

FOR FAITH and KING

a Romance of Ville-Marie

BY BLANCHE L. MACDONELL

CHAPTER VII.—Continued.

Notwithstanding the manifold agonies, sharp and oft-repeated, through which it had passed, Ville Marie was warmly hospitable and festive. The windows on St. Paul street were thrown open and crowded with ladies; the benches before every door were thronged. The gathering about the Market Place represented all conditions. Merchants engaged in serious negotiations, grave priests of St. Sulpice, suave smiling Jesuits, gentlemen rigorously examining the crowd as it passed, exchanging salutations with friends and commenting with the slyest of chuckles upon the appearance of the ladies. *Habitants* in plain, coarse attire, and their brown, buxom wives chattered volubly; Indians stalked about with stoical and haughty composure; children in close caps without borders and long-waisted gowns and vests shouted and gambolled; plumed soldiers with shouldered arquebuse swaggered; licensed beggars, wearing ostentatiously their certificate of poverty from some curé or local judge, abounded. French musicians, with drum, trumpet and cymbal, tried their best to swell the tumult.

"All this tantamarre presages well for the colony," decided Nanon, as she followed her mistress. "My poor little, generous demoiselle, that soft, sleek, splendid cat of an English girl, still makes eyes at the *Sieur du Chêne*. For me, I waste not my breath on the melancholy; no patience have I for jeremiades. Tell not your secret in the ears of the cat, but it is I, Nanon Benest, who shall sew in the lappet of that gallant's coat an image of St. Felix, to secure him from charms and lead him in the right way."

"Oui-dà-oui-dà. We are in despair for time. Shall we then lose the chance when it alights at our very door," panted a stout woman, as she elbowed her way through the crowd. "Place them, *ma bibiche*."

Nanon reddened and flouted like an enraged turkey gobbler. "Your *bibiche*, indeed. Ouais! I know you, wife of Chauvin the younger, whose son Louis was turned back from his confirmation for running the woods when he should have been ringing the bells. Scaramouch and old Pepin, thy father, who is like a crab-apple."

The struggling, jesting, good-humoured assembly found no lack of diversion. Two men, who had been condemned for theft, were exposed in the pillory, with a placard, bearing a record of the offences committed, fastened on the chest. One, a sturdy rogue, looked boldly around with a certain humorous appreciation of the situation; the other, younger and more sensitive to the shame of his position, sat with bowed head and downcast eyes. A herald proclaimed loudly, "*De par le roi*. Know then, nobles, citizens, peasants (villains) that by order of His Majesty the King, Candide Bourdon and Xavier Cointet, accused and found guilty of theft, are condemned to three days in the pillory and two hundred livres damage, payable to the religious ladies of the Hotel Dieu."

The crowd threw mud and abuse liberally at the culprits, and Migeon, the bailiff, an imposing personage in the dignity of his uniform, contemplated the whole affair with an air of proprietorship. Bayard, the notary, a man of consequence in the town, lean and brown and wrinkled, wearing narrow robes with an almost ecclesiastical collar and waistband to match, a brown wig, mixed with white, thickly furnished but short, and which, in the ardor of controversy, was constantly being pushed awry, was settling a dispute between two loquacious traders. In another spot, to the intense delight of the populace, the effigies of two Indians were being

consumed over a roaring fire. Sentence of death for murder had been passed upon these savages, but it having been found impossible to catch these nimble children of the forest, justice was for the present obliged to content herself with inflicting the direst penalties upon their inanimate representatives. Amidst all this throng Du Chêne found friends and companions of every degree. The impulsive young fellow had access to many hearts. Of a temper eminently social, he displayed an eagerness eloquent of a yearning after fellowship, a charming abandon of manner expressive of confidence rather than carelessness, a sort of spiritual sunshine that acted like a tonic upon all with whom he came in contact.

Jean, Le Ber's valet, was describing to a soldier, a new arrival from France, the burning of four Iroquois which had taken place at the Jesuit Square.

