

C. L. Bennet

AN UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPT OF THE FIRST CANADIAN NOVELIST

JULIA CATHERINE HART (1796-1867) has a just though seldom recognized claim to be called the first Canadian novelist. *St. Ursula's Convent, or The Nun of Canada, containing scenes from Real Life* was published by Hugh C. Thomson at "Kingston, Upper Canada" in 1824, and had been written eleven years earlier. She was born as Julia Catherine Beckwith at Fredericton, New Brunswick, on March 10, 1796. She was the daughter of a United Empire Loyalist and the descendant of Mathew or Matthew Beckwith, who settled in Connecticut about 1635. Of the two authors who are usually given the honour of having written the first Canadian novel, one, Mrs. Frances Brooke, was a Canadian only by virtue of a few years' residence in Quebec, and the other, John Richardson, published his first book some years after *St. Ursula's Convent* had appeared in print. The claim of Richardson's *Wacousta* (1832), like that of Mrs. Brooke's *The History of Emily Montague* (1769), is also weakened still more by its having been first published in London, and not reprinted in Canada until much later.

The story of *St. Ursula's Convent*, printed for subscribers in two volumes of 165 copies each, is based on events before and after the siege of Quebec. It attracted little attention during or after the somewhat obscure life of its author, and only a few copies are known to survive. (Libraries cited by R. E. Watters in *A Check List of Canadian Literature, 1628-1950* are the Library of Congress and the Toronto Public Library.) A second novel by Mrs. Hart was published in the United States: *Tonne-wonte, or The Adopted Son of America: A Tale Containing Scenes from Real Life*. This book of 312 pages was published in 1831 in Exeter with its author signing herself as "an American". (The author's husband found employment in the States from 1826 until 1831, when the couple took up residence in Fredericton.) Copies of *Tonne-wonte* are listed by Watters as being in the Library of Congress, the Toronto Public Library, and the Library of the University of British Columbia.

Articles in *Saturday Night* and the *Family Herald* (see Notes), headed the "First Novel Printed in Canada" and "Author of the First Canadian Novel", both referred to an unpublished novel *Edith, or The Doom*. Through the kindness of the present owner, a direct descendant of the author, the manuscript of Mrs. Hart's third novel, with some related documents, has been made available to the *Dalhousie Review*. The *Family Herald* refers with some justice to the two volumes of *St. Ursula* sold at auction to the Toronto Public Library in 1904 for eight dollars as "a great treasure of Canadiana" which "proved to be an item almost unique". For the novel in manuscript, regarded simply as an "item", the word "unique" may be used without qualification. And whatever questions may be raised—as they were raised in the beginning—concerning the merits of the work, it has importance, apart from its date and its literary history and relations. In itself—as much for its artistic and self-critical shortcomings as for the ingenuity and complexity of its plot—it has, within limits, a compelling fascination.

On both sides of her family Julia Catherine Beckwith had interesting connections. Her father, Nehemiah Beckwith, was one of the Loyalists who settled in New Brunswick in 1779 and 1780, and "is said to have been the first to establish a regular water communication between St. John and Fredericton; and in 1786 he sold . . . a large unfinished vessel called the 'Lord Sheffield' to Benedict Arnold, the notorious traitor of the American Revolution". In an article in the *Atlantic Advocate*, March, 1963, it is stated that Beckwith never forgave Arnold for his treachery. Her mother was Julie Louise LeBrun de Duplessis, daughter of a Quebec advocate "who came to Canada in 1755 as a volunteer in the Regiment of Bearn . . . one of only four in his profession to remain in Canada after the cession". Other distinguished relatives included Julia's first cousin, the historian Abbé Ferland, with whom she corresponded when he was a student at Nicolet College and she was a young woman living in Kingston. "I was delighted with the progress you are making in your studies", she wrote, "for nothing is more highly pleasing than to see youth assiduously attentive to the improvement of their minds". At Kingston, to which the family had moved in 1820, Julia was married on January 3, 1822, to George Henry Hart, an Englishman. For some years before they moved to Rochester, N.Y., she conducted a school for girls. *St. Ursula's Convent* was published in 1824, when the author was twenty-eight. She gives neither her real name nor a *nom de plume*, but in the Preface she begs indulgence for

the first production of an author of seventeen, which was the writer's age when *St. Ursula's Convent* was written. . . . It was in the delightful vale of Cornwallis, justly styled the Garden of Nova Scotia, that this work was commenced. It was continued

*Life and Progress
of the*
ST. URSULA'S CONVENT,

OR

THE NUN OF CANADA.

The nun of Canada

CONTAINING SCENES FROM

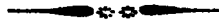
REAL LIFE.

The moral world,
Which though to us it seems perplex'd, moves on
In higher order, fitted and impell'd,
By wisdom's finest hand, and issuing
In universal good.

