

## Louis Hebert

(The First Colonist and Seigneur of Canada)

THERE are numerous ways to gain glory. Some men have won fame through important deeds, glorious actions, famous victories that astonished the world. Others have rendered themselves useful to humanity and have been exalted because of their great discoveries. Many intelligent men have brought upon themselves the attention of their country, but are unknown abroad, though they deserve to be praised as highly as those who have had the occasion of showing their talents. There are others again, obscure heroes who have worked hard for the welfare and glory of their own country; who have toiled and laboured; who have lead an obscure life without having in their minds the slightest intention of obtaining honors, and who, however, have won fame, and deserve to be known and praised even in foreign countries.

Of this last class is Louis Hebert.

Let us briefly consider what his life and work have been, and we shall see in our consideration the truth of the following quotation: "The glory of a country sometimes does not consist of the deeds of some of the inhabitants, but of the lives of those obscure toilers who go their way, accomplishing their duty, and transmitting to the future generations the spirit and ideals that form the soul of a nation."

Louis Hebert was French, and a Christian; these are but two of his many titles of glory. He received a good education, and succeeded his father in the profession of apothecary. He married Marie Rollet, who became the constant companion of his work.



The peaceful life of apothecary seems to have pleased him. However, we feel sure that he had a certain liking for adventures and explorations, for we see him following M. De Monts, lieutenant-general of Acadia, on his first voyage to this country in 1604. At that time Hebert had not yet resolved to become a true colonist and establish himself in the new country. Because of this he left his family in France, but during his sojourn in Canada the thought of bringing them overseas became stronger and stronger, and in 1607 he left Acadia and returned to France. However, the happiness of feeling himself back in his own native country could not make him forget the marvels of the new land in the west, and in 1609 he came again to Canada, this time being accompanied by his brave wife. But he was destined not to remain, for on his arrival he saw his own colony ravaged and destroyed, and in sorrow he returned to France.

In 1617 Champlain requested that he accompany him to Quebec; desirous to render himself useful, Hebert consented. From this date to 1627, the one of his death, he remained in Quebec tilling and cultivating the soil, penetrating little by little the wild forest. He won the friendship and respect of all others colonists, proved himself a true Catholic; in one word, his life was an example to his fellow beings. His death was the crowning of such a life. He received with great piety the sacraments of the Holy Church, and on the 25th of January, 1627 he gave back his soul to its creator. His last words were: "I am glad to die, because I have seen some of our poor natives die in the true Faith we have taught them."

Such was his life. "He connected his name with no brilliant exploit either of war or of peace ;



he had his share of adventure, but no more than a hundred others in his day ; the greater portion of his adult years were passed with a spade in his hands. But he embodies a type, "(1)" and what a worthy type it is ! as we shall now see.

Not only did Louis Hebert love his country and his religion. There was something else to which he was much attached ;—the soil of New France. His principal title of glory in Canada is the fact that he was the first man who devoted himself entirely to the culture of the soil. He was a man of will ; and so, when he made up his mind to become a colonist of New France he put his thought into execution, and carried it on in spite of the obstacles and sometimes the opposition with which he met.

The first land in which he toiled was Acadia. But here his work was not successful, he was obliged to return twice to France. He was not the man, however, to be discouraged by circumstances. And he resolved to come again to Canada. It was at this time that he accepted Champlain's proposal to accompany him to Canada. From that day on, Hebert was a true colonist in the full sense of the word. He brought his family with him, and coming immediately into contact with work, he built for himself the first Canadian house. Then he began his ploughing.

The obstacles were numerous. There were the difficulties of starting a work where none had been done before. "Trees had to be felled and cut up, the stumps burned and removed, stones gathered into piles, and every foot of soil upturned with a spade." Moreover, he had to go constantly against the will of the Society of the Merchants who were hostile to the clearing of land.

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(1) W. Bennett Munro.



But here his strength of will, and attachment to the soil, were forcibly shown, for he struggled and toiled harder and harder, until he became sure that his efforts would not be fruitless. He had left all his friends and relatives behind him in France, had sold his property and had taken his family to the colony which was what nobody had as yet done because of the difficulties and dangers such an attempt presented. For many years he had undertaken long and laborious works, had run numerous dangers, spent what little he had for the benefit of New France, and finally he gave himself and his whole family to agriculture. Certainly, he was a man of will and a lover of the soil.

His works, and the high ambition of establishing agriculture on a firm footing in New France brought upon him the title of First Canadian "Seigneur." He has still another source of glory; he inspired his sons with the idea of the necessity of agriculture in the new colony, and left behind him a family which continued his work, and contributed in a large proportion to the maintenance of what is today Canada's greatest source of wealth.

His work and sacrifices won for him the title of "First Colonist of Canada"; he deserves it, because he undertook to give the new world a means of supplying itself, and because he made of this occupation the work of his life.

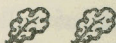
The monument that was erected to Hebert in Quebec, on September 3rd of last year, shows that the inhabitants have not forgotten the man who was the first to till their soil. Great manifestations took place; there were delegates from all parts of the province; it was a national day, an apotheosis of



agriculture, a deep expression of the gratitude of the people for Louis Hebert.

Five statues adorn the monument : they represent Louis Hebert, Marie Rollet, their son-in-law, and two of their children, thus uniting in the same crown of glory the principal members of that family to which Canada shall always be grateful. Yes we owe them a great deal, and can never have too great an admiration for the man who was "first colonist and seigneur of Canada."

G. A. L.—'20,



Youth, what man's age is like to be, doth show ;  
We may our ends by our beginnings know.

—Denham.

How beautiful is youth ! how bright it gleams,  
With its illusions, aspirations, dreams !  
Book of Beginnings, Story without End,  
Each maid a heroine, and each man a friend !

—Longfellow.

We do that in our zeal our calmer moment would  
be afraid to answer.—Scott.

Remember what Simonides said,—that he never  
repented that he had held his tongue, but often that  
he had spoken.—Plutarch.

But Shakespeare's magic could not copied be ;  
Within that circle none durst walk but he.

—Dryden.