have broken all precedents, and she promises you the gold medal for attendance and good conduct. The room is typical of the whole convent. The floor is bare natural wood, spotlessly clean. No First Lieutenant ever had a smarter deck. There is some fine dark panelling round the walls, harmoniously plain. A door opens through the panel at the far end. It is quite indistinguishable at a little distance, and has an air of mystery about it. How the nuns laugh when you ask if that's the way to their *oubliette*! The only ornament, beside a few small pictures, is a huge, old-fashioned fire-place, with a chimney-nook you would like to sit beside, and build castles in the dying fire some midwinter evening. The mantel-piece and frame are of handsomely carved, smoke-brown oak. The dogs and fire-irons are enormous, with a long-established air about them. The whole is flanked by cannon balls and shells—grim reminders of troublous times, and glorious trophies of the steadfast bravery shown during the four sieges through which the convent has passed.

The library has the appearance of being deep down, the windows being high, and the light coming only from above. You look round and quite naturally ask how many "tomes" there are—"volumes" seem such mundane things compared with these ranks of solemn folios. There is a case or two of modern secular books, some up-to-date Canadian histories among them. Here is the only known impression of the seal of the famous Company of New France, or *Cent Associés,* founded by Richelieu in 1627. The seal is three inches in diameter, the encircling inscription is *Me donavit Ludovicus Decimus Tertius,* and a figure holding the cross stands against a background spangled with the *fleur de lys.* On the other side is a ship under sail, with the inscription:

In Mari Viæ Tuæ. This ship and its fine motto, *Thy ways are in the Sea,* have been adopted by the Champlain Society, and the Quebec Tercentenary crest displays both sides of the seal.

But the most interesting of all is the wealth of correspondence: letters written during the last three centuries by people of every class, from a reigning sovereign to a simple *habitant.* Anne of Austria, Frontenac, Montcalm, Murray, Carleton—all who were greatest in Canada's heroic ages were correspondents of the Ursulines. But more appealing than the rest are the letters from two Parisian Ursulines during the Reign of Terror. In spite of the horrors surrounding them and the fate which sent twenty-five of them to the guillotine, these faithful nuns did all they could to safeguard the property and revenues of their sisters in Quebec. Half of their letters are filled with accounts of the business precautions taken by their indefatigable *dépositaire,* La Mère de Ste. Saturnine, then in her eightieth year. The other half alternately freeze the blood and set one's veins on fire with indignation.

On the 13th of January, 1793, the nun who then signed herself "ex-Superior of the Ursulines of the Faubourg St. Jacques" wrote to the Superior in peaceful Quebec:—"Dear Reverend Mothers, you have doubtless heard with grief of the destruction of all the religious houses in France. Our monastery has not escaped the common fate. Your compassionate hearts would have bled to see the cloister-wall broken down, and ourselves forcibly driven out from our asylum. To our great regret, we are all scattered . . . . . beg our Divine Lord to grant us grace to make a holy use of the heavy trial he has sent us. All the clergy we knew have disappeared; we cannot discover any who have escaped the massacre of the 24th of September. Our venerable confessor and our two chaplains were certainly among the victims. . . . . . . I recommend myself to your good prayers as one already dead, for although my health is fairly good, which seems a miracle, considering my seventy-four years and cruel situation, yet I may not be among the living by the time this reaches you. The holy will of God be done. If I were younger I might try to accept your invitation." The letter was not delivered till after her death, as presentiment had told her. But neither correspondent could have imagined beforehand what adventures that farewell message was to undergo. It was carried over to England by some refugees flying for their lives, and confided to the care of a shopkeeper, who mislaid and forgot it. Finally, one day in 1802, nine years after it had been written, an English merchant, who had found it in London, called at the convent and gave it to the third successor of the Superior to whom it had been addressed!

The annals contain some curious entries about distinguished visitors. Thus it is recorded that when King William IV. paid a visit, as a young naval officer of twenty-two, the nuns found him "most affable and gracious, *although a sailor.*" Four years later, in 1791, came the next member of the Royal Family, Queen Victoria's father, then called Prince Edward, who was colonel of the 7th Fusiliers stationed at Quebec. The good Mothers were delighted with him. He took refreshments with the bishop in the Superior's room, and bought some bark work for which he insisted on paying twenty times its value. Again, in 1860, the greatest of all their public receptions was given to King Edward VII, then on his Canadian tour as Prince of Wales. The annalist records with pardonable pride that the Prince spent two whole hours in going over the convent, after the ceremony, and that "he showed as much interest in observing the plain apartments, the bare floors, the simple cells, as any one of us might have felt in seeing Windsor Castle."