THOMSON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



KINGSTON, UPPER CANADA:
PRINTED BY HUGH C. THOMSON.

1824.

Edith

or

The Doom

"I know not how the truth may be
But I tell you the tale as 't was told to me"

by J. N. B.

Vol 1st

Introduction

The following work is founded on a legend long hallowed by tradition, in a family in the east of England. One of the doomed fair ones is still in existence.

The legend will be found in Chap. 28 - page 471 - Vol 1st. The theory of the origin of genius, fanciful as it may appear, and though new for the first time, reduced to consistency, is not the invention of the Author's imagination, but originated with some gifted spirits of Europe, and is vaguely credited by some amongst them, as also by others who have wandered from thence to America. Many are the ills resulting from ill assorted marriages, should the following pages lead any individual to hesitate before contracting such an ill-omened union, or to pause reflect and endeavour to avert its evil consequences when too late to recede, then the Author will not have written in vain.

These different narratives are woven together in one plot, alternating scenes of merriment, sentiment and gravity, and ultimately making it pronounced a wholesome moral.

Frederick. N. B.

J. N. B.

in New Brunswick, the subject having been suggested to the author, during a residence in the Canada's. . . . The era, to which this story relates, was an eventful one, and may be reviewed with interest by many families, who, like the author, trace their descent in a manner similar to that of the principal personages of the tale. . . . Mother St. Catherine is not a mere creature of imagination, but had a real existence in Canada, and even the name of her daughter is preserved. [Is it merely fortuitous that the author's second baptismal name is Catherine?]

The preface also refers to "the slow progress of improvement in British America", suggests the need to encourage "a British American, on the threshold of her humble career of authorship", and trusts "with deference and hope" that the "reviewers of our parent country . . . will view the unpolished stranger with indulgence, although destitute of the elegance and refinement which adorn the land of our forefathers".

After the title page, the Toronto volumes have a dedication "to the Right Honourable the Countess of Dalhousie"; with the MSS volumes there are the title page (but not the dedication) of *St. Ursula's Convent*, the preface, and a list of subscribers, of whom A. J. Beckwith of Fredericton is put down for ten copies, and the largest numbers of single subscriptions are from Kingston and Fredericton.

A brief description of the plot of *St. Ursula's Convent* will prepare the reader for the longer and more complex narrative of *Edith, or The Doom*. Some time after a preliminary exchange of babies by a scheming foster-mother, the hero is taken prisoner at the Siege of Quebec and believed killed. After many adventures, including two shipwrecks and imprisonment in the silver mines of Mexico, he escapes to England and inherits a fortune and a title. Meanwhile his wife enters a convent intending to become a nun, but through one of the exchanged infants, who happens to be a pupil, she and the hero are brought together. Eight young people become entwined in romance, two just escaping being married as brother and sister. There are more shipwrecks, with a literally last-minute rescue from almost final disaster by a providential sail on the horizon. As a commentator says, "Everything turns out all right. The dying villain confesses and is forgiven and the heroine and her titled husband retire from the scene arm in arm".

Edith has features in common with one or both of the earlier novels, and the combination and development of the two in one long and complicated tale may suggest one reason for its failure to find a publisher.

St. Ursula's Convent, in two volumes of 101 and 132 pages (in 12 mo. trimmed to $6\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{8}$), may be given an approximate estimate of between 55,000 and 60,000 words. *Edith, or The Doom* is contained in two bound manuscript volumes (paper,

stitching, and covers suggest that the author made full use of the stock and skills of her husband, who was a book-binder) of 477 and 499 closely-written pages of about 360 words a page, or a total of from 300,000 to 350,000 words. The story is based on a legend, which in an earlier detached draft of the Introduction was said to be told at the end of the first volume at page 490. Volume I, as bound, ends at page 472, and the revised introduction, bound with it, refers first to "page 471 vol. 1st" and corrects this to "the commencement of this Volume". The author again insists on the importance of the legend by writing on an otherwise blank page before Chapter I: "It is necessary to read 'The Legend of the Doom' first that the work may be understood".

The introduction, as revised, is given in full:

The following work is founded on a legend long hallowed by tradition in a family in the east of England. One of the doomed fair ones is still in existence.

The legend will be found at the commencement of this volume. The theory of the origin of genius, fanciful as it may appear, and though now for the first time reduced to consistency, is not wholly the invention of the author's imagination, but originated with some gifted spirits of Europe, and is vaguely credited by some amongst them, as also by others who have wandered from thence to America. Many are the ills resulting from ill assorted marriages, should the following pages lead any individual to hesitate before contracting such an ill omened union, or to pause, reflect, and endeavour to avert its evil consequences when too late to recede, then the author will not have written in vain.

These different materials are worked together in one plot, alternating scenes of humour, sentiment, and gravity, and ultimating it is presumed in a wholesome moral.

