

The Catholic Colonies: Part 1



J.M.J.

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By +Angela Marie Michaels

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(Pasture Rural Landscape)

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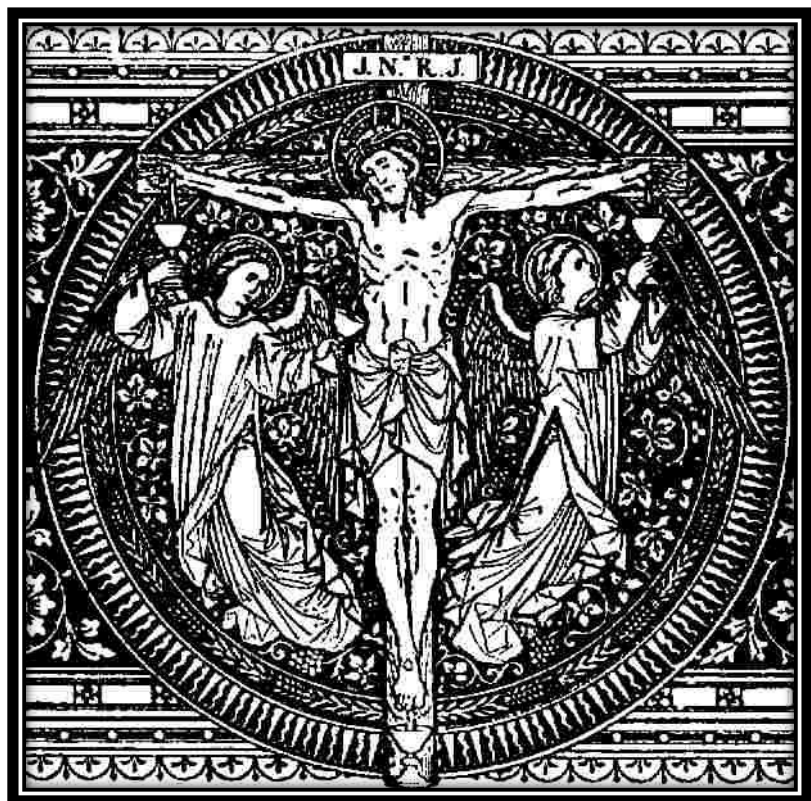
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Glory to the Blood of Jesus!

*“Blood of Jesus, Precious Blood,
Praise to Thee for all Thou art;
Fount of grace, the Godhead’s shrine,
Source of glory, Blood Divine. . .
Blood that angel hosts adore,
Would that men would love Thee more,
Blood of Jesus, Sacred Heart,
Praise and thanks for all Thou art,
Home where all find peace and rest,
Be Thou known and loved and blest!”*

—Fr. Faber



↖CHRISTLAND

N
W + E
S

↖*sea*

↘

↖*north coast*

The Sanguis Christi Isles
~ aka "The Catholic Colonies"

