

# A Knot of Blue

BY WILLIAM R. A. WILSON.  
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"Certainly!" But the city is so small that you will probably meet everyone in a short time with but little aid from me; for instance, at the governor's ball next week you will see the bravest and the fairest in the colony."

"Ah! the fairest! I had forgotten to inquire about the women. But I am sure that along with such men, you have also beauty, wit and intelligence amongst the fairer sex."

"True, Monsieur, and I shall take pleasure in presenting you to two of the most beautiful women in New France. If not the world. The fairest of all, the ward of the governor, is an old-time friend of mine. The other, Madame Duvivier, is a new-comer who arrived at Quebec only ten days ago. She is a widow of 26 who has been ordered by her Paris leech to try our bracing northern air. I have met her but twice and then only casually, but my eyes can bear witness to her beauty, while those who know her more intimately than I vouch for her wit and intelligence."

"What lucky star directed my steps hither?" exclaimed Monsieur du Tillet, in delight. "With a heart as true and such charming companionship, he would be a fool indeed who could not find contentment."

The time occupied on their journey was thus filled with genial discourse. After reaching La Maison Sombre and introducing his new friend to Marie Giroi, the old housekeeper, Raoul turned to leave.

"Pardieu! Why this haste?" exclaimed Monsieur du Tillet regretfully. "Will you not enter, Monsieur, and take a glass of wine to help relieve you of the fatigue of our ride?"

"Merci, Monsieur," replied Raoul, "but I believe I will not stop. I must return with the governor's horse. Adieu!" and, mounting, he rode away, receiving a friendly wave from his late companion as he disappeared down the avenue of trees that led to the house. His pride had been flattered by the open-hearted appreciation of his valor on the part of du Tillet, and he passed most of the time on the road back to

having made such a charming acquaintance.

## CHAPTER VIII.

The night of the governor's ball had arrived. Being the social event of the year it drew many people from homes situated far distant from Quebec. From Beauport, Beaulieu, and the other settlements and seigneuries down the river; from Sillery and the many intervening estates; even from Montreal itself—the people came, young and old, to pay their respects to the representative of the King and bask for a brief period in the sunshine of his mimic court. The men had an ear open for bits of news that might indicate the ultimate trend of events in the delicate political situation then existing between England and France; their wives, each laden with her little burden of gossip, eagerly sought out old acquaintances in order to barter what they knew about Madame A. for what others knew or thought they knew about Madame B.; the young people, always glad to exchange the monotonous life of the settlement for a short whirl of gaiety in the capital city, brought their bright faces and merry laughter to awaken the echoes in the narrow streets of Quebec and lighten up the walls of the somber old Chateau.

A democratic gathering it was, too, the Governor of Montreal having to elbow his way through a throng of mingled fur traders, army officers and members of the noblesse of New France, in order to greet the Governor of Quebec and compliment him upon the success with which he managed to keep at bay the ravages of time. The style of dress was varied. That of the ladies of fashion in Quebec was only a year behind the prevailing mode in Paris, while that of the women from other districts was two, three or four years old, according to their distance from the center of fashion of the colony.

The court of the Chateau, well illuminated by lanterns, was filled with the noise and confusion of the arriving guests. Within, the place was ablaze with candles; the rooms, destitute of most of their furniture, were decorated with spring flowers and leafy boughs, while the floors were well waxed for dancing. Five musicians, securely enclosed in the bay of a window with a huge pitcher of Norman cider and glasses on a convenient stand in their midst, discoursed a melodious greeting to the assembled company.

The people were not late in arriving, for state balls were such rare occurrences that each one felt in duty bound to try to be the first guest to arrive and the last to leave. Raoul de Chagnac brought his new-found friend Monsieur du Tillet and early introduced him to a number of the young ladies. His reception was cordial, as the hearty laughter and polite bowing going on in the vicinity of his rather stout but passably graceful figure testified. He endeavored to be gracious to all, and his polished manner, gentlemanly bearing, ready wit, and ridiculous drawing speech made him an instant favorite. Raoul and he worked their way gradually to the center and were warmly welcomed by the governor and by Almée de Marsay, who stood near him. She was resplendent in her youthful bloom, enhanced as it was by the simple, daintily-fitting gown that she wore, and the single ornament, a pink blossom that nestled shyly in her hair. The two men were soon obliged to pass on to make room for those crowding up behind them.

