

while frequently their neighbours of the next village or commune suffer from debility and bodily weakness. It is a matter of local influences, even the animals are under similar conditions. I do not undertake to explain this theory more fully, for it is received to-day by the mass of careful students.

Now, have we black hair, black eyes, dark skins, in excess? No, assuredly not; no more than have other people. I go further and say that individuals in whom the features of the person and the colouring of the skin recall the savage type are rare among us. In many cases, going back two or three generations, it can be proved that the complexion was not so dark; probably the grandchildren of the present individuals will return to the earlier pale tints.

And thus we come to enquire whether we have just now a greater proportion of black eyes, swarthy skins, raven's-wing tresses than formerly, comparing the sum-total of the population. Whoever can reply so as to clear up this uncertainty will have discovered a novelty. But even then the question will not be ended, for it will be necessary to prove savage descent; and that, it seems to me, would be impossible, save in a few exceptional cases.

To say that the movement of emigration of Frenchmen to Canada came to an end about the year 1675, when the colony counted but about seven thousand souls, is to repeat that which everybody knows. Nevertheless to abide by the strict truth, we must add that more than one family settled among us after that date. The conditions of the time explain the whole thing perfectly. For example, a French merchant consulting his personal interests, establishes himself here. A young man, in a subordinate position at the desk, comes to the colony hoping to be advanced a stage, and ends by marrying here: a workman that the bait of a larger wage allures, a professional man required at a particular time adopts the New France, and becomes on this side the ocean the parent stock of a family. The military, officers and privates, quit the flag, by permission, to become farmers.

The military! Oh, the splendid race we owe to them! "*Canadians, sons of soldiers*," is a stave most fittingly chanted at our national re-unions. Never were a people more justly entitled to say of their originals, "We are sons of husbandmen and soldiers." "The ploughshare and sword are our shining blazon."

"Poor, but valiant; pioneers, brave, adventurous, never despairing, that is our character in the past as in the present." We insist upon that, whatever debate may bring on an exchange of arguments upon our originals. It is the truth; let it so be understood; and let us always be proud of it!

The troops of France had been disbanded to the last man in 1672. After that not a single regiment was sent out to us, save in 1754, during the seven years' war; but to renew the garrisons the King despatched little detachments which received the offer of grants of land, on very favorable conditions. Year by year, some seignories were thus peopled; our Canadian women married these new colonists. If we can positively affirm that among us every man counted and that there were neither idle ones, nor a floating and undecided class, the same may be said of the women. As soon as a girl became of marrying age she found her own place, and indeed that was held as a part of her being.

A child of the country she continued to live in her first estate, and thus was founded that robust population which is our pride. There obtains throughout France a certain admiration for the works of Mr. Francis Parkman.* They are all admirably written as literature, and often well put together, but the oil of their mechanism is anti-Canadian. Mr. Parkman attributes wholly to France the successes of our element from Hudson's Bay almost to the Gulf of Mexico, while indeed the great things that we have accomplished are nearly always and solely Canadian doings. When he finds himself embarrassed to explain why our scanty militia scattered terror among the masses of the New England soldiery, he says that our commanders were, from the highest to the lowest grades, French, and he names them.

Now, all, with scarcely an exception, were born in Canada, and had never seen France!

This style of pleading a cause before a tribunal of justice is the manner of the advocate, but the method is execrable in historical matters.