sea

↖CAPITAL

The Northeast ↗

coast

Droplets

SEMINARY

↖*The Northwest*

Droplets

MONASTERY

sea

coast

mountains

↖

mountains

THE WILDS

↙

forest

↖*Pretium*

wilderness

↘

The Misericordiae

River

Cruce

coast
Cordium

sea

coast

Purgatory

OUR LADY OF MERCY

CHILDREN'S HOME

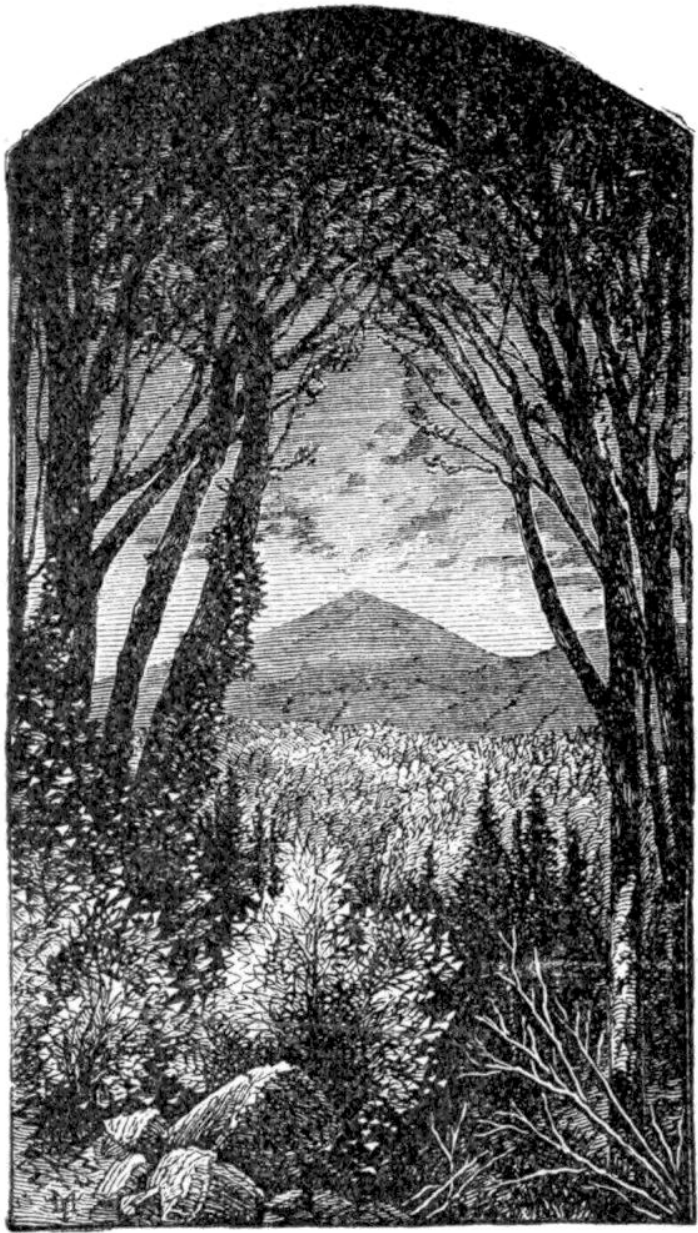


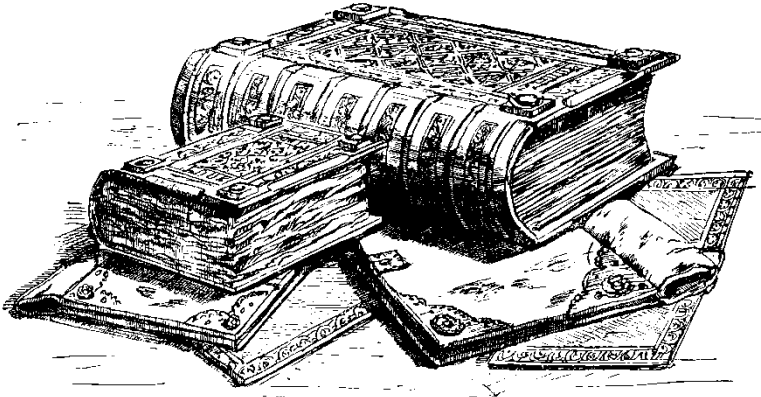
A.M.D.G.

B.V.M.H.

All to the
Greater Glory of God
and in Honor of the
Blessed Virgin Mary







Prologue: Pages of History...

“TELL US,” requested the convalescent child, resting among soft red clover, shaded by boughs, “the story of these Isles. . .the tale of our motherland. . .”

“What don’t you know?” the older boy, thus addressed, inquired.

“Oh—please tell us the whole story, as though we knew it not,” she answered.

“Though there is much that I, myself, as yet, know not, I will do as you ask,” came his kind reply, accompanied by a gentle smile.

And the boy began the story.