"Ma foi! she is adorable," exclaimed du Tillet in Raoul's ear, "but I do not wish to poach upon your preserves, mon ami. Take me to beauty number two, the peerless widow you told me of."

Raoul smiled, well pleased at hearing this tribute to Almée's loveliness from one who had seen much of the world and was a competent judge. He thereupon led the way into an adjoining room in search of the beautiful widow.

Madame Duvivier's beauty was the complement of that of Almée de Marsay in every way. Tall and slender, with dark eyes and hair black as the proverbial raven's wing, a sadly curved mouth, nose strongly aquiline, a glance languid, yet with an occasional gleam of boldness, a complexion of striking pallor—these features made up an extraordinary picture of feminine refinement, sensuous, unspiced, attractive to most men, maddening to many. She possessed all the physical attributes foreign to the French type, rather that found beyond the Pyrenees, a beautiful woman indeed, alluring, lovable when in repose, but a possible demon when aroused.

She was surrounded by a cluster of young men each vying with each in his efforts at paying court to her beauty and her wit. She skillfully held the allegiance of all, bestowing an enchanting smile or jesting word on every one in turn in such a manner that every man thought himself favored above his fellows. Du Tillet gazed at her with undiminished interest. When an opportunity presented itself the two men entered the charming circle. She instantly recognized Raoul and greeted him in a playfully chiding tone:

"Ah! here comes Monsieur de Chagnac, a tardy cavalier indeed. Did you life at court impart such dilly-dally habits, Monsieur?"

"Nay, Madame," was Raoul's quick reply. "I did but wait until I could bring another captive to chain to your triumphal car as proof of my homage and allegiance to the Queen of Beauty."

"You will be merciful and forgive, Madame," said du Tillet with a low bow, "for the sake of one who hastes from the shrine of English and of Dutch beauty to do reverence at your own, as a moth gladly leaves the outer darkness for the candle flame."

"Your metaphors are mixed, Monsieur, while the last one who hastes flame but to be shivered up and die."

"A glorious ending indeed to its usefulness!" was the gallant rejoinder. "But many, blinded by the light, are

only singed and fall stunned, willing captives to the light."

Raoul, seeing that his new friend was well cared for, withdrew with a bow and mingled with the crowd again. One by one the circle of admirers left also, inwardly cursing du Tillet, until he and the fair widow were left alone. "Your dexterity at verbal fence, in contrast with the awkward skill with which the rest use their rustic blades, betrays long practice at court, Monsieur," said Madame Duvivier with a ravishing smile.

"The same words apply to your comely self. Never before have I met so formidable an antagonist at court or in colony, who could spur me on to my best efforts. But tell me, Madame, why did I not behold you among the beauties that form so lovely a circle about his gracious majesty, the king, when I was in Paris last year?"

"Alas! Monsieur, I was in retirement then, mourning the death of my husband, who fell, brave soldier that he was, in Italy fighting under the Prince de Condé."

During their conversation du Tillet had been covertly studying every expression of his companion's face. "Alas!" he echoed in sympathetic tones, "how sad for one so young and beautiful to meet with such deep affliction. But I doubt not I could recall to your mind a deeper sorrow."

The woman glanced at him anxiously. "A deeper sorrow?" she repeated.

"Yes, I can recall it by a word," and leaning toward her he spoke a name in a low, malicious tone.

His companion gave a start of astonishment, and replied in a voice of alarm: "What mean you by that word, Monsieur?" at the same time fixing on him a piercing look in which fear struggled with anger for the mastery.

"Hush!" exclaimed du Tillet, "some one is approaching to speak to you. Leave the hall within a half-hour on the plea of illness and go home; I shall also excuse myself. Instruct your servant to admit me when I come and you shall know all. Do not fail me," he added sternly, then, with a smile and a ceremonious bow he said aloud: "Adieu, Madame. I leave you in better company," and he strolled off unconcernedly.

Alas! had wandered back to Almée, who still stood near the governor, looking very tired.

"Come, mon amie," he cried cheerfully as he approached, "let us try to find some quiet spot where you can rest. The governor can spare you now. You have done your duty to the crowd whose only interest is in staring at your beauty. Pray turn your attention to me."