J. N. [sic] B.

Fredericton New Brunswick
America.

Following the introduction is a letter ("To my much valued friend J—. M—.") which gives insight into the purpose and convictions that drove and directed the author's all too fluent pen:

"... may the muse, or good spirit, or whatever else it be that visits me in my dreams, seems often to crown my wishes, warns me frequently by presentiment of coming events, in short appears to be an invisible friend ever near may this benign being strengthen my perseverance, may it enlighten my understanding, and sharpen my knowledge of human nature, may it enable me to portray its shades, its subtleties, draw forth the hidden folds of the human heart, and lay bare its dark workings: may it assist me to unmask evil, to elevate into open view whatever is good, and by bringing both into free light, enable good to conquer evil

I rely on thee my friend to encourage me to persevere in this arduous undertaking, and in the impartial criticism of thy clear and bright understanding, in thy

knowledge of the world, and of human nature, and in thy polished acquaintance of the English language, I put much trust. May this work be crowned with success, and may we enjoy the gratification, and feel the proud consciousness of having contributed our mite to the happiness and self knowledge of the human race, and on our death bed, "For come that moment must, that comes to all", may we feel a calm assurance that we have promoted, but not injured the cause of virtue.

J. N. B.

Fredericton New Brunswick. N. America.

Feb 29th 1851.

The Legend is "Transcribed from the Waltheof annals by me, their faithful servitor. /Allen of the Harp/ Warden of Castle Waltheof." In just under twenty pages it deals with a Saxon family, at the time of the Norman Conquest, which was "anxious to preserve their blood as unmixed as possible". All perished save two: Edith, a high-minded maiden, and her half-brother, Cuthbert, a boy of five. A Norman knight is fascinated by Edith who sends Cuthbert away and "invites her detested admirer to partake of a small collation". By means of a soporific powder and an oubliette, "almost incredulous as it may appear", the gentle Edith sends the usurper and his page into the depths of a vault, first securing a signet from the knight and his keys from the page. After being disguised as a boy, Edith makes a visit "in her own attire, radiant with beauty and excitement" to seek pardon of the Conqueror himself.

The fascinated conqueror regarded her with passionate admiration, but at the record of the deed of blood, he started. "St Aubin my bravest, my most valued knight! Cruel subtle serpent! Where was thy woman's softness?" A true woman knows no softness when her honour is concerned" replied the young Saxon.

William will forgive her crime, save her brother, and restore her estates only if she will yield to his passion.

Time passed, the Lady Edith was lying ill on the bed of the fatal chamber, her old nurse alone was with her; the aged crone took the infant in her arms.

"It is a beautiful girl my lady".

"Present it not to me Nurse, base born bantling of the Norman! That ill begotten usurper! Hurl it down the oubliette".

On one of many sleepless nights, as Edith thought

of the past, of the present, of the future, strange unearthly ideas flitted through her capacious brain, her heart once free from taint but now perverted by circumstances, beat with strange emotion, she starts, what is it that appears before her? Is it tangible, or is it ideal? A flitting shadowy form stood there, at first small, but as her eye fixed, it extended in dimensions to the figure of a gigantic woman . . . "the guardian spirit of this castle and of thy family"

who proceeded, on request, to announce "its doom and thy own. . . . In every generation shall be born one daughter of thy house, bearing thy lineaments, thy form, thy characteristics, altered alone by circumstances, and the spirit of her times." These successive women will combine youth, beauty and power with vanity and self-exaltation. The family "shall never want a male heir until in progress of ages a maiden shall be born possessing the mysterious spirit who shall be of entire alien blood by the mother's side," and condemned "to wander houseless amidst the savages of the wilderness". "And lady" (continued the spirit) "learn also a deep mystery.

Hast thou not felt in thyself a something superior to mere mortals? Hast thou not marveled at the super human strength of thy own character? . . . Possessing all these attributes, and having so greatly failed in their application, canst thou marvel at the heavy punishment awarded thee?"

Eventually, however, the last of the Ediths will meet "her congenial spirit . . . in a wild and distant country" and "their pure love not the creation of earthly clime, but co-existent with their ethereal origin . . . will never fail." Prophecies follow as to the son of the final union, but Edith replies "I will render thy doom abortive, for never shall I marry, never will I be the mother of another child." Her account of the midnight conversation is deposited in the archives of the castle, to be recorded centuries later by the faithful Allen of the Harp.

The story returns to "real life". Edith's child by William had not been killed, but was given by the nurse to her own daughter in place of a child who had died and then in turn to a noble family of mixed Norman and Saxon blood. This child, Bertha, grew in grace and favour, and attracted the evil desires of William. The nurse's daughter revealed the secret to Edith, who confronted the Conqueror. Cuthbert, still ignorant that she was his half-niece, had married Bertha, and their offspring is Edith II. There are other complications, but the stage is set and it is time to raise the curtain on a plot of fifty-six scenes that are seldom less complex, though often less interesting, than the prologue.