The Refectory is where "plain living and high thinking" are practised *in excelsis*. Here are the signs and symbols of both. This room looks centuries older than the others. It is in perfect fitness for its present use; but it is long and comparatively low; quaint steps lead down into it from its garden door, the ceiling is massively ribbed with huge dark beams, and the whole appearance of it is distinctly mediæval. The tables are long, bare, immensely heavy; so, too, are the deep and narrow benches. You can't imagine that chairs and carpets have ever been invented. The table is set for supper. There are white water jugs at intervals; and heavy semi-globular pewter salt cellars on thick stems and solid bases. These are over two hundred years old. At every place there is a little birch-bark bread-basket, used to "gather up the fragments that remain." A lectern, like a witness-box in shape, serves for the *lectrix* who reads aloud during meals from some book of devotion. It is all so simple, and so unstudiedly natural. A nun explains the bill of fare, and the great difference between fast and feast days. You would mistake the feast for the fast days, if you had not heard about the latter first! But it seems that, beyond marking the difference in the calendar by difference in diet, the Refectory is merely a place to refresh one's body for the sake of one's soul. "Won't you give us the pleasure of your company at dinner?" laughs a nun who has not been cloistered many years, "you'll be better afterwards than if you dined at the club." And so you would.

As you approach the class-rooms there is a quick, settling shuffle of little feet, a tap with a wand, a soft "Hsh!"—and there is the nun at her desk, and all the girls standing before her, exactly as teachers and taught stand for inspection all the world over. The prize-winners wear coloured scarves over their left shoulders; but they are wisely not "shown off" before the visitors. A half-holiday is asked for and granted in honour of a distinguished guest; and instantly every girl is dropping pretty, smiling curtseys to a running accompaniment of multitudinous *Mercis!*

"It would be such a privilege to be allowed to present the novices." So the party goes on to where fourteen are being marshalled in an adjoining corridor. Two broad sunbeams are pouring steeply down into the far end of the long room in which you are waiting; and as the timid little procession begins to move in, beneath the high window, veil after mist-like veil becomes an aureole in the transfiguring light. One face and figure arrests your eye. The colour comes and goes, shifting incessantly under the rich, warm, half-Italian complexion. The neck strains a little, and pulses fast; though the face is calm enough, and the delicately poised figure is almost still, it sways so imperceptibly. What is her beauty doing here, secluded and immured from every hope of triumph? Look again. She is evidently interested in all that is taking place; but, just as evidently, only in so far as these outside interests relate to her vocation. "Vocation" is the dominant in the rhythm of her whole expression. Some other novices catch their breath with shyness before answering your questions; but her words are as untroubled as her brow. Is this the "Blessed Damozel" that haunted the imagination of Rossetti with a vision of earthly beauty looking back on us

From the gold bar of Heaven?

. . . .

The wonder was not yet quite gone
From that still look of hers.

. . . .

Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of waters stilled at even.

There is an astounding volume of sound from what must be four-handed piano-playing in the music room. No wonder: it is a fourteen-handed performance! The solitary harp looks neglected in its corner. Is it out of favour, even in convents, now-a-days? At one time it was the chosen instrument to give the languishing, romantic finish to a lady-like education. Perhaps its truer virtues will be recognized again, and the fit though few will re-awake its glamour as bards and angels are famed to do.

A hurrying little group meets you in the passage. They had forgotten the Indian pupil! She is a curiosity now; perhaps the last of her race to be taught there—within a few short steps of where Marie de l'Incarnation used to gather so many round the famous ash tree. She is a new-comer; and the convent is almost as strange to her as to the visitors who cluster round. One of them knows some words of her native tongue. Her eyes look far out beyond her surroundings as she answers. Is it only a freak in the association of ideas that always makes certain Indian languages set your fancy wandering among wind-swept pines and "the voice of many waters"?