“...My family has long been good friends with the *Chrétiens*, sharing both their sorrows and joys. . .of which there have been many in the past three decades. These events, pertaining to our own days, began before my time. *Mon père* was still unwed, and His Majesty was but recently married to a most noble, beautiful, and virtuous lady,

Queen Clare. Soon thereafter, on July eighth, another faithful '*follower of Christ*' was born to this illustrious Royal Family. (For that is what the surname Chrétien, *cray-tee-en*, means.) The little princess was christened Isabella Maria. She would grow to be of the same peerless beauty as her much-loved mother, although Isabella's refined grace and elegant feminine strength would someday surpass even that of Lady Clare. Two years later, on Christmas morn, a Crown Prince was born. All of Christland, the ancient kingdom which was home to the Chrétiens, rejoiced! At the baptismal font, the newborn prince continued a tradition several generations old, receiving the same name as his father—becoming Constant V.

"A period of mourning was entered not long after this blessed Christmas Season. Sadly, King Constant IV suffered the loss of his wife. As comfort for himself, to provide a mother for his children, and to contract a union beneficial to the kingdom, allying the capital of Corpus Christi more closely to one of the land's most powerful and influential duchies, a marriage was arranged between His Majesty and Lady Farrah.

"While tempting to say that this proved to be an unwise match, who can discern the Will of God? Who can question the value of one human soul. . .the worth of one life. . .as being of less or greater importance than another? All are created to attain salvation.

"The eternal fate of Constant V's younger half-brother remains a question mark.

"Prince Eric Chrétien was the first born of His Majesty's second marriage, about one year following the royal wedding. As the siblings grew up together, ten years passed by without much significance. . .There were miscarriages, the usual difficulties of maintaining peace and order in a

realm. The crime level increased and prisons became overcrowded with inmates, ranging from those who had committed minor misdemeanors to much more serious offenses. Often had the need for penal colonies been discussed: a place to send convicts, while also expanding Christland across the seas, founding a new settlement and spreading Catholicism to distant foreign shores. The next year, action was finally taken to see this long-held desire fulfilled.

“Some time previously, an explorer from these shores had sailed into harbor, with an intriguing story for His Majesty of a marvelously beautiful island far south of here—about a month’s distance, with good winds. He had circumnavigated the mainland, thus finding it to have been formed by Our Lord into a perfect teardrop shape. Its uppermost tip faced north; the southern parts gradually curved, somewhat like this:



“Positioned near the northeast and northwest portions of the ‘tip’ were several islets of varying sizes, located a short distance from the main island. These came to be known as ‘The Droplets.’ There was evidence of primitive natives inhabiting, mostly, the mainland, but no contact was ever made, the men and women avoiding the foreigners. On two of the northwest ‘Droplets,’ a penal colony was soon established with a garrison and prison. Military families and other interested settlers at once moved in, as did the first shipload of convicts.

“They had a good first year, everyone working hard to

build solid fortifications in preparation for winter. On January sixth, the following year's happy Epiphany, Prince Caspar Melchior Balthazar Chrétien was born. He was Lady Farrah's second, and last, healthy child to be safely brought into the world.

"For two years, there was peace and stability in both Christland and the newly established 'Catholic Colonies.'

"And then tragedy struck.

"Not much had ever been discovered about the native inhabitants of the isles. They had scrupulously kept their distance, observing the foreigners from afar and, as it turned out, they had strongly resented their coming. Their true hideous nature was discovered that spring when they made a massive attack on the colonists. It was an almost complete massacre, with only a few survivors narrowly escaping death and the grim fate that had met any prisoners taken alive by the savages.

"The natives were bloodthirsty cannibals.

"Christland reacted with horror when word of the ruthless massacre reached its people, sorrowing at the tales depicting the loss of men, women, and children alike, many told in grisly detail, for these natives followed a terrible tribal law which commanded: 'Hate your enemy, slay your enemy, eat him and drink his blood.' King Constant IV, recognizing the evil of the pagans, determined to retake not only the fallen 'Droplets,' but the entire mainland itself. The very next spring at the earliest possible date, he sent a large force across the seas in order to win a decisive victory against the cannibalistic savages, to reestablish the penal colonies, and catholicize the islands. There was all-out war for three years.