"Ah, yes! A marvellous courage and constancy these people exhibited. But see you, faith of Jean Ameron, that was something to laugh at. Their agony lasted six hours, during which they never ceased to sing their own warlike deeds. Four brothers, the handsomest men I ever saw."

"Burned to death," enquired the soldier.

"But no, it was a form of torment they had themselves invented. They were tied to stakes, driven deep into the earth, and every one of our savage allies, aye, and some Frenchmen too—in truth, I also took part; it requires great courage to touch an Iroquois, even though tied to a stake—armed themselves with pieces of red, hot iron, with which they scorched all parts of the savages, bodies."

"Yes, fault of me, well treated were those pagans," decided a sun-burnt voyageur, whose hat was adorned by waving red feathers. "Drinking brandy that disappeared down their throats as quickly as though it had been poured in a hole made in the earth."

"Bah! that explains itself; better chance had they than many Christians," added a woman standing by. "The Fathers baptized them, addressing a few brief words of exhortation, for to do any more would, speaking frankly, be merely washing a death's head, then they ascended straight to heaven."

Suddenly, while trade and amusement were in the full tide of activity high above, voices and sound of jovial laughter, loud and clear and shrill, arose the death cry. As though a sudden spell had fallen upon the busy gathering, instantaneously every sound and motion ceased; an awed, breathless silence prevailed. Once—twice—eight times in succession it echoed, rising and falling like a crescendo, managed by a skilful musician. Its significance was perfectly comprehended by the listeners. It was the signal given by a war party returning in triumph with the scalps of eight enemies. Every man snatched his weapon, and for a moment all was confusion, then, inspired by a common and irresistible impulse, soldiers, priests, traders, Indians, women and children, all rushed off in the direction from which the sounds had proceeded.

A tall man, painted, greased and feathered like an Indian and almost as dark, walked with a majestic air of haughty composure, holding in one hand eight long sticks, from which were suspended a like number of lank, waving tresses, and in front of him, tied together like children in leading strings, walked two squaws, with eyes abased and extremely resigned and stoical countenances.

The voyageurs raised a great shout of welcome.

"Hem! It is Dubocq, but truly Dubocq. Yes, it is he. Vive Dubocq."



HEMING.
COUREUR DE BOIS.

Dubocq smiled condescendingly, received the embraces and enthusiastic congratulations of his friends sedately, but perfectly conscious of his own importance, refused to divulge any of the particulars of his story until he reached M. de Callière.

Lydia was timid. Her face irradiated by a lovely expression, half smiles, half tears, she clung to Du Chêne for protection. Her crystal clear eyes were widely opened. He noted the upward sweep of the thick, fine lashes, the exquisite flush deepening in the cheeks and melting into the warm whiteness of brow and chin and throat. Did ever sculptor chisel a mouth where all sweet graces curved more sedately?

"He is a savage!" the English girl demanded with a shiver.

"No," Du Chêne's glowing, brown eyes rested earnestly on her face, "No, his grandfather was French, from Normandy, and married a squaw, Marie Arontio, daughter of the first Huron chief baptized by the sainted Father de Brebœuf. Sainte Marie Madeleine, Religieuse of the Ursulines in Quebec, is his sister. He has always been considered one of our best fighters, a man of great courage and extraordinary strength. Some years ago he was taken prisoner and all believed him dead. He has escaped from the cruelest men in the world, from whom he would have suffered unheard of torments."

The crowd, with cheers and shouts, proceeded up St. Joseph street, upon which the residence of M. de Callières was situated. The Count de Frontenac, with several members of his suite, were in the house, and, disturbed by the noise, appeared at the door to enquire the cause of the disturbance, accompanied by M. de Callière.

"What have we here?" inquired the Governor-General, who possessed a singular faculty for interesting himself in all his surroundings.

"Dubocq! Dubocq! Vive our champion Dubocq."