But there are so many things to see! The corridors seem unending; they are so long, so many; weather-beaten grey outside, solid through and through, as if they had grown, rough-hewn, from the rock of Quebec and had been hand-chiselled afterwards, just to humanize them. Every window gives a glimpse of golden-tinged block-tin roofs, with a steep pitch and studded with little pointed windows. The stairways are innumerable. One is called after St. Augustine—a great hero in all convents—and on the landing is a statue of St. Joseph which was placed there in commemoration at the jubilee of 1689. The Blessed Virgin Mary, of course, watches over the Community Hall, in her quality of Perpetual Superior. A bell is ringing—it is the same one that is rung at four o'clock every morning of the year. You confess that the last time you heard it at that hour you were coming home from a dance. "What different worlds there are in this one," says the nun beside you; and then adds quickly, "but innocent pleasures are very good for refreshing the mind—we take a great deal of pleasure in our garden." Another nun, with a turn for ornithology, regrets that as the town spreads further and further, all round the convent, the birds get fewer and fewer. "They would come back if they could; this is their sanctuary."

These things excite your own interest. But what interests the nuns most of all? Probably the Chapel of the Saints. A very ancient and highly venerated statue of Our Lady of Great Power stands benignant in the centre of the altar. The whole breadth of the wall on either side is covered with pictures and relics. In every other niche, too, there are relics in pious plenty. Some of them were added during the life-time of La Mère Marie, like those of the martyrs, Justus, Modestus and Felix, which her son, Dom Claude Martin, sent out in 1662. An Ursuline of Metz sent a relic of St. Ursula herself. All that is mortal of St. Clement is here, by permission of Pope Innocent XI. In 1674 the collection was already so rich that it was decided to build a special chapel in its honour. Since then it has increased enormously in value to the devotee. Here are the trophies of the Holy War, of the war from which there is no discharge but death, the war against the Powers of Darkness and the principalities of this wicked world: relics of Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits who so often befriended the Ursulines; of the "most lovable" Saint Francis de Sales, of the great St. Augustine; of the foundress of the Ursulines, St. Angela de Merici; relics of all ages and all countries, from the first century to the twentieth and from Canada to China; and, shedding a diviner virtue on them all, genuine particles of the Cross of Christ and of His Crown of Thorns.

Will objects connected with Marie de l'Incarnation soon be numbered with relics of the saints? You cannot help hoping that they will, so eager are her followers in this just cause. Her tomb is already a shrine for nuns and pupils... .. ..

But here is something different, something to bring you back to secular affairs, and waken memories of the heroes of world-history. It is the skull of Montcalm, a gruesome relic of that vivid personality. The chaplain keeps it in the same room as Father Resche used during Wolfe's siege of Quebec. A curious link between a changeful past and present was supplied by the life of Father Daulé, another chaplain, who was born at the end of the Seven Years' War and died as France and England were about to send an allied army to the Crimea. You will find a deeper and less mortuary interest in the historic old chapel. *La Guerre est le Tombeau des Montcalm.* At Bougainville's request the French Academy had composed a Latin inscription for a memorial tablet shortly after Montcalm's death; and Pitt had willingly given permission to have it sent out to Quebec and erected here. But many delays occurred; and this tablet was only unveiled on the hundreth anniversary of the burial, at a service held with all the magnificent rites of the Church which the hero loved so well. The elaborate inscription recites Montcalm's titles to remembrance at full length. But it is little more than a good official document beside the terse French epitaph which Lord Aylmer, a British Governor-General, had inscribed on the grave many years before. This noble tribute, from one soldier to another's fame, will live so long as self-sacrificing loyalty is held in honour, and victors and vanquished alike can appeal for equal justice to the God of Battles.

HONNEUR A MONTCALM!

LE DESTIN

EN LUI DÉROBANT LA VICTOIRE

L'A RECOMPENSÉ

PAR UNE MORT GLORIEUSE.

No other spot of equal size in the whole New World touches the heart of universal history so nearly as this old chapel. It is just beyond beheld the very birth of Life; and then not feel how the most modern self transcends its wonted boundaries of time through all its endless kinship with the immemorial past and illimitable future.

Re-enter now the high-throned Upper Town, girt like a giant armed. Seek its heart once more. The sacred solitude does not chill you now, as it did when you came here first, out of mere bustling curiosity. Your feet no longer seem muffled in the dust of death. Greatness no longer seems departed; but omnipresent, immortally alive. For here, in this veteran chapel, which has braved so many dread ordeals with the heroic Ursulines, the twin renown of Wolfe and Montcalm becomes a shrine of memory, where the pilgrims of all chivalry can find inspiration for the exalting service of every age.

