

**MARIA CHAPDELAINÉ,
A TALE OF THE LAKE
ST. JOHN COUNTRY**

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Maria Chapdelaine, a Tale of the Lake St. John Country by Louis Hémon & W. H. Blake

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LOUIS HÉMON & W. H. BLAKE

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MARIA CHAPDELAINÉ

A TALE OF THE
LAKE ST. JOHN COUNTRY

BY

LOUIS HÉMON

TRANSLATED BY

W. H. BLAKE

Author of "Brown Waters," etc.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I PERIBONKA	1
II HOME IN THE CLEARING	27
III FRANÇOIS PASSES BY	45
IV WILD LAND	59
V THE VOWS	77
VI THE STUFF OF DREAMS	105
VII A MEAGER REAPING	119
VIII ENTRENCHED AGAINST WINTER	125
IX ONE THOUSAND AVES	135
X STRAYING TRACKS	153
XI THE INTERPRETER OF GOD	173
XII LOVE BEARING GIFTS	185
XIII LOVE BEARING CHAINS	211
XIV INTO THE DEEP SILENCE	225
XV THAT WE PERISH NOT	257
XVI PLEDGED TO THE RACE	285



CHAPTER I
PERIBONKA



The door opened, and....

CHAPTER I
PERIBONKA

Ite, missa est



THE door opened, and the men of the congregation began to come out of the church at Peribonka.

A moment earlier it had seemed quite deserted, this church set by the roadside on the high bank of the Peribonka, whose icy snow-covered surface was like a winding strip of plain. The snow lay deep upon road and fields, for the April sun was powerless to send warmth through the gray clouds, and the heavy spring rains were yet to come. This chill and universal white, the humbleness of the wooden church and the wooden houses scattered along the road, the gloomy forest edging so close that it seemed to threaten, these all spoke of a harsh existence in a stern land. But as the men and boys passed through the doorway and gathered in knots on the broad steps, their cheery salutations, the chaff flung from group to group, the continual in-