“During that time, more convicts and free settlers moved in. A capital city was founded in the conquered northernmost tip of the mainland, and a bishop was appointed. Due to the blood spilt by so many innocent colonists and to honor that Most Precious Blood which Our Lord shed for the salvation of the world and each individual soul, the capital—as well as the entire teardrop island—was christened *Sanguis Christi*.

“Peace was won at the conclusion of those three hard-fought years. At the same time, gold mines and several diamond mines were discovered. This excited the interest of many in Christland. There was an influx of free settlers and the usual slew of disreputable crooks, all eager to move to the new lands now available for further colonization.

“In the midst of this great triumph and excitement, King Constant IV died, leaving his eldest son to assume the throne that autumn. Constant V would turn just twenty on Christmas Day. Despite the natural sorrow that his father’s death caused him, there was joyful anticipation of a royal wedding to be held, with the newly crowned king as groom. He was expected to propose to a childhood friend in the spring.

“However, the marriage was not to be. Spring came, and with it, a bitter revolt led by none other than Constant’s greedy and ambitious half-brother, Prince Eric, who was strongly supported by his influential mother. Farrah had always felt that *her* eldest son should have the crown, rather than the son of Constant IV’s deceased first wife; Eric was envious and self-centered enough to agree. He had never gotten along very well with Constant, through no fault on his older brother’s part. Constant was a good man of a most noble character. Young Caspar greatly admired

and looked up to him—as do I.

“While this family strife was ongoing, trouble was also brewing in the Catholic Colonies. Unfortunately, the governor appointed by King Constant IV proved to be incompetent. He was a well-meaning nobleman, but unsuited for the task of wisely governing the Sanguis Christi Isles. Much trouble was caused by the licensing fees which each miner was obliged to pay to search for diamonds, gold, or other ore. Added to this was the trouble of finding men for the police force to protect the colonists and safeguard the peace. Many former convicts were hired, and the ranks of the force became flooded with corrupt officers who abused their authority. Although the colonists were in his heartfelt prayers, and he sent clear orders for reform, being preoccupied with the pressing troubles with his half-brother, King Constant V was unable to properly attend to the situation in the distant colonies. Things went steadily from bad to worse; the royal commands were later found to have been intercepted by enemies within, and had never been implemented. Meanwhile, Christland became enmeshed in a widespread civil war, with treachery and rebellion occurring on all sides of the field. After two years, on a cold winter day, Constant was defeated. The rightful king was locked away in chains and confined in harsh seclusion, without even the benefit of the Sacraments, a deprivation which would last for three long years. . .

“Eric was crowned king by a bishop who supported his revolt, ‘King’ Eric taking firm control of the capital, Corpus Christi. He appointed a new governor to rule over the Catholic Colonies, with the same authority of a monarch. Ritch Powers would turn out to be much worse than the former nobleman. He was not incompetent, and he actively engaged in furthering the bad conditions already present on

the Isles. He supported the general corruption and the moral decline among the populace, working in direct opposition to the good Catholic bishop of the colonies. He was also known to be on friendly terms with the secret societies that had been gaining greater influence and power in the colonies.

“Eric himself wasn’t concerned about the state of the Isles, or the spreading of the True Faith. He saw the penal colonies merely as a means of filling his own coffers, wanting only to bleed the land and settlers dry of all that they were worth, without any care for how it was done. Being much of the same mind, his governor acted accordingly.

“There was still hope for a reversal of these ill proceedings. Throughout her younger brother’s imprisonment, Princess Isabella had not been resting idle. With the strong support and help of her husband, a worthy Catholic noble from the Passio Christi duchy, this intelligent and inspiring woman marshaled Constant V’s scattered forces. Aply continuing the fight against his unscrupulous usurper, they determinedly worked to free the rightful king from his unjust captivity.

