

He removed his rapier, scabbard and all, from his belt and gave it to Roger.

"It is a flawless and honest blade," he said. "Take it, my son, with an old man's blessing—and give me the little boat that I may return to my humble work."

Roger accepted the rapier and ordered the schooner's gig to be swung over the side.

Father Pontin thanked him

"I, too, have loved a woman," he said. "I, too, have had a wife. I was a soldier in those days, adventurous, proud and an unreasoning fool. And I had a friend. I quarrelled with my friend and killed him—no, not with that blade. And my wife died. I gave my lands and my son into my brother's keeping and sought forgetfulness in the bosom of Mother Church. I wore a cross where I had worn a sword. In time I was sent to the heathen in this wilderness. I toiled faithfully among the Maliseets for years and my work was blessed. I won their love and trust. I won their souls to Christ. And in time a new Governor came to this country. I watched him covertly. I taught the savages to obey him, for I believed in him. And always I carried the cross, for there was peace in the weight of it on my hip where the gleaming hilt of a sword