Separate from the bound volumes, in a much less careful hand and style than most of the novel, is the author's summary of events in the twenty-seven chapters of Volume I. Since it is impossible to emulate her understanding of her own performance, this summary is reproduced in full. (Here as elsewhere the author's spelling and punctuation, but only a few of her excisions or corrections, are retained.)

Edith, or The Doom

This work lays claim to two novel ideas, that are developed throughout. First that of "the Doom". The Spirit of a lady of the era of William the conqueror in expiation of crimes committed by her consequent on the spirit of the times bearing on her

haughty mind is condemned to animate the person of a lady of her own family of like personal appearance temperament & with her then self one in each successive generation throughout a succession of ages until her spirit be purified from the taint then contracted Vide Legend of "The Doom". The ["life and fate" deleted] destiny of that lost Edith is therein also prophesied—The heroine of the tale is the *Edith* of the era of the American War of Independance the chain of conection from the first Lady Edith to the last, is preserved throughout. The work commences with the marriage of the heroine at Liverpool Eng. then retrogrades to the history of her parents in which allusions are made to the mysterious traditions of the Waltheof family, the Edith of that generation is introduced and the last alluded to. Major Waltheof the younger son is disowned for having contracted what his parents deemed a misalliance. On the death of his sister Edith his last friend, the Major yielding to grief and despondency exchanges into a regiment bound for America and accompanied by his wife and infant daughter Edith, bids a last adieu to his native land. The breaking out of the American revolution finds Major Waltheof Commandant of fort Oswego a widower with his only child Edith—She is lost in the woods is sought and found by Arthur Beresford son of the last Edith, a young officer whose relationship to the Waltheof family is then unknown to himself and to the Major and his daughter Thrilling description of a storm, American scenery & highly wrought scene between the lovers Vide Chap 4th page 40—the wanderers are met by American scouts who convey them to the Amer army then investing fort Schuyler. The young officer falls in with his regiment as the British ambuscade burst on the Americans Major Waltheof and his friends search for Edith in vain Escaped from the engagement she is afterward taken charge of by a friendly tribe of old friends of her own—After traversing the country they are encamped within hearing of the canon at the battle of Saratago—Edith with the friendly squaws mother & daughter traverse at night the field of battle an interesting scene—Vide page 102—Chap 7th—They there find Major Waltheof mortally wounded: before expiring in the Indian camp to which they had removed him in addressing his daughter he alludes to her destiny of mystery, prophecies her future fate, gives her family papers with references, and informs her that Arthur Beresford whose addresses he had sanctioned had that day fallen by his side in battle The Major is immediately intered by the women of the tribe and the whole encampment instantly en route. page 117 They are waylaid by hostile savages many fall. Edith and her young Indian friend Leilah who has lost her parents and brother in the skirmish are borne in captivity to Misawouka on the borders of Lake Michigan where they are adopted by their captors. The hero of the work here makes his appearance a young German student endowed with mysterious fancies who had left his ancestral castle on the banks of the Rhine in search of his congenial spirit whom he hopes to find in the form of a beautiful girl who will be his future wife he had joined the American army and is brought in prisoner by the Indians, his prowess had exasperated them but Edith rescues him from the stake by her eloquence and the exercise of her great mental powers now developing—Chap 8th page 133 Rudolph de Imonstadt Baron de Rheinwhist the German student is handsome well formed and accomplished both mentally