One step beyond, within the cloisters, a living link brings this Valhallan past almost as close in the body as you have just felt it in the spirit. Here is an aged nun who perfectly remembers the tales of former days, told her so often by La Mère de St. Ignace, who saw Montcalm's shattered corpse lowered into the grave after the Battle of the Plains. While Mère St. Ignace herself heard the still older tales of Geneviève de Boucherville, who saw the perpetual Lamp of Repentigny first lighted more than two hundred years ago, and whose father remembered the time of Champlain, whose tercentenary of the foundation of Quebec is being celebrated in this present year of grace. The combined ages of these four human links already exceed three hundred and seventy years. Long may this mighty span continue to grow with the life of the survivor!

A few steps more, and you are again in the historic garden, with its intimate memories of La Mère Marie. Here, between her intercessions to the King of Kings, she formed the statesmanlike resolve to persuade Canadians that, if they would be steadfast through the appalling devastation of famine, war and earthquake, they could make Canada the Land of Promise for countless generations. And here the nuns still come to reinvigorate mind and body; and for the solace of the soul. Here is a haunt of ancient peace, in which to ponder great, still books of meditation. Here is the old French cross, upheld by a pedestal made from the original ash-tree, beneath whose shade La Mère Marie taught and exhorted her faithful converts. Near by is the corner of wild garden, as wild to-day as when the little Indian feet brushed so deftly through its springing flowers, never treading one down because she loved them all to grow there as God himself had planted them. And here, where the very ground seems native to the Golden Age, the nun who passes by in venerative mood might well apostrophize the first great Ursuline of

Canada in words addressed to another spirit of the same deep constancy and calm:

> Thy soul within such silent pomp did keep,
> As if humanity were lull'd asleep;
> So gentle was thy pilgrimage beneath,
> Time's unheard feet scarce make less noise,
> Or the soft journey which a planet goes:
> Life seem'd all calm as its last breath.
>
> A still tranquillity so hush'd thy breast,
> As if some Halcyon were its guest,
> And there had built her nest:
> It hardly now enjoys a greater rest.

But the garden wakens deeper memories than these. Are not its walls the harp whose unseen, æolian strings have echoed to the voice of cloister melody from morn till eve, year after year, and in five years of jubilee? At dawn the Godward day begins:

Ad Te de luce vigilo.

During more secular hours there are the busy hum of school and rippling treble of an interlude of play. But, where all is done *ad majorem Dei gratiam,* even these sounds become attunable to the dominant strain of a glad *Te Deum* or the full self-surrender of a suit preferred *in forma pauperis* to the Throne of Grace:

O Cor amoris victima.

At dusk the whole Sisterhood commits soul and body to Heavenly safe-keeping for the night:

In manus tuas, Domine.

And is not all this but one accordant note in the full chorus of praise addressed by a single Church in a single tongue to the one true God—a chorus of praise unwearied for nineteen Christian centuries, and unwearied still, as, with the sun, it passes from choir to choir unceasingly, among the Catholic faithful the whole world round?

And even when her Chapel is dim and silent, and the midnight garden is only a hushed seclusion at her feet, the watching Ursuline is brought home to the Divine Infinitudes by her very Convent. Here, from her roof-side window, again within the stupendous colosseum built by Titanic Nature round the arena of Quebec, she finds all that Earth can show her of Eternity:—the home of a vanished past, lost to all record or tradition; the home, too, of deeds to stir the hearts of men while history remains; the scene now of quickening life along the great, ship-bearing River, in the busy streets, and among the girlhood at school beside her: and then the hills, the old, the everlasting hills; and the primordial tides, throbbing so far inland with the full pulse of the Atlantic; the wide, wide sky; the universe of stars; the view of all immensity.

Murs, ville
Et port,
Asile
De mort,
Mer grise
Où brise
La brise—
Tout dort.

Ce bruit vague
Qui s'endort,
C'est la vague
Sur le bord;
C'est la plainte
Presqu'éteinte
D'une sainte
Pour un mort.

On doute
La nuit..........
J'écoute..........
Tout fuit,
Tout passe,
L'espace
Efface
Le bruit.

Then, when an angel lays his ear to this still convent, as we lay ours to catch the voice of Ocean whispering through a single shell, he surely hears those undertones of lowly human service which are the soul of all the harmonies on high.

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