

Ralph Destournier saw that argument was useless. When the time came, he would act.

But May passed without bringing the lover. Quebec was beginning to take courage, and what with hunting and fishing, semi-starvation was at an end. Emigrants came back and all was stir and activity in the little town.

There came a letter to Rose, after a long delay. Savignon had joined a party of explorers, who were pushing westward, and marvelled at the wonderful country. He had pondered much over his desires, and while his love was still strong, he did not want an unwilling bride. He would give her a longer time to consider—a year, perhaps. He had wrung a reluctant assent from her, he admitted, and taken an ungenerous advantage. For this he would do a year's penance, without sight of the face that had so charmed him.

Was he really brave enough to do that? Rose thought so. Destournier believed it some new attraction to the roving blood of the wilderness.

But Rose would not wholly accept her freedom. Still she was more like the Rose of girlhood, though she no longer climbed or ran races. The Sieur was whiling away the heavy hours of uncertainty by teaching several Indian girls, and Rose found this quite a pleasure.

The servant came in with some news. Not the French vessel they hoped for, but an English man-of-war, with two gunboats, was approaching.