and personally courageous and full of resources; he felicitates himself that in the young orphan he has discovered the object of his search—He rescues her from drowning. Although through the jealousy of the savages they are restrained from conversing much together in the camp yet accompanied by young Leilah they meet often in the Forest where he details to her his sublime theories explaining to her the union of spirit and matter these subjects find in her mind a congenial soil He points out to her as a class apart from others of mankind those known as persons of genius He details the history of their origin which he professes to have discovered from abstract studies in the halls of learning of his native land This sublime and curious account he relates in Chap 11 page 175—the outlines I will give in few words [The following words are cancelled: “They were he said Spirits surrounding the Omniscient at the Great rebellion of the Angels A particular legion stood aloof from either side. On”] It gives us to understand, that, formerly bright denizens of etheriality they are here in expiation of their former errors until they shall have regained their original purity. The children of genius are indeed in the midst of others but not of them, their sympathies, feelings, tastes strikingly mark them as a portion set apart from others of the human race—This theory of Rudolph is the other novel idea of the work, and is developed throughout in connexion with that of “*The Doom*” The Ediths being of their number. Rudolph becomes enamoured of the young girl she returns his esteem and affection but her love for him is very different from that she had felt for Arthur Beresford. The doom had attached to the otherwise noble character of Edith many of the traits of a coquette these were now developing and had innocently entangled her into an engagement of marriage with an Indian chief she being ignorant of what constituted assent. In that tribe though she was not permitted to retract she yet found means to delay the marriage and in the meantime Rudolph accomplished their escape taking Leilah with them. Some fine scenes succeed as they proceed towards Philadelphia Chap 12—page 190 One in page 216 where Rudolph introduces his deceased friend Ernest who he declares ever appeared to him in his dreams previously to any impending calamity The affianced pair with their Indian friend Leilah arrive at Philadelphia and embark for Germany The voyage is full of incident wild & thrilling Chap 14th page 220—They are shipwrecked Chap 15 page 270 the young girls placed on a raft by Rudolph are at length rescued by smugglers after they had seen him sink in the sea while defending himself from the attack of a villainous fellow passenger the Marquis de Montmarte. The young wanderers are landed in London their ignorance leads them to lodge in a city tavern. The money they had about them is soon expended and they are rescued from a dilemma by a natural brother of Major Waltheof hitherto unknown to the Waltheof family The noble character of the neglected son is developed as the tale proceeds A fine episode reverts to the origin of Edgar Athelstan the illegitimate son of Sir Ethelred Waltheof—The merchant adopts Edith and educates her with his only child Alice also takes Leilah under his protection Mr Athelstan’s letters to Sir E. Waltheof respecting his granddaughter Edith remaining unanswered the young lady led on by fate contracts a very illassorted marriage with a young merchant who seeks her for the sake of the

ten thousand pounds settled on her by Mr. Athelstan though this is unknown to the bride This brings up the tale to the celebration of the marriage in the first Chap with which the work opens. The honey moon out lasts their felicity the tyrannical temper of Charles McDonald soon makes his wife bitterly repent her ill-assorted union. Sir Ethelred Waltheof unknown and delirious is rescued from ship wreck by one of Mr Athelstan's homebound ships is found and recognized by the merchant who conveying his father to his country seat nurses him there with great care assisted by Alice and Edith, the husband of the latter being absent at Hamburg on business Chap 23-page 384. Sir Ethelred returning to consciousness imagines he sees in the young Alice his first love the mother of Athelstan. Again our Edith, of whose birth he had never heard he confounds with his long since deceased daughter and with his only sister who had died in her youth then again he would apostrophize her as the spirit of the original Lady Edith the mother of the race Our Edith having never heard of the legend is bewildered and lost in amazement—At length Sir Ethelred is restored to perfect sanity eclairsissements take place the Baronet repents his injustice to these his descendants convalescent he enjoys much happiness in their society but becomes moody when he discovers the misalliance of Edith who is heires intail presumptive of the family the only bar being a youth far gone in consumption then seeking health with his grandmother the lady Waltheof at Madeira it was returning from thence that Sir Ethelred had met with shipwreck page 403 Chap 25 The Baron returns to Waltheof castle accompanied by his son Athelstan with Alice Edith and the latter's companion the Indian girl Leilah Sir Ethelred is smitten illness en route is borne to his castle in a state of unconsciousness none but servants and dependants are there to receive him. Edith shewn to the apartment of the original lady Edith and succesively occupied by each of her descendants of her name is suddenly transformed from the amiable and ladylike though high minded young female she has hitherto been to the haughty feudal noble of antecedent times She no longer recognizes her own individuality. Shadowy imaginings dim reminiscences flit through her brain sympathies unfelt before seem to change her identity and to connect her in a visionary chain of far bygone transactions, a long and interminable vista of wild ever changing scenes flit across her mind's eye as she looks from the casements of the antique battlemented castle In her dreams at night the original lady Edith of whom she has not yet heard any lucid account appears to her the visionary address of her shadowy visitor impressing her with mysterious undefinable sensations. Again in her visions of the night our heroine passes through scenes depicting the manners of every British reign from the Norman to the House of Hannover. On her wandering around the battlements Edith meets with an old retainer of the castle a venerable son of song sounding the strings of his harp who a solitary denizen of a retired turret is unaware of her arrival The visitors were all unknown to the servants having arrived with the unconscious Sir Ethelred Startled by her appearance in the uncertain beams of the moon Allen of the Harp apostrophized her as the wandering spirit of the Edith of the castle deducing a favourable omen for the family from her reappearance nor would give one bit to her assertion that she was a mortal. Excited by all this Edith's