When, after the death of Colbert (that is to say from 1683 to 1715) Louis the Fourteenth, engaged in his long and disastrous wars, was neglecting Canada, many expostulations were sent from the Supreme Council of Quebec. We were asking the men of Old France to help to develop in America a New France. The King responded to these just demands with an offer of certain convicts, coiners, bankrupts, vagabonds, footpads, galley slaves. But we never could accept such presents. Never! The letters of the monarch and of his ministers are extant, and it is true that they can be cited; but who can prove that the Canadians had endorsed them? The replies and refusals of the Supreme Council of Quebec (which was become by order of the King the Senate (*Conseil Supérieur*) are there in all their native dignity. Traditionally the temper of our population opposed itself to this class of people. Thus therefore the repulse! "Not a head rather than one with a smirch on its forehead." Seeing the impossibility of imposing on us the castaways of the kingdom, the Minister fell back on smugglers and salt-smugglers (*contrebandiers et faux-sauners*). In these times of war to the knife, of financial crises, of general distress (the end of the reign of Louis XIV), a smuggler was a sort of gentleman, born of the people, sacred by misfortune and readily to be compared with those whom we call in these days, "His Majesty's loyal Opposition." The salt-smugglers made their business the commerce in salt. The Mother Country was at such a point of exhaustion that the revenue of the tax on salt became one of the main resources of the Treasury. Read Vauban and shudder at the recital of the miseries of the French people. The contrabandists and salt-smugglers of 1693 to 1730, far from deserving the reprobation of history, have a right to our respect. Well, the Supreme Council of Quebec asked for contrabandists and salt-smugglers. They were not afraid of epithets. They knew the world from which these unfortunates were drawn; they called them to their help in preference to the adventurers of the large cities. Let us leave it to the writers who know nothing, to work themselves into a frenzy and pretend that such recruits became an injury to

* It must be remembered that this was written while Mr. Parkman was still alive. S. A. C.

us. On the contrary, it was a generous blood they infused into our veins.

But then, it will be said, the negligence of the French administration having given birth to a class in revolt against the laws, Canada was peopled with these persons. Do not let us pass the bounds of fact. According to all the documents in our possession not more than two hundred of these exiles came hither during the epoch in question, that is between 1700 and 1730. And observe that our population was at that period settled, constructed, organized from a long way back. The new colonists found themselves but a drop in a bucket.

But they came: I admit that. What I do not admit is the accusation of being contaminated by them. They were neither sufficiently numerous, nor sufficiently corrupt to exercise upon us an evil influence. We have absorbed them, not without retaining, it may be, a little of their spirit of opposition to power—not altogether an evil.

I have already spoken of *Le Sage*. The author of *Gil Blas* knew not much of Canada. The absurd narrations of Captain Beauchene put him into a rapture on us as his subject. This was in 1710 and 1715. Beauchene had lived more on the sea than on the land of this continent. His story relates more particularly to the Antilles than to Lower Canada. *Le Sage* confused the tropics with the West, after the fashion of the excellent *La Fontaine*.

What Beauchene has related of sons of great families exiled among us, from 1690 to 1715, is partly true, but what an overplus, good heavens! For ten gentlemen whom the *lettre-de-cachet* sent to our trading posts, *Le Sage* seems to imply that France had been depopulated, emptied, scourged, cleansed, relieved, consoled, by these expulsions. It is too much cleansing at one time. At this same period, a minister of the King was replying to a request for expatriation by force on the part of a family of some influence, "We send nobody to America against his will." Moreover, where do we find traces of these poor devils in the genealogies, perfect as they are, of our own families?

When Louis XIV died (1715) the difficulties in finance became a catastrophe. Law appeared. Muddling everything, ruling everything, he opened a bank upon his own method. It was bankruptcy all along the line in 1720. We have paid dearly for the experience. The Regent repudiated almost all the debt of Canada. It was millions! But he bought a diamond which was his glory! A new trading company, another monopoly, saw the light. Then more mischief commenced. That there should be introduced into commercial affairs a set of rotten operators is easy to be believed. The details often fail us; but I take the general run of events and draw therefrom the idea of a very painful condition of things. The administration of the colony, straitly concentrated in the hands of the Cabinet at Versailles, was sure to produce here more than one misreckoning. The finances were not of the "*habitants*" but merely birds of passage. M. l'abbé de la Tour, who lived but two or three years at Quebec, about 1730, said, without the slightest distinction or naming any date, that "Canada is composed of persons ruined and compromised in France." He indeed was a little worse informed than La Hontan who, before him, had exercised his caustic pen upon the young women selected by Colbert. The abbé de la Tour evidently speaks of what passed