“At long last, the king’s loyal subjects successfully carried out the escape plans. . . .Constant, grateful to God and Isabella, returned to the battlefield. His final victory occurred less than a year later, on September twenty-ninth. Following intense fighting, the kingdom was gloriously retaken, the control of the throne returning to Constant V. But his troubles were not yet over. Prince Eric and his stepmother were still on the loose, as ambitious as ever. The rebels were now significantly in the minority though, and King Constant V was able to turn more of his attention

to finding out the state of affairs in the penal colonies. A very good governor, Lord Jean Vinard by name, was appointed at Christmastime, as Constant's gift to the needful people of the Isles, one for which the good settlers would be greatly appreciative, for Vinard was a staunch Catholic who took his duties most seriously.

"His very first act of office, upon arriving in the Isles on February first of this present year, was a direct challenge to the secret societies' notable presence in these parts, a veritable gauntlet thrown down to the Freemasons and their allies.

" 'Who,' he asked, surveying the Sanguis Christi capital as he toured the fair city, traveling to his new estates, 'gave permission for this Lodge to be built? Tear it down.'

"And 'it,' the Colonies' Grand Lodge, was promptly torn down.

"The outrage of the Masons at this offense can only be imagined.

"Governor Vinard sent a brief report back to the king concerning his initial findings—something of an overview of the present situation in the Isles. There was much work to be done, he had seen at the outset; and a lot that he must undo. His first focus was on the capital, which was to be his headquarters, as well as being the site of the island's sole cathedral and home of the longsuffering Bishop Schaffer [*shay-fer*], whose unfailing efforts to perform the functions of his own Church office had been frequently frustrated by malignant forces. Without acting *openly* against him, Freemasons were suspected of opposing the bishop at every turn and causing significant harm, both spiritually and temporally.

"Vinard delivered to this esteemed clergyman a Christmas gift from King Constant V, which he had brought

with him from the motherland. It was a very valuable chalice of solid gold, embedded with thirty-three precious red diamonds. Constant had ordered the sacred vessel to be crafted in thanksgiving to God for his deliverance from the hands of his enemies and for the victory won when he had regained control of his land, reclaiming his throne—and also for his joy at finally being able to claim the hand of his lovely and ever-faithful bride.

“Lady Catherine Sancta Maria Fidela Soulney of the Anima Christi duchy and Constant Chrétien had been wed on the feast of St. John the Evangelist, Constant having proposed on Christmas Day, which had also been the king’s twenty-eighth birthday.

“The red diamonds had been fittingly cut from a very large, extremely rare gem, known as the Precious Blood Teardrop; one of the most prized gems from the Crown Jewels, worth an immense fortune. Constant chose to bestow this rich gift on the Catholic Church’s ecclesiastical authority in the Sanguis Christi Isles, in apology for the great trials that Bishop Schaffer had endured during the rule of the two previous governors, and as a promise of his and Jean Vinard’s full support for the thorough catholicizing of the colonies. Aware of the great harm that the Freemasons were causing to countless souls, King Constant V wanted the bishop to do all in his power to eradicate their wicked presence for good.

“In the meantime, the conflict was ongoing in Christland. Although most of the warfare had subsided, there were still occasional outbreaks of violence in some small portions of the kingdom. Eric’s whereabouts were unknown. He had disappeared from the scene. There was no doubt in anyone’s mind, though, that the prince was still plotting for

when he could try again to oust his hated half-brother, and be 'king' once more. . ."



There was a moment's silence. A cool breeze lightly rustled among the boughs, patches of sunlight glimmering through the leaves and dancing across the shaded clover.

At length, the child breathlessly spoke.

"O! you ought to write down your story in print for others to read the tale, you told it so well."

The older boy, smiling a little, replied, "Our story is, as yet, very much incomplete—besides which, I could never hope to match the eloquence of Lord Fontaine in chronicling such events."

"Fontaine? Who is he?"

She was answered by a laugh, a friendly laugh which sounded pleasant to the ears. "That's another story altogether!* But now it is your turn. Pray tell me more of yourselves."

"Oh. . ." she breathed, perplexed, "I hardly know where to begin. Where should we start?"

"I can help with that. Who are you exactly?" the boy asked them with keen interest. "And how came you to be here?"