"Who, sated with all the complimentary speeches he has heard, wishes to add me to the company of his flatterers? I shall disappoint you, for I shall do nothing but scold," was the rejoinder as they moved away.

"Say, rather one who like the bird after disporting himself all day amongst the butterflies and gaudy birds of paradise, flies joyfully homeward."

"To his sober, homely little mate for supper and a resting place."

They had ceased to talk and entered a room which was almost deserted, far from the music. Finding a small settee in one corner they seated themselves.

"Nay, nay, Mademoiselle Torment," laughed Raoul, "rather, to one whose presence seems like the cool, restful, strengthening atmosphere of a mountain top after mingling with the noisy, jostling crowd in the plain below."

"Good! Monsieur Poet," replied Almée "try again."

"Still better, to enter your presence is like passing from the light of the ballroom with its smoking, flickering candles, into the bright, clear sunshine. It will do. You see I can make you say the same pretty speeches to me, your friend, that you whisper when making love to the beauties of the court."

"With this difference, petite, that in your case I mean them."

"Well then, mon ami, if you really mean what you say you will heed words of warning from me."

"Warning?"

"Yes, against your new friend, Monsieur du Tillet."

"Why, the governor himself commended him to me, but no man, even though a governor, can detect what a woman's intuition teaches her. For all his pleasant manner I have formed an instinctive dread of him. Take care, mon ami, that your intimacy with him lead you not into danger."

"Merci for your thoughtfulness for me, but do not fear. I shall keep my eyes open in that quarter."

"One warning more and I am through. That woman with whom he was talking as we passed, Madame Duvivier; do not, I beg of you, place yourself within the circle of her influence. However we may be mistaken in our estimate of a man, trust a woman to detect what is dangerous in another woman. We are not blinded by the artifices of feminine skill and cunning as men are."

"As regards the man, I believe you are mistaken. But the woman—she can have no power over me. That she is beautiful I must admit, but with you close at hand to warn me, my guardian angel, with your wholesome presence to counteract the noxious, tainted air of evil, with you—"

He stooped, and picking up the flower that had dropped from her hair he held it in his hand and examined it thoughtfully.

"So sweet, so innocent, so pure: with a mission to turn the minds of men Godward in thanksgiving for its beauty, its tender grace, its perfume! How like your own dear self, Almée, it is. Look at it! I am moved to love this blossom that has nestled in your hair tonight, for its message of goodness and truth, its delicate beauty. May I not keep it? And beholding your gentle loveliness my heart is moved to—"

"Ah! here you are, mon bijou," interrupted the voice of the governor, who had just entered. "Will you not come with me? One of our guests, Madame Duvivier, is indisposed and is leaving," and slipping the girl's arm into his own he bore her away with him, leaving Raoul raptly twirling the flower between his fingers.

Shortly after the departure of Madame Duvivier from the ball, Monsieur du Tillet made his adieu and was soon knocking at her door. He was at once admitted to the room where she, having removed her wraps, was stand-

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ing awaiting his arrival with a look of mingled fear and scorn. He bowed politely. She pointed to a chair and seated herself on a couch.

"Pray what is the reason for this mysterious interview, Monsieur? You, a stranger, whisper an unknown name in my ear and then command me to grant you an audience at my home at once. I saw fit to humor your whim. Proceed, or my mood may change. Why have you come?"

"To relate to you a story."

"What! at this time of night?"

"It will interest you, Madame, I assure you. To begin with I will say it is about a young French girl whose beauty captivated a poor army officer who married her and loved her devotedly. She soon became indifferent to him and found a younger and more pleasing lover. She possessed other powers besides those of beauty; she was learned in the mysteries of the Black Art; the secrets of the alchemist were known to her and she was skilled in the use of all deadly poisons. Finally, in an evil hour, she stole a sum of money with which to please her lover's eye. Fearing detection and wishing to marry him before her exposure, she poisoned her husband. He died without any suspicion being attached to her—but, pardon me, does the tale interest you?"

du Tillet stopped with a malevolent glance at his companion.

"The woman had sat staring wildly at him during this recital. She signified 'Go on,' although no sound came from her lips. Du Tillet bowed and proceeded.

"She was finally obliged to face the consequences of her first crime, escaping the gallows, like the cat, she was a thief. Her lover naturally forsook her. Vague rumors connecting her with her husband's death, together with stories concerning her dealings with the Evil One, caused her to disappear. After her flight, proof of the murder of her husband was discovered. Were she to be found anywhere beneath the French flag she would be at once arrested, transported to France, tried and executed. I alone know her whereabouts. The name I whispered to you tonight was the name of the murdered officer, and you—"

"It" came in harsh, raucous tones from Madame Duvivier's throat.

"You are his wife?"

For a moment the woman seemed stunned by his accusation, then, with a moan, fell back upon the couch unconscious. Du Tillet, smiling complacently, arose and going to her prostrate form took a small knife lying on the table and slit her right sleeve near the shoulder. There, clearly outlined upon the ivory white of her skin, a small, dull-red fleur-de-lis glowed. With a look of satisfaction he sat down and waited for her to regain consciousness. Finally she stirred, opened her eyes, and looked at him with a shudder.

[To be Continued.]

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## Bylaw No.--

TO AUTHORIZE THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF LONDON TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH THE HYDRO-ELECTRIC POWER COMMISSION OF ONTARIO, TO SUPPLY ELECTRICAL POWER OR ENERGY FOR THE USES OF THE CORPORATION AND THE INHABITANTS THEREOF.

WHEREAS, by an Act passed by the Legislature of the Province of Ontario in the sixth year of the reign of His Majesty King Edward VII, and chapter 15, entitled "An Act to provide for the transmission of electrical power by municipalities," it was, amongst other things, enacted that any Municipal Corporation might apply to the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario for the transmission to such corporation of electrical power or energy for the uses of the corporation and the inhabitants thereof, for lighting, heating and power purposes, and the said commission might thereupon furnish to such corporation a statement of the terms and conditions upon which such electrical power or energy might be transmitted and supplied.

AND WHEREAS the said Act further enacts that the Council of said Municipal Corporation may submit to the electors a Bylaw authorizing the Municipal Corporation to enter into a contract for the supplying of such electrical power or energy.

AND WHEREAS it is expedient that a Bylaw should be submitted, pursuant to said Act, to authorize the said Corporation to enter into a contract with the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario,

THEREFORE THE COUNCIL OF the Corporation of the City of London enacts as follows:

1. That it shall be lawful for the Mayor and Clerk of said corporation to execute a contract with the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario for the supply to the said corporation of electrical power or energy for the uses of the corporation and the inhabitants thereof, for lighting, heating, and power purposes, at from \$17 50 to

\$23 50 per horsepower per annum for continuous power, ready to be distributed by the said corporation, such price to include all charges for interest, sinking fund, for cost to construct, and the cost to operate, maintain, repair, renew and insure the plant, machinery and appliances to be used by said commission.

2. This Bylaw shall take effect on, from, and after the passing thereof.

3. That the votes of the electors of the said City of London will be taken on this Bylaw on Monday, the seventh day of January, A. D. 1907, commencing at the hour of 9 o'clock in the morning and continuing until 5 o'clock in the afternoon at the several polling places and by the several deputy returning officers appointed to hold the municipal elections on the said day.

4. That on Wednesday, the second day of January, A. D. 1907, at his office in the City Hall, in the said City of London, at the hour of eleven o'clock in the forenoon, the Mayor shall appoint in writing, signed by him, two persons to attend at the final summing up of the votes by the Clerk, and one person to attend at each polling place on behalf of the persons interested in and desirous of promoting the passing of this Bylaw, and a like number on behalf of the persons interested in and desirous of opposing the passing of this Bylaw.

5. That the Clerk of the said Municipal Corporation shall attend at the City Hall at the hour of twelve o'clock (noon), on Wednesday, the ninth day of January, A. D. 1907, to sum up the number of votes given for and against this Bylaw.

PASSED in open council this day of Clerk. A. D. 1907. Mayor.

## NOTICE

TAKE NOTICE that the above is a true copy of a proposed Bylaw, which has been taken into consideration by the Municipal Council of the City of London, and which will be finally passed by the said council (in the event of the assent of the electors being obtained thereto), after one month from the first publication thereof in The Advertiser, the date of which publication was Tuesday, the eleventh day of December, 1906, and that at the hour, day and places therein fixed for taking the votes of the electors the polls will be held.

E. BAKER, Clerk.

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