sympathies are no longer in unison with those of the young girls her companions she wanders apart, her ill assorted marriage bitterly present to her thoughts One day accompanied by Alice and Leilah she finds herself in the picture gallery Chap 25 page 418 their admiration is raised by a succession of portraits representing a series of young females each the facsimile of our heroine in form and features but differing in costume and manner as though they had lived at different epochs through succeeding generations all young but the first in the line whose appearance bespoke her antiquity. This apartment becomes the favourite resort of our heroine. One evening a young stranger suddenly enters and startled on seeing her, apostrophizes her as the spirit of the Ediths of the golden hair Henry Waltheof grandson and heir of the family had arrived, a son of genius noble-minded and accomplished but the victim of blighting consumption he was drooping fast downward to the tomb The cousins soon come to an understanding Edith is introduced to the haughty ambitious and selfish Lady Waltheof and is acknowledged by her as the daughter of her lost son Cuthbert Scene striking page 441 The scenes at castle Waltheof are full of interest Henry and Edith together visit the venerable Allen of the Harp at his turret the soul of the old man which seemed equally to belong to the antique pile and the ancient family as to his own person is highly elate He plans to unite these two remaining descendants for the lady whose horror of her hasty marriage daily increases was still tenaciously silent on the subject Athelstan is passive having been reproached by Edith in a moment of irritation for having permitted it to take place Sir Ethelred is still dangerously ill Alice and Leilah daunted by the haughty spirit of the place are silent and reserved! Henry Waltheof seated with his cousin in the apartment of the old man requests him to explain to her the tradition of the Lady Edith The ancient retainer with impressive form and much ceremony produces an ancient manuscript and Henry Waltheof reads aloud the Legend of "*The Doom*". Their remarks on this extraordinary production complete Vol 1st. page 490

(The reader is again reminded, in an inserted page, of the importance of the Legend.)

Revision of both volumes is indicated by changes of paper, penmanship, spelling, and numbering. Possibly the first volume was more carefully written from the beginning, but there is evidence to suggest that the first is mainly a corrected or twice-corrected copy and that more of the second lacked a final revision. In Volume II, for instance, a long "s" is uniformly used before a second "s" in such words as "happiness" or "possession". In corrected or inserted pages of Volume I the author uses the more modern "ss".

Although it has no accompanying synopsis, Volume II continues with the mixture as before, beginning with secrets concerning birth; the mutual attraction of kindred superior spirits; repetitions of family history; the beginning of many quarrels between Edith and McDonald; and the addition of new characters, including Venning, a villain who encountered Edith on her second passage to "America" and still pursued her on their arrival among the Loyalists in Halifax. Edith,

still accompanied by Leilah, again meets Arthur Beresford, who had not, after all, perished at Saratoga. More reminiscences, revelations, and unravellings follow, with accounts of social life in Halifax, and of the sensation created by "Mrs. McDonald" at the "Colonel's Ball" given in her honour. Edith's love for Arthur is constantly frustrated by McDonald (who does happen to be her husband) and by Venning. Then to New York, where Edith continues to lament her exile but is happy to meet another of her Indian friends, and then, at last, a meeting with Rudolph, who is now "Brother Christopher". And so on and on. In Chapter XX, Charles takes his wife for another excursion. They reach the French Island of St. Domingo, and then proceed in a larger ship, to "high southern latitudes", round Cape Horn. After a violent and prolonged storm, with many meditations on life and death, they are almost lost while clinging to a spar. Providentially a man from a South Sea island swims out and rescues Edith. He proves to be Beresford. McDonald is believed drowned, and after many avowals by Arthur and some doubts and fears from Edith they hold themselves "by the witness of the Guardian spirits who surround us [but without benefit of clergy] . . . united in indissoluble marriage [and] sealed their union in a fond embrace". Then conversations continue amid scenes equally reminiscent of the *Swiss Family Robinson* and of *The Blue Lagoon*, until there arrives a handsome and impressive stranger who proves, in his turn, to be none other than Rudolph de Imandstadt, Baron de Rheinwhist, who has sought Edith around the world. He has been performing good works among the savages, and his nobility of character is such that he and Arthur become friends and confidants. The reappearance of McDonald causes complications, but many pages offer little more for quotation than "Interminable the reminiscences of our heroine". McDonald, who has none of the virtues, kills Beresford, and the distracted Edith drifts to sea in a canoe. Then McDonald, after many prayers and confessions to Rudolph (whom he addresses as "Father Christopher"), dies of remorse, and the noble German is left alone on the island. Edith, as the reader may have guessed, is not lost, but is rescued by a Spanish merchant vessel, and taken to Valparaiso and then, by another ship, to New York. Two months after her arrival in New York, and more recollections and encounters, Edith becomes the mother of a fine boy. "The health of our heroine was now entirely restored, her cheerfulness had returned, but her coquetry, her levity had fled forever, a deep sense of religion . . . had taken possession of her soul". Messages from London, combining solicitude with letters of credit, bring Edith to England where she soon reaches the ancient edifice of Waltheof Castle and is "held in the embrace of her venerable progenitors".

Hark the strings of the harp, they vibrate in joyous harmony, the venerable Allen approaches. "Welcome he cries to the last of the mystic ladies, the yet yellow haired Ediths of the castle. . . . Welcome to the long-promised child who terminates the doom . . . the curse is accomplished, henceforth shall it flourish like a green bay tree, and shed its shoots around!"

