

knoll neighboring to the palisade of the Jesuits. Here a huge cross of wood had been made ready, and lay upon the ground. A vast throng of many-tinted Indians, which had hovered about the little column on its way, spread over the near ground, and formed a ragged circle about the spot. Some of the savages stood, with the breezes from the Sault fanning their plumes; others crouched on the soil as only Indians can; and here and there, on little undulations of the ground, the more supple fell into picturesque groups, giving a better view to those who stood behind. All along this dusky horde, set off with the saffron and vermilion of the forest adornments, there was the glistening jet of curious eyes.

The Frenchmen were grouped in the centre about the prostrate cross. Father Dablon stepped forward, and with outstretched arms sanctified it with a solemn blessing. At a sign from Saint Lusson, some stalwart shoulders were placed beneath the holy wood, and the huge symbol of redemption lifted its head slowly in the air, till its foot fell at last into the cavity which had been made for it. As the dull thud of the impact fell on the eager ears, every Frenchman's cap was off. While the earth was thrown about the cross, their voices rose in unison in that grand old seventh-century hymn, the *Vexilla Regis*. A graver in Paris had cut the royal arms in conventional style on a metal plate, and Colbert had taken care that this token of possession was sent to Talon. By him it had