"We-ell," the convalescent said slowly, glancing 'round at her circle of companions, "I suppose, really, when one considers the question, our being here wouldn't have come about at all, were it not for that morning in April. . . The morning we met Edwin."

* (To learn more about Lord Fontaine, the reader is referred to the *Catholic Once Upon a Time Series*, Volumes 1 and 2.)

So that is where this story of *The Catholic Colonies* shall begin.



Chapter 1: A Providential Meeting

“GOOD MORNING, MERTEN!”

The young farmhand, who went by the name of Merten Meinhardt [*mine-heart*], and was the same age as the reigning king of Christland, looked up at the merry call, a smile breaking across his face at first sight of the boy and girl hailing him from astride their mounts. He had been so intent on his work that he had not heard the hoof beats thudding on the thick grassy fields.

Merten was kneeling in the southwest corner of a fenced pasture. It was early morning, April twenty-ninth, the feast of St. Peter Martyr, and he had just finished burying the last of the blessed palms which were to be placed in the four corners of one's property, so as to obtain heaven's special protection.

“Hello,” he said, standing up and taking a soiled handkerchief from his pocket, leaning his forearms over the top fence railing, and wiping the wet dirt from his fingers.

There was a faint Germanic lilt to his voice, his eyes bearing a warm glow, a most friendly light, as he asked the pair, "What brings you two here?"

"Can you guess?" the boy grinningly returned, displaying a leather pouch and small trowel before leaning over to steady his companion's pony while she dismounted.

"Burying palms for your uncle?" Merten easily did so. "I've just finished the doctor's, myself. It didn't take very long; the ground is good for it after the recent rain." April was a rainy season in the Catholic Colonies.

"What will you do now, Merten?" asked the girl.

"Check the fence line while I'm here, I think, and there is some damage on one of the doctor's wayside shrines that I want to fix, the crucifix on the south fence."

"We're free till this afternoon. May we help?" the boy asked.

"If you wish," Merten readily accepted. Being a friendly sort, and the local doctor's only farmhand, he appreciated the help as well as the companionship offered by the siblings.

Lewis and Meriol Marsden were orphans living with their maternal aunt and her husband, Mr. Myron Dobbs, whose property adjoined that of Dr. Alden [*all-den*], on the west side. Lewis, a sturdy-limbed boy with dark brown hair and eyes, was twelve years old. He was a steady, reliable youth who did his best to be a responsible and helpful worker on Mr. Dobbs' wheat farm. Merten always liked to acquire his assistance or one of his older cousins' help when he sometimes needed an extra hand. Lewis' younger sister was a nice, gentle girl with a slender, delicate build. She was ten years old and had curly light blonde hair and light blue eyes. Meriol also enjoyed visiting the doctor's place, especially when she could help out with

the chores in and around the farmhouse itself.

They worked in companionable silence alongside Merten for awhile, Lewis asking an occasional question of the older man. Merten was the kind of person that a boy could learn a lot from. He had had much experience working at a wide range of jobs when growing up, and was handy with many different tasks, including (but not limited to) raising various livestock, farming, the art of smithery, a bit of masonry, carpentry, hunting, and scouting.

Soon after they had watched Merten repair the sloped roof that was picturesquely and protectively overhanging the large wooden crucifix, Lewis tore his fascinated gaze away from Merten's skilled handiwork to take a look at the shadows. It was now midmorning. The time had sure flown!

"Merten, before we go any further from here, would it be alright for Meriol and I to go check the fish traps at the river?" Lewis asked, referring to the Misericordiae River, which wound southeast around the outskirts of the doctor's property. "We could check yours too, and bring back any catches for Mrs. Jennings. Would that be alright?"

"Yes. But be careful," Merten cautioned, while examining a portion of the fence, with most of his attention absorbed by the task, although he spared the pair a glance when reminding them, "With all of the recent rainfall, the banks will be treacherous. Check your footing before you check any traps."

"We will!" the siblings promised.

They rode off at a canter.

Very soon, Lewis and Meriol Marsden reached the riverbank, close to where Mr. Dobbs and Merten were wont to set their fish traps.

And that's when it happened.