The vision of the legend appears to the last of the Ediths, "regarding her with an expression of satisfaction", and recapitulates with appropriate comments the story and moral of the doom.

To close the story in Chapter XXIV ("Last scene of all, that ends this strange eventful history"), the reunited family of Waltheof receives a visit from a handsome and impressive stranger, Rudolph de Imondstadt, the Baron De Rheinwhist. He is also remembered as the "Father Christopher" of Charles McDonald, whose aged uncle was invited to the nuptials of Rudolph and an Edith "now grown wise by time and affliction". "Allen of the Harp seemed to renew his youth when conversing with so powerful a kindred spirit" as Rudolph, and the fortunes of both the German and the English noble families continued to prosper.

The summer and autumn of life, of our well matched pair was passed in peace and prosperity, a perfect union of heart and mind ever united them in entire confidence; reciprocal affection that never wavered bestowing the highest enjoyment that this world can give, it had but one drawback, blessed in themselves, in their children, in all that belonged to them, they sometimes feared that they might forget that this life is but a pilgrimage, this world a place of trial, its phases scenes of preparation for a higher sphere: our persons but prisons of clay confining our immortal spirits to a mundane habitation until they can purify themselves for flight to an abode of ethereal happiness.

Finis.

From the passages to which the author has called particular attention in the synopsis of Volume I, it is possible to offer only a few excerpts to illustrate her style—or styles—and her taste and judgment. References in the synopsis do not always correspond to chapters and pages in the bound volumes; some evidently refer to an earlier draft.

Down poured the tempest in all its fury, dark lowered the clouds, crash went the ancient denizens of the forest, plunging to the ground, their branches intermixing with the more robust plants, tearing them away.

Trembling stood the youthful pair, the flexible maiden reclined against the firmer youth, who fearing but for the one he loved, not for himself, supported her on his arm, slowly the day broke, but failing her rosy torch, gloomy and lowering was the horizon, and loud howled the tempest: there stood those two young creatures, dubious to remain, uncertain where to go. "Almighty God, cried Edith, comfort my

father, and receive my spirit". Arthur impulsively pressed her more closely to his side. "We may yet live to meet him". he whispered. "Ah Arthur, should you outlive me, be a son to the solitary man." At this moment a brilliant flash of lightning illuminated the surrounding forest, while a tremendous concussion of thunderstorm seemed to shake the earth, Edith was silent, she generally delighted in the outbursts of nature, but here all was too real, too palpable, imagination itself was stuned.

("Chap 4th page 40"; revised Chapter V, p. 57)

"Preserver of my life! he exclaimed, have I then the happiness of meeting thee free from the observation of my captors!" and he extended his hand, silently the maiden placed hers in it, but who can describe the sensations produced by this simple action. At length raising her eyes to his. "Much pleased am I, said she, to meet a white brother in this wild country, and happy indeed am I, that it has been in my power to serve you. Sit down, and inform me who you are, and how you came into that Jeopardy."

"Bright being of beauty! I am thy brother spirit, I fell into peril, led by fate to meet thee here; and to incur an obligation I never can repay."

("Chap 8th page 133"; IX, 143)

Business required Charles McDonald's presence at Hamburg and Mrs McDonald accepted Mr. Athelstan's invitation to remain at Rosehill during his absence. Edith felt her husband's departure a relief, she enjoyed herself at her uncles as she had been accustomed to do before her marriage. Mr Athelstan had retired from business but as he had ever possessed his life in activity, he still wished to have something to do: by way of amusement, he therefore retained some interest in shipping, sufficient to excite, but not to inconvenience him, should he meet with losses.

("Chap 23-page 384"; XXIII, 384. Paper, penmanship, and numbering indicate unrevised copy, similar to most of Vol. II.)

Wandering through the passages of the Castle, Edith found herself in the picture gallery lined around with portraits; she walked thoughtfully along, glancing at each. "These then, thought she, are the resemblances of my progenitors, how varied, and yet how similar: the family lineaments reappear in each succeeding generation, and yet with the admixture of new features as new alliances are formed, Here is a lady with sarcastic mouth, her son it must be, for he is next her, adds that feature to the bold front of the father. The next possessor again, has a shade of his grandmother's expression, varied by that of his mother, who is placed between them, How interesting all this! What indeed could human pride have invented, more strikingly to examine its own importance than thus assembling as it were the whole race and displaying them at once as they looked individually when spread through centuries of time".

("Chap 25 page 418"; XXV, unnumbered between 418 and 419, an early draft, with paging changed from 386, 391, 392 to 418,—419)

Maxwell, "a grand-niece of the novelist and an author and historian in her own right", at a Spring Convocation, on May 11, 1954.

