

LIFE OF JEANNE MANCE.

By MDLLE. MARIE-CLAIRE DAVELUY.

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FATHER CHARLES RAPIN AND MADAME ANGÉLIQUE DE BULLION.

A Provincial of the Franciscans and a man of great merit, Father Rapine, with whom Jeanne Mance was already acquainted, was due in Paris during the winter of 1640. It was with lively pleasure that she meditated how she could lay her somewhat unusual case before this great figure of his time. Father Rapine was Professor of Philosophy or Theology and Director of the Franciscan monastery in Paris from 1635 until 1637, which entailed his being *ex-officio* head of the provincial chapter of Paris; afterwards he became Provincial of the French province of Saint-Denis for some years. He is seen intervening in the affair of the *Cordeliers* with the *Récollets* from 1636 to 1642, in virtue of his powers as commissary Visitor of the Breton Province. From 1641 to 1643 he was again Superior of the monastery in Paris. This Franciscan Father was held to be one of the best historians of the Order of Friars Minor. "He has written much, as often in Latin as in French," notes Moreri.

Father Rapine heard Jeanne's story with great attention. Did one ever talk of the Canadian missions to a Franciscan without arousing his interest? On them the Franciscan Order Friars Minor had already expended large sums. They were always ready to resume the apostolic field, where they could show their martyrs. Did the dolorous shade of Father Le Caron shimmer a moment before the eyes of Father Rapine? It was not long since the gentle missionary had passed away, grieving that he could never more return there, over the hostile seas to the bloodstained and blessed shores of New France. Father Rapine, "man of great merit," could not easily have forgotten the events which had momentarily cast an air of mourning over the activities of the Order.

He gave his conclusions, "approving Jeanne Mance's project and her utter trust in the will of God; saying that this was good and that she must forget all considerations of self, but that it was advisable that others should be confided with the direction of this last matter." Dollier de Casson.

A few days later Jeanne Mance had news from Father Rapine. He requested her to be prepared for the afternoon of the next day but one. She was to go to the town mansion of the Bullion family, in the rue Platrière. He himself would be there and would introduce her to a great and rich lady, a widow of extreme and ardent devotion; who was the discreet but munificent patroness of practically every charitable activity in France: Madame Angélique de Bullion, the widow of a month of the late Superintendent of Finances in France.

On a winter's day of 1641 Jeanne Mance entered the Bullion mansion for the first time, the first of many subsequent visits, as time was to show. The architecture of the house was very simple in style. But the interior was surprising. The richness of its interior decoration thrilled and enthralled. Painted walls and ceiling glowed with glorious colour and line. The elegant style of the painter Simon Vouët was unmistakable, the artist whom Louis XIII loved and encouraged, as did Cardinal Richelieu.

The presentation was effected without any awkwardness. It was obvious that the distinguished Franciscan was a welcome visitor to the house. The widow of Claude de Bullion had, since her recent bereavement, surrounded herself with the compassionate brothers of Saint Francis,

for had her husband not always had a profound regard for them, and had he not desired to be buried in one of their churches, that of the *Cordeliers* of Paris.

This then was the high and puissant Dame Angélique Faure, widow of the noble lord Claude de Bullion, chevalier, seigneur of Bonnelles, Esclimont, Panfou and Villiers, Baron de Maule, Marquis de Gallardon, Minister of State and Guardian of the Seals of the Royal Orders, Superintendent of Finance and President of the Chamber of his *Parlement*.

Perhaps Jeanne Mance first saw her in the attitude portrayed in that picture of her which is attributed to Philippe de Champaigne. It was her custom to receive visitors seated in her favourite armchair, which was ornamented in the left hand corner with an escutcheon bearing the arms of the de Bullion family. She wore a black dress, low cut, with a shoulder drapery, in the style of Louis XIII's reign. Her feet rested on an embroidered velvet footstool.

Amplly built and extremely stout, of a dignified aspect and smiling easily, she was and always remained of a placid habit. At first sight of her one recalled her husband's joking expression. "That clever, dark little Monsieur de Bullion" called her, familiarly, "ma grosse amie,"—my fat friend. All sorts of charitable works interested this pious lady. She devoted most of her time and money to them, and her bounty was always on the scale of truly royal largesse. One day she had gone to Saint Vincent de Paul and had offered him a sum of 80,000 francs for the *Hôpital-Général* of Paris.

The first impression was excellent on both sides. Father Rapine having retired, the interview was prolonged. A mutual sympathy had been established. At her departure Jeanne Mance promised to return. Her visits to the Bullion mansion became increasingly frequent.

Then one day their conversation took a particular turn.

"Mademoiselle," said Madame de Bullion suddenly, "Tell me, for your coming to me seems like a work of Providence, would you not like to take charge of a hospital in the country of Canada to which you are going?"

(Jeanne declares herself willing, after her doubts as to her physical fitness for the task have been swept aside by Madame de Bullion's insistence. She again consults Father Saint-Jure.)

On Father Saint-Jure's advice she made a retreat of ten days, and again he assured that "God wanted her in Canada that he desired her to accept the offers that had been made her, and that she must not worry about her bodily infirmity and the natural delicacy of her constitution, great as they were.

Now Jeanne Mance's visits to Madam de Bullion had a definite object. First and foremost the terms of the hospital's foundation were discussed. It was resolved among other things that Jeanne Mance should be assigned an annual pension of 1,000 livres for her lifetime; in addition she was to be charged with the administration of the said hospital's temporal welfare until her death. Then the pressing question the anonymity in all future endowments was settled.

A preliminary draft was of necessity drawn up. Then Jeanne Mance began to receive the necessary money for the enterprise. "Mademoiselle," relates Sister Morin, "received her money in several instalments or payments, as I have already said, not being able, for fear of being detected, to carry it all away at once; she has told me herself several times most divertingly," continues the worthy annalist, "that she hired a sedan chair, and that one evening her porters said to her: 'But how comes it, Mademoiselle, that when you come to this place you weigh less than when you go away? Assuredly this lady must love you and make you presents.'" This gave her greatly

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