NOTES

With the two bound volumes, besides the author's separate synopsis of Volume I, and part of a letter addressed to her son, there are cuttings from *Saturday Night*, October 10, 1925, and the *Family Herald*, January 25, 1933, p. 21. The *Saturday Night* article, by H. R. Morgan, has a photograph of Mrs. Julia Catharine [sic] Hart; the *Family Herald* has drawings made from this photograph and from the title page of *St. Ursula's Convent*. H. R. Morgan states that the authorship of *St. Ursula's Convent* was established by Philéas Gagnon more than 85 years after its publication, "by dint of diligent research and in a paper contributed to the Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada". He refers also to a contemporary critique in the *Canadian Review*, in which notice was given to the work only because it was "the first native novel that ever appeared in Canada". The plot was criticized for its intricacy, but the work was said to be "distinguished both by sympathy and elegance of expression and void of meretricious splendor". In the *Family Herald*, Jean Ritchie Anderson gives additional biographical information, and lists a number of collectors at the "Masson Sale" in 1904—"probably the last 'St. Ursula's Convent' ever to come under the auctioneer's hammer". In the absence of present opportunity for further inquiry, most of the information not directly related to *Edith, or The Doom* is taken from these two articles.

Stitched together, and identified in careless handwriting similar to that of the synopsis, are three letters: one, dated from New York, October 11, 1847, commends Mrs. Julia C. Hart, with the recital of some family history, and her removal from New York to Fredericton about the year 1831, and concludes: "Mrs. Hart is an Educated Woman—has spent her life over books, and is with her family in good standing." It is signed by J. Hammond, 232 Fourth Street, who is identified as "late Judge of the Marine Court of N Y of great talent & acquirements".

In a brief letter from Fredericton, May 13, 1852, John Saunders says that while he does not consider himself a judge of fiction "my opinion of yours is that it bears the impress . . . of a highly talented mind. Parts of the second volume appear to me too improbable & too unlike the events of real life—but the first volume (which is my favorite) . . . would do credit to any of the . . . novelists of the present day." The writer of this letter is described as "a gentleman of talent and extensive literary acquirements & President of the Legislative Council appointed for life. . . ." Also from Fredericton, Nov. 5, 1852, George Roberts ("Head Master of the Collegiate Grammar School Fredericton") writes: "I have derived much pleasure from the perusal of your manuscript which, in my opinion, judiciously blends the interest of romance with the ordinary occurrences of every day life . . . the scenes, especially those which occur on the Western Continent, are graphically and truthfully delineated. The character of the heroine is perhaps, not quite so perfect

as one could wish it to be . . . [in] one whose claims to superior mental and even spiritual endowments are so often insisted upon, yet [in view of the moral purpose of the book] perhaps even this apparent inconsistency may be a beauty rather than a blemish. The introduction of certain touches from the school of German metaphysics is managed with much address & adds greatly to the interest of the tale." (The Rev. Dr. George Roberts was the grandfather of Sir Charles G. D. Roberts.)

Attached to the fly-leaf of Vol. II of *Edith* is a letter filling almost two pages of a double sheet of foolscap, addressed by David Bugbee to Mrs. Hart from the Fredericton Hotel, Thursday morning, Jan. 15, 1846. The writer is evidently an American publisher, but there is no identifying note except "Mr. Bugby's [sic] first letter". Other additions are, in pencil, a scribbled note: "Suggest about republishing Tonnewonté" and, in ink, an apparently irrelevant memorandum—"To His Excellency"—concerning a payment of £2055. 60 shillings. David Bugbee begins by praising a short story, "The Victim of Seduction:

It is a beautiful story and I must confess eloquently written. I made out to read most of the blotted parts of the manuscript. It seems to me the characters are all real, that it is a story of truth not of fiction—I regret not having the first part of the "Recluse of Lake Superior". I read a number of pages with much pleasure.

The writer regrets that his immediate departure will prevent his calling on Mrs. Hart and that to publish "so many stories in one volume would make the Book too large & expensive for this age of cheap literature. Most of the Books pubd. in the U.S. of a moral kind sell at 25 cts & 12½ cts for one put in pamphlet style. . . . To carry out your original design of a no. of tales would make quite a large vol Octavo." As an alternative, he suggests the possibility of publishing the tales separately, in sequence (following a preface) if the first proves acceptable: "If you think well of it and do not ask too high for the manuscript, I will undertake the issue of the first book in Boston". He wishes to see "The Recluse" again and to show it to a friend. "I am inclined to think the Recluse would be a capital story for the first book. . . . To say more would be superfluous."

Although Mrs. Hart "contributed frequently to the New Brunswick press, particularly to the New Brunswick Register, of Fredericton, before her death in that city in 1867 at the age of 71", there is nothing to indicate that her shorter stories fared better with publishers than *Edith*, or *The Doom*.

The manuscripts described in this article are owned by Mr. Marvin H